Changing Political Attitudes and the Role of Facebook

Maryam Tahira Gondal [1]
Ghulam Shabir [2]

Abstract

Since the evolution of social media, human communication has changed a lot and so did the values, attitudes and behaviours. Communication experts are very vocal on briskly changing attitudes due to such communication patterns. On the other hand, political actors, advertisers, and propagandists are targeting the young minds on social media outlets. This study primarily focuses on consumption patterns and reliance on political information consumed on Facebook by the young university students and their prospect attitudinal change in their political beliefs. The survey based study focused different provinces of Pakistan and concluded that the heavier the reliance on the FB for political information, higher will be the chances of change in previously held political beliefs and attitudes.

Keywords: Political Attitudes and Social Media, Facebook and Political Propaganda, Facebook and Politics, SNS and Attitudinal Change, Political Communication on Facebook

---

[1] PhD Scholar, Department of Media Studies, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalpur.
[2] Former Chairman and Professor, Department of Media Studies, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalpur

Introduction

Social Media as Natural Product of Human Nature

Despite being conceived in a very technological age and being a true marvel of modern science, social media is in essence based on innate human nature. Humans have a curious mind and a thirst for social exploration. It runs in our genes and is a fuel for communications, new prospects and many interpersonal relationships. With ever rising young population, social media offers this adventure in safety and privacy of our homes. Whether we need to contact our school friends or arrange a meet up with college buddies; share our success with colleagues; or express our 'availability' to opposite sex, it's just handy to post a status, share a photo, like a post or comment on one, on the digital directory and journal , that is one of its kind: Facebook.

Brainchild of visionary Mark Zuckerberg and his friend Eduardo Saverin, Facebook was made non exclusive to the world in Sept, 2006. Since then, it has evolved into something far more universal than its competitors. It is surely not the only social medium tapping on inexhaustible pool of chatty, enthusiastic, largely young user base. But it is the social media giant. So much so, that other social networking platforms are left looking for non –Facebook niche in the market.

Competition of Facebook with other Networks

Unlike Facebook, Instagram banks on visuals only, and tries to woo a user base with the idea of a neat, digital photo journal. Twitter, on the other hand, restricts it's users to 140 characters per post, in a bid to be more curt and crisp. Despite boasting a considerable user base, these networking sites have to do a lot of work to pose serious competition for Facebook. For now, Facebook remains a go-to place for modern users of social media and its success is unsurpassed.

Prior to Facebook, MySpace and Orkut were among popular networking platforms. But they failed to stand their ground and break the barriers as Facebook did. So in spite of head start and superior business structure, MySpace was sold by News Corp, at a mere $35 million dollars. To put it in perspective, MySpace was sold by the News Corp. at a price less by $500 million US dollars than the buying cost. Orkut, founded in and boasting a great following at one time, was killed by Google in 2014 (Lee, 2011).

Many physical gestures and face to face communications have been replaced by likes, messages, comments and friend requests. This digital age has sped up our communication and opened up a world of infinite choices. Facebook's success can be better understood by looking at some of their policies and by their staggering numerical success.

A Bid to Approach Unreached: 'Facebook Is Free and Always Will Be'

This phrase on login pages of Facebook is a statement of intent. Unlike other, elitist platforms, Facebook has recognized that its long term survival depends on expanding user base. Defying pressure to expedite returns to the shareholders; Facebook has kept reaching out to the underdeveloped world. It is to be noted that majority of population in these regions of the world do not have access to high speed internet, neither do they have resources to allocate for procuring it. Pakistan is a perfect example of this market where mobile phone users are still using 2G technology or less. 3G has been launched in Pakistan, but its coverage is limited to few metropolitan cities and costs are too high for most. In course of time, these efforts have paid off and Facebook has developed a truly universal user base.

Inclusive Policy of Facebook

In light of the policy to be as inclusive as possible, Facebook has introduced 2G Tuesdays, which allows staff at Facebook, to walk in shoes of users in emerging markets , like Pakistan , who have slower internet services.

Pakistani Statistics

Over 20 million Pakistanis were on Facebook by end of 2015. Of these, more than two thirds are below age of 25, which speaks volumes about its popularity in young crowd. Of the total Facebook users, 15 million are male and 4.7 million are female.

More and more teens and preteens are now exposed to social media from a young age, increasing their vulnerability and likelihood of using Facebook than their parents or elders. These young people have been conditioned to spend considerable time with their computers and mobile devices, compared to their forerunners.

Raising Social Awareness: A Newsfeed

Not only Facebook helps us stay informed of our friends' life milestones; like getting a job, having a new relationship, or seeing adorable photos of their newborn, it also keeps us in tune with the relevant social issues. Social media often embarks on social commentary and open discussion about various social evils, that unfortunately mainstream media has no time for. Therefore, via various friend groups and Facebook pages, this stream of posts on social issues makes its way into nearly every newsfeed of Facebook users across the country.

Everyone Has a Voice: Facebook as a Neutralizing Medium

No one has to be somebody to join or enjoy Facebook. As a dominant social networking platform, it provides every user a unique possibility to make an impact, or not. The Arab Spring shows the true power of social media, where common people came together and published and propagated opinions and made a huge social difference. . There are people around the globe who made careers and gained fame from the social media.

Political Socialization on wall posts

Everybody has personal wall on Facebook. So Facebook is the replacement of personal diary to open diary. Anybody can look at the wall if it is public. It is the choice of user that he share things with the friends or everybody on the Facebook. Users are getting more socialize and aware of the political issues. We can say that social networking has a remarkable role in political socialization of the masses.

Not everyone is cut out to be a leader and trendsetter. It is especially natural for gullible young people to be affected by a fashionable behavior or trend. Often, propaganda is spread by making it appear popular among certain group of people, and these people, would then, predictably join in. This tactic is employed by mass media, companies and even government policy makers to achieve their respective ends. Social media is a handy tool in hands of these groups and they can employ it to spread their opinions, packaged in a user friendly and emotionally relevant scenario. The end user might think that he / she is engaging in a personal cause, when they are actually being subversively tricked in to it.

Activities of Pakistani Youth on Facebook

Pakistani youth is spending an increasing amount of time online. They are using the Fackebook platform for a myriad of random and sometimes well directed activities. Recently their political participation on Facebook and Twitter has gained attention from main stream media and leading political parties. It is to be noted here that these platforms are often used side by side, and with easy accessibility via smart phone apps , young people are simultaneously logged in to more than one platform at any one time. In addition to its usage

for connecting to friends and family members, range of activities include passive consumption of popular posts as well as active participation in the form of shares, likes, tags and comments.

Online Political Activism & Real World Actions

We have long believed that the meaningful action springs from thoughtful inaction. In the age of social media, solitude and meditation has been replaced by regurgitated content off the internet. It is not altogether a bad thing, but it is easy to get lost in the world of internet. Young people have all the time to spend and none to spare. This haphazard ingestion of ideas and posts can simply kill a few brain cells and go down the drain. Question is will a certain degree of online political activism actually lead to some real world action or will it merely range from sharing post to signing a petition and nothing more; something termed as 'Slacktivism'.

This is puzzling Pakistani politicians too. PTI is leading in online youth support on Facebook and other social media. They are active on Facebook, quick to respond, ready to react. But opposing party PMLN has already coined the phrase; 'Jalsa Imran Ka, Vote Nawaz Ka'; meaning attendance of PTI public meetings will not translate into votes.

Facebook as Platform to Connect with Supporters

Since the success of PTI, all political parties are coming to realize that social media is a great platform to connect with their supporters and further their cause. Now, PTI, PMLN, PPPP and several other parties and their leaders have set up dedicated social media teams and many hold personal accounts, which they use to directly interact with the public and get their message across.

Also, the voice of social media has increased social accountability of political figures and parties. If enough people point it out, they have to answer.

The laptop scheme by CM Punjab was seen as an effort to please the youth and win over their support. Slowly, we are seeing that there is significant anti-PTI voice on social media, although the increasing polarization is disturbing.

Relationship between Politicians, Media and Public

Historical evidences confirm it that there is an old relationship exists between politics, media and public. However the ways of communication, media and persuasive techniques change with the change of advancement in scientific inventions, contemporary needs and public interests. In democratic societies media is said to be free from the state control. In the country like Pakistan the mass media is playing a remarkable role in setting political awareness. Being the students of mass media we already know it how politicians and pressure groups use media towards their perspectives. Political actors use different persuasion strategies which are consciously planned and designed. Therefore a lot of academic research is based on this area; still one cannot ignore and deny its importance. This research is also based on the study of political communication through media and changing attitudes of youth by the use of media. Almost every youngster is using internet and Facebook has become a compulsory subject. They're using Facebook from the bed to the classroom. Due to its easy and attractive programming Facebook is catching these guys in a huge amount. In addition the youngsters spent a lot of time on Facebook, while discussing and chatting about politics. They contradict with each other as well as come to mutual understanding.

Objectives

Primary Objective:

Exploring the relationship between exposure to political content on Facebook and attitudinal

change in the graduate and undergraduate students of the province is the primary objective of the study.

Secondary Objectives:
- To investigate how the propagandist play-up with young minds.
- To support the fact that Facebook has become very effective tool of political propaganda.

Statement of the Problem

Facebook has become a vital tool for socializing in modern digital era. This study intends to investigate whether there is any relation between exposure to the political propaganda messages on FB and changes (if any) in the perception, political thought and social behavior of graduate and undergraduate students of the Punjab and Sindh province. This study will also explore the extent of change in political inclinations caused by Facebook propaganda.

Literature Review

To explore the relation between the usage of social media websites by politicians and their chances of getting popular or gaining electability, a content analysis of three different politicians was conducted on 88 students of college level and it was tried to measure the influence on their perceptions. Chaire Mc Caskil, Thaddeus McCotter and Kevin McCarthy were the politicians chosen for this purpose. Five different attributes from their Facebook and Twitter accounts were studied; quality of content, speech informality, designing, posting frequency and number of their followers on these websites. A positive correlation was found in personable contents and voting intentions. Social networking websites like Facebook have enabled the people to access the political and public figures with ease. It is an essential part of political campaigns to address the audience of social networks (Hellweg, 2011).

Sadly, it cannot be said that we now have found the exceptional definition of the concept, and because there is no agreement between the students concerning the definition of this time period, the gained knowledge of propaganda has to go on. It is a tricky phenomenon that consists of together with it some disagreeable connotations and preconceptions that must be put away when learning propaganda. This suggestion can be utilized as well for just right functions, as for unhealthy ones; it depends on the character who appeals at its robust resources. Might be propaganda will never die out and, as Edward Bernays hoped in 1928, probably smart men will comprehend that propaganda is the contemporary instrument through which they can combat for productive ends and support to bring order out of chaos (ŞUTIU, 2015).

Social media logic revolves around popularity, connectivity, programmability, datafication and redefining the public values. Over the past few years, social media logic has developed into the mass media logic, sometimes glorifying it, sometimes replacing it. By focusing away from institutions to social media logic as transforming force, it was desired to identify key principles increasing social interaction in a digital and networked society concentrating on the methods and strategies at work in social media logic. Social communication in all the socio political or socio economic ways has emerged as the new media prevailed (Dijck & Poell, 2013).

Since the ''Arab Spring'' in uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, researchers have tried to understand how Internet and social media can cause to bring political change in authoritarian systems. Social media like Facebook are just a part of a new political communication system evolving in North Africa and the Middle East. News coverage of such events tends to focus on

catchphrases such as ''Twitter Revolution'' or ''Facebook Revolution''.   The events took place in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East are being given meanings by a new political communication system. This system is works by the increasingly interrelated consumption of satellite TV, the Internet specially the Facebook and twitter and the widespread use of Internet-enabled smart phones (SEN, 2012).

The 2014 presidential election in Indonesia was a milestone for democratization. A research was conducted employing the accidental survey methods in Sep-Aug 2014 among different universities. The perception of respondents towards social networking websites as a channel for political participation during the elections was very good and most of them considered that such websites provide a free and easy approach to the information. Self willingness and self interest were the other factors involved in political participation through social media. On the other hand it was also indicated that smear campaign was delivering positive and a very significant contribution in political participation by the social media users (Kholid & Listiya, 2015).

Although the most of the mainstream politicians in Pakistan have not yet considered social media as a tool of core political communication, President Zardari, Prime Miniter Gilani and opposition leader Nawaz Sharif etc. don't show much activity on the social media. However the observers expect that a huge surge in online activities is expected in the upcoming elections of 2013 and social networking websites can be helpful in recognizing and mobilizing young voters. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has an active website carrying and updating the necessary political communication for the party. They have also established many Facebook profiles and pages for the promotion of their political agenda and making fans. Online media has also given rise to different social mobilizations like the Lawyers' Movement 2007-08. Citizens' engagement has also been activated by social media such as in 2010 flood in Pakistan. Civic activism at local and national level has also been a major topic of social media (Michaelsen, 2011).

Political mobilization started for anti-corruption protests in 2011/12 in India, involving technological and social communication means. The Internet Mobile Association of India predicts that there will be more internet users in India in 2015 as compared to the USA. In 2015 elections the Congress party leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi did not have any social media accounts but still the party had a pro forma presence in cyber media. AAP party including the leaders such as Arvind Kejriwal had immense presence on Facebook and other social media. BJP and especially Modi have been marked with the huge adoption of social media and utilized this medium for political mobilization. Followers of Modi on social media are in millions. Social media proved to have a heavy impact on political mobilization especially in the society members with low income and limited internet footprints. Political actors heavily used the social media for political mobilization and persuasion. Even with less than fifty percent of internet penetration, the social networking websites can create tangible impact in political discourse. It is just the way this medium is exploited. Digital campaigns are more likely to cause positive electoral results (Pande, 2015).

The 2012 American elections can be named as the first real social media campaign whereas the social media campaign was also a major part in 2008 campaign. During the 2012 presidential campaign, thousands of photoshopped photos were disseminated over the social media depicting President Obama unpatriotic. The question to be focused in not whether or not those sharing the propaganda material were dupes and victims of false campaigns, rather the more important query is what the underlying motives being articulated through techno

cultural practices are. Social networking websites are agonistic spaces and they are producing constitutive and creative politics that we have to accept (Burroughs, 2013).

The emerging media has the power to inform as well as to motivate for political judgment. Publicity becomes more critical despite of being easy too. Radical democratic standards try to restrain the critical integrity and the publicity goods start diminishing (Barney, 2008).

In the US, the hacker group Anonymous once revealed that the army contractors developed fake Facebook IDs to hack the progressive organizations. Another project by the Central Command and the US Corporation Ntrepid is being carried out to effect the online communications and create pro-American propaganda outside the US. The propaganda model perfectly applies to the Internet especially in description of news production (Pedro, 2011).

A survey in Spain revealed that about 66 percent social media users use this platform to express their feelings about political issues, civic matters and also post their reaction to the other posts they see. About 38 percent of the users utilize social media to promote the political or social issues while 35% of the users try to encourage the people to come out for vote. Social media is also being used to follow the politicians and political candidates, to post different web links to access political news or stories and to encourage the people to take some action against the political matters (Rainie, Smith, Schlozman, Brady, & Verba, 2012).

The Youtube, Facebook, Twitter are the basic sources of information while analyzing the conflicts in Syrian crises. In Ukrainian case, it was a Facebook and Twitter revolution. It was of same nature like in Egypt and Tunisia in Arabian Revolution. Social media is tractable during the war times too. Soldiers used to communicate with their families through Facebook during the war in Afghanistan. Posts of social media networks are having some beliefs or concerns. They are creating a virtual environment of war (Ibrahim, 2015).

Social media has become the coordination tool for almost all the political movements across the world, especially in case of authoritarian government systems where they are trying to limit the access to this. Moreover the social media can strengthen the civil society as well as the public sphere in the long term. It may happen easily where the public opinion is relying on media and dialogue. It will be more difficult to articulate the websites like Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, YouTube, QQ, Wikileaks, Tuenti, Naver etc. by the US government as these are the websites used mostly for the political speech and coordination. But such an articulation is also very necessary (Shirky, 2011).

The presidential campaign of president Obama in 2008 was manipulated by political campaign on social media. The scholars started comparing this campaign with the political campaign of John F. Keneddy through the use of TV. The intensive use of social media by Obama seemed to be one of the biggest factors in his victory against John McCain. Obama targeted millions of young social media users mobilizing them through Facebook, Twitter, flickr and other social websites, creating a good team of political volunteers for him campaign. Moreover, the Republicans are also using the social media actively. On the other hand, the political blogging is creating problems for candidates. Social media will keep playing significant roles in future political campaigns (Smith, 2011).

The YouTube, Wikis, Facebook, Twitter and blogs are the key social media channels for learning from others, planning and starting operations, recognizing the practices, creating and maintain the contents, evaluation and improvements. The greatest contribution of social media is that the users can produce and share the contents if a very fast and flexible routines. This medium has always been used for voting advice, political campaigns, promotion and mobilization for change (Centre for European Studies, 2015).

Social media users do not follow national boundaries like the traditional media channels do. Blogs, Facebook, Twitters etc, are the social networks with huge potential for acting like an institution to confront the political maturity. Social networks try to enhance personalization of the policy. In social networks, politics are not analyzed in normal ways through rational procedures. Symbolic meanings are often derived. Social media has changed the patterns of political participation of the users in a strange manner (Harsij, Ebrahimipour, Rahbarqazi, & Malekan, 2014).

There are positive effects of internet on democracy. A moderate link is present between political self-efficacy, situational political involvement and amount of attention to traditional internet communications for political communication. Young adults are shifting to online communication channels from the traditional media. Attention to the social network channels is accountable for variance in self efficacy in political patterns of the users. Still further researches are required to conclude the true effects of internet mediated political communication and information on self-efficacy (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010).

Social Media, Political Participation and Attitudes of Youth

The study on 2011 elections in Nigeria indicates that there was a positive correlation between Facebook usage and Political activism. Social media has the ability to unite and engage the public in political debates and activities. There are about 60 million young voters in Nigeria whereas the number of internet users is about 43 millions. Social media can usefully mobilize these voters to take part in the political process (Dagona, Karick, & Abubakar, 2013).

Research Questions

This study has been designed to obtain answers for following questions:
1. Whether and to what extent the attitudinal change is caused by exposure to political propaganda campaigns through Facebook?
2. What are the general beliefs of the university students on political communication through Facebook?

Hypotheses

H1: The greater the exposure to political Facebook posts, greater will be the attitudinal change.

H2: The more the reliance on Facebook for political information, the more the political opinion will be influenced.

Methodology

Survey is the basic research design. Questionnaire was the primary instrument designed for graduate and undergraduate students of the Punjab and Sindh province.

Graduate and undergraduate university students of the Punjab and Sindh province have been taken as the Universe of the study. Randomization technique was applied in the sampling procedure. A complete list of all the universities of Punjab and Sindh was compiled. Then 04 universities (02 from each province) were selected randomly using basket draws. Major strata were defined as graduate and undergraduate, male and female students in equal number. Purposely, the Facebook users were selected at this stage.

Total sample of 800 (400 female and 400 male) students were interviewed from the sample frame of graduate and undergraduate students of the Punjab and Sindh province.

To add some qualitative analysis a few interviews of the professionals have also been added.

Questionnaire was designed in accordance to the mental depth and verbal capacity of the selected population. English was chosen to be the language of communication.

Testing Hypotheses

Regression

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.763[a]	.582	.581	.659

a. Predictors: (Constant), Extent of reliance on Facebook for political information, How much Facebook is consumed

b. Dependent Variable: Extent of change caused in previous political attitudes by political contents on Facebook

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	481.289	2	240.644	553.946	.000[b]
	Residual	346.231	797	.434		
	Total	827.520	799			

a. Dependent Variable: Extent of change caused in previous political attitudes by political contents on Facebook
b. Predictors: (Constant), Extent of reliance on Facebook for political information, How much Facebook is consumed

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	.639	.061		10.403	.000
	How much Facebook is consumed	.768	.025	.763	31.108	.000
	Extent of reliance on Facebook for political information	.000	.020	.000	.011	.991

a. Dependent Variable: Extent of change caused in previous political attitudes by political contents on Facebook
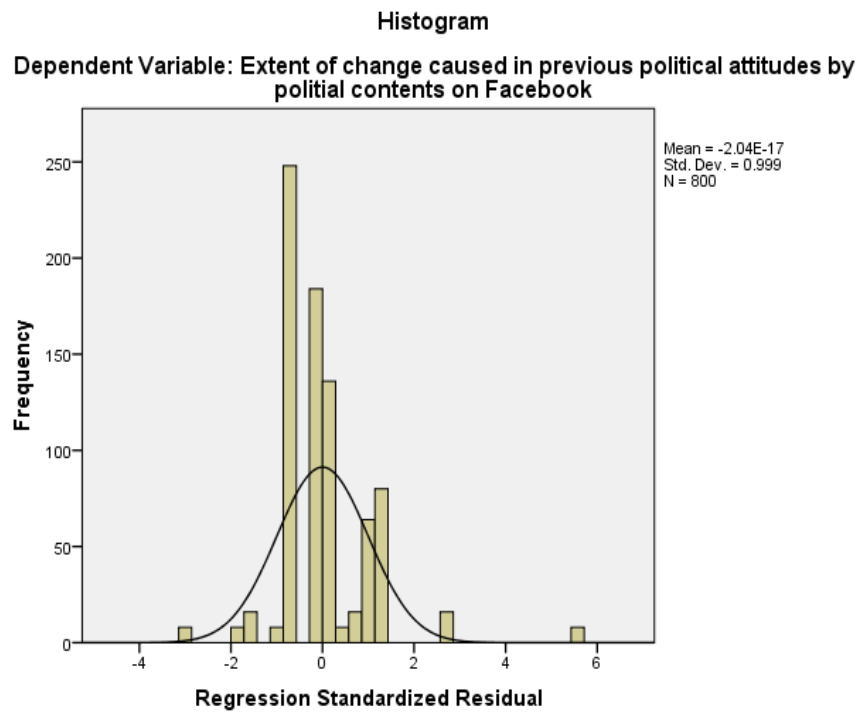
Charts

Histogram

Dependent Variable: Extent of change caused in previous political attitudes by
politial contents on Facebook

Fig. 4.29: Histogram

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Dependent Variable: Extent of change caused in previous political attitudes by politial contents on Facebook
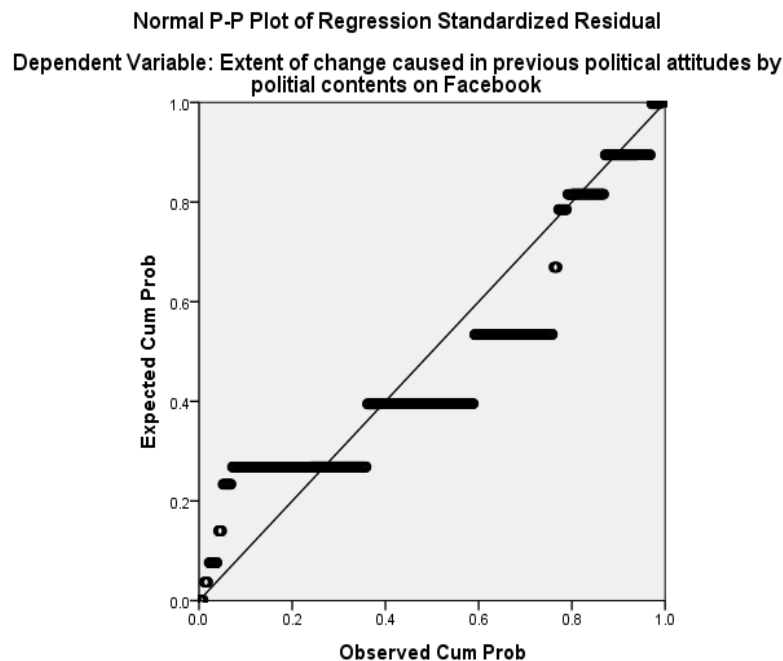
Fig. 4.30: P-P Plot

While testing the hypotheses through linear regression analysis, the value of R is found to be 0.763 and R square is 0.581 that is fairly closer to +1 indicating a positive correlation between independent and dependent variables. Significance level of 95% is achieved in the ANOVA test. The value of Beta is 0.763 (closer to +1 instead of -1) and 0.000 (significant) that also indicates that the independent variables are creating causal effect on the dependent variable.

Hence the 95% confidence level is achieved to accept the alternate hypotheses and reject the null hypotheses and the results can be generalized to the whole population. There is a positive correlation between the extent of exposure to political posts on Facebook and change in political attitudes. There is also a positive correlation between reliance on Facebook political contents and change in political attitudes.

Discussion and Interpretation

After the data analysis, it came into consideration that graduate female students are the highest consumer of internet whereas the male graduates are also using the internet intensively. There were minute number of respondents who rarely or never used internet. Similarly both the post graduate male and female students are the biggest consumer of internet in Pakistan.

Graduate female students are highest in the number of those who consume Facebook very greatly where as male graduate and post graduate both are phenomenal in Facebook usage as well. The number of those who rarely or never use Facebook is very low.

Majority of graduate students both male and females admitted that they are very highly exposed to political contents on Facebook whereas majority of post graduate students said that they greatly or to some extent are exposed to political posts on Facebook.

There is a remarkable strength of respondents graduate and post graduate, male and female who take interest in politics to some extent. It was an interesting fact that a lot of female respondents said that they have no interest in politics at all. Male graduate and post graduate students seemed to have more inclination in politics than the females.

Majority of graduate female students rarely share any political contents on Facebook whereas majority of graduate and post graduate male students share political contents of Facebook to some extent or greatly. Once again the political activism is observed in male students more intensively as compared to the females.

When asked whether the respondents believe in authenticity of political contents on Facebook or not, majority of graduate students said they greatly or very greatly believe in that. On the other hand, the number of those who never believed so is not very phenomenal. It indicates that a huge number of students believe that the political contents on Facebook are mostly authentic.

There is a huge majority of graduate students both male and female who rarely consult other media channels to confirm the authenticity of political information they seek from the Facebook whereas both male and female post graduate students greatly confirm the information they come across on Facebook. It is a hopeful thing to know that Facebook users are to some extent trying confirming the political information from other media channels.

Majority of graduate students heavily rely on Facebook to seek political information. There are also a large number of them who rely on Facebook for the said reason to some extent. Some graduate students both male and female seemed never relying on Facebook for gathering political information.

When inquired about which political party the respondents think has comparatively stronger political presence on Facebook, male and female, graduate and post graduate students in majority have agreed that it was Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). PML-N and PPP stand second and third respectively in the survey.

Most of the respondents have strongly or very strongly agreed that political contents on Facebook can create political awareness among the users. Very less are those who never or rarely find Facebook helpful in creating political awareness.

While measuring the extent of change caused in previous political attitudes by the Facebook political contents, majority of graduate respondents said that they changed greatly or very greatly. Most of the post graduate students especially females said that their previous political attitudes changed greatly or to some extent. It was surprising to know that there were very minute numbers of respondents who said their previous political attitudes rarely or never changed by the political posts they see on Facebook.

Although the funny representation of political actors on Facebook is generally considered harmless and only for recreation but the survey revealed that both male female, graduate and post graduate students in majority do not perceive such posts harmless. Although there are still a lot of respondents who thought such posts are harmless but they are comparatively smaller in number as compared.

The most of the graduate students believe that political posts on Facebook have a power of making or distorting the image of politicians greatly. Post graduates also agree to the point of

view but mostly to some extent or not very greatly. It is overall evident that political posts can glorify or distort the political image.

There was a huge majority of male graduate and female post graduate students who perceive that political campaigns on Facebook can bring some change into the political opinion to some extent. Most of the other students seemed agreeing the statement greatly or very greatly. Only a small number of students were of view that change in political opinion is not possible by political campaigns on Facebook.

The study revealed another interesting fact that a majority of young students heavily or to some extent believe that their political opinion is better than that of their elders because they have access to and awareness from Facebook which their elders didn't have.

Majority of the students very greatly perceived that Facebook is a very effective medium for political communication and expression of political thoughts. Only few of them did not seem agree to the point of view.

A phenomenal number of female graduate students believed to some extent that political posts on Facebook are often based on propaganda. Generally the graduate students did not seem very much agreed to the view that political posts might be propaganda. Whereas the post graduate students especially males greatly agreed that such posts are often a propaganda.

It was asked from the respondents whether they make any effort to know or not where the political contents they see on Facebook are being originated from. It was shocking to be revealed that a huge majority of all the students rarely make any such effort. They do not seem bothered about the origin of political contents on Facebook which may lead to misinformation.

While measuring the extent to the agreement that political campaigns on Facebook can change political behaviors too, majority of respondents seem agreeing to the statement to some extent if not very greatly. Whereas a lot of female post graduates students did not believe in any change in political behaviors this way.

It is another interesting fact that majority of the overall respondents greatly or very greatly said that they feel discomfort from the political contents on Facebook they come across. Female students seem more discomforted as compared to the males.

When asked about the extent of freedom of speech the respondents believe in while using Facebook, a huge majority, mostly the male students responded that they believe so to some extent. A lot of female post graduates never seemed believing in absolute freedom of speech on Facebook while the general trend seems to be supporting freedom of speech to some extend if not very greatly.

Conclusion

On the balance of the statistical analysis, the researcher can conclude that there is a strong positive correlation between the extent of exposure to political contents on Facebook and change in political attitudes of youth. There is also a positive correlation between reliance on Facebook for political information and change in attitudes among the Pakistani youth. Facebook is creating political awareness and has emerged as a handy medium for expression of political thoughts, activism and mobilization. Political campaigns through Facebook can not only bring attitudinal change in political mindsets and attitudes, they may also lead to the behavioral change. Political actors utilize this medium for political communication and propaganda as well whereas majority of the youth do not try to investigate about the origin of the political communication they are coming across through Facebook. Extensive use of

Facebook and reliance on it for information has opened new avenues for political actors to exploit the young minds.

References

Anduiza, e., gallego, a., & jorba, l. (2012). Internet use and the political knowledge gap in spain. *Revista internacional de sociología* , 129-151.

Ariton-Gelan, C., Tasente, T., & Ciacu, N. (2013). New Discrusive Strategies within Political Communication, Case stude: Parliamentary Parties in Romania. *Acta Universitatis Danubius* , 99-116.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory.* Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall.

Barney, D. (2008). Politics and Emerging Media: The Revenge of Publicity. *Global Media Journal, Canadian Edition* , 89-106.

Bastion, G. d., Stilz, M., & Herlitz, R. (2014). *Social Media and Political Participation.* eschborn: Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Bohler-Muller, N., & Merwe, C. v. (2011). The potential of social media to influence socio-political change on the African Continent. *Policy Brief* , 1-9.

Burroughs, B. (2013). Obama Trolling: Memes, Salutes and an Agonistic Politics in the 2012 Presidential Election. *The Fibreculture Journal* , 256-277.

Centre for European Studies. (2015). Social Media - The New Power of Political Influence. *Suomen Toivo Think Tank* , 1-15.

Chen, S.-C., Chen, H.-H., Lin, M.-T., & Chen, Y.-B. (2011). A Conceptual Model To Understand The Effects Of Perception On The Continuance Intention In Facebook. *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research* , 29-34.

Cover, R. (2014). Separating Work And Play: Privacy, Anonymity And The Politics Of Interactive Pedagogy In Deploying Facebook In Learning And Teaching. *Digital Culture & Education* , 47-59.

Dagona, Z., Karick, H., & Abubakar, F. (2013). Youth Participation in Social Media and Political Attitudes in Nigeria. *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice* , 1-7.

Davies, R. (2014). *Social media in election capaigning.* European Parliamentary Research Service.

Department for Education. (2015). *How Social Media is used to encourage travel to Syria and Iraq: Briefing note for schools.* Home Office UK.

Dijck, J. v., & Poell, T. (2013). Understanding Social Media Logic. *Media and Communication* , 2-14.

Dougherty, J. (2014). Everyone Lies: The Ukraine Conflict and Russia's Media Transformation. *Shorenstiein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, Discussion Paper Series* .

Faraon, M., Stenberg, G., & Kaipainen, M. (2014). Political Campaigning 2.0: The Influence of Online News and Social Networking Sites on Attitudes and Behavior. *Journal of eDemocracy* , 231-247.

Gilmore, J., & Howard, P. N. (2013). Does Social media Make a Difference in Political Campigns? Digital Dividends in Brazil's 2010 National Elections. *Center for Communication and Civic Engagement Working Paper, University of Washington* .

Gomez, J. (2013, September). *Malaysia's 13th General Election: Social Media and its Political Impact*. Retrieved January 05, 2016, from Gomes Centre: www.gomezcentre.com

Gonzalez-Quijano, Y. (2013). False Promises? The Social Media and Arab Political Change. *Media and Arab Transitions* , 60-63.

Harsij, H., Ebrahimipour, H., Rahbarqazi, M., & Malekan, M. (2014). A study of the relationship between cyberspace and political participation (The case study of students at the Univresity of Isfahan). *Journal of Applied Sociology* , 43-46.

Hellweg, A. (2011). Social Media Sites of Politicians Influence Their Perception by Constituents. *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications* , 22-36.

Henn, R., Hoehr, K. M., & Berwanger, G. I. (2012). Transformations of the Journalism Event in Social Networks: From the mobilizations against homophobia to the crisis of a country music duo. *Brazilian Journalism Research* , 96-113.

Ibrahim, A. (2015). Communication between Communities in a Modern War Paradigm. *SEA-Practical Application of Science* , 259-261.

Joseph, S. (2012). Social Media, Political Change and Human Rights. *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review* , 145-188.

Kalyango, Y., & Adu-Kumi, B. (2012). Impact of Social Media on Political Mobilization in East and West Africa. *Global Media Journal* , 1-20.

Kholid, A., & Listiya, S. (2015). The Influence of Social Media Towards Student Political Participation During the 2014 IndonesianPresidential Election. *Journal of Government and Politics , VI* (2), 246-264.

Konard. (2010). *Online Social Networking and Political Communication in Asia.* (P. Behnke, Ed.) Singapore: Konard-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Kumar, K. K., & Geethakumari, G. (2014). Detecting misinformation in online social networks using cognitive psychology. *Springer Journal of Human-centric Computing and Information Sciences* , 1-22.

Kushin, M. J., & Yamamoto, M. (2010). Did social media really matter? College students' use of online media and political decision making in 2008 election. *Mass Communication and Society* , 608-630.

Lee, A. (2011, June 30). *Myspace Collapse: How the Social network Fell Apart*. Retrieved January 05, 2016, from Huffpost: www.huffpost.com/us/entry/how-myspace-fell-apart_n_887853.html

Lupascu, N. (2012). Electoral Campaigns in the Process of Transition to Democracy in Romania after December 1989. Research Theme: Local Campaign for Mayor's Office ofIasi, 2004 – The Construction of a Political Product. *Romanian Journal for Multidimensional Education* .

Michaelsen, M. (2011). *New Media vs. Old Politics: The Internet, Social Media, and Democratisation in Pakistan.* Berlin: fesmedia Asia.

Mutula, S. M. (2013). Policy gaps and technological deficiencies in social networking environment: Implications for information sharing. *SA Journal of Information Management* , 9.

Osman, A., & Samei, M. A. (2012). The Media and the Making of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. *Global Media Journal, German Edition* , 1-19.

Pande, S. (2015). Changing Paradigm: Social Media and Political Communication, A Situation in Delhi. *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism* .

Pedro, J. (2011). The Propaganda Model in the Early 21st Century. *International Journal of Communication* , 1906-1926.

Rainie, L., Smith, A., Schlozman, K. L., Brady, H., & Verba, S. (2012). *Social Media and Political Engagement.* Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center.

Sauter, T., & Bruns, A. (2013). *Social media in the Media: How Australian Media Perceive Social Media as Political Tools.* Kelvin Grove: ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation.

SEN, P. D. (2012). The Social Media as a Public Sphere: The Rise of Social Opposition. *International Conference on Communication, Media, Technology and Design.* Istanbul: ICCMTD.

Shirky, C. (2011). *The Political Power of Social Media.* The Council on Foreign Relations.

Siljanovska, L. (2014). Mass Media And Cultural Memory: Idealization Of Values. *South East European University, Tetovo, Macedonia* , 113-122.

Smith, K. N. (2011). Social Media and Political Campaigns. *University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Projects* , 1-30.

Statista. (2015). *Number of monthly active Facebook users worldwide as of 4th quarter 2015 (in millions).* Retrieved January 06, 2016, from Statista: www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/

Stieglitz, S., Brockmann, T., & Xuan, L. D. (2012). Usage of Social Media for Political Communication. *Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems* (p. 22). AISeL.

ȘUTIU, C. L. (2015). Propaganda: How A Good Word Went Wrong. *Agathos: An International Review of the Humanities and Social Sciences* .

The Express Tribune. (2013, May 21). *Pakistan election 2013 total voter turn out: 55%.* Retrieved December 28, 2015, from The Express Tribune: www.tribune.com.pk/story/552368/pakistan-elections-2013-total-voter-turnout-55/

TOADER, F. (2014). Politics and Leadership on Facebook During the 2012 Romanian Parliamentary Elections and the 2014 Euro-Parliamentary Elections. *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy* , 399-419.

Treverton, G. F., & Miles, R. (2014). *Social Media and Intelligence.* AB: Elanders Sverige.

Yousif, R. O., & Alsamydai, M. J. (2012). The Impact of Political Promotion via Facebook on Individuals' Political Orientations. *International Journal of Business and Management* , 85-98.