



**Usage Patterns Of Political Parties; Content Analysis Of Political**

**Pages**

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**Abstract**

The online group of communities offers people the opportunity to connect not only with their social platform groups but beyond that group. An advanced era of the social world started in Pakistan after 2004 when a platform like Facebook and Twitter started their services for Pakistani people. The study in hand explores the impact of the political use of social media on political awareness within its predictor's political knowledge, efficacy, and participation as well as the relationship between the political awareness among the youth of Pakistan and the usage pattern of political parties on Facebook and Twitter. The study employs the content analysis to discover the usage pattern of political parties on these two platforms and the results show that the political use of social media by three well-known parties in Pakistan influence the political knowledge, and online and offline political participation of people. Despite a direct significant positive relationship between these two predictors of political awareness, political efficacy is not at all influenced by the political use of social media but has a slight effect on the political awareness of youth.

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*Keyword: political parties, Facebook and Twitter, Youth of Pakistan*

## **Introduction**

New Media and its social network platforms are mostly used for political activities specific platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram are now considered as online public domain for political campaigns through which political parties share political information with the masses. The current study is additional input in the field of academic research that explicates the connection between the political awareness of people in Pakistan and social media. So far, many studies exploring the association between social media and politics primarily observed the outcomes of the political use of social media such as “voter turnout”. In Pakistan, the major voting turnout of youth was found in the general election, in 2013 because the major political parties utilized social media for their political purposes. As Raza and other researchers examined different patterns and trends of social media and found that youth became politically mobilized through social media (Raza, Ahmad, Mahdi, Sajjad & Usman, 2022) In another research, social media use for political purposes was keenly explored and found the same results (Zaheer, 2018). These results became authentic and reliable by exploring the political use of new media and its chief effects on making political opinions and research also found that it was only possible because of the accessibility and affordability of social media. Furthermore, it altered the whole political scenario in Pakistan (Memon & Shaikh, 2019). So, an empirical study is needed to quantify the effects of the political use of new media and how it influences the level of political awareness of the masses in Pakistan. Political awareness is not a simple concept it is a multidimensional concept that precisely has three



subareas political knowledge, political efficacy, and political participation that will be explored in current research. Akar explained in his research that the three sub-domains of political awareness: political knowledge, political efficacy, and political participation are interconnected perspectives (Akar, 2020). As there is a strong association between new media and its political use so is the connection between political use of new media and the level of political awareness of the masses as its greatly influence by the political use of social media. In developing countries like Pakistan, new media fascinate people particularly political parties and youth Khan and Shahbaz found through a survey of 200 respondents that social media excessively inspire the political knowledge of youth by influencing their political awareness and trust levels (Khan & Shahbaz,2015). There are so many researches that have been done on the effects of new media but the political use of the new online platforms is still unquestioned in Pakistan. The current study can be related to uses and gratification as the level of political awareness and the burgeoning of social media use for political purposes have to explore the shifts from traditional to new social media. The study at hand primarily focuses on the political use of new media by three leading political parties, PML(N), PPP, and PTI in Pakistan. The study also checks in what way these parties enhance political awareness as a whole within the evaluation of political knowledge in boosting party political efficacy and political participation of masses in Pakistan.

### **Research Question**

RQ1: To what extent usage patterns of political parties on social media influence political Awareness of youth?



RQ2: To what extent usage patterns of political parties on social media influence the Political Knowledge of youth?

RQ3: To what extent usage patterns of political parties on social media influence the Political Efficacy of youth?

RQ4: To what extent usage patterns of political parties on social media influence the Political Participation of youth?

### **Hypothesis**

H1: Usage pattern of political parties on social media significantly influenced political knowledge of youth

H2: Usage pattern of political parties on social media significantly influenced the political efficacy of youth

H3: Usage pattern of political parties on social media significantly influenced the political participation of youth.

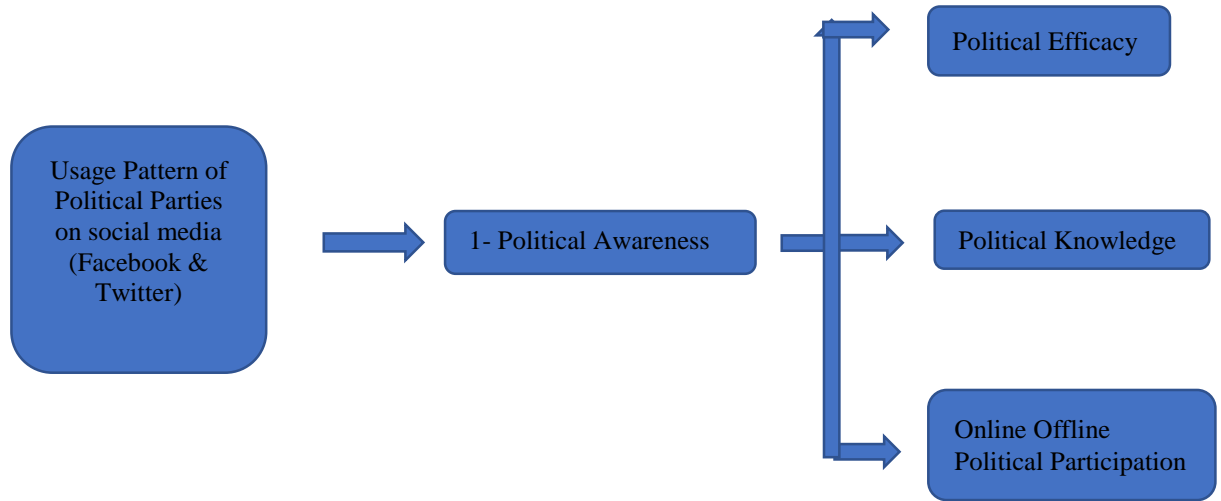
### **Conceptual Framework**

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

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<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>Moderating Variables</b>	<b>Dependent Variables</b>
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### Political Awareness among Youth

## 2. Literature Review

The chapter highlighted the prior research that illuminated the concept of social media, political aspects of politics in Pakistan, usage pattern of political parties on social media, and political awareness as a whole within its predictors; political knowledge, political efficacy, and political participation.

### 2.1 Idea of social media

Social media is web-based that allows interactivity for people. People use it to communicate with their social groups and beyond the groups by sharing, posting following and commenting, and replies to those comments, etc. It's a vast and intensifying platform through which many people activated and



connected with their social groups daily. They comment and post on blogs and other social network sites etc. (Solis, 2008). These social networks allow people to connect with other persons and groups and join these networks to share different content with their family, friends, and social groups (Winchester, 2008).

## **2.2 social media and political dynamics in Pakistan**

Since the 1970s, media has been under controlled of authorities, while national media had the liberty of broadcasting and they were allowed to broadcast only entertainment programs. But after the 1980s these entertainment programs were also banned by General Zia-ul-Haq and the media faced strict rules and regulations. But fortunately, the situation had been changed after that because, in Musharraf's regime, the media entered a new era in which the private channels started broadcasting freely and a significant revolution for media has been started in that era (Zubair, 2016). Whereas the current situation is different now media has the freedom and Pakistani people have the right to speak anything they freely enjoy numerous channels and almost 100 Pakistani private channels are busy gratifying their needs. Social media is supposed to be utilized and that is only possible after social media started in Pakistan ( Tariq et al., 2018). In Pakistan, around 39 million people are using 3G and 4G on their smartphones, and currently, approximately 28 million people utilize social media sites on their phones (Digital in 2017 Global Overview & ISPAK, 2017). Mostly these social network sites are used for socialization (Ahmed, Aleem & Khan, 2021). But mostly in Pakistan, these social network sites use for political purposes and it's a new phenomenon in the Pakistani political scenario (Tareen & Adnan, 2021)). In another study, Mustafa stated that due

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to social media living standards of people upgraded because it offers interactivity so people are now connected to the world's wider social issues (Mustafa, 2018).

### **2.3 Usage pattern of political parties on new media sites**

Political persons and party members want to pass their set plans to the public without the interference of any organizations and social media is the only platform through which they promote their political agendas freely and without any restriction. Currently, it's probably the best media that give fruitful results to their political campaigns. So not only the political persons but also media persons get their daily news updates from social media sites, especially Facebook and Twitter. Social media is an open and public-friendly platform that not only promotes political agendas through campaigns but also allows political persons to interact with the masses without any barriers (Axford, 2017). For the study in hand, researchers selected two famous social media sites Facebook and Twitter, as these sites have been used as a tool in the political arena and have become the most extensive platforms for political parties and political leaders. Borah stated in his study voters are influenced by Facebook posts during the presidential election and the political post during the campaign boost the participation of the public (Borah & Xiao, 2018). In March 2012, Facebook has updated its earlier profile design to a new timeline design, which covers profile pictures, cover photos, friend activities, views app buttons, storyline, pinned post segment, and a composer ("Facebook Pages" 2009, 7). Though, the profile account is restricted to a specific number of friends whereas a page creating is more advantageous for political parties and other brand promoters because there is no restriction on people to visit the page. The feature of the

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cover story is exceptional and advantageous itself as it permits to upload a larger picture that can imprison the core and it shows all the schema or theme, people who visit the page can imprison the core through this cover story (“Facebook Pages” 2009, 2). Facebook suggests tackles to operators through which they impact their aimed followers to grasp their wished products and for that agenda, it authorizes them to create aimed ads, and pages and invites friends and friends of friends to figure their followers (“Facebook Pages” 2009, 5). In nutshell These are the features and Facebook’s tackles that can be utilized by common people, for this research precisely “political use of Facebook by political members political parties” there are some exclusive tools for example Account set up, Page creation, Try to increase page likes, Increasing Facebook friends, Facebook Hashtag creating, Keyword-based posting, Wall comments, Daily updates on-page, Facebook photo album, Video uploads, Facebook polls, and quiz, Take part in group discussion, Change profile picture to support for a cause, Encourage others to take action on issues important to them, etc. At this time Twitter is a well-known social media platform with at least 500 million operators with the power of dialog between common people and government authorities, celebrities, politicians, and other influential personalities. (Twitter, 2013). Throughout 2014, Indian general elections usage of Twitter was explored and it was found that Twitter is used for three resolves; political information, social value, and entertainment (Safiullah, Pathak & Singh, 2022). In another presidential movement in the U.S in 2012, Zhang, Seltzer, and Bichard examined the effect of social media tackles as well as Twitter and found that political parties use these tools to inspire and stimulate their voters (Zhang, Seltzer, and Bichard, 2013). According to

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Dehghan people used Twitter for communal statements and utilized diverse themes and important frameworks in community discussions during election days (Dehghan, 2018). Thus, Twitter is thought of as a means of political settlement, Kaur and Verma also settled with the same idea that Twitter is best for political utilization (Kaur & Verma, 2022) So as Mubarak and his fellows are settled with the same statement and defined Twitter as an online means of inhabiting people (Mubarak, Suomi & Kantola, S. P. 2020). Unlike Facebook having diverse tools to start a discussion, Twitter offers its operators 140 characters to write any message with the capability of one-sided discussion. On Twitter, you have to follow people and pages to get their updates However you will not get likes on Facebook from people you follow on Twitter (“Following Rules and Best Practices” 2012). In a nutshell, all research mentioned above discoursed the general use of Twitter and the participation of the public in common discussion during election days. Twitter is an influential source of motivation and it inspires its users to vote in the election and choose their political leaders (Pew Research Center, 2010). These references showed Twitter as a persuasive political tool as it encourages the political involvement of people. As noted above that Twitter is a platform with a short 140-character message and microblogging services, so it must be flattened and captivating. The concept of Twitter is to write your opinion in form of a short message called a tweet and to follow other people and their tweets, just like a Facebook operator is first registered through their account to access its services. Twitter is also high and dry on socializing, it’s up to the operators who they want to bond with on Twitter, can message and follow their followers. Twitter’s most attractive feature that makes it even more captivating is the hashtags defined

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by the symbol #, which stresses the keywords that are for any detailed theme or event. The operator has to click on that hashtagged word to get all tweets related to that stressed word for example during election days, the user can see all tweets and related videos and messages by following these hashtags. Operators can also discuss wide-ranging issues through short forms of tweets by adding exploit links, especially video links, through videos with tweets one can talk about in additional information detail.

#### **2.4 Concept of Political Awareness**

Many researchers illuminated the idea of political awareness with several definitions they defined political awareness as the serious cause of changing behavior (Ardèvol-Abreu, Zúñiga, & McCombs, 2020). Political awareness is the key variable of the study and one cannot understand this phenomenon without its predictors. Political awareness has imperative standards in our life and according to Feldman, politically aware people are many stable people who have a better understanding of politics and with a constant attitude about political matters, they better know the party ideologies and can construct public opinion (Joseph & Gaba, 2020). Oxley and other researchers defined political awareness in a simple way they thought that a person who knows about the political facts, activities, party agendas, and movements and can select his or her political candidate that is a politically aware person (Oxley, 2020, Liñeira & Henderson, 2021).). Same as Sevenans thought about politically aware persons they give attention to political matters and issues and understand the political conflicts (Sevenans, 2021). In another research, Görtz stated that political awareness is considered to have factual information about a government that remains constricted in the mind of the public (Görtz, 2022).

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## **2.5 Predictors of Political Awareness**

The article will study three possible mediators of political awareness; political knowledge, efficacy, and political participation not only individually but their relation to the main variable of the study. A person who is well informed about political facts has an affiliation with a party and takes part actively in the political process is more efficient and politically aware. Three variables are interlinked but the purpose to comprise all three variables in the current study is to address the relationship among them and how they work in the whole political process. As researchers stated that the person who is politically aware must actively participate in the political process because political participation endorses by political knowledge (Li & Yu, 2022) same case with the political efficacy many researchers claimed that political efficacy specifically internal political efficacy has a great effect in the political process as it also increases the political participation (McDonnell, 2020; Groskurth, Nießen, Rammstedt & Lechner, 2021; Huber, & Steinbrecher, 2022; Nulman, 2020 ). To recognize the interrelationship of the utilization of social media for political awareness given by political parties in Pakistan through their official accounts and pages on Twitter and Facebook with the observation of political knowledge, political effectiveness, and political contribution we need concepts, and by the supervision of usage and satisfaction and bordering, this research inspects the usage pattern of political parties on social media, political usage of social media by youngsters and political satisfaction scale of political understanding.



The concept had been moved into the phase of new media to categorize the details because these details raised the active viewers from conservative media into the new world media (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Wook, 2019). So, the results of their study were similar to the findings of Papacharissi and Rubin. So, the U&G is the best model to determine the requirement for social media usage and its effects on the younger generation and their level of political understanding and offers to fill the study break in the Pakistani framework. Precisely, in this study, the concept will be utilized to check the usage of social media for political purposes by the youth and usage of social media for political understanding, its effectiveness, and political contribution.

### **3. Methodology**

The data took from the websites of the Election commission of Pakistan and there we got the first, second, and third major parties of Pakistan due to their total seats in the assembly. Three leading parties; Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI, n = 156), Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN, n = 85), and Pakistan People Party (PPP, n = 54) were selected for the study in hand. The videos through the census method were gathered from the period of i.e., June 2020 to August 2020.

The process of content analysis of these two social media sites was done in two stages; in the first stage the content analysis of the parties' official political pages on Twitter and Facebook was investigated, for example, their formation date, page name whether the page's name changed or not, why and when it has been changed, are these pages has been mentions their YouTube and Twitter accounts on their official pages. It also counted how many likes follow and share their political posts and how and who handled

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and manage these official pages have also been checked. Same as with official Twitter accounts of political parties it was also checked that when the political party joined Twitter, how many followers they have and how many pages and members they followed through their official accounts. The number of tweets and their replies were also recorded. In the second stage, videos uploaded on official party pages from 3 months June, July, and August 2020 were evaluated and for that purpose, ten categories that have some subcategories were constructed. The categories give a clear-cut understanding of code accurately and the reader also gets a crystal-clear understanding of the video's content.

### **3.1 Video Categories and their description**

Ten categories have some subcategories.

#### **i. Senate and National assembly session**

Videos related to the senate and national assembly's activities.

#### **ii. Provincial assembly session**

Videos related to provincial assembly's activities.

#### **iii. Press conferences & media talks**

Videos related to press conferences by governmental and opposition spoke persons and their media talks.

#### **iv. Criticizing Govt, Pm & opposition**

Videos in which politicians and party members criticize the government, prime minister, and opposition

#### **v. Visit for compassion and goodwill**

All videos which related to any visit for compassion and goodwill

#### **vi. Appreciate own party's performances**

All videos in which party appreciate their performances.



**vii. Media appreciate good governance**

All videos in which media appreciate the government and their good performance.

**viii. Protest**

Any video regarding any type of protest.

**ix. Media criticizing bad governance**

All videos in which media highlights the bad governance.

**x. Media criticizing bad opposition**

All videos in which media highlights the bad performance of the opposition.

The category of political party activity was divided into two categories which are relevant and irrelevant

**i. Relevant**

All videos are related to the party's political activity whether in the country or out of the country.

**ii. Irrelevant**

All videos are not related to the party's political activity.

**4. Results and Discussions**

The current study presented recent trends and usage pattern of political parties on social media in term of frequency and information accessibility regarding politics and the results shows that the political use of social media influences the masses' political knowledge, efficacy, and their online and offline participation.

**RQS. To What extent usage patterns of Political parties on social media, influence political Awareness' (a) Political Knowledge, (b) Political Efficacy, and (c) Political Participation of youth?**



The results will be discussed in the following unit which not only discusses the consequences of the research questions but also discusses the hypothesis to explore the relationships among the variables of research.

**A) Usage pattern of political parties on social media and Political knowledge of youth**

It was hypothesized that political parties' usage pattern influences the political knowledge of the masses and the result of the study from Facebook's content analysis revealed that the political posts on official pages not only have heavy viewership but also have thousands of likes and shares which illustrated the interest of people in political content shared by political parties. The table also shows that there is a strong significant relationship between political content shared by party admins and their no. of views and likes which elucidated that when they show greater interest in political content their political knowledge also is increased as they watch political information given by political parties. In the case of the video category-wise, the result from twitter analysis shows that political parties typically shared videos regarding press conference and media talks that simply revealed that these pages have serious political content that directly affect the needs for political knowledge of people. Consequently, the results of the content analysis also revealed that the party regularly posts political content on their pages and shares political information which directly or indirectly influences the political knowledge of people as they take the political content shared by parties seriously and further share content with their friends too.

**B) Usage pattern of political parties on social media and political efficacy**

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It was hypothesized that political use of social media influences the political efficacy of people but directly there was not found any finding which shows the direct effect of that content on the political efficacy of people. While content analysis of the main feature of official accounts on Twitter and political pages on Facebook indirectly shows that content shared by political party's pages slightly affects the political efficacy of people as there were found to be higher viewership which shows that their political efficacy might be motivating them to use social media for political purposes. So H2 was not directly supported and the result might be affected by the affiliation of the masses because people who are highly affiliated for example party workers and supported may have high political efficacy and they might use these sites for their political purposes. Anyhow more in-depth studies are required with more concentration on political affiliation.

### **C) Usage pattern of political parties on social media and political participation**

The hypothesis H3 was stated that political parties' usage pattern on social media influences the political participation of people and the results also revealed that political use of Facebook and Twitter directly influenced the participation of the masses. Whereas the results of both networks are different from each other, Facebook's content analysis shows that users didn't share political videos that revealed their less online political participation while twitter's content analysis shows the direct online political participation so, the Ha3 is partially supported the present research.

## **5. Conclusion**

The general election 2018 in Pakistan was the first election in which the people were relatively active on social media for political purposes and the

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participation of youth in that election was remarkable. As the current study determined to check the usage pattern of political parties on social media and its impact on political awareness as a whole within its predictors; political knowledge, political efficacy, and political participation, the results show that people who use social media sites frequently for political purposes and follow political pages, they scroll daily these pages and ultimately by the political utilization of these sites they got powerful effects on their political awareness and their political knowledge, efficacy and political participation whether online or offline eventually influenced by these network sites.

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