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Social Media Political Campaign in District Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract

Since decades, a new era of the election campaign has grown in Pakistani politics by shifting the purpose of consideration from the streets to Social media. This undertaking can be called as social media political campaigning. Political communication is a very huge and fascinating part of Social media. For about 2 decades, the domain of World Wide Web has transformed the globe and developed by what means information is kept, circulated, explored and used. Each political party is trying to make its full and extreme struggle to cover the cyberspace better than its rivals do. In this way, this study hence, is an attempt to know that what level of social media Political campaign offers the opportunities and prospects to the voters to know about their leaders, party thoughts, ideology, and party manifestos. These help voters to decide who is the best party or candidate for the nominated position. In this research study, there are three main Political Parties of Pakistan, having most of the public affiliation. These political parties are “Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML N), Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), and Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) The data was collected by applying a purposive non probability sampling technique. Whereas, the finding are presented in tabular form and then the data findings in table have been described. The key finding showed those respondents were frequently users of social media specifically Facebook and Twitter. They have enough exposure to political content through social media. Finding shows that users consume knowledge regarding party manifestos and have much knowledge of political content through social media political campaign.

Keywords: social media, political campaign, political content, voters perception

1. Introduction

Traditionally, the most prevalent means to carry out campaign strategies and policies is the mass media. Whether it be newspapers, radio or television, mass media have subjected for election campaigns for over a hundred years. Since last two decades, Election results were suffering from social media in a very large portion of the country that using voting system and it's obvious to visualize that almost all the winners in election campaigns are those that put more resources on online campaigns comparing with their opponents. To find out the core impact of social media into the context of political communication, Media and communication scholars, political scientists, sociologists, and international relations scholars have conducted hundreds of studies on various aspects of social media usage (Golan et al., 2019). Researcher also observed this political attitudes and engagement in the case of individuals on digital platforms in Spain. Study findings show significance difference between cognitive and effective components of attitude (Marco et al., 2017). Pakistan is a democratic country in which people elect a legislature by casting their vote (Ahmed et

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al., 2014). The citizens who cast their vote to elect a legislature are above the age of 18. Discussing political viewpoint, we see that political parties regularly reinforce their voters to boost their vote bank and political power utilizing social media forums in Pakistan. The idea is to attract young community that is elderly 18 to 24 age have not ever cast their votes in any elections previously. This lead to poll for their party in the forthcoming elections in Pakistan 2013 (Udayakumar, 2005).

In election 2013, all major political parties of Pakistan had also used Social media for this purpose. In this research study, there are three main Political Parties of Pakistan. These parties are those who are having most of the public affiliation. These political parties are “Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML N), Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), and Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI)” headed by Imran Khan. Pakistan Muslim league (PMLN) has a very powerful, popular, and analytical page on Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Orkut. However, the utilization of social media into the context of politics and election campaign during the time of General Election in Pakistan can be traced back in 2008, when a new era of the election campaign has evolved in Pakistani politics by shifting the aim of attention from Social median (Globalization..., 2013).

Writing for Thought Co. (Murse, 2019) reveals that “the utilization of social media in politic significantly transformed the way election campaigns are run.” In politics the use of social media is a new sensation in communications studies. Similarly, political campaigns now use social media networking sites to create the candidate’s political identity, to inform and appeal voters, and to spread information regarding party manifestos. Gosman (Gosman, 2016) describes that social media “has come to be a effective tool for political campaigns to employ their communiqué plans” leading to the formation of content that candidates and their supporters can practice to enhance understanding, involve publics, and attract them for votes. Together with traditional party affiliation and exit polls, social media sites are being effective in forecasting voter behavior. In 21st century’s politics it is essential to understand the various social media platforms, their reach, resources, and procedure.

2. Materials and methods

For this research, survey method has been designed to collect data from the target population. The data was collected using questionnaire in this study researcher simply used Krejcie and Morgan Table (Krejcie Morgan, 1997). This is the simplest and reliable way to determine sample sizes to conduct a survey. For this purpose, a sample of 384 out of 1049586 respondents from district Hyderabad has drawn from the four main taluka of Hyderabad (Latifabad, Qasimabad, Hyderabad city, and Rural Hyderabad). Where 96 respondents had selected from each Taluka for the data collection. The data was collected from the age group of 18 to 35, years old respondents because the voter of this age group usually uses social media frequently. The data for this research study is collected with well-designed questionnaire. This questionnaire was consisting of close-ended questions according to needs and desires of researcher. Finally, the data was analyzed using data analysis software SPSS version 20 software.

3. Discussion

As a fifth estate, Social media is also having a characteristic of democratic. According to A. Elahi (Elahi, 2013) people normally communicate their opinions and decide after peers’ views also. Individuals know how to modify or establish a belief or conviction after taking into concern peers’ opinions and views spread over social media web sites. Similarly, a strong democracy is the essence of the role and contribution in government of its citizens. Some would claim that SNS has now improved the nationwide democratic system, by means of offering a platform over which public to be able to link and connect along with the representatives of our government. This characteristic of democratic system remains to be challenged more over in our consequential sections devoted to how established agenda and creating of public opinion is influenced by social media. Hence political expression on social media can affect young people’s engagement in political life (Lane, 2020).

According to study was done by PEW research centre, around 20 % of the users in social media changed their views on political issues by the contents of social media (Pew..., 2016). Globally Netherlands is on the topmost standing in the usage of Social media throughout the globe. 63.5 % inhabitants of Netherland are almost using Social media often on daily basis. Social media has appeared as a crucial influential means in recent years and likes of the many politicians and parties have used it to their advantages. With the phase of local elections around the corner, the parties and candidates had taken up social media like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to

transmit across their messages (Brichacek, Andra, 2017). Political candidates on social media communicates with their audiences to boosted campaign participation and can be a mechanism for young population's experience to campaign news (Marquart et al., 2020).

In 2008, elections a new era of the election campaign have grown in Pakistani politics by shifting the purpose of consideration from the streets to Social media. This undertaking can be called as social media political campaigning. For about 2 decades, the domain of World Wide Web has transformed the globe and developed by what means information is kept, circulated, explored and used. The immense influence propagated that much that it effects not just trades and industries but cross over into politics, medication, mass media and openings geological positions, socio-cultural boundaries and eventually, alters people's lives day to day (Jennifer, Alejandro, 2010) However, the performance of the mass media, which are driven by power and money to select and form information, fosters Work in media effects has measured for years the extent to which the media inform and update and also notify the public what to think about and how to think about it (Lippmann, 1922). If we examine at the effect of social media had over political decision making of a country, we will find that everywhere in the world every major country to some level or the other have been realised by it. For example, the 2008 US Presidential Election, when Barack Obama became the President for the first time, had been called by various critics as a win by social media. It is now an acknowledged fact that Barack Obama cast-off social media to its full potential (Moldovan, 2013).

Hence since last two decades social media shift political communication and campaign from traditional media to new media. Within the 2012 US President Election, Barak Obama spent around \$47 million on the digital side of the campaign which is 10 times of his rival Mitt Romney (McMahon, 2016). In 2016 US election, Trumps had the foremost followers and subscribers on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram among all the candidates (McMahon, 2016). Apart from the prevalence of social media in Western elections, recently some researchers investigating the Indian general elections 2014 and according to the research investigation, BJP remained highly successful and popular in digital campaigning which was a main party and therefore the final election winner (Baishya, 2015). These examples show that social media affect the choice of voters. Presidential elections 2008; Barrack Obama government make realizes the public in what way they make use of social media and immediate communication as a component of their campaign to win the presidential elections 2008. Foremost, Obama created a social networking site as a backbone of Obama's campaign of social media 'My.BarackObama.com' which set variety of social media channels. Meanwhile, considering the Trump campaign strategy and tactic is of important substances of both perspectives of politics and communication. Several scholars advocate that Twitter employed by Donald Trump was one of the most significant aspects among those that preceded him to the presidential office (Morris, 2017).

Moreover, the 2008 US Presidential Election was the primary example of in what manner social media is able to use to gather popular votes and prompt popular feelings and sentiments. Later the massively effective social media campaigns of the 2008 election and Arab Spring 2011.given new approach to public. Social Media networking sites played a fundamental part in determining political debates in the Arab Spring. This research tries to investigate this tendency in political communication especially into the context of Pakistan general election 2018.The new usage pattern of Social media in Pakistan seems to be no different than the United State and UK (Metzgar, Maruggi, 2009). This will lead to cast vote for their respective party in the upcoming elections in Pakistan (Udayakumar, 2005). This is only because, on social media immediate response systems such as retweets or likes indicate to politicians which messages are in trend which make them politician to run their SNS political campaign according to the trends. Research indicates that negative dialect rises the number of retweets of a particular tweet obtains, showing likings for negativity among the Twitter audience (Mueller, Saeltzer, 2020). Thus Social media can open channels for political expression, engagement, and participation for both candidates and voters simultaneously (Tucker et al. 2017).

These Political parties are trying to establish political communication between voter and political party to develop their party ideology as well as providing day-to-day report revisions about their authority and party efforts (Carty, 2010). On the Social media, active and regular participation in Pakistan has become a political norms and attitude for the leading political parties. Moreover, it also tries to comprehend how social media sets the agenda for election campaigns amongst people (Karamat, 2016).

Study of literature reveals that politicians, particularly in the United States and Europe, have accepted social media broadly, as instruments that can boost communication with their voters (Gattermann, Vreese, 2020). Hence provide opportunity for voters to understand more about party manifestos and platforms (Fazekas et al., 2018).

4. Results

The objective of this study was to assess respondents level of utilization of Facebook and Twitter, to what extent exposure to various content and political parties manifestos of social media, assess political information by social media and to what extent change party affiliation by social media political campaign.

Table 1 the respondents were asked about their gender where result shows that, more than half 58.3 % of the respondents were male while 41.7 % of the respondents were female. Moreover, the result regarding age indicated table 1 that 45.1 % of the respondents age was 18 to 22 years, 23.7 % of the respondents age was 23 to 26 years, 16.1% of the respondents age was 27 to 30 years and 15.1 % of the respondents' age were 31 to 25 years old. However, the respondents were inquired about their education level where result revealed that 1.8 % of the respondents were illiterate, 3.1 % respondent's education level were primary, 11.2 % of the respondents education were Matriculation while 26.3 % of the respondents were intermediate, 47.1 % of the respondents education level were graduation and rest 10.4 % of the respondents education level was Masters. The respondents were also asked about their marital status most of the respondents 65.9 % was Single while rest of the 34.1 % were married. The result regarding profession indicated that majority 39.6 % were students, 15.6 % were government employed, 19.5 % were private employed, 14.6% have their own business, while rest of the 10.7 % were unemployed. Overall 55 % earn approx. 10,000 to 20,00/month while 45 % earn above 20,000 approximately.

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	224	58.3
Female	160	41.7
<i>Age</i>		
18-22	173	45.1
23-26	91	23.7
27-30	62	16.1
31-35	58	15.1
<i>Education</i>		
Illiterate	7	1.8
Primary	12	3.1
Matric	43	11.2
Intermediate	101	26.3
Graduation	181	47.1
Masters	41	10.4
Other	0	0
<i>Marital status</i>		
Single	253	65.9
Married	131	34.1
<i>Occupation</i>		
Govt. employed	60	15.6
Private employed	75	19.5

Unemployed	41	10.7
Own Business	56	14.6
Student	152	39.6
<i>Monthly Income</i>		
10000-20000	211	55.0
21000-above	173	45.0
<i>Resident</i>		
Hyderabad city	96	25.0
Latifabad	96	25.0
Qasimabad	96	25.0
Hyderabad	96	25.0

n = 384

Table 2 respondents inquiring about the frequencies of social media utilizing where result indicated that (27.6 %) Are those respondents who answered as very much in use of Face book (33.3 %) is those who responded as much. In the somewhat category of Facebook (19.3 %) respondents provided their response. In rarely category, total (19.5 %) respondents gave answers, while (3.0 %) responded as they didn't use Facebook at all. Twitter was the second popular location for respondents who are utilizing and visiting this site. (20.3 %) of respondents provided a response as they are using Twitter very much. Furthermore, (19.5 %) are following that they are utilizing twitter in much categories. (19.8 %) respond as somewhat. (14.3 %) as rarely and (26.0 %) answered as not at all. The mean and standard deviation of Facebook is 2.3 and 1.0 respectively. Meanwhile twitter mean is 3.0 and standard deviation is 1.4.

Table 2. How frequently do you use the following social media

Variables	Very Much	Much	Somewhat	Rarely	Not at all	Mean	St. Deviation
Face book	106 (27.6 %)	128 (33.3 %)	74 (19.3 %)	75 (19.5 %)	1 (3 %)	2.3	1.0
Twitter	78 (20.3 %)	75 (19.5 %)	76 (19.8 %)	55 (14.3 %)	100 (26.0 %)	3.0	1.4

n = 384

Table 3 it displays the exposure of Social media contents on the respondents. The analytical outlook shows that a total of (27.6 %) are revealing from informative education contents very much. (26.5 %) answered as Much exposing to this category (18.8 %) answered as somewhat (9.4 %) are rarely and (17.7 %) of respondents are granted response as not at all. The mean of education category is 2.6 and standard deviation is 1.4. In answer to exposing from Social media entertainment contents, most of respondents responded as very much and much. (37.8 %) responded as very much and (28.9 %) granted answer as much. (14.1 %) Responded as Somewhat, (10.1 %) as rarely and (9.1 %) of overall feedback as not at all. If we look at the political content's category, we preview than a very large no of respondents who are utilizing Social media to gratify their desires. The mean and standard deviation of entertainment category is 2.2 and 1.3.

A total of figure of (25.3 %) is revealing to political contents of Social media very much. (20.8 %) of respondents are revealing to political contents, and they responded as much. (20.5 %) responded as somewhat and (14.6 %) conveyed their eager as rarely, and Figure of (18.8 %) responded as not at all. If we investigate much and somewhat category on the respondents, then we can observe that there is a little difference on both categories with difference of 0.3 percent. This appears that respondents are approximately identically revealing from political contents of Social media. However, the overall view shows that respondents are very strongly revealing from political contents of Social media but not in the comparisons to entertainment and education category as the frequency of the both category as much higher than political category. The results also reveal that the political category's mean is 2.8 and standard deviation is 1.4.

In the religious contents, the (21.4 %) of respondents answered that they are exposed from devout contents very much and total of (22.4 %) responded as much. (25.5 %) answered that they are revealed as somewhat and (14.6 %) are revealing rarely in religious contents of Social media. (16.1 %) of respondents responded there will as not at all. The mean and standard deviation of this category is 2.8 and 1.35 respectively. Sports content's category shows that a total of (24.5 %) respondents responded very much on the exposure of sports contents, while (18.5 %) of respondents are granted their answer as much exposure from sports contents of Social media. (19.3%) of respondents of responded that they are revealing from sports contents as somewhat. (9.4 %) responded that they are revealing rarely and (28.3 %) responded as not at all. The mean of sports category is 2.9 and standard deviation is 1.5.

Table 3. To what extent do you expose to the following contents of Social media

Variable	Very much	Much	Somewhat	Rarely	Not at all	Mean	Std
Education	106 (27.6 %)	102 (26.5 %)	72 (18.8 %)	36 (9.4 %)	68 (17.7 %)	2.6	1.4
Entertainment	145 (37.8 %)	111 (28.9 %)	54 (14.1 %)	39 (10.1 %)	35 (9.1 %)	2.2	1.3
Politics	97 (25.3 %)	80 (20.8 %)	79 (20.5 %)	56 (14.6 %)	72 (18.8 %)	2.8	1.4
Religious	82 (21.4 %)	86 (22.4 %)	98 (25.5 %)	56 (14.6 %)	62 (16.1 %)	2.8	1.35
Sports	94 (24.5 %)	71 (18.5 %)	74 (19.3 %)	36 (9.4 %)	109 (28.3 %)	2.9	1.5

n = 384

Table 4 displays the frequency of information about the political party's manifesto through official pages of political parties utilizing Facebook. The first political party is Pakistan Muslim League (N) (5.5 %) respondent responded that they are having very much manifesto information of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz). After that (14.8 %) of respondents who responded that they are having much information about the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) manifesto utilizing Facebook. In third category (23.4 %) responded as somewhat, (20.8 %) in rarely and at the end (35.4 %) of general respondents responded as not at all for the manifesto information of Pakistan Muslim League (N). The mean and Std of this category is 3.65 and 1.26 respectively.

In the second party evaluation which is Pakistan People's Party (13.5 %) of respondents responded that they are having manifesto knowledge very Much. (10.9 %) of respondents responded as having PPP's manifesto information as much and (20.8 %) of respondents gave a response as somewhat. (19.3 %) of total respondents responded that they are having manifesto information rarely. Furthermore, (35.4 %) answered as not at all. This category's mean and Std is 3.5 and 1.4 respectively. In the third-party comparison, manifesto knowledge from the official page of Pakistan Tehreek E Insaaf in a very much category is (21.6 %) after this (22.7 %) respondents answered as they are having much knowledge about Pakistan Tehreek E Insaaf Manifesto. (15.1 %) answered as somewhat and (13.0 %) answered as rarely. There are furthermore (27.6 %) respondents in not at all categories. The mean of this category is 3.0 and Std is 1.5. In the other party comparison, manifesto knowledge from the official page in a very much category is (4.2 %) after this (6.8 %) respondents answered as they are having much knowledge about other party Manifesto. (14.6 %) answered as somewhat and (26.0 %) answered as rarely. There are furthermore (49.4 %) respondents in not at all categories. Moreover its mean is 4.0 and Std is 1.1.

Table 4. To what extent do you know about the following parties 'manifesto on social media

Variable	Very much	Much	Somewhat	Rarely	Not at all	Mean	Std. deviation
PML (N)	2.1 (5.5 %)	57 (14.8%)	90 (23.4 %)	80 (20.8 %)	136 (35.4 %)	3.65	1.2

PPP	52 (13.5 %)	42 (10.9 %)	80 (20.8 %)	74 (19.3 %)	136 (35.4 %)	3.5	1.4
PTI	83 (21.6 %)	87 (22.7 %)	58 (15.1 %)	50 (13.0 %)	106 (27.6 %)	3.0	1.5
Others	16 (4.2 %)	26 (6.8 %)	56 (14.6 %)	100 (26.0 %)	186 (48.4 %)	4.07	1.1

n = 384

There is information in [Table 5](#) about the use of Social media's Political contents helps us in understanding Political parties. Here are (20.8 %) of those who are responding very much, (26.3 %) are those who responded as much. (22.3 %) of respondents answered that as somewhat. Only (11.7 %) respondents responded as rarely, (18.8 %) responded as not at all. The mean and Std is 2.8 and 1.29 respectively.

Table 5. Social Media helps in understanding political parties

Do you understand that, use of Social media's Political contents helps us in understanding Political parties	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. deviation
Very much	80	20.8	2.8	1.39
Much	101	26.3		
Somewhat	86	22.3		
Rarely	45	11.7		
Not at all	72	18.8		

n = 384

[Table 6](#) reveals the use of political contents and through this usage increase of information level of Social media regarding political issues of Pakistan. An analytical outlook interprets that (25%) responded as very much with this question and (26.6 %) responded as much. (17.4 %) responded as somewhat from this question and (16.7 %) are responded as rarely from this question. At the last (14.3 %) answered as not at all. Its mean is 2.68 and Std is 1.38.

Table 6. Social Media increase information level regarding Political issues of Pakistan

What do you understand that, use of Social media political content can increase your information level regarding Political issues of Pakistan	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. deviation
Very much	96	25	2.68	1.38
Much	101	26.6		
Somewhat	67	17.4		
Rarely	64	16.7		
Not at all`	55	14.3		

n= 384

[Table 7](#) inquired by the researchers about the satisfaction from Social media than electronic and print media of respondents considering government. We can glimpse the above table 7 and investigate that (12.2 %) of respondents responded as very much upon this question, and they are democratically persuaded from Social media as a contrast to electronic Media. (34.6 %) of respondents are responded as much from this inquiry. A Figure of (18.4 %) respondent as somewhat from this inquiry. In this question (12.0 %) of respondents are rarely and (22.7 %) are granted their answer as not at all. The mean of this inquiry is 2.98 and standard deviation is 1.36.

Table 7. Politically influenced from Social media Political Party official pages than Electronic Media and Print Media

How much you politically influenced from Social media Political Party official pages than Electronic Media and Print Media?	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. deviation
Very much	47	12.2	2.98	1.36
Much	133	34.6		
Somewhat	71	18.4		
Rarely	46	12.0		
Not at all	87	22.7		

n = 384

Table 8 categorization of the response given by the respondent by taluka wise the figure in terms of party affiliation by utilizing social media as YES, are for Hyderabad is (20 %), Hyderabad city is (25 %), the figure (33 %) is for Qasimabad while the rest of the (22 %) is for Latifabad. In category NO, Hyderabad response is (27 %), Hyderabad city is (21 %), Qasimabad is (29 %) while (23 %) is for Latifabad respectively.

Table 8. Using a social media, have you change your party affiliation during the election campaign of General election 2018

Variables	Hyderabad	Hyderabad city	Qasimabad	Latifabad
Yes	40 (43.75 %)	54 (56.25 %)	36 (37.5 %)	46 (47.9 %)
No	56 (58.3 %)	42 (43.75 %)	60 (62.5 %)	50 (52.08 %)
Mean	48	48	48	48
Std. deviation	8	6	12	2

n = 384

5. Conclusion

Social networking sites are popular tools to engage citizens in political campaigns, social movements, and civic life (Boulianne, 2019). Researchers realized that traditional campaigns in the form of rallies and town hall meetings were no longer enough to win elections. In order to win elections, garner support and spread information, politicians will now require combining new media as well as some of the traditional campaign tactics to win elections as different political candidates themselves have different uses and gratifications of online media (Hoffmann, Suphan, 2017).

This General Election has seen a major change with respect to the marketing actions done by significant national as well as local/regional parties. The existence of social media has significantly impacted the democratic scenario of the country. As many as 70% first time voters (12 crore) of the age group between 18-23 years were supposed to be using social media platforms. And henceforward to capture this significant amount of the voters, political parties geared up their efforts to fit themselves into the communication behaviors of such people. Political workers remained active on social media as part of their party's election campaign. Recently, Social media sites have become the utmost mighty and vigorous source of political news and information. Social media is a very substantial means for the political mobilization and application of political ideology all around the globe (Hindman, 2009). In carrying political and social changes, social media has been instrumental by providing possibilities. Social media has performed a substantial part in the political and social revolts in the recent political dominance of political parties (McChesney, 2004). Through social media political parties also can transform the insight of common people by images, voice mails and video clips.

Typically, users of the social media are the youngsters, according to explanations professionals acknowledge as true that youngsters that seem impassive in government will play more significant in elections. Furthermore, Pakistan is part of this international networking of Social media mesh. The youth of Pakistan is also getting evolving in developing attitudes

considering social and political matters. Debating political perspective, we perceive that in Pakistan political parties regularly and frequently reinforce their voters to boost their vote bank and political power employing social media forums. The idea is to appeal young community that is aged up to 18-24, who have not ever cast ballots in any elections previously.

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