

The Promotion of Democratic Behavior and the Role of Media

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Abstract

This study is conducted to measure the influence of social media over the democratic behavior of the students. Social media is the main component of political participation in democratic societies and the study of democratic behavior is a highly specialized sub-field in political and social science. The study was concerned with the reasons that to what extent the social media play a significant role in promoting the democratic behavior of the students. The main objectives of the present study were to find out the factors like the social media which affect the democratic behavior of the students in Gomal University. A sample of 70 respondents (students) was selected by simple random technique from Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Specifically, this study explored the relationship of democratic behavior with social media and the other factors that had strong effect on democratic behavior. The results of the present study showed a diverse response of the student regarding the impact of social media on the democratic behavior.

1. INTRODUCTION

When used properly, social media can be valuable addition to a department's communications strategy. "Because many employees have expressed an interest in developing and maintaining social media presence in personal and professional capacities, the office university communications and marketing has crafted following introduction to social media. Social media an internet based form communication". Social media platforms allow users to have conversations, share information and create web content (Klapper, 1960). "There are many forms of social media, including blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networking site, photo -sharing site, instant messaging, video -sharing site, podcasts, widgets, virtual world" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976).

The experience of fair elections as well as independent media is not an old subject for Pakistan. "The very first opportunity that media received to play its role in generating political awareness among public, although restricted and new born, is in the General Elections of 2002 which were held under the strict and biased control of Musharraf government". But media with its full maturity and resources can be witnessed through the part it played in the General Elections of 2008 and 2013.

Several factors contribute towards the formulation of voting behavior of electorates with varying intensities. "This may range from a number of social identities including class, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, language, occupation as well as political campaigns, affiliations with some association, peer groups, and support for specific ideology, policy or agenda" (Bennett, Curran, Gurevitch & Wollacott, 1990). But these can't be claimed as the only forces because any experience, history, political culture, values or direct socialization through civic courses can also help shaping a specific voting behavior. "Also with the development in technology the influence of many factors such as media boosted with ease of access, wider distribution and sophisticated techniques of communication". Owing to its potential to influence and the part played by media it is now considered as fourth branch of government (Miller, 1991). Dr Raja Mohammad khan in "Media as a responsible pillar of state states that, this Fourth Estate is most important as people need the media to provide them with a fair and accurate reporting of all happenings"; locally as well as around the globe (Rogers, 2002).

Media is a critical agent of socialization and keeps the two way flow of communication smooth acts as a bridge between the masses and the government. "Media when free and independent of outside interventions can induce significant changes which may alter the whole course of future" (Willis, 2007). Media can generate support or opposition among public over some issue or for some policy, it can mobilize the masses for any cause by injecting its importance and developing a general consensus. "It can propagate unity among masses by indicating their collective problems and promoting collective goals".

1.2 statement of Problem

The role of social media in promoting of the democratic behavior is the statement key problem in my research. The research finds the promoting rate of the social media in democratic behavior in this media period. How social media promote democratic behavior as like competition, participation and liberty.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the present research work are

1. To find the role of social media in individual democratic consciousness.
2. To explore the social media impacts in recent revolutions in unstable countries.
3. To explore the levels of democratic behavior among the university students in Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KPK, Pakistan.
4. To highlights the role of social media in the promoting of democratic systems of various countries.

1.4 Significance

1. Today social media plays very important role in governmental affairs and individual survival not only in limited area but around the world.
2. This research is most significant one because one cannot refuse from the important of social media in the promoting of democratic behavior.
3. This research will be exposed the unknown important role of social media in the promoting of democratic behavior.
4. The present research work will be a model for coming generation.
5. The findings, in this regard, will make a substantial contribution to the existing databases of knowledge about the issues of violence, particularly the voting behavior of the students in the universities.

1.5 Main Hypothesis

The social media has a profound impact on the democratic behavior of the students. The social media can either increase or decrease the level of democratic behavior. There are certain technical complications in defining and measuring the role of social media in a specific way. This study responds to the questions: In Gomal University, what is the level of democratic behavior among the students? How they feel about the role of social media in promoting the democratic behavior?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Just as the Internet has changed the way the people behave, organize vacations and research school projects, it has also affected how they interact socially. "Through the use of social media, people can exchange photos and videos, share news stories, post their thoughts on blogs, and participate in online discussions". Social media also allow individuals, companies, organizations, governments and parliamentarians to interact with large numbers of people. "In conjunction with the increase in online activity, there are concerns about the ways in which the personal information that is shared by social media users may be collected and analyzed" (Islam, 2008). The present study gives a brief overview of the "evolution and development of social media, looks at how their attributes affect the way people interact online", and considers their potential social and economic impact.

2.1 The Social Media

The term "social media" refers to the wide range of Internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute user-created content, or join online communities. "The kinds of Internet services commonly associated with social media (sometimes referred to as "Web 2.0") include the following: Blogs; Short for "web log," a blog is an online journal in which pages are usually displayed in reverse chronological order. Blogs can be hosted for free on websites such as WordPress, Tumblr and Blogger" (Norris, 2008).

Wikis; A wiki is a collective website where any participant is allowed to modify any page or create a new page using her Web browser. "One well-known example is Wikipedia, a free online encyclopedia that makes use of wiki technology". Social bookmarking; Social bookmarking sites allow users to organize and share links to websites (Burton, 2010). "Social network sites; These have been defined as web-based services that allow individuals to; construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Among the most popular in Canada are Facebook and LinkedIn".

2.2 Types of social media

Social media are different from traditional or industrial media in many ways, including quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy, and permanence. "There are many effects that stem from internet usage. According to Nielsen, internet users continue to spend more time with social media sites than any other type of site". At the same time, the total time spent on social media in the U.S. across PC and mobile devices increased by 99 percent to 121 billion minutes in July 2012 compared to 66 billion minutes in July 2011. "For content contributors, the benefits of participating in social media have gone beyond simply social sharing to building reputation and

bringing in career opportunities and monetary income” (Tang, Gu, and Whinston, 2012). In 2014, the largest social network is Facebook and other popular networks include Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Pinterest. These sites also allow people to stay in contact, whether it is through pictures or writing.

2.3 The Characteristics of Social Media

Social media can be defined as a phenomenon that has recently taken over the web, allowing more connectivity and interaction between web users and it encourages contributions and feedback from anyone who is a member of any virtual community. “Social Networking can be defined as a phenomenon that has recently taken over the web, allowing more connectivity and interaction between web users (Sides, Shaw, Grossmann & Lipsitz, 2011)”. Several websites, such as Facebook and My-Space are labeled as "virtual communities. Social media is best understood as a group of new kinds of online media, which share most or all of the following characteristics, given below.

2.4 Advantages of using Social Media

1. A good tool to use to publicize your work.
2. Costs very little money to set up online.
3. Easy to create groups and forming communities of interest.
4. Online participation can be easier than face to face.
5. Cross border collaboration can be facilitated.
6. Connections mean power and money for many companies.
7. Constant flows of information from updates and real time communication Ex. Twitter.
8. Breaks down barriers for people who want to stay in touch with other people.
9. Companies can obtain information from their demographics.
10. May be used for educational reasons such as: publishing and sharing content and collaborating with others.
11. Provide added context and value to knowledge.
12. With social networking sites, you are not bound by any geographical and cultural differences. You get to meet and know a variety of people whose interests are similar to your own. These sites are a window to different cultures and places.
13. The social networking sites also facilitate you to procure information on any subjects from anywhere.

2.5 Facebook

Facebook is a social networking website that was originally designed for college students, but is now open to anyone 13 years of age or older. “Facebook users can create and customize their own profiles with photos, videos, and information about themselves”. Friends can browse the profiles of other friends and write messages on their pages. “Each Facebook profile has a "wall," where friends can post comments”. Since the wall is viewable by all the user's friends, wall postings are basically a public conversation. Therefore, it is usually best not to write personal messages on your friends' walls. “Instead, you can send a person a private message, which will show up in his or her private Inbox, similar to an e-mail message”.

2.7 Twitter

Twitter is a free social networking microblogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. “Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices”. Tweets and replies to tweets can be sent by cell phone text message, desktop client or by posting at the Twitter.com website.

2.8 Skype

Skype is for doing things together, whenever you're apart. “Skype's text, voice and video make it simple to share experiences with the people that matter to you, wherever they are”. With Skype, you can share a story, celebrate a birthday, learn a language, hold a meeting, work with colleagues – just about anything you need to do together every day. “You can use Skype on whatever works best for you - on your phone or computer or a TV with Skype on it”. It is free to start using Skype - to speak, see and instant message other people on Skype for example. You can even try out group video, with the latest version of Skype.

2.9 Democratic awareness of social media

Voting choices are a product of both personal attitudes and social contexts, of a personal and a social calculus. “Research has illuminated the personal calculus of voting, but the social calculus has received little attention since the 1940s”. This study expands our understanding of the social influences on individual choice by examining the relationship of partisan biases in media, organizational, and interpersonal intermediaries to the

voting choices of Americans. “Its results show that the traditional sources of social influence still dominate: Interpersonal discussion outweighs the media in affecting the vote” (Yaser, Mahsud & Chaudhry, 2011). Media effects appear to be the product of newspaper editorial pages rather than television or newspaper reporting, which contain so little perceptible bias that they often are misperceived as hostile. “Parties and secondary organizations also are influential, but only for less interested voters who are more affected by social contexts in general”. Overall, this study demonstrates that democratic citizens are embedded in social contexts that join with personal traits in shaping their voting decisions (Shawar, & Asim, 2012).

2.10 Media’s Impact and Democratic Behavior

Elections as the source of representation of collective decision by voters and the influence of media in shaping the electorates preferences in candidate selection as well as in other political attitudes are inseparable and unavoidable. “The influence of media as one of the several factors shaping voting preferences was identified as early as in 1940’s and 1950’s but these primitive studies over media suggested only marginal role of media over the voters’ choice”. Tranaman and Mcquial (1961) has suggested in “Culture, Society and the Media” that the role of media continued to claim its influence as the diffusion grew and it started to win public trust over political insight, thus begins to shape the public preferences (Mohammad, 2014).

The recent work by Jim Willis “The Media Effect: How the News Influences Politics and Government” (2007) revealed the Studies of the 1968 presidential elections in US and found a perfect correlation between the type of issues covered and broadcasted by media and the voters concern for the same issues. George A. Comstock and Erica Scherer’s work published on “The Psychology of Media and Politics” (2005) discovered that the diffusion of mass media changed the balance of factors effecting the voting decisions of public and by 1970’s this became the predictor of the voters choice”.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Survey Approach

An analysis of the social research methodologies suggests that survey is the handy tool for managers to collect primary data using questionnaire and interviews about the perceptions and attitudes of the respondents. It is noted somewhere that questionnaire approach is the “most frequently used mode of observation in the social sciences because surveys are reportedly the excellent vehicles for measuring attitudes in large populations (Sekaran, 2003:257).

3.2 Population & Sample

The universe or population is the entire group of items in which the researcher is interested and wishes to plan to generalize (Boyd et al., 1977:302-303). The population of interest in this research project consisted of all the ‘Students’ in the Gomal University, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan while from this population, a sample of 100 students was selected by simple random technique.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

- *Secondary Sources:* All research inevitably involves the use of the book, pamphlet, periodical, and documentary materials in libraries. Obviously, no research project can be undertaken without this preliminary orientation (Goode & Hatt, 1952:103).
- *Primary Sources:* A structured questionnaire was prepared by first extracting variables and their related attributes from the extensive literature survey. The questionnaire included the research and demographic variables. There were two (2) demographic variables while the research variables are the violence and the voting behavior.

3.4 Tools for Data Analysis

Similarly, the descriptive tools were applied by showing the frequencies, means and other data about the research variables.

4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, the student presented the empirical results computed from the field study. The main sections are the cross tabulations and the testing of hypotheses (Research Questions).

Table 4.1 The Cross tabulation across Income and Gender

		Gender		
		Male	Female	Total
Income	Below 20000	4	6	10
	Below 40000	16	14	30
	Above 40000	23	7	30
Total		43	27	70

Table 4.1 shows the cross tabulation across the income and the gender. It shows that 10 respondents whose income is below 2000, from which 4 are males and 6 were females. In the same line, there are 30 respondents whose income is below the 40000, from which 16 are males and 14 were females. Similarly, there are 30 respondents whose income is above the 40000, from which 23 are males and 7 were females.

Table 4.2 The Cross tabulation across Department and Tongue

		Tongue			Total
		Urdu	Saraiki	Pashto	
Department	Social Sciences	3	16	18	37
	Natural Sciences	3	14	16	33
Total		6	30	34	70

Table 4.2 shows the cross tabulation across the department and tongue. It shows that there are 37 respondents who belong to social sciences departments and from which 3 respondents Urdu speaking, 16 are Saraiki speaking and 18 spoke Pashto. In the same line, there are 33 respondents who belong to natural sciences department and from which 3 respondents Urdu speaking, 14 are Saraiki speaking and 16 spoke Pashto.

Table 4.3 The Cross tabulation across Residence and Tongue

		Tongue			Total
		Urdu	Saraiki	Pashto	
Residence	Urban	4	21	17	38
	Rural	2	9	17	32
Total		6	30	34	70

Table 4.3 shows the cross tabulation across the residence and tongue. It shows that there are 38 respondents who belong to urban areas and from which 4 respondents Urdu speaking, 21 are Saraiki speaking and 17 spoke Pashto. In the same line, there are 32 respondents who belong to rural areas and from which 2 respondents Urdu speaking, 9 are Saraiki speaking and 17 spoke Pashto.

Table 4.4 Frequencies across Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	43	61.4	61.4	61.4
	Female	27	38.5	38.5	98.6
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.4 shows the frequencies regarding the respondents on gender basis. It shows that there are total 70 respondents, from which 43 (61%) are males and 27 (38%) are females.

Table 4.5 Frequencies across Income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 20000	10	14.3	14.3	14.3
	Below 40000	30	42.9	42.9	57.1
	Above 40000	30	42.9	42.9	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.5 shows the frequencies regarding the respondents on income basis. It shows that the income of 10 (14%) respondents is below 20000. In the same line, the income of 30 (43%) respondents is below 40000. Similarly, the income of 30 (43%) respondents is above 40000.

Table 4.6 Frequencies across Department

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Social Sciences	37	52.9	52.9	52.9
	Natural Sciences	33	47.1	47.1	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.6 shows the frequencies regarding the respondents on department basis. It shows that the 37 (53%) respondents belong to social sciences department while the rest of 33 (47%) respondents belong to natural sciences department.

Table 4.7 Frequencies across Residence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Urban	38	54.3	54.3	54.3
	Rural	28	40.0	40.0	94.3
	3	4	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.7 shows the frequencies regarding the respondents on residence basis. It shows that the 38 (54%) respondents belong to urban areas while the rest of 28 (40%) respondents belong to rural areas.

Table 4.8 Frequencies across Tongue

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Urdu	6	8.6	8.6	8.6
	Saraiki	30	42.9	42.9	51.4
	Pashto	34	48.6	48.6	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.8 shows the frequencies regarding the respondents on tongue basis. It shows that the 6 (9%) respondents speak Urdu, 30 (43%) respondents speak Saraiki and 34 (49%) respondents speak Pashto.

Table 4.9 Frequencies across Computer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	51	72.9	72.9	72.9
	No	19	27.1	27.1	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.9 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: do you have a computer at your home? From the respondents 51(73%) have replied yes while 19 (27%) of the respondents have no computers at their homes.

Table 4.10 Frequencies across Cell Phone

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	58	82.9	82.9	82.9
	No	12	17.1	17.1	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.10 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: do you have a cell phone? From the respondents 58(83%) have replied yes while 12 (17%) of the respondents have no cell phones.

Table 4.11 Frequencies across Net Surfing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	55	78.6	78.6	78.6
	No	15	21.4	21.4	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.11 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: do you know about net surfing? From the respondents 55(79%) have replied yes while 15 (21%) of the respondents have no net surfing.

Table 4.12 Frequencies across Internet Facility

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	26	37.1	37.1	37.1
	No	44	62.9	62.9	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.12 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: is there internet facility available in Gomal University? From the respondents 26(37%) have replied yes while 44 (63%) of the respondents have replied that there is no internet facility in Gomal University.

Table 4.13 Frequencies across Role of Social Media

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	31	44.3	44.3	44.3
	No	39	55.7	55.7	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.13 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: is there any key role of social media for the promotion of democracy in Pakistan? From the respondents 30(44%) have replied yes while 39 (56%) of the respondents have replied that there is no key role of social media for the promotion of democracy in Pakistan.

Table 4.14 Frequencies across Political Discussions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	32	45.7	45.7	45.7
	No	38	54.3	54.3	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.14 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: do you participate in political discussions through social media? From the respondents 32(46%) have replied yes while 38 (54%) of the respondents have replied that they have never participate in political discussions.

Table 4.15 Frequencies across Political information

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	47	67.1	67.1	67.1
	No	23	32.9	32.9	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.15 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: do you get political information through social media? From the respondents 47(67%) have replied Yes while 23 (33%) of the respondents have replied with No.

Table 4.16 Frequencies across Political Ideas

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	29	41.4	41.4	41.4
	No	41	58.6	58.6	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.16 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: do you express political ideas with others through social media? From the respondents 29(41%) have replied Yes while 41 (59%) of the respondents have replied with No.

Table 4.17 Frequencies across Political Behavior

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	34	48.6	48.6	48.6
	No	36	51.4	51.4	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.17 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: do social media help you in

changing your political behavior? From the respondents 34(49%) have replied Yes while 36 (51%) of the respondents have replied with No.

Table 4.18 Frequencies across Learn about Democracy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	52	74.3	74.3	74.3
	No	18	25.7	25.7	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.18 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: have you ever learned something about democracy from social media? From the respondents 52(74%) have replied Yes while 18 (26%) of the respondents have replied with No.

Table 4.19 Frequencies across Social Networking

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Facebook	40	57.1	57.1	57.1
	Skype	30	42.9	42.9	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.19 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: in social media which social networking play most important role about political information? From the respondents 40(57%) have replied Facebook while 30 (43%) of the respondents have replied with Skype.

Table 4.20 Frequencies across Liking of Social Network

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Facebook	50	71.4	71.4	71.4
	Twitter	20	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.20 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: which social networking you like most? From the respondents 50(71%) have replied Facebook while 20 (29%) of the respondents have replied with Twitter.

Table 4.21 Frequencies across Political awareness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	38	54.3	54.3	54.3
	No	32	45.7	45.7	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.21 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: do the social media enhance the political awareness in the students? From the respondents 38(54%) have replied Yes while 32 (46%) of the respondents have replied with No.

Table 4.22 Frequencies across Views on Social Media

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	53	75.7	75.7	75.7
	No	17	24.3	24.3	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.22 shows the frequencies of the respondents regarding the question that: do the students can achieve their views on social media? From the respondents 53(76%) have replied Yes while 17 (24%) of the respondents have replied with No.

5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Media has penetrated deep into our society through several channels but the only constraints that restrict its full potential is inaccessibility and lack of trust. The majority of the students in urban areas uses media as the primary source of information and has high levels of consumption patterns or at least average for those even without having a keen interest in politics. On the other side the scenario is completely opposite and

majority of rural population rely on peer groups and family as a source of information and the role of print media is also restricted due to illiteracy and lack of interest. With different ingestion of media on both sides the impacts, attitude and voting patterns of people are also dissimilar. As revealed through this study the majority of public in rural area vote on the basis of family and personal affiliations and in case they experience a change that is not mainly due to media but on the basis of personal differences and relations.

Along with that the personality and appearance of leader counts a lot for them and a little importance is placed over media as mostly people do not agree with the stance of media. On the other hand majority of urban population, which utilizes towering level of information as a courtesy of media, tend to vote on the basis of performance and policy. Also they strongly believe that social media does influence over students democratic behavior and do agree with the stance of media over many of the matters. This shows there exists a positive relationship between the two as the more public is exposed to media. The more they are politically aware, updated the more they tend to vote rationally. Media could serve to loosen the old existing bonds like family heritage, it can enlighten people with enough information (if neutral) to make long-lasting decisions keeping a broader objective in view.

5.1 Recommendations

1. Media should promote programs such as civic education and awareness because of its capability to reach audience and the potential to influence.
2. The most importance should be placed at the core issues of society than the individuals' being set by a specific party or group.
3. Media should avoid breaking news without previous confirmation.
4. The news should be brought to audience without any addition of elements such as suspense, glamour or bias.
5. All the facts regarding political affairs should be placed in front of public in order to adequately enlighten them for a wise decision making.
6. Instead of leg pulling all the media streams should promote a strong culture that encourages justice, positive deeds and public participation.
7. A well-defined code of conduct should be followed by the Mass Media and in any case the national interest at large should be kept supreme.

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