



COMMUNICATION & POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INFORMATIONAL ROLE OF NEW MEDIA, TRADITIONAL MEDIA AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract- This thesis examines the difference of political engagement between users of different communication networks. Communication networks are categories in two types i) interpersonal communication (Face-to-Face communication) ii) technological communication. Face-to-Face individual communication takes as inter personal communication network and in technological networks, TV and social networking sites are taken. Difference in conventional political activates tested with the use of these different communication networks. Fundraising, volunteering, attending political rallies or meetings, and signing online petitions were the variables used to study political participation. Quantitative survey research design has been applied to this research, in which the data collection tool was a questionnaire. The samples were selected through a quota sampling technique at different levels of the population. The findings revealed that people who use face-to-face communication for attaining political information are slightly more active than other. However, there was no remarkable difference noted in political engagement with the use of different communication networks and social networking sites came as the top used communication network among youth. Additionally, the survey came as male are significantly more politically active than female while, the using means of information is almost same.

Keywords: Communication networks, Political engagement, Face-to-face interpersonal communication

I. INTRODUCTION

Participation in politics is considered a prerequisite for a healthy and functional republic. However, previous studies suggest a declining trend in civic participation in politics in many parts of the world, especially among young people, making the political withdrawal of citizens the most difficult since the turn of the century. Determining the key factors that can bring foreigners back into politics has become an important topic in recent research on political communication, and this attempt to identify the root cause of political instability has led to a number of individual and social problems.

According to the Michigan School of Thought, the individual factors responsible for political participation often have their origins in psychology and include psychological factors generally related to a voter's voting behavior and their world. Separate external events, for example age and gender, social and economic status or partnership and political utility (Verba & Nie, 1972). The second school is the Colombian school of thought (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954), which places special emphasis on the social characteristics of political behavior, linking the decision to vote to factors such as personal relationships and belonging to certain groups (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954). The Columbia school also suggests that the individual's association with specific social, ethnic, or religious groups determines personal attitudes. This sense of belonging to a particular group leads to the information flow in two different phases.

From the perspective of political instability, it has been argued that the probability of political participation increases as media consumption increases. Researchers have argued that the search for information or news is essential to increase public participation in politics (Hebermas, 1989), which is also a premise of democracy. Democracy is reinforced by informing the attitudes of citizens, thus facilitating the formation of opinions, attitudes and decision-making in the social and political fields (Berelson, 1954).

The relationship between political engagement and communication network is one of the most popular topics of discussion among the media and communication scholars. The central idea of the discipline is the debate on whether the ability of the media to encourage citizen participation in politics, or that the media only attract citizens who are already interested in politics.

Professor Prior (2013) investigates the effects of changes in the media on political messages, political awareness, and voter participation, with an emphasis on three periods: The pre-television era from 1935 to 1970, the television era from 1970 and the Internet era from 2005. In the pre-television era, political messages buy, and involvement was limited to educated segments of the population that could read easily readable channel. The television age has expanded approach political information by disseminating it as relatively easy fragments of everyday language, embellish with surprising images. The generation of the internet, as the flow of information is expanding and deepening, has again limited the reach of those exposed to politics. On the other side Hindman (2009) stated over the past two tanners, some scientists have frequently argued that online information can promote political engagement, mostly among young people.

Studies tend to reduce in political participation, especially among young people, in many parts of the world, the political attempt of the people is the most difficult political issue of the current century (Bastion, Stiliz, & Herlitz, 2014) (Stephens, 2000). Over time, there is a shift in political participation with the emergence of the internet. The internet has become the most important platform for socialization. Some scholars work with the democratic perspective of the Internet due to interactive and decent functions. The Internet increases the possibilities of interactive message traffic on a much larger scale than the domain without a connection; therefore, it plays an important part in promoting political engagement (Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005).

Technologies are changing the lifestyles of societies. In media and communication studies, timeline of media effect researches provide evidence about change in lifestyle because of technology. With the revolution of radio, the idea of strong media influence emerged, and the magic bullet theory accelerated it. Later, television changed the way it was used, and now the Internet has completely changed the landscape (Eijaz, 2013).

Pakistan has over 196,174,380 inhabitants (CIA, 2014), or 67.1% of this population. He is not yet 30 years old and during the elections the television channels became main source of information 2008 & 2013 (Yusuf, 2013). Sixty six per cent of Pakistanis consider that talk shows provide reliable knowledge (Gallup Pakistan, 2013) & young people are content to discuss important issues through political discourse (Mahsud, Chaudhry, Amin, & Khan, 2013). In this scenario, this study will highlight Political participation as "good" or "bad" effects on the use of a television news channel by citizens' Political commitment and knowledge.

The TV in Pakistan is a story of more than 50 years. It starts with state-owned Pakistan Television (PTV) in 1964. Now the TV sector in Pakistan there is over 80 satellite channels licensed by the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority established (PEMRA) in 2002. Advertisement revenues of all media platforms in Pakistan were Rs. 32 billion in 2011-12 and shear of TV advertisement is 22 billion that shows the importance of TV in Pakistan (Siddiqui, 2015).

There is a wide range of publications on the role of television channels in political engagement. Urban political researchers and media researchers have studied political engagement. Apart from a lot of research on this subject, no research is definitive. Relations with the mass media, as studies have described them differently. Many authors conclude that watching news on television increases political knowledge, commitment and confidence in the system (Quintelier & Hooghe, 2011).

Social media has become a leading news source with two-thirds of users, updating their latest news through sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. The most recent evidence of the widespread use of new media for personal interests comes from the US Presidential Election of 2016, when Obama continue the tradition of running a strong campaign through the media. In Americans, social media was the second most popular source for news and political updates after television (four out of ten). Additionally, fifty per cent of young Americans prefer new media for the newest news (Vraga, Bode, & Troller-Renfree, 2016).

While in Pakistan Social media as a tools of communication is used in 5 ways; breaking ignored news; call-up people for campaigns; strengthen coordination of issues and problems; and speed up communication (Kugelman, 2012).

The presence of social media in Pakistan is increasing. In the six months from late 2010 to early 2011, the number of Facebook users increased by 3.6 million against 1.8 million (Kugelman, 2012). In Pakistan 44.6M are internet customers which are 22% of the total populace, 35M (18%) are social media users. Top five social networking sites in Pakistan are FaceBook (92.06%), YouTube (4.68%), Twitter (1.50%), Pinterest (1.17%) and Instagram (0.18%) (AlphaPro, 2016).

The current study examines the use of social media and the process of political participation in Pakistan and presents the issue of underdeveloped democracies. Pakistan will be unique in exploring the implications of the use of social media. Users of social networks are under 30 years old, much older than in the Middle East and North Africa (Michelson, 2011). In addition, its traditional media is free compared to Arab countries. Therefore, Pakistan is a suitable region to explore the use of information on social media and the consequent democratic outcomes such as building the social capital of citizens, political expression and ultimately advocacy.

The points discussed above show that changing technology over time has also changed the means of information flow. In the age of the Internet, social networking sites are a new front of the information. This research study examines the political engagement of those seeking political information through different communication networks.

Communication Networks

According to Berlo's "SMCR" modal of communication, communication is a linear process in which information (Message) flows from sender through a channel to a receiver. In SMCR modal, all elements of communication are linearly interconnected. SMCR is the main protocol for every communication network; technologically protocols may differ with different communication networks.

Literature shows there are two types of communication networks i) interpersonal communication (Face-to-Face communication) ii) technological communication (Unzen, 2012). With the emergence of media technology such as latest technologies for communication and online networks nowadays we have two types of interpersonal mediated communication & Face-to-Face communication (Unzen, 2012). In this study Face-to-Face communication is examined. With the advancement in information technologies more technological communication networks are classified. Matthew Barnidge (2014) divided communication network into two types of conventional media (TV, radio and press) and online media (social networking sites). In this research, two communication networks TV (traditional media) and social networking sites (online media) have been taken as a technical communication network.

Political Engagement

The word politics is derived from polis, which means city-state. Classical Greek society was splitter up into independent city-states, each with its system of government (Heywood, 2016). According to Aristotle (367 BC–347 BC) notes translated by Jowett, a human is a political animal. In other words, we can state that politics is all about power and power shifted with time to time. According to the rule of politics, citizen's rule and are ruled in turn. Therefore, politics is an art of government (Jowett, 1999).

Barnes and Kaase (1979) categorized political engagements in conventional and unconventional participation. Activities carried out through official channels, such as voting or partisan activism, such as conventional and other channels, organized outside of channels such as protest or building occupation, such as unconventional. Verba and Nie (1972) also distinguished political activities between conventional and unconventional activities. Political communication can take diverse forms, conventional political activities (contributing with money, volunteering for a campaign, voting, attending events such as rallies) were considered as political engagement for this study (Pew, 2014).

Studying the role of social media in increasing participation in Pakistan, increasing the interest of young people in online and offline politics, given the similarities in the changing political landscape

internationally and from the new political perspective mentioned above Using and forming a government through a new party. In general, the main goal of this study is to examine the political implications of social networks. In particular, the general process combining the use of social media and the political participation of the Pakistani people has been less politically active throughout history.

Objectives of the study

- To identify the most used communication network for information about political activities.
- To understand the difference of political engagement between users of different communication networks.

Problem Statement

The literature on political engagement and communication networks reveals how the media influences people, what type of content is positively linked to political engagement, and what type of content is negative. There are also many studies on the effects of television, the press and social networking sites. This study focuses on comparing political engagements with the use of different communication networks, as a two-step communication flow hypothesis.

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the communication network most used by IIUI students to obtain information about political activities?

RQ2: Does the political engagement of IIUI students have differed with the use of different communication networks?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between political engagement and communication network is one of the most popular topics of discussion among the media and communication scholars. It is a political and social subject. The literature review of this study done in three sections. The first part deals with changes in the media over time, which called the evolution of the media, while the second part communication networks of the study are discussed and in final literature, review examines the effects of different communication networks on political activity.

Evolution of Media

Media ecologists have investigated the evolution of the media system over time since the origin of research in media. Harold Innis' (1950) and (1951) studies illustrate media ecologists' initial interest in the evolution of communication technologies.

McLuhan (1964) put it, The effect of technology is not in respect of opinion or don't change ideas, but feelings or patterns of imagination without constant and resistance, For example, television has changed the way we think. In case of media as species McLuhan (1964) stats, no medium means it is alone, but another media only interrupts it. Radio has changed the form of reporting as much as the image of cinema in silent films. Television has changed a lot in the form of radio programs and other things in the form of documentary novels. Media evolution in America can notice in following Neuman's (2010) timeline (Neuman, 2010).

With developments in mass media observations under the idea of the principle of relevant constancy that US users offered this opportunity in the media, which represents a steady chunk of total gain during the last half of the 20th century (McCombs, Journalism Monographs, 1972) (McCombs & Eyal, 1980). As theory improved in the literature, the concept of functional equivalence was emphasized, it predicts that

emerging new media come with new better functions than previously dominate media that causes a decline in the use of that media. As in evening, radio changed by television to become the main entertainment centre of the house and radio went to the bedroom. Similarly, the mobile phone extends the wireline, especially with teenagers (Dupagne, 1997). In the 80s Ithiel de Sola Pool and associates observed the Communication flow paradox. This paradox may be a distant theoretical cousin of relevant constancy findings (Neuman, 2010).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To understand how political engagement differs from using different communication networks, this study considers the two-step flow of the communication hypothesis. It is proposed to provide information from the mass media towards the first "opinion leaders" and then to the less vigorous population groups (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948).

Work of Paul Lazarsfeld and colleagues based on the analysis of experimental election campaigns in Erie County, Ohio, USA. They propose that information from mass media is delivered first to 'leaders' and from them to other sectors of the population (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948).

Elihu Katz (1957) reviewed, that Opinion leaders and those who have influenced by them generally belong to the same main group of family members or they may be friends and colleagues. Although the opinion leader might be more involved in the area of his/her influence, it is unlikely that the prejudiced one far exceeds the organizer in his/her interest. Most opinion leaders are mainly influenced, not through mass media, but by other people. "Opinion leaders" are not important figures in this respect, but are interested in all subjects and, from there, ask for more information. The person is not an "ideological leader" because of his social status or prestige, but because he participates in a subject that he reads and informs. In the two-step flow hypothesis weight only on one aspect of interpersonal relations that are related as channels of communication, but other studies show other aspects of the relationship as well. So, interpersonal relations are (i) sources of social pressure, (ii) channels of information, & (iii) sources of social support, each connects individual relationships with policy making in a slightly unusual way (Semiu, 2013). Elihu Katz (1957) reviewed, that Opinion leaders and those who have influenced by them generally belong to the same main group of family members or they may be friends and colleagues.

Many studies concluded, as opinion leader always highly attentive to media and more active in all relevant activities but Robinson (1976) talked about less attentive to media. He divided less attentive into those who engage in conversations about the election and those who do not and noted that those who participate in the conversation more politically active on another hand the media reported in the same way almost among non-discussants they cannot be influenced by the media. When interpersonal information sources and media information sources are compared to their level of influence it shows that interpersonal sources influence wield greater influence in decision-making (Robinson, 1976).

The Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet's (1948) model asserts that message flows from the media to leaders and then to the common public. This model gained prominence when the media influence theory suggested that the media has a direct effect on the public and the media was the sole channel that benefited from it.

However, in the current age, the use of the Internet as a means of communication and debate is undermining the clear direction of the media towards the leaders of public opinion and the public, and calls into question the 2-step flow model. Since digital media allows direct communication between the sender of the message and the target audience without mediation.

Bennett and Manheim (2006) discuss the power loss of two-step model and the emergence of the one-step communication model. Furthermore, people in a social media environment sometimes read news they like or suggest by friends who may or may not having role of opinion leaders. They questioned the two or more stage flow model, which recognizes the presence of mutual influence on the flow of information.

That's why one-step flow model proposed a and argued that social and technological changes, such as social isolation, consumption of personalized media, and restricted broadcast technology, now allow people to receive messages directly from people media and get feedback. The role of opinion leaders has diminished. Thorson and Wells (2015) recommended inclusive framework to recognize the dynamics of information flow.

As a result of the above discussion, it was revealed that this study follows the two-step communication flow as a theory, but with certain limitations, as mentioned above, in the age of information technology, media resources are easy to access for to everyone. Therefore, this study ignores the concept of opinion leaders in two-step flow of communication (Bennett & Manheim, 2006). From the Thorson and Wells's (2015), concept of Curate Flows, communication networks of this study taken; TV as strategic curate flow, social networking sties as automated curated flow and face-to-face interpersonal communication refers to personally curate flow.

Hypothesis

H1: Those who receive political information through face-to-face communication are more politically active than those who receive information through TV and social networking sites.

H1_o: Those who receive political information through face-to-face communication are not more politically active than those who receive information through TV and social networking sites.

H2: There have been significant changes in the political activities of those who use social media, TV and face-to-face interpersonal communication for political information.

H2_o: There have been no significant changes in the political activities of those who use social media, TV and face-to-face interpersonal communication for political information.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitative survey research design has been applied to this research, in which the data collection tool was a questionnaire. The questionnaire designed for this study consists of four sections, namely: introduction, demographic statistics and use of communication networks and level of participation in political activities. In the first part, the name and email address of the respondent requested. In demographic data, questions asked are gender, age, education and native province. The third part deals with the use of communication networks. In this part of the questionnaire, attention to news is measured by asking respondents how often (0 = never; 3 = mostly) they receive information on political activities from different sources. Respondents' participation in political activities is measured using a five-level scale in Part IV of the Questionnaire. The variables used to study political participation are fundraising, volunteering, attending political rallies or meetings, and signing online petitions.

Population and Sampling

The literature shows that several studies have been reviewed at the national level concerning political engagement (Zúñiga & Valenzuela, 2011). Due to time and resource limitations, a national survey was not possible in this study. The study focuses on social science students at the International Islamic University Islamabad, as IIUI includes students from every region of Pakistan. Therefore, a unit of observation and the population of the study is social science students (male & female) of IIUI. At the request of the Dean, the Academies Directorate of IIUI provided a list of the number of social science students (male and female) which is considered as a sampling frame in the study. According to this list, there are 1619 male students and 3411 female students in the Faculty of Social Sciences IIUI (Figure 3.3). Total number of students: 1619+3411= 5030. The sample size was calculated from The Slovin's Formula at a 95% confidence interval: $n = N/1+N.e^2$

V. RESULTS

Due to time and resource limitations, a national survey was not possible in this study. The study focuses on social science students at the International Islamic University Islamabad, as IIUI includes students from every region of Pakistan. Therefore, a unit of observation and the population of the study is social science students (male & female) of IIUI. At the request of the Dean, the Academies Directorate of IIUI provided a list of the number of social science students (male and female) which is considered as a sampling frame in the study. According to this list, there are 1619 male students and 3411 female students in the Faculty of Social Sciences IIUI. The survey results are following:

Table 4. 1 Use of Different Communication Networks

	TV	SNS	F2F
Mean	2.15	2.31	1.98
N	349	349	349
Std. Deviation	.627	.684	.641

Table 4.1 shows the use of different communication networks for information on political activities. The use of communication networks was tested on a three-level scale with 3 scores being the most used and 1 being the lowest. The survey of 349, which looked at the average score of different communication networks, found that social networking sites are the most popular source of information for youth regarding political activities.

Table 4. 2 Use of Different Communication Networks over Gender

Gender		TV	SNS	F2F
Male	Mean	2.18	2.43	1.96
	N	111	111	111
	Std. Deviation	.575	.669	.660
Female	Mean	2.14	2.26	1.99
	N	238	238	238
	Std. Deviation	.651	.685	.633

Table 4.2 shows that male and female in the study have a similar tendency to use communication networks for political information. Social networking sites were found to be popular in both. However, according results in table 4.3 male are significantly more politically active than female while, the using means of information almost same.

Table 4. 3: Avrg. Score of Political Engagement over Gender

Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Male	2.4667	111	.92533
Female	1.8857	238	.70636

Table 4. 4: Means Comparison of Political Engagement over Communication Networks

Communication Network Used	Mean Score of Political Engagement	
	t	N
TV	2.0750	40
SNS	2.0800	85
F2F	2.2348	23
Total	2.1027	148

A comparison of the average score of political engagement with the use of different communication networks can be seen in table 4.4. According to the mean score, those seeking information through face-to-face interpersonal communication are politically more active than TV and social networking sites users all though the difference in points.

The following results were obtained when the one-way ANOVA was performed to test the H2.

Table 4. 5: Avg. Score of Political Engagement over Use of Different Communication Networks

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
TV	40	2.0750	.72563	.11473	1.8429	2.3071	1.00	3.60
SNS	85	2.0800	.80841	.08768	1.9056	2.2544	1.00	4.60
F2F	23	2.2348	.79006	.16474	1.8931	2.5764	1.00	4.00
Total	148	2.1027	.78089	.06419	1.9759	2.2296	1.00	4.60

Table 4. 6: Avg. Score of Political Engagement

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.476	2	.238	.387	.680
Within Groups	89.163	145	.615		
Total	89.639	147			

In table 4.5 descriptive data of political engagement with the use of different communication network is presented and in table 4.5 values of ANOVA test at 95% Confidence Interval indicates significant level .680 between groups (TV, SNS and F2F) which is greater than .05, therefore the null hypotheses H20 is accepted. In other words, the ANOVA test found that there have been no notable changes in the political activities of those who use social media, TV and face-to-face interpersonal communication for political information.

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the use of different communication networks (Face-to-face communication, TV and social networking sites) for information on political activities and the difference between political engagements. Literature shows there are two types of communication networks i) interpersonal communication (Face-to-Face communication) ii) technological communication (Unzen, 2012). Technological communication networks are more classified as Matthew Barnidge (2014) divided communication network into two types of conventional media (TV, radio and press) and online media (social networking sites). Barnes and Kaase (1979) categorized political engagements in conventional and unconventional participation. Activities carried out through official channels, such as voting or partisan activism, such as conventional and other channels, organized outside of channels such as protest or building occupation, such as unconventional. Verba and Nie (1972) also distinguished political activities between conventional and unconventional activities. The literature shows that several studies have been reviewed at the national level concerning political engagement (Zúñiga & Valenzuela, 2011). Due to time

and resource limitations, a national survey was not possible in this study. The study focuses on social science students at the International Islamic University Islamabad, as IUI includes students from every region of Pakistan. Therefore, a unit of observation and the population of the study is social science students (male & female) of IUI. At the request of the Dean, the Academies Directorate of IUI provided a list of the number of social science students (male and female) which is considered as a sampling frame in the study. According to this list, there are 1619 male students and 3411 female students in the Faculty of Social Sciences IUI.

By examining all the responses to the survey, the political activities of the heavyweights of all three-communication networks were examined to see how they differed from each other. The variables used to study political participation are fundraising, volunteering, attending political rallies or meetings, and signing online petitions. On the bases of average score of these variables political engagement is determined. Highly score five is the most active and zero is least.

The findings in response to RQ1 in table 4.1 revealed that social networking sites are the most popular source of information for youth regarding political activities. So, as in previous studies (Ito, et al., 2008) (Kugelman, 2012) (Holt, Shehata, Strömbäck, & Ljungberg, 2013), (Prior, 2013), it is proved in these days, social networking sites are at the top of the list of communication networks used by young people to get information about political activities.

In table 4.2, the RQ2 revealed, as those who receive political information through face-to-face communication are slightly more politically active than those who receive information through TV and social networking sites. However, there no significant difference is noted in political engagement with the use of different communication networks. So, as in previous studies (Davis, 2010) (Hoffman & Thomson, 2009) (Semiu, 2013).

Additionally, male are significantly more politically active than female while, the tendency to use means of information almost same. Number of factors has been cited as an explanation, which means that women are less likely to become involved in politics due to their limited access to social and economic resources (Coffé & Bolzendahl, 2010). Studying the role of social media, in increasing participation in Pakistan, increasing the interest of young people in online and offline politics, given the similarities in the changing political landscape internationally and from the new political perspective mentioned above Using and forming a government through a new party. In general, the key aim of this study is to examine the political implications of social networks. In particular, the general process combining the use of social media and the political participation of the Pakistani people has been less politically active throughout history.

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