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RESEARCH ARTICLE

**FROM ONLINE SPACES TO URBAN GOVERNANCE: POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION
VIA SOCIAL-MEDIA AMONG ISLAMABAD PAKISTAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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Abstract

Online venues, especially social media platforms, have become more important in the modern digital age for political socialization, especially among young people. With an eye on urban government, this study investigates the effects of political socialization on university students' offline political engagement and perceptions of their own political efficacy through social media. In this study, 375 undergraduate and graduate students from FJWU, IIUI and AIOU had their survey data analyzed using a quantitative research approach. The results shows that university students rely heavily on social media to be informed about politics and have a strong sense of political agency. An individual's belief in their own political impact and their engagement in offline political processes as they pertain to city administration are both positively correlated with their degree of political engagement on the internet. It appears that social media plays a vital role in the modern process of political socialization, since there is a strong relationship between political knowledge, online involvement, and offline activity. Digital platforms are changing the way young people get involved in politics, and this study highlights the social significance of these platforms and their potential to improve participatory city planning.

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Introduction:-

The generation of millennials uses the Internet and social media the most frequently. Young people are inspired to participate in political events by political-related online activities(Quintelier & Vissers, 2008). Political participation, political knowledge, and internet use are all related. Elections are being significantly influenced by this trend, particularly in developing nations like Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. Information about politics is increasingly being spread via the internet and social media(McAllister, 2015), it also poses threats to democracies, as shown by the 2016 US presidential election and some European countries. Social media is one of the primary sources of information for the billions of its users, but it also has a great deal of room for misinformation to sway public opinion. Political dynamics can be assessed by looking at the effects of social media on political activism. The Internet has a dual impact on political information and participation because it encourages political engagement among its users and strengthens offline political participation(Nam, 2012). Information and communication technologies significantly altered the world more than ten years ago. For instance, social and political discourse,

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communication methods, and interpersonal interaction have all changed because of new media and technology. Political scientists, sociologists, media and communication specialists, and experts in international relations have conducted many studies on the various facets of social media use (Golan et al., 2018). The public is receiving a lot of information about political events thanks to the Internet, which engages its users as well as encourages them to take part in offline political activities. The Internet has become increasingly important for political participation and discourse. Through their websites, political parties initially used the Internet as a one-way communication tool to inform the public. However, two-way communication patterns have changed because of the use of new media and technology (Emruli & Bača, 2011).

Social media use among millennials is widespread not only in developed nations but also in underdeveloped ones. In Pakistan, political organizations and individual politicians use social media extensively to inform voters and users of the platform (Michaelsen, 2011). When it comes to political communication, both developed and developing nations are impacted by new technology and social media, but developed nations are more impacted due to the widespread use of the Internet (Riaz, 2010). Internet users' social and political education is significantly impacted by social networking sites (SNS), particularly young people (Khan & Shehbaz, 2015). SNS in Pakistan have a significant political impact on people, according to a recent study (Karamat & Farooq, 2016). New media is being used by students to learn about politics, share opinions, and engage in political discourse with their neighbors (Ali & Ali, 2014).

In Pakistan, when compared to other social networks like Twitter, Facebook is the one that young people use the most for political information. Pakistan has the second-highest youth population in the world, after Yemen, and this has significantly influenced Pakistan's political dynamics (Ittefaq & Iqbal, 2018). Pakistan's political parties have been actively utilizing social media since 2008, which has altered Pakistani politics (Eijaz, 2013). Most survey respondents used social media for political purposes, particularly Facebook. Comparatively speaking to other Asian nations, Pakistan has very low Internet penetration, but usage is growing over time. Only 19% of Pakistanis have access to the Internet, according to the most recent statistics, however, the widespread use of social and new media in several industries, including politics, health, and education, is encouraging researchers to look into how these platforms are used (Ittefaq & Iqbal, 2018). To increase voter turnout, it encourages people to vote in national elections by giving them the chance to discuss the numerous complex issues that Pakistani society is currently grappling with (Ahmad & Sheikh, 2013). The amount of time college students spent engaging in politics online was related to their offline activism and influenced it. The research demonstrates that this platform has altered the political activities and views of students at Punjab University (Zaheer, 2016).

This study fills a gap in the literature, focusing on Pakistan's marginalized and rural areas. It also looks at topics covered on social media networking sites and how university students participate in politics both offline and online. The study also investigates how the participants' political participation in real life and online has an impact. Investigations have also been done into the connection between this efficacy and political participation. Prior research has looked into how new media are used in larger cities as well as other societal sectors like politics, health, and education, but the majority of the studies have neglected to include marginalized communities. But to examine how they use social media in the political spectrum, our study concentrates on Pakistan's rural areas.

The objective of this study is:

- O1: Examine the patterns of social media use among university students in urban Pakistan.
- O2: Examine the link between college students' use of social media and political engagement.
- O3: Examine the variables that affect college students' use of social media for political engagement.
- O4: Analyze the impact of social media use on the political attitudes and behaviors of university students in urban Pakistan.

Literature Review:-

Online groups, pages, and accounts provide the young population with access to social media and the Internet (Bimber & Copeland, 2011). Underlined importance of new media in facilitating political participation and transforming its political efficacy. The study claimed that people who use social media are involved in politics. The respondent's political effectiveness and interests have increased thanks to the Internet, which have led to their participation in both online and offline politics (Jiang, 2016) studied how online and offline political participation was impacted by the Internet. He also considered the opinions of the populace of politics are shaped by the Internet. Internet users become more politically engaged thanks to this strong relationship, which increases their political

efficacy and interest in elections. Internet use has become the main channel for political effectiveness and participation, increasing voter and election awareness. The use of new media has increased the proportion of users who vote. It develops a plan that makes it simpler for individuals to contribute to political campaigns and cast ballots(Larson, 2004). Users' efficacy helps them to better understand political affairs by acquiring political information from new media. Young people now have a platform for information and communication with large audiences as well to participate in political activities, according to studies into youth, new media, and the rise of participatory politics. The studies mentioned above were carried out in developed nations and came to similar conclusions. However, the research field has excluded and ignored young people from underserved communities and rural areas. Our research focuses on how politically engaged young people in rural areas use social media.

It is reasonable to claim that social media also has negative aspects. For instance, Calder in his study claimed that "We must prevent political participation from this situation rather than accepting it, according to a study, which argued that it is necessary to know the disadvantages of new media for political communication"(Calder, 2013). Researcher focused on the political activism of college students using online media. The study's findings show how offline and online political participation are related; however, email has a much smaller impact on political discourse than Facebook(Mahmud & Amin, 2017). Similarly after examining SNS and political engagement, it was discovered that Facebook content reflects a favorable response to political engagement(Schmiemann, 2015). Some studies examined how online platforms foster political interaction and evaluated online social connections and political engagement. They also found that social interaction online encourages participation offline, strengthening similar ties between unrelated bridging networks(Gibson & McAllister, 2012).

Following the general pattern in this field of study, investigated political engagement and participation through various online and offline channels, it was discovered that political participants can engage in politics and publicly express their opinions thanks to new media and other online channels. Individual attitudes, as well as their use of digital media and political engagement in real life, vary. Online users' knowledge of politics is increased by using the Internet and other e-activities, which also encourages political engagement and participation(Papagiannidis & Manika, 2016). Cantijoch and his colleagues studied topics such as internet use, political participation, and the results of e-discussion, e-information, and e-political campaigning. Their research shows that e-campaigning connects and successfully engages Internet users both before and after elections(Cantijoch, 2012). Theorist observed that Spanish digital platforms' users have positive correlation between political engagement and their attitudes toward family relationships(Marco et al., 2017)another study's finding show a clear separation between the cognitive and practical aspects of attitudeanalyzed the relationship between social media and political participation, one in eight adults used social media for civic and political purposes. Social media was regularly used by 39% of American adults(Rainie et al., 2012).

Due to the new political participation trends on social media, political communication patterns have changed. After looking into how social and digital media are used in politics, researchers concluded that these channels are primarily used to promote social interactions and keep users updated on current events(Siluveru, 2015). Study examined how politicians communicate on social media and discovered a close connection between them and those who use social media. SNS has also significantly improved the relationship between voters and politicians(Stefan et al., 2012). Study examined how social media in India affected voting behavior, social media unites people within political parties(Biswas et al., 2014). Revealed that activists used social media for group action(Storck, 2011). Study also found that when politicians use social media to influence constituent perceptions, it was investigated whether voters reacted more favorably to politicians' personal content than to their professional content(Hellweg, 2011). Similarly, study discussed Facebook as a unique platform for communication between political parties and voters, and it offers best practices for connecting with voters for political engagement(Kalsnes, 2016). Study found that social media was a popular network for communication between candidates and voters(Raoof et al., 2013). By disseminating information about politics and encouraging participation and mobilization, social media plays a crucial role in both political education and the public's political mobilization(Doris, 2014).

According to the most recent statistics, there are 44.61 million Internet users in Pakistan. 37 million of these Internet users are regarded as active social media users. 36 million of them use Facebook, 6.30 million Instagram, 1.26 million Twitter, 2.15 million Snapchat, and 5.10 million LinkedIn. In addition, 41% of users are between the ages of 18 and 24 and 36% are between the ages of 25 and 34. These data show that young people in Pakistan make up the majority of social media and Internet user. Digital marketing company recently released a report titled Digital

Statistical Indicators 2018 that asserts that 44.6 million out of 198.9 million people, or 22% of the population, are Internet users. Only 35 million of them or 18% of the total population are active social media users. Out of the total population, there are 109.5 million mobile users, and of those, 32 million (or 16% of the total) use their mobile devices to access the Internet and social media regularly. Both in rural and urban areas, young people dominate the social media user base (Ahmad, Alvi, & Ittefaq, 2019).

Facebook is crucial for political effectiveness (Adebisi, 2016). Political knowledge and needs boosted young people's political involvement and trust, according to research on cognitive engagement and online political participation among youth in Nigeria and Malaysia on Facebook and Twitter. Abdu and his associates evaluated Facebook's influence on young people's use, interaction, interest in politics, and access to high-quality information. Facebook use and political interest positively correlate with online political participation, according to the study's conclusion (Abdu et al., 2017). The coworkers of Conroye found a connection between offline political participation and online political groups. The relationship between online political groups and political knowledge is, however, constrained due to online group discourse, whereas the relationship between online and offline participation is very strong (Conroy et al., 2012). Effects of politicians' participatory Facebook posts on young people's political efficacy, they found significant benefits for those with high external and collective efficacy traits and low cynicism traits (Heiss, 2016). The use of social media by young people can facilitate greater political and civic engagement, particularly for those who believe they have limited ability to engage in and understand political affairs, according to an analysis of Facebook's use in political activities (Chan & Guo, 2013).

Numerous studies on the impact of social media and the internet on both online and offline political participation have been conducted over the past ten years. One of the main places for online users to discuss politics and participate in offline political activity, for instance, is Facebook (Njegomir, 2016). It was discovered that Facebook was used for political content and could have a detrimental effect on official political participation in both developing and developed nations, according to research that looked at how Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook affected millennials' political behavior. Researcher made the connection between political communication strategies and the expansion of the public sphere and found that Facebook was a useful tool for encouraging political communication among the public (Karamat & Farooq, 2016). Another investigation discovered an important relationship between new media platforms and mass movements (Marcheva, 2008). Facebook helped to better understand the various perceptions of political participation, including discussions of contentious issues. To measure the effect of the Internet on political and campaign messaging, researchers have created several scales. Due to the homogeneous nature of social media, assessing its impact on internet users is difficult. Facebook users actively engage in politics during elections learned that politicians communicate with voters on Facebook and inform them of their political agenda (Sæbø & Rustad 2013).

Study found that posts endorsing the candidate increased political participation in people whose party affiliation is congruent with the post (Borah, 2014). In a similar vein, it was observed that Facebook use and political participation in the 2008 election increased they concluded that altering how political candidates and organizations use social media could have negative effects (Vitak et al., 2009). It also revealed that political cynicism is predicted negatively by social media use (Hanson et al., 2010). Researcher accessed various party organization channels to learn more about their political candidates, and found that voters prefer the online world (Medaglia & Andersen, 2009). It was discovered that Obama's 2012 campaign utilized Facebook as a marketing tool; this online effort highlighted Obama's personality as a tactic that inspired supporters to act rather than feel empowered (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2014). Based on the substantial amount of literature that has been devoted to social media and political communication, we can argue that published literature illustrates the opportunities and challenges of social media in politics in various countries around the world.

H1: Political effectiveness and online political activity are significantly related

H2: Online political activities have a significant relationship with real-life participation.

H3: Political participation and political efficacy have a significant relationship with each other.

Research Problem:

This study clarifies the connection between political activity and political social media awareness and explains how using social media affects political activity or campaigns in urban Pakistan.

Theoretical Framework:

Uses and gratifications theory is used in this study. According to this theory, people actively seek out and use media to satiate their unique needs and desires. In new media context's, users may seek to gratify their social, informational, or entertainment needs. According to this theory, people actively use media to gratify their needs. Users of social media may look to social, informational, or entertainment needs to be satisfied. Therefore, a psychological communication perspective is one of uses and satisfactions. It shifts the focus of the investigation from examining the direct effects of media on receivers, which is what a mechanistic perspective is interested in, to evaluate how media is being used by people: "that is, what purposes or functions the media serve for a body of active receivers"(Aubrey, 1978). The psychological viewpoint emphasizes personal use and decision-making. Researchers therefore aim to "explain media effects in terms of the purposes, functions or uses (that is, uses and gratifications as controlled by the choice patterns of receivers)"(Aubrey, 1978).

A functional approach is demonstrated in some early writings. Suggested, for example, that specific activities environmental monitoring, correlation of various elements of that environment, and dissemination of social heritage (Lasswell, 1948) media serves narcotic, status-granting, and ethical purposes. Others claimed that the media perform a wide range of tasks for people and societies(Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1948) later on it also found that watching television makes people feel a para-social connection to media figures (Horton & Wohl, 2016)watching television allows viewers to escape unpleasant life experiences(Pearlin, 1959). Study noted that anxiety caused by media news is diminished by media entertainment(McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Researcher observed how families watch television to examine the connections between interpersonal and mediated communication. According to his theories, television could be used in a variety of relational contexts to promote communication (e.g., as a conversational agenda), affiliation or avoidance (e.g., conflict resolution), social learning (e.g., behavioral modeling), competence or dominance (e.g., role reinforcement), or structurally as an environmental resource (e.g., for companionship) (Lull, 2006).

The uses and gratification theory offers a useful framework for comprehending the connection between social media use and political engagement among university students in rural Pakistan. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to consider each person's unique needs and motivations when analyzing how social media affects political behavior. This study used both quantitative research methodology and surveys. The participants in the study were young Pakistanis. It is believed that young people use social media the most frequently and actively. Their political awareness and participation are significantly impacted by social networks.The methodology used in this study is quantitative. In this study, statistical measurements are used to quantify the research findings. the reliable and empirical approach to quantitative research planning. By employing a quantitative strategy, the researcher hopes to open the door for others to retest and enhance his findings.

Method:-

To gather information, a survey of the target population was conducted. Surveys are the most effective method for gathering data from users of mass media. Because the Uses and gratifications theory focuses on the user, whenever researchers use it as a theoretical framework, they use survey methodology to collect data.

Sample Frame:-

The researcher polled 400 active users of electronic media as a sample. All current users of social media and electronic devices make up the study's population. The researcher used the following frame:

$$S=N/1+(N) (0.5)^2$$

$$S=4000/1+(4000) (0.0025)$$

$$S=363.66$$

Sampling Technique:-

Using practical and purposeful sampling techniques, the researcher selected a sample from the target population. Non-probability sampling includes these two sampling techniques. It is essential to employ a sampling technique to gather samples effectively. A suitable sample directly affects the study's outcomes.

Instrument:-

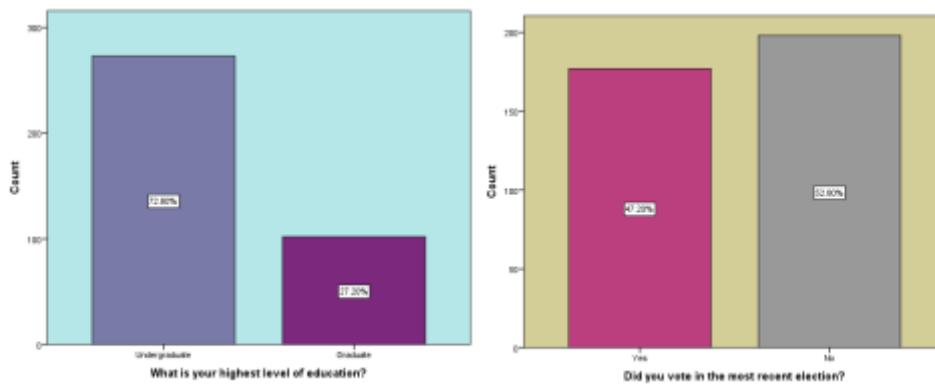
Using an online survey questionnaire, the researcher gathered information from respondents. This questionnaire consists of 14 questions. These inquiries cover a wide range of subjects, such as usage trends and respondent demographics.

Data Analysis:-

The data was gathered and examined using SPSS. The researcher made use of descriptive statistics to calculate frequencies and percentages. He also used correlation to demonstrate the connections between different values.

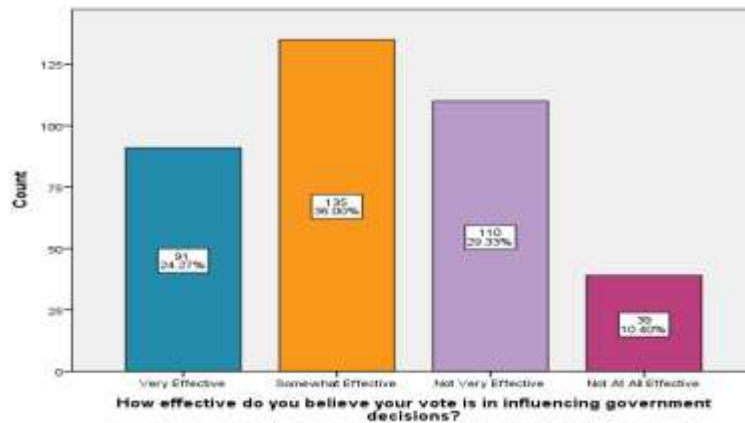
Table 1: Demographics of our respondents		
Variable	Category	Frequency
Age	18 to 25 years old	78.67%
	26 to 33 years old	18.83%
	33 years old and more	2.40%
Gender	Male	38.67%
	Female	61.33%

The above table shows that out of 375 respondents 78.67% are between 18 to 25 years old, 18.83% are between 26 to 33 years old and 2.40% are more than 34 years old. 38.67% are female and 61.33% are males.

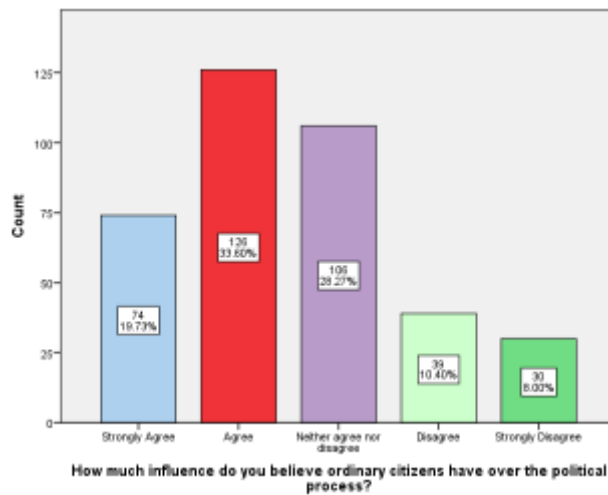


The above graph shows that out of 375 respondents 72.80% are undergraduate and 27.20% are graduate. 47.20% voted in the most recent election and 52.80% didn't participated in the recent elections.

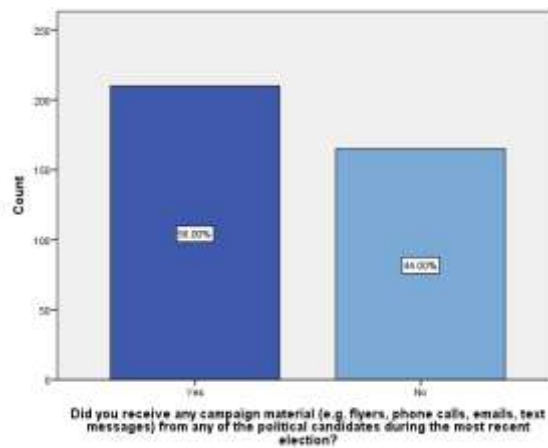
Political Efficacy:



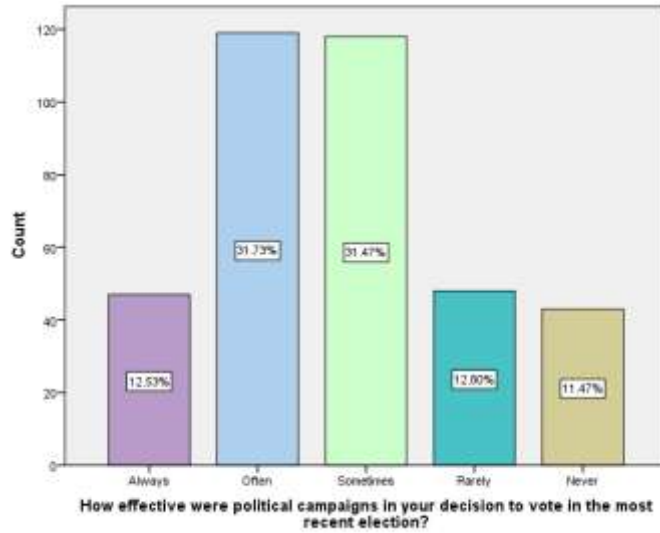
Perceptions of electoral influence on government decision-making among respondents are divided, but moderately positive, according to the graph. Although 36% of voters believe their votes have some impact on policy outcomes, they are wary of the magnitude of that influence, indicating that they are aware of the link between voting and policy outcomes. Voting is considered as important but not enough to guarantee responsiveness on its own, which suggests a partial trust in democratic processes among this group. Concurrently, a sizeable percentage of voters are not very confident in the impact of their ballots. Almost a third of voters think their votes don't make much of a difference, which shows they are skeptical about how the government responds to their concerns or how election results are turned into real policy changes. A further 10.40% of voters feel their votes have no impact all, adding fuel to the fire of disappointment and perhaps a sense of political isolation or marginalization. A quarter of voters feel their votes make a difference, which shows that there is a sizable populace that has faith in democratic procedures and holds institutions to account. For this demographic, casting a ballot is perhaps the most direct route to influence over public policy and the direction of government. The distribution as a whole indicates that, while most people do believe that elections do have an impact, they do not have a lot of faith in voting as a powerful tool for government. More openness, accountability, and public participation are needed to increase public faith in democratic decision-making procedures, as indicated by the majority of "somewhat effective" and "not very effective" replies.



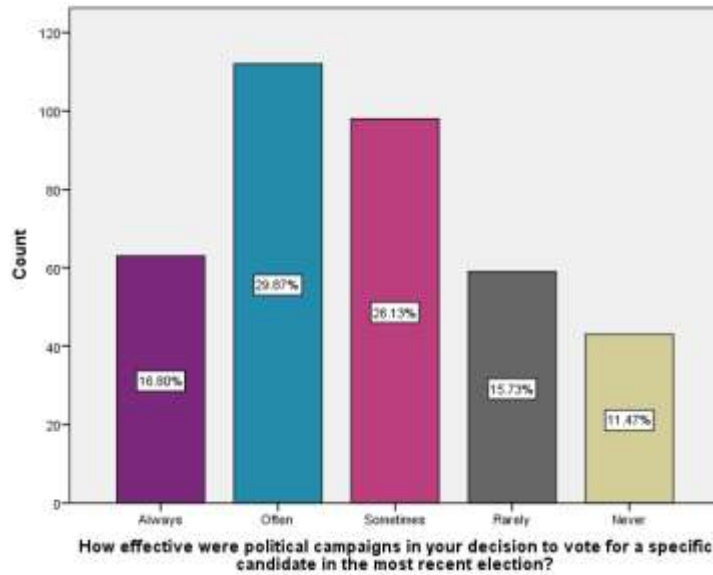
Above graph shows that 33.60% respondents agree that ordinary citizen has influence on political process, 28.27% respondents neither agree nor disagree that ordinary citizen has influence on political process, 19.73% respondents strongly agree that ordinary citizen has influence on political process, 10.40% respondents disagree that ordinary citizen has influence on political process and 8% respondents strongly disagree that ordinary citizen has influence on political process.



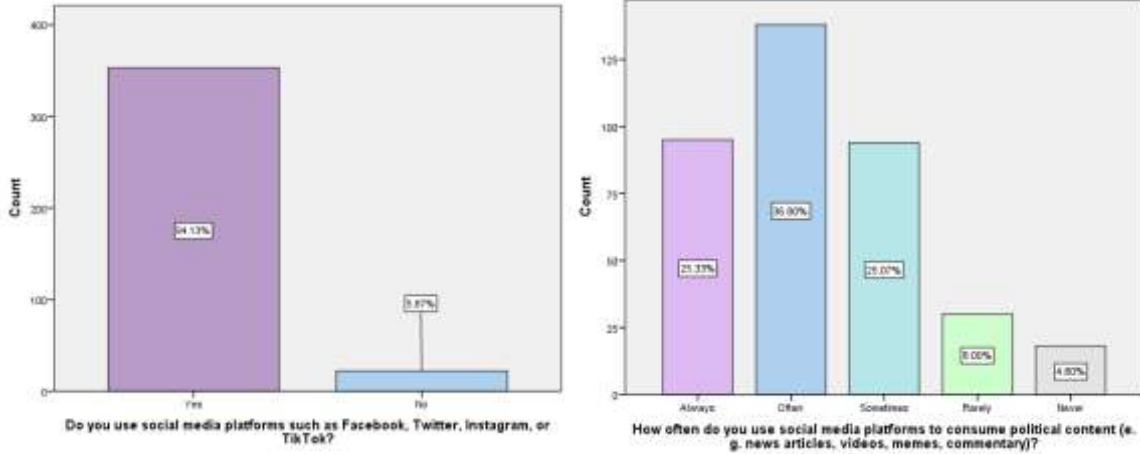
According to the above graph 56% respondents received any campaign material and 44% respondents didn't receive any campaign material.



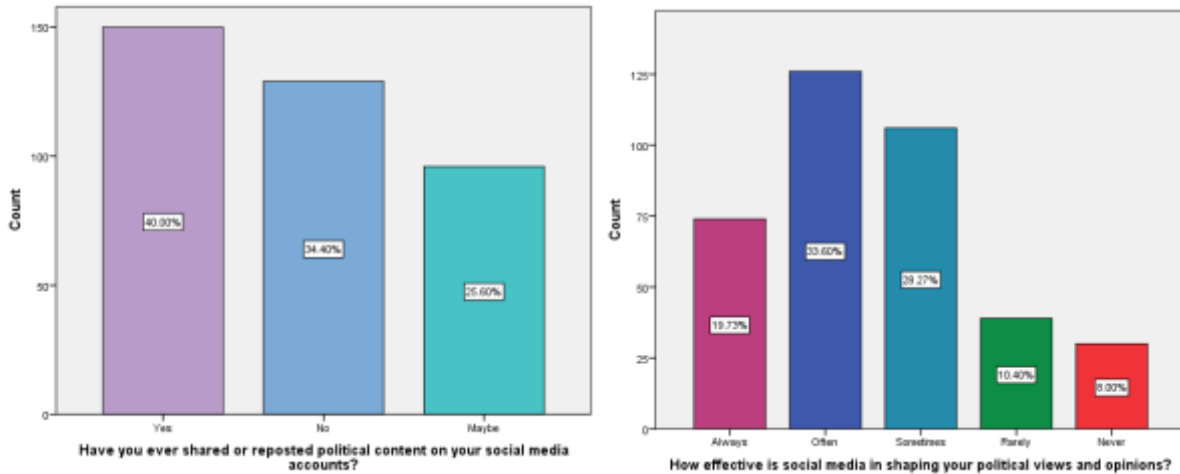
According to the above graph the political campaigns 12.53% were always effective in making decision to vote, 31.73% are often affected, sometimes 31.74% of the respondents are affected whereas 12.80% are rarely affected and 11.47% are never affected.



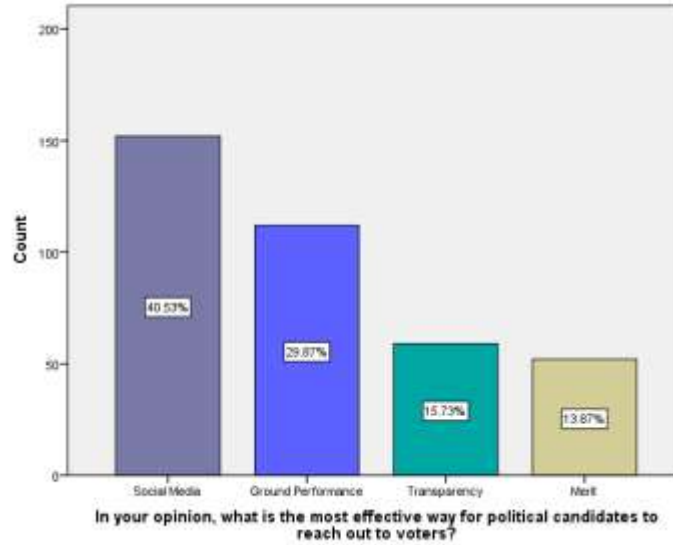
According to the above graph the political campaigns 16.80% were always effective in making decision to vote for a specific candidate, 29.87% are often affected, sometimes 26.13% of the respondents are affected whereas 15.73% are rarely affected and 11.47% are never affected.



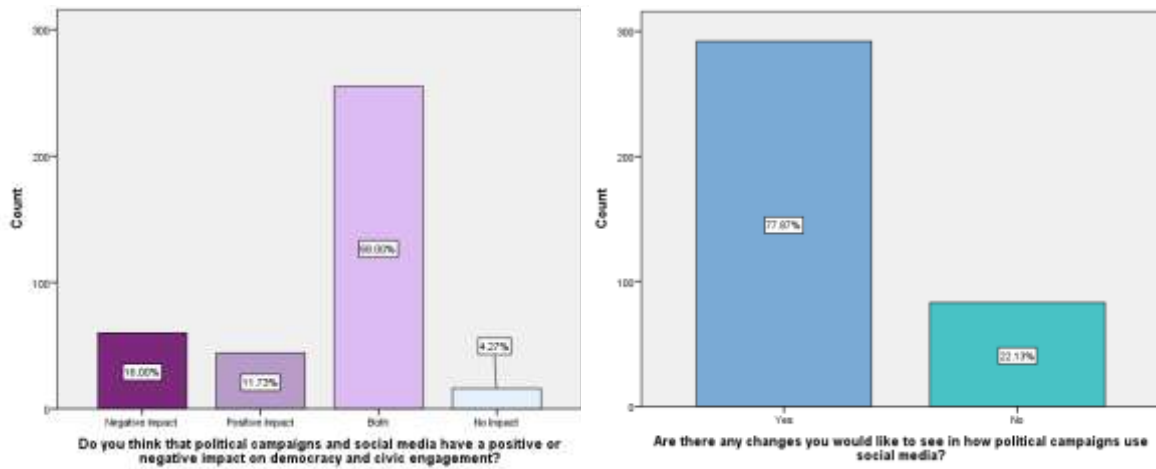
The above graph shows that 94.13% use social media platforms whereas 5.87% don't use social media. 25.33% respondents always use social media to consume political content, 36.80% often use, 25.07% use sometimes, 8% rarely use whereas 4.80% never use social media platforms to consume political content.



The data shows that people's participation with political content on social media varies and their views on its impact on politics are also different. Among those who took the survey, 40% regularly share political content on social media, suggesting that many are politically active online. A significant digital divide hinders online political activity; more than one-third of respondents (34.40%) report not using social media at all. Furthermore, 25.60 percent of people still don't know if they have submitted political content or not, which could indicate either a lack of self-awareness or passive information consumption. Findings show moderate confidence rather than strong conviction on perceptions of social media's usefulness in changing political views and beliefs. While a greater percentage (33.60%) see social media as frequently beneficial in influencing political beliefs, only 19.73% think it is always effective. Taken as a whole, these numbers indicate that more than 50% of those surveyed see social media as a powerful political tool. However, 28.27% think it's only effective occasionally, suggesting that its effectiveness is conditional or context-dependent. Less than 10% are pessimistic, with 8% thinking social media never works and 10.40% saying it rarely does. While social media does play a significant role in political discourse and the formation of opinions, the graph as a whole, shows that this impact is neither ubiquitous nor consistently acknowledged. Given that a large percentage of respondents do not use social media and that opinions on its usefulness are divided, it is clear that online platforms should be seen as supplementary to more conventional means of obtaining political information and engaging with the political process.



According to above graph, 40.53% respondents think that social media is the most effective way for political candidates to reach out to voters, ground performance (29.87%), transparency (15.73%) and 13.87% respondents say that reaching out the voters on merit is more effective.



The above graph shows that 16% respondents think the political campaigns and social media have a negative impact on democracy and civil engagement, positive impact (11.73%), 68% respondents think that political campaigns and social media have both negative and positive impact on democracy and civil engagement whereas 4.27% respondents think that there is no impact. 77.87% respondent want to see the changes how political campaigns use social media whereas 22.13% don't want to see any changes.

H1: Political effectiveness and online political activity are significantly related

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.413 ^a	4	.003
Likelihood Ratio	17.048	4	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.366	1	.000

N of Valid Cases	375		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 20.30.			

Table 2 shows that Pearson chi-square value is 0.03, the H1 is that Political effectiveness and online political activity are significantly related. By doing analysis value of $p = 0.03 < 0.05$. Hence it is proved that H1 is accepted, those who participate in political activities through online medium get effected by their political opinions or political affiliations.

H2: Online political activities have a significant relationship with real-life participation.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	97.529 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	95.398	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	100.265	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	97.269	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	375				
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 57.49.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

The Pearson chi-square test that looked at the correlation between political engagement online and offline is shown in Table 3. With a p-value ($p = 0.00$) below the conventional 0.05 threshold, the analysis reveals a chi-square significance value of 0.00. This proves that the two variables are significantly related to one another. Consequentially, H2 is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. These results provide credence to the idea that people's real-life political engagement is significantly related to their online political activity, such as following political pages and engaging with political content. Participation in online political venues is associated with a greater likelihood of respondents experiencing shifts in their offline political beliefs and affiliations. Based on these findings, it appears that political participation in the digital realm has real-world consequences. In sum, the data in the table show how internet platforms are increasingly influencing how people participate in and form opinions about politics in the modern day.

H3: Political participation and political efficacy have a significant relationship with each other.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.268 ^a	12	.014
Likelihood Ratio	24.799	12	.016
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.036	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	375		
a. 8 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .34.			

Table 4 shows that Pearson chi-square value is 0.014, the H3 is that Political participation and political efficacy have a significant relationship with each other. By doing analysis value of $p = 0.014 < 0.05$. Hence it is proved that H3 is accepted, those who believe that their decision influence the country's political decisions also effectively participate on social media campaign and vote for the best political party.

More and more evidence suggest that university students can effectively engage in political socialization about municipal government through online venues, especially social media. Research repeatedly demonstrates that social media plays a crucial role in political socialization by increasing political consciousness, knowledge of specific issues, and participation in civic life among young people, particularly students already immersed in digital environments (Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2014; Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012). Students learn about local policymaking, become more politically active, and acquire opinions about the governance process through learning about urban concerns like transportation, housing, environmental governance, and local policymaking (Boulianne, 2015). The use of social media by university students is positively correlated with political awareness and online civic participation, according to research from Global South contexts like Pakistan (Ahmad et al., 2023). This suggests that social media can play a role in shaping political orientations in areas where traditional civic education may not be available. While online spaces do a great job of getting people talking and thinking about politics, their influence on long-term offline activism is still uneven and frequently limited by things like algorithmic filtering, echo chambers, and false information (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Vaccari et al., 2016). The evidence reveals that political socialization through social media works on cognitive and attitude levels, especially when it comes to urban governance challenges. However, the effectiveness of this approach in fostering democracy is contingent upon factors such as digital literacy, multiple exposure, and supporting institutional environments.

Conclusion:-

The findings of this study demonstrate that political socialization through online spaces plays a critical role in shaping the political efficacy and civic engagement of university students in Islamabad, thereby contributing to broader processes of urban governance. The results indicate that students who actively use social media platforms to access political information and participate in political discourse exhibit higher levels of political awareness, confidence, and perceived ability to influence political decision-making. This highlights the growing importance of digital environments as key sites of political learning and engagement within urban contexts. Furthermore, while both undergraduate and graduate students show notable levels of digital political participation, online engagement emerges as a particularly strong predictor of political efficacy among students aged 18 to onward. This suggests that digitally mediated political socialization is not only widespread but also especially influential among more mature segments of the student population.

Importantly, the study finds that political engagement is not confined to virtual spaces but extends into real-world civic and political activities. A significant relationship exists between online political socialization and offline participation, as students frequently engage in activities such as sharing political content, interacting with elected representatives, visiting political websites, and participating in on-ground political actions. This transition from online engagement to offline participation reflects the integration of digital and urban political spheres. In the context of Islamabad's urban governance, social media platforms, particularly Facebook function as crucial intermediaries that connect students with political actors, public institutions, and governance processes. These platforms facilitate access to information, encourage dialogue, and enable direct or indirect interaction with decision-makers, thereby enhancing participatory governance mechanisms. Overall, the findings reinforce the argument that online political activity is a significant determinant of political efficacy and real-life engagement. Social media, as a central arena for contemporary political socialization, empowers urban youth by fostering informed, confident, and active citizenship. Consequently, digital platforms contribute to more responsive, participatory, and inclusive urban governance by integrating young citizens into the political and decision-making processes of the city.

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