

Mapping Interaction Patterns Of Pakistani Twitter Users For Political Communication

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Abstract

Twitter-based interactions are successful in generating political debate. This interactive platform contributes information about trending political issues. The particular concern of the current research was to examine the interaction patterns of Twitter users for political communication. The study looked at the political communication on Twitter through the lens of Uses and Gratification approach. By taking an example from Pakistan, the aim was to identify the perceived significance of Twitter as a platform for political communication and how the users used it to gratify their cognitive, personal integrative, and social integrative needs. Using a simple random sampling technique, a sample size of 400 respondents was collected from Twitter users in Pakistan. The findings affirmed that Twitter was considered significant for political interactions. Concerning needs gratification, the cognitive needs were the primary gratified needs for Twitter-based political communication. This pattern of use was unlike other countries where the main reason for using Twitter was to gratify personal and social integrative needs. Based on the findings, the study provided a profile of the users who used Twitter for political communication in Pakistan. The insights of the study will help enhance engagement and design political campaigns for social media, particularly Twitter.

Keywords: Political Communication; Twitter; Pakistan's Twitter Users; Uses and Gratification

Introduction

Twitter provides an opportunity for participatory power and mobilizing the public. The important feature of this platform is unless someone changes the privacy settings, the default setting of the posts as public. This feature makes it a valuable resource for information-seeking and sharing (Conover, Gonçalves, Ratkiewicz, Flammini, & Menczer, 2011). Likewise, the

feature of hosting real-time discussions and current topics made it a legitimate channel for knowledge and surveillance. Twitter users interact primarily through tweets, retweets, favorites, and mentions. Retweets allow users to rebroadcast the content shared by others with or without the endorsement of the content. Furthermore, hashtag annotations are used to spread the ideas across and to become a part trending discussion.

The perspective of situational awareness is useful for the contribution of information through Twitter (Vieweg, Hughes, Starbird & Palen). Jansen and Zhang (2009) found that electronic word of mouth micro-blogging is a process of distributing information from person to person. The users can explain their interests and share their thoughts with others in the form of microblog posts. Usually, a microblog post has the same length as of a standard newspaper headline which makes it easier to share and consume. Online participants who use a Twitter account to follow the stream of messages also have their group of followers. The Tweets can be restricted to a specific number of individuals or can be made available to everyone. Microblogging through Twitter remarkably became very popular as compared to other microblogging platforms (Reinhardt, Ebner, Beham & Costa, 2009). These patterns of interaction on Twitter provide a distinct way for political interactions.

The particular concern of the present research was to examine the interaction patterns of Twitter users for political communication. The theoretical foundation of the study was the Uses and Gratification approach that was first developed by Cantril (1942). The theory falls under the umbrella of the active audience concept where the consumers are considered powerful in making choices for the media text. Uses and Gratification offers a structure to comprehend how individuals consume media for their specific needs. In the process, they become more or less active and, consequently, their gratification may also increase or decrease.

The present study analyzed various interaction patterns of Pakistani Twitter users for political communication. It identified the significance assigned to Twitter-based interaction concerning political communication. It also focused on understanding as to how the gratification of cognitive, personal integrative, and social integrative needs of Pakistani Twitter users was linked to their political communication.

Political Micro-Blogging and Twitter: A Uses and Gratification Approach

Political microblogging has played an imperative role in determining online political communication with Twitter (Murthy, 2011). Twitter was effectively used in the US presidential campaign of Barack Obama. The successful use of Twitter during the 2008 campaign made it a legitimate channel for political communication and persuasion. In Iran, also, Twitter was widely used during the protest of the presidential election in 2009. The protestors were relying on Twitter to communicate and to protest. It was named the “Twitter Revolution”. The concept of the “Twitter Revolution” has been established and with the use of Hashtag, it helps protesters and citizens in organizing their effort (Stieglitz & Xuan, 2012). Like many social media platforms, the reach of Twitter is global.

Twitter has the capacity of information sharing with a multidimensional flow. It can also foster one-to-one and one-to-many modes of communication (Hutchins, 2016). Boukes (2019) found that the frequent use of Twitter positively affects the knowledge acquisition of current affairs whereas Facebook causes a decline in knowledge acquisition. An online survey (Kaye

& Johnson, 2004) conducted on politically interested internet users examined motivations for using the internet. The findings indicated that the audiences gratify their needs through the internet for seeking information on politics, social utility, and entertainment.

David and Williams (2013) demonstrated the significance of uses and gratifications that consumers get from Twitter. By conducting 25 in-depth interviews from Twitter users, the study found that the key uses and gratifications through Twitter were: social interaction, information-seeking, entertainment, communication, expression of opinion, surveillance, knowledge and information sharing. Ancu and Cozma (2009) also identified that the use of social media as a source of political information was mainly due to the desire for social interaction, followed by information-seeking. However, the information-seeking factor is considered weaker than the social interaction factor for creating an influence on social media users. Lariscy, Tinkham, and Sweetser (2013) found that the use of the internet is interrelated with political information efficacy, political information source, and participation in political debate. The research employed uses and gratification theory to measure gratification differences. The findings indicated that surveillance was central gratification for seeking political information.

According to Effing, Huibers, and Hillegersberg (2011), the changing internet scenario has empowered citizens so they may participate in the work of political representatives of the government. It is an obligated change from content consumers to content producers (prosumers) in which only a few people can become responsible for the contribution of information. These prosumers share their insight, and they maintain a relationship with other individuals. A large number of stories along photos and videos can be posted that have the power to grasp worldwide attention. It shows that social media takes a significant part in information, consumption, and circulation of news. Twitter users, who have experienced information and news sharing through Twitter and other social media sites, identified the medium as influential news sharing and referring resource. The distribution of information and the sharing of content is possible due to the participatory nature of social media touchpoints. Lee and Ma (2012) surveyed 203 university students and found that one of the most advantageous features of Twitter is that it supports user-generated content to online consumers which have turned active consumers into active producers.

On “Twittersphere”, chronological feed is available and able to follow tweets via hashtags allow seeing the tweets of journalists, news media, political actors, bloggers, and the public (McGregor, Mourão & Molyneux, 2017). However, the personal sharing of individuals may not reach a larger audience without the use of hashtags. These hashtags can form a cluster of conversational idioms. By using such idioms, Twitter users can publicly get involved in conversations. It enabled the participants to share their insight in online circles (Boyd, 2006). The political hashtags usually originate from information shared in real-time. This online activism emerged as a driving force that revolutionizes the political process. It shows that the blogosphere reflects public opinion rather than that of the political elite (Small, 2011). Due to these activities, users account form a node and it connects with other nodes forming a sub-network on Twitter. This makes Twitter more significant for analysis because it contains shared meaning because of interconnectedness developed among different nodes (Doğu, 2019). Tweets also reflect the political sentiments of voters and Twitter can mobilize action. Thus, for

leaders, the tweet is an ideal way to link with followers and motivate them to take part in the action (Parmelee & Bichard, 2011). Bermingham and Smeaton (2011) analyzed political sentiments and found that opinion poll on Twitter can be used to detect a future political trend. Twitter displays predictive quality through the inclusion of political sentiment.

Communication on Twitter is related to the trend the users wish to follow. By using the norm of hashtags, tweets related to that topic can be identified easily by other Twitter users. The norm of retweeting that post shows that other users found that post valuable (Fischer & Reuber, 2011). Survey-based research concluded that Twitter use in appropriate environment can satisfy the users and they continuously use Twitter for self-expression and self-documentation (Liu, Cheung, & Lee, 2010). However, the lack of formality and intimacy on Twitter, “depersonalize interactions” can create a context in which people do not consider the effect of their interactions on others (Ott, 2017).

The study by Johnson and Yang (2009) with a sample of 242 Twitter users, identified that the social motives and information motives are an important factor in using Twitter. It found that social motives are positively related to Twitter use whereas information motives are not significantly related to Twitter use. Twitter is primarily used for the satisfaction of social needs rather than as an information source (Johnson & Yang, 2009).

The Uses and Gratification approach provides a viable theoretical backing to the present research. This approach was first developed by (Cantril, 1942) to study the gratification of media content for the satisfaction of social and psychological needs. According to Richard West (2010), the Uses and Gratification Theory is an extension of Abraham Maslow’s needs and motivation theory, in which he proposed that active mass media users seek to gratify the hierarchy of needs. McQuail (1972) explained some needs and gratifications of media users. The idea of active mass media use was further explained by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) to understand how people actively use mass media for the communication process. Uses and gratification offer a structure to comprehend how those individuals who consume media for specific needs can become more or less active and how their gratification increase or decreases.

There were five basic assumptions of Uses & Gratification approach explained by Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch (1974).

1. Active audiences use media to attain certain goals.
2. The connection between gratification needs and the choice of a specific medium is related to audience members.
3. The media competes with other sources to satisfy needs.
4. The people are aware of media usage and their concern gives the researcher an accurate picture of its usage.
5. Only audiences can evaluate the significance of media content.

One way of explaining the goals of using the media is to link it with the needs. McQuail (1972) classified several needs and gratifications. One such need is the cognitive need, which is defined as the application of media for information-seeking, surveillance, and comprehension. The other one is personal integrative need where reinforcement of personal values, enhancing credibility and confidence are the key aspects. Likewise, social integrative need occurs when users consume media for companionship and social interactions.

Social media with the feature of interactivity makes it convenient to understand the needs of people that they develop during their engagement and interaction with media. The users monitor information. Their social and psychological needs are satisfied through surveillance gratification. Social interaction plays a significant part in the effectuation of any process. Twitter-based interaction can trigger powerful thinking as this social interaction is one too many. If Twitter users get quality content on Twitter than they persist to make use of it for social indulgence that is derived from interactivity. Twitter provides an interactive environment to users and they exchange information with each other which brings them social interaction. Users gratify their needs when they are involved in the process of using Twitter. This Twitter gratification also lies in the technical originality of Twitter function which facilitates publication and production of Tweets.

The present research is focused on the two aspects of the Uses and Gratification: a) audience can evaluate the significance of the media content b) audience use media to attain certain goals, that is, to satisfy their needs. These two aspects of the theory are critical in understanding the use of Twitter for political communication in Pakistan. The following research questions were constructed to measure these aspects:

RQ1: Are Twitter-based interactions considered significant for political communication by Pakistan's Twitter users?

RQ2: How political communication through Twitter helped the users in Pakistan to gratify their cognitive needs?

RQ3: How political communication through Twitter helped in the gratification of personal integrative needs of Twitter users in Pakistan?

RQ4: How political communication through Twitter helped in the gratification of the social integrative needs of Pakistan's Twitter users?

Method

The present study used a survey method to collect data. The political communication on Twitter was operationalized as monitoring of political information and participation in recent political issues through tweets, retweets, hashtags, and mentions. The interactions on twitter were further operationalized as the purposeful use of Twitter for participation, information-seeking, and news sharing related to politics. Keeping in view the identified political interaction patterns through the previously discussed literature and uses and gratification theory, a 20-item questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire used a frequency scale for calculating frequency and the 5-point Likert scale to calculate agreement and disagreement.

Additionally, demographic information of the respondents was collected through 4 items: namely, gender, age, education, and profession. The age was categorized as; 18-24, 25-31, 32-38, and 39 and above. The gender categories were male and female. The education was categorized as; matriculation, intermediate (12 years of education), graduate (16 years of education), post-graduate (18 years of education), and Ph. D. The identified occupations in the questionnaire were: student, teacher, journalist, politician, and other.

The questionnaire was distributed online using a snowball sampling technique to collect data. The data was collected from various respondents. A total of 400 valid questionnaires,

fully completed with all the information, were collected. Since the data was collected before the election of 2018, therefore, the election 2013 was taken as a point of reference in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The majority of the respondents, 49.75 %, were between 18-24 years of age. 30% belonged to 25-31, 12.75% belonged to 32-38 and only 7.50% of respondents were from 39 and above age group. Concerning gender, 68.26 % of the respondents were male and 31.74% were female. The education information showed that 2% of participants were qualified up to matriculation, 9.25% reported that they were intermediate, 51.25% were graduates, 36.25 % were postgraduates, and 1.25% of respondents were Ph.D. degree holder. In terms of profession, most of the respondents, 49.3%, were students. 10% were teachers, 7.3 % were journalists, and 3.3% of politicians also filled the form. 30% of the respondents chose other as the category of their profession. Since the other category was not open-ended, the profession of the respondents could not be determined.

The majority of the respondents were using Twitter frequently. 24.0 % of respondents reported that they use Twitter very frequently, 36.3% claimed that they are frequently using Twitter. The 30.5% were using Twitter occasionally, while only 9.3% of the participants who responded to the survey were using Twitter rarely. The data analysis of each research question is discussed in the following.

RQ1: Are Twitter-based interactions considered significant for political communication by Pakistan's Twitter users?

The significance of Twitter-based interactions was measured in terms of its effect on offline political participation. The other aspects of the signs included the influence of such interactions on the government's reforms initiatives and the involvement of news organizations in these interactions. The respondents were also asked about the influential power of Twitter during the 2013 general elections in Pakistan. Table 1 showed the data from responses.

Table 1: Significance of Twitter-based Interactions for political communication

	Strongly Disagree <i>f (%)</i>	Disagree <i>f (%)</i>	Neutral <i>f (%)</i>	Agree <i>f (%)</i>	Strongly Agree <i>f (%)</i>	Total
Political participation on Twitter can affect offline participation in politics	11(2.8%)	69(17.3%)	129(32.3%)	145(36.3%)	46(11.5%)	400 (100.0%)
Political interactions on Twitter can influence government to bring reforms	27(6.8%)	94(23.5%)	115(28.8%)	134(33.5%)	30(7.5%)	400(100.0%)
Twitter has facilitated political communication by involvement of news organizations	12(3.0%)	24(6.0%)	85(21.3%)	221(55.3%)	58(14.5%)	400(100.0%)
Twitter was an influential medium for political communication during 2013 General Elections	8(2.0%)	31(7.8%)	67(16.8%)	203(50.8%)	91(22.8%)	400(100.0%)

The data shown in Table 1 indicated that interactions based on Twitter were considered significant for political communication. The majority of the respondents believed that political participation in Twitter can affect offline participation in politics. These online interactions influence the government to bring reforms. The political communication on Twitter has been facilitated through the involvement of news organizations. Also, the respondents considered it an influential medium for political communication during the 2013 General Elections in Pakistan.

RQ2: How political communication through Twitter helped the users in Pakistan to gratify their cognitive needs?

In the questionnaire, 5 questions were constructed to measure respondents' gratification of cognitive needs through politically oriented interactions on Twitter. The cognitive needs are operationalized as the use of Twitter for information-seeking, surveillance, and comprehension.

Table 2 shows the corresponding data for each question.

Table 2: Gratification of cognitive needs for political communication

	Very Frequently <i>f</i> (%)	Frequently <i>f</i> (%)	Occasionally <i>f</i> (%)	Rarely <i>f</i> (%)		Total
Monitor political information on Twitter	125(31.3%)	135(33.8%)	108(27.0%)	32(8.0%)		400(100.0%)
	Strongly Disagree <i>f</i> (%)	Disagree <i>f</i> (%)	Neutral <i>f</i> (%)	Agree <i>f</i> (%)	Strongly Agree <i>f</i> (%)	
The use of Twitter allowed to construct perception about political issues	83(20.8%)	36(9.0%)	66(16.5%)	184(46.0%)	31(7.8%)	400(100.0%)
The use of Twitter allowed to focus on the recent political trend	52(13.0%)	15(3.8%)	57(14.3%)	193(48.3%)	83(20.8%)	400(100.0%)
Knowledge about political issues has grown due to Twitter usage	26(6.5%)	48(12.0%)	81(20.3%)	182(45.5%)	63(15.8%)	400(100.0%)
Twitter use improved my information- seeking behavior	18(4.5%)	38(9.5%)	89(22.3%)	189(47.3%)	66(16.5%)	400(100.0%)

The data showed that Twitter users actively gratify their cognitive needs through Twitter-based political communication. The majority of the respondents reported that they frequently monitor political information on Twitter that allowed them to focus on recent political trends. They construct their perception about the political issue which ultimately improved their knowledge and information-seeking behavior about political issues.

RQ3: How political communication through Twitter helped in the gratification of personal integrative needs of Twitter users in Pakistan?

The personal integrative needs were measured in terms of frequency of tweeting, retweeting, and favoriting the tweets about political issues. Furthermore, the agreement for political expression, political influence, public following, and the use of Twitter as a public forum for democratic political meetings, provided an insight into the dynamics of personal integrative needs (See, Table 3).

Table 3: Gratification of personal integrative needs for political communication

	Very Frequently <i>f (%)</i>	Frequently <i>f (%)</i>	Occasionally <i>f (%)</i>	Rarely <i>f (%)</i>		Total
Send tweets related to the political content	77(18.8%)	115(28.9%)	152(38.2%)	56(13.0%)		400(100.0%)
Retweet about political issues	87(21.8%)	123(30.8 %)	138(34.5%)	52(13.0 %)		400(100.0%)
Favorite tweets about political issues	92(23.0%)	115(28.8 %)	126(31.5 %)	67(16.8 %)		400(100.0%)
	Strongly Disagree <i>f (%)</i>	Disagree <i>f (%)</i>	Neutral <i>f (%)</i>	Agree <i>f (%)</i>	Strongly Agree <i>f (%)</i>	
The use of Twitter allowed to express political views	67(16.8%)	37(9.3 %)	79(19.8%)	144(36.0%)	73(18.3%)	400(100.0%)
Participation through Twitter creates political influence	16(4.0%)	49(12.3%)	80(20.0%)	208(52.0%)	47(11.8%)	400(100.0%)
Public following on Twitter is helpful for politicians	18(4.5%)	56(14.0%)	69(17.3%)	187(46.8%)	70(17.5%)	400(100.0%)
Twitter is a public forum for democratic political meetings	24(6.0%)	81(20.3%)	108(27.0%)	148(37.0%)	39(9.8%)	400(100.0%)

The response analysis showed that Pakistani Twitter users occasionally gratify their personal integrative needs through Twitter-based political communication. The majority of the users believed that they express their political views through Twitter by sending tweets and retweets but their frequency of expressing political views was occasional. Mostly, the respondents reported that public participation through Twitter can create political influence in Pakistan as Twitter users considered it a public forum for democratic political discussions which was helpful for the politicians as well.

RQ4: How political communication through Twitter helped in the gratification of the social integrative needs of Pakistan’s Twitter users?

The data in Table 4 showed that Twitter users occasionally gratify their social integrative needs through Twitter-based political communication. Social integrative needs were operationalized as consuming content on Twitter for companionship and social interactions.

Table 4.1: Gratification of social integrative needs for political communication

	Very Frequently <i>f (%)</i>	Frequently <i>f (%)</i>	Occasionally <i>f (%)</i>	Rarely <i>f (%)</i>		Total
Participate in online political discussions	89(22.3%)	112(28.0%)	142(35.5%)	57(14.3%)		400(100.0%)
	Strongly Disagree <i>f (%)</i>	Disagree <i>f (%)</i>	Neutral <i>f (%)</i>	Agree <i>f (%)</i>	Strongly Agree <i>f (%)</i>	
Hashtags on Twitter allowed to participate in recent political issues	25(6.3%)	42(10.5%)	113(28.3%)	170(42.5%)	50(12.5%)	400(100.0%)
Twitter enhanced relationship between political elites and citizens	29(7.3%)	53(13.3%)	96(24.0%)	175(43.8%)	47(11.8%)	400(100.0%)
Twitter provide opportunities to interact with political elites	28(7.00%)	67(16.75%)	82(20.50%)	178(44.50%)	45(11.25%)	400(100.0%)
Twitter has enabled participants to share their political insight	5(1.3%)	15(3.8%)	63(15.8%)	242(60.5%)	75(18.8%)	400(100.0%)

Most of the Twitter users responded that they participate in online political discussions through Hashtags, but their frequency of participation was occasional. Therefore, it can be deduced that the Twitter users in Pakistan were using Twitter for their political interactions mainly for their cognitive needs than personal integrative and social integrative needs. However, the majority of the respondents believed that Twitter-based interactions enhanced their relationships with politicians as it enabled them to share their insights with their online circle.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research aimed to examine the interaction patterns of Pakistani Twitter users, specifically, for their political communication. This perceptual study gauged the responses of Pakistani Twitter users to determine the significance of Twitter twitter-based on for their need gratification; that are, cognitive, personal integrative, and social integrative needs. According to Johnson & Yang (2009), Twitter was formed for social interactions and to post updates of what a user is doing currently. However, in the current study, the selected respondents from Pakistan were primarily using Twitter as a source for information-seeking and knowledge.

According to survey findings, the majority of the participants reported that online political participation on Twitter affected their offline participation in politics. The study conducted by Sturmer & Simon (2004) showed the same insight. It stated that online communities can form active political followers and that online political participation can indirectly or directly affect offline mobilization. Varnali & Gorgulu (2015) argued that the relationship between offline political sentiments and online engagement was not instructive

because political participation and influence may or may not be considered as a fundamental instrument for this relationship.

The significance of Twitter-based interactions was confirmed by the respondents in the present research. Firstly, most of the respondents believed that political interactions on Twitter influence the government to bring reforms. The finding was in line with the findings of the study by Velde, Meijer, and Homburg (2015), which stated that public participation was a central component of healthy democratic discussion that can target and influence the government to bring reforms in implemented public policies. Secondly, the survey responses showed that the majority of the respondents believed that Twitter has facilitated their political communication through increased involvement of news organizations in such interactions. The study conducted by Broersma & Graham (2012) also explained the interactions of Twitter users with news media organizations established a relationship between them. Twitter users contribute to developing stories through their participation. Lastly, Twitter users think that Twitter was an influential medium for political communication during the 2013 General Elections in Pakistan. The influential nature of Twitter concerning elections was documented in many studies. For example, the study conducted by Parmelee & Bichard (2011) stated that the tweets reflect the political sentiments of voters and Twitter can mobilize action during electoral campaigns.

The data corresponding to cognitive need gratification, for political interactions, revealed that majority of the Twitter users frequently monitor political information on Twitter. Other research (Lee 2013, Lin 1996) has also highlighted the use of Twitter for satisfying psychological needs through surveillance. However, another study (2010) identified that interactivity and responsiveness were more significant than the cognitive aspects. Confirming the analysis of the previous research (Earl, McKee Hurwitz, Mejia Mesinas, Tolan, & Arlotti, 2013; Fischer and Reuber 2011, Murthy 2011, Varnali and Gorgulu 2015), the present study noted that most of the respondents believed that the use of Twitter allowed them to construct perception about political issues and to focus on the recent political trend. Moreover, the current research found that the knowledge and information-seeking behavior of the majority of Twitter users improved due to their Twitter usage. The results of studies conducted by Kaye and Johnson (2004) and David and Williams (2013) also revealed that audiences gratify their needs through the internet for political information seeking.

Concerning personal integrative needs, most of the respondents in the present research highlighted that the use of Twitter allowed them to express political views. This phenomenon has already been discussed in the previous studies as well (Holton, Coddington and Zuniga 2013, Liu, Cheung and Lee 2010, Nardi, et al. 2004). These studies identified that Twitter use in inappropriate environments can satisfy users and they continuously use Twitter for self-expression. It is noteworthy to point out that, in research (Tumasjan, et al. 2010), the frequent users of Twitter were observed to get involved in contesting political discussions. However, in the case of Pakistani users, most of the users only occasionally get involved in the political discussion through tweets, retweets, and favorite tweets. Yet, somehow most of them still believed that public participation through Twitter is creating political influence in Pakistan. Additionally, the respondents believed that following politicians on Twitter were helpful as they considered Twitter as a public forum for democratic political meetings.

The findings of the present research showed that Twitter users occasionally gratify their social integrative needs through Twitter-based political communication. This validated his understanding of previous researches (Deller, 2011; Fischer and Reuber 2011; Small, 2011) from Pakistan's context. Additionally, most of the respondents think that the use of Twitter enhanced relationships between political elites and citizens in Pakistan. It provided them opportunities to interact with political elites. The studies conducted by Ausserhofer & Maireder (2013) and Bruns (2012) also showed similar findings. They suggested that due to the huge following of political parties, this medium for political communication has established a link between citizens and political actors by engaging them in political discourse. Another research on Twitter through the Uses and Gratification approach identified that the primary use of Twitter was for the satisfaction of social needs rather than information needs (Johnson & Yang, 2009). In the present research, however, the more frequent use for Twitter was for information seeking.

The current study provided an insight into the gratification of the need of the selected respondents. The findings of the present study suggested that Twitter is significant for political communication. Unlike the users of the other countries, the interaction patterns adopted by Pakistani Twitter users for political communication were primarily for information-seeking. Despite using a social media platform, their reinforcement of personal values and social interactions were at the secondary level.

The study makes no claim for generalization of the data on a larger population. Due to snowball sampling, most of the respondents who filled the questionnaire were young, educated people, mostly students. Yet, this is the main group that actively uses social media for their interactions. The findings of the study can be used to make a probe into the psychographics of Pakistani Twitter users. The profile of the Twitter users in Pakistan for political communication, as emerged from the data of the current study, showed that:

a) They understand the significance of Twitter for their political communication.

Their online discussions influence their offline discussions. They believe that the platform has the potential to influence the government's reforms initiatives. Also, their reach and interaction with news organizations are facilitative here.

b) They use Twitter mainly to satisfy their cognitive needs.

Through Twitter, they can monitor, and understand political information. It allowed them to construct their perception concerning political issues and trends.

c) They use the platform for personal and social integrative needs, but the main emphasis remained on the cognitive needs.

The insights of the current study can be a starting point for an in-depth analysis of the Twitter profile of politically motivated users in Pakistan. The detailed understanding of the dynamics of social media use through focus group discussions, interviews, and large-scale surveys require further investigation.

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