# Seeing Is Believing: Social Networking, Media Exposure And Education As Determiners Of Universality Diversity Orientation

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## ABSTRACT

To familiarize oneself with the outgroups, in the modern world people take help from print and electronic media such as newspapers, and social media. Keeping in view the current scenario, the present study examined the interrelationship of usage of social networking sites (SNSs), access to international (TV or YouTube) channels, and education with Universality diversity orientation (UDO). 385 educated residents of Peshawar between 18 to 41 years comprised the sample. Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale, Short Form (MGUDS-S; Miville et al., 1999; Fuertes et al., 2000) and Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS; Olufadi, 2015) were applied on the sample online. Result revealed significant positive correlation between usage of SNSs and scores on UDO. Significant differences were also found between national TV viewers and international channel viewers on UDO. Significant differences were also found in UDO scores for different level of education, i.e., post graduates scored higher on UDO. This research explicates the need to broaden the horizon for the students through participation in the globalized world. Media industry should also foster UDO through its content by including different ethnic/racial groups in the programs.

**Keywords:** Universality diversity, Social networking sites, mediated intergroup contact, out-group, media exposure

## Introduction

Technology has made a drastic change in the world by making it a global village, that is, now social distance has surpassed the boundaries of physical distance. Advances in communication industry with the invention of computers and mobiles have altered older ways of communication.

Instead of communicating through postal mail, telephone or by in person visits, internet provides instant contact even with people who would not have a chance, or inclination otherwise to see each other (McKenna & Bargh, 1999). Advent of internet created novel platforms like social networking sites which replaced chat rooms and multiuser dungeons (MUDs). SNSs appearing in 1997 are now a part of modern life, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc. As SNSs are used worldwide, these sites help individuals interact not only with their own groups but also with the outgroups (Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

People making use of SNSs can be using it for the need of affiliation, as Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs, places relationships with others as the third most important need. SNSs provide an opportunity to establish relationship through virtual communities of Internet. Similarly, acquisition of information along with knowledge about different perspectives on national and international issues also motivates people to join SNS. Initially, social media was mainly used to interact with family, and friends but with time it broadened its horizon and individuals started to interact with distinct racial/ethnic groups. Social media helps an online dialogue without the need of a face to face interaction (Ghatak & Singh, 2019).

Due to the invention and spread of Television the audio-visual content of media now exert more influence on the minds. Both television and internet help individuals in understanding other civilizations and providing education. One prominent change can be found in attitudes due to media which consequently affect their behaviour (Burton, 2002). The objective of this study is to find whether being exposed to international media and SNSs usage develop positive attitudes toward outgroups as well as to see the role of education in positive attitude towards outgroup. These research questions were framed keeping in mind various perspectives like, Contact hypothesis of Allport (1954), theories of mass media (such as media dependency theory, Ball-Rokeach, 1976), cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1969) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2002). Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1979) should be understood first before discussing contact hypothesis. Social identity theory assumes that on the basis of similarities and differences, people categorize themselves into groups, which serve as their social identity. The differences found from the other group are then utilized for self enhancement purpose by having a negative view of those who are considered as different. To counteract the effect of social identity theory, Contact hypothesis postulates that a powerful method of minimizing this bias and increasing positive attitudes towards other communities a direct interpersonal contact should be provided with the outgroups while keeping certain conditions fulfilled. The conditions include equal status, common beliefs, collaboration, institutional support, voluntary communication, future engagement opportunities, and equal members. Bar-On et al., (2000) have also showed that physical contact can increase mutual acceptance. As studies have already proved the impact of direct contact in fostering positive attitudes towards outgroups, a few studies were also conducted to check the role of mediated contact in intergroup interactions. Mediated settings with reference to intergroup contact theory were investigated by Schiappa et al. (2005, 2006) and called this point of view, Parasocial Contact hypothesis (PCH). Results revealed that in a TV series of gay men, the extent

of exposure was inversely correlated with the sexual bias of the audience. Likewise, Ortiz and Harwood (2007) also concluded that television exposure of different sexual preferences individuals shown in positive interaction with each other created positive attitude towards the outgroup. They stated that mediated intergroup contact is the best method of contact to facilitate intergroup relation. They stated that intergroup relations are facilitated in the best manner by mediated intergroup contact. The particular studies pose a question of understanding the international media's impact on the audience of Pakistan. International media comprises of any non-native content available on TV, YouTube and other websites that can be easily accessed via mobile phones or computers.

Electronic media namely TV, movies and SNSs exert a significant impact on socialization and ways of looking at the world. Media dependency theory of Ball-Rokeach (1976) states, that media content alters the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of individuals as people depend overly on media. Likewise, cultivation theory of Gerbner (1969, Gerbner et al., 2002) explains the effects of contact that the world view slowly alters as the time passes and resembles what is seen on television. In light of Bandura's theory (2002) individuals have the ability to imitate others. Observing others facilitate the internalization of cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses to settings that may not be directly encountered. Vicarious experience is attained due to observation of models in the media as well as through direct human environment enables acquiring those responses which individuals can imitate in similar situations. This perspective can be extended to TV displays of intergroup interactions, that is, when audience observes positive intergroup interaction on TV they can imitate positive intergroup behaviours. We can safely infer from these theoretical approaches that Pakistani audience of international channels will believe the outgroup portrayals' on media than national channel audience. The belief on the international content as the actual depiction of outgroup will have a significant impact in framing Pakistani audience attitudes toward outgroups. The present study will argue about the way SNS use and TV, can affect the positive attitude towards outgroup known as universal diverse orientation (UDO). UDO is a sense of relatedness among people with identical and non-identical social backgrounds. UDO is a sense of belongingness with people belonging to similar and dissimilar social backgrounds.

Along with the exposure to the media, education can also exert its influence in developing positive attitude towards outgroup. Hyman and Wright, (1979) contended that education has a strong liberating impact on intergroup attitudes. This perspective assumes that advanced schooling promotes a more enlightened world outlook, with equality and tolerance towards the ethnic out-groups. According to Hello et al. (2002), education can also be thought of as knowledge and experiences that have a liberalizing impact. Schuman et al. (1998) stated that among Whites' the highly qualified showed less racial stereotypical tendencies than less qualified individuals. This result is an indication that education contributes in the expansion of Universality diversity orientation. Mindful of the importance of education and insufficient literature on this, in the current study, differences are sought in UDO on the basis of education.

## Rationale

Although research on intergroup contact has proved that direct contact is the finest mean to alter intergroup attitudes (Allport, 1954), but new technologies in media in the form of news reports and SNS made people depend on them heavily which also change these attitudes. As the insight people get through media about the out-groups, researchers, interested in studying intergroup contact, have expanded their research to the impacts of mediated contact (Paolini, 2004; Schiappa, 2006; Turner et al., 2007) and revealed positive outcomes of intergroup attitudes through indirect contact. Schwab et al. (2018) also revealed that virtual contact can lead to positive outgroup attitudes. Therefore, the present research predicted significant differences in UDO among international channel viewers compared to the national channel viewers. It was also predicted that international channel viewers are more likely to show positive attitudes towards outgroup. Similarly differences were also sought among different level of education on UDO scores.

**Objectives**
1. To find out the interrelationship between social networking and media exposure with universality diversity orientation.
2. To differentiate the scores of universality diversity orientation among different levels of education.

**Hypotheses**
1. There will be positive correlation between use of social networks and universality diversity orientation.
2. International channels viewers will score high on universality diversity orientation scale than those who watch national channels only.
3. Universality diversity orientation will be higher in more educated individuals than the less educated ones.

**Sample**
A convenient sample of 385 individuals was selected for the present study from different colleges and universities of Peshawar. The sample consisted of 149 males ( ) and 236nfemales (), between 18 - 41 years (M = 23.16, S.D = 5.53). The sample varied in education, that is, n= 119 intermediate, n=101 under graduates, n=89 graduates and n=76 post graduate students. Likewise, n= 169 watched only national channels (43.9 %), whereas n= 216 (56.1 %) watched both national and international channels as well as you tube channels. Those individuals were included in the sample who had exposure to media. Uneducated and with no media access individuals were not included in the sample.

**Instruments**

**1. Demographic Sheet**
The demographic information sheet asked participants about their age, sex, education, favourite TV channels: national and international, including YouTube channels and the time they spent watching them.

**2.      Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale short form; (Feurtes et al., 2000)**

Universality Diversity Scale short ( Feurtes et al., 2000) is a 15 item  6-point Likert scale with response options strongly disagree scored as 1 to strongly agree scored as 6. While answering individuals have to rate their-selves according to the present time. The subscales include; Diversity of Contact, Relativistic Appreciation and Comfort with Differences subscale. The original and short form correlation (0.77), shows similarity between both the versions along with  mutual. Test-re-test reliability of the scale is 0.88. Reliabilities for the subscales are .82 for diversity of contact sub-scale, and 0.59, and .92 for the relativistic appreciation sub-scale, and comfort with differences sub-scales respectively. MGUDS-S shows its convergent validity (0.48, p<0.01) with Autonomy subscale of the White Ethnic Identity Attitudes Scale (WRIAS; Helms & Carter, 1990). Higher scores reflect better understanding of similarities and differences between individuals suggesting more chances to pursue interactions with a variety of others.

**3.      Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS; Olufadi, 2015)**

The (Olufadi, 2015) is an 11 point scale consisting of 29 items. SONTUS includes five subscales: Relaxation and free periods with 9 items; Academic-related periods (6 items); Public-place-related use (6 items); Stress-related periods includes (6 items), and Motives for use (4 items). Coefficient alpha of the full scale is .93 whereas, for subscales it ranges between 0.83 and 0.93. SONTUS shows convergent validity with Internet Addiction Test and Facebook Addiction Scale, with a CFI 0.95. This scale determines time spent on the social media. Scores reflect individual's standing as low, average, high or extremely high on social networking sites.

**Procedure**

As the study was conducted during Covid-19 data was collected online. The demographic sheet, Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale and Social Networking Time Usage Scale were entered into the Google Form and a link was generated. The link was then shared with family, friends and relatives as well as on social media sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Participants were requested to further disseminate the form link. Instructions clearly specified that the form can only be filled by the residents of Peshawar. After clicking the link, first informed consent appeared that included information about the rights of the participation. Maintaining the anonymity of the participants, the survey hardly took 10 minutes to complete.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1** Psychometric Properties of (M-GUDS-S and SONTUS

| Measure | M | SD | Range | Coefficient alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| M-GUDS-S | 67.48 | 10.21 | 52-83 | .95 |
| SONTUS | 14.51 | 2.30 | 11-19 | .86 |

Note: M-GUDS-S = Miville-Guzman Universality Diversity Scale-Short Form, SONTUS= Social Networking Time Use Scale.

Table 1 shows high reliabilities .96 and .86 for both M-GUDS-S and SONTUS respectively suggesting their suitable for the present study.

**Table 2** Mean, standard deviation and interscale correlation between Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale (short from) and Social Networking Time Use Scale.

| Variable | n | M | SD | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. M-GUDS-S | 385 | 67.48 | 10.21 | - | |
| 2. SONTUS | 385 | 14.51 | 2.30 | .86** | - |

Note: (M-GUDS-S) = Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale (short from); SONTUS = Social Networking Time Use Scale; **p<.01

Table 2 shows that use of social networks and acceptance of the outgroups are significantly positive (r = 0.86; p < 0.01) correlated.

**Table 3** Differences between national and international channel viewers on MGUDS-S

| Measure | N, IntN, & YT channels (n = 216) | | National channels (n = 169) | | t(383) | p | Cohen's d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | | | |
| MGUDS-S | 75.00 | 6.46 | 7.88 | 4.41 | -30.80 | 0.00 | 3.09 |

Note: MGUDS-S = Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale (short from);N= National channels; IntN= International channels; YT=You Tube; p < 0.01

Table 3 shows significant difference at $p < 0.01$ between national and international channel viewers with high UDO scores (M=75.00) for participants watching international channels than those watching national channels only (M=57.88).

**Table 4** One way ANOVA showing differences in MGUDS-S on the basis of qualification of participants

| Measure | Education of the participants | | | | | | | | F | η² | Post hoc |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Intermediate | | Graduation in progress | | Graduated | | Post Graduate | | | | |
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | | | |
| MGUDS-S | 57.70 | 4.22 | 63.91 | 6.33 | 76.69 | 5.68 | 77.92 | 4.66 | 353.05 | 0.73 | 1<2<3<4 |

Note: MGUDS-S = Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale; Inter = Intermediate; Grad_prog = Graduation in progress; Grad = Graduated, P_Grad = Post Graduation; $p < 0.01$.

Table 4 shows significant differences in UDO scores based on education, with mean differences among enrolled BS students(M=63.19) and intermediate students (M=57.70). Likewise, differences are evident between graduated (M=76.69) and those who are still pursuing their graduation. Whereas, only a minor mean difference is seen between graduate and post-graduate students.

**Discussion**

The present research investigated the relation between social networking, media exposure with UDO and the differences education can bring in the UDO scores of individuals. The first research hypothesis was confirmed with strong positive correlation ($r = 0.86$; $p < 0.01$) between SNSs usage and UDO scores. The findings of our research stands contrary to the contention that social networking sites lack actual social presence hence it cannot influence prejudice (Kampf, 2011). Intergroup contact hypothesis, asserts four aspects (equal status, intergroup collaboration, shared interests and the support of social and institutional authorities Allport, 1954) which can help reduce the antagonism among the groups. Coming into contact with outgroups exert positive influence on a person's cognition (learning about outgroups), behaviour (giving a chance to positive contact experiences), and emotions (developing friendships, reducing negative emotions) (Pettigrew, 1998). Tausch and Hewstone, (2010) stated that the intergroup contact reduces bias by minimizing anxiety/threat)and inducing empathy. Similarly, in a meta-analysis Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) revealed that individuals who went through a carefully structured contact showed surprising reduction in bias. They also contended the conditions asserted by Allport can be consedered as encouraging, instead of being necessary for prejudice reduction. Amichai-Hamburger (2008) advocated that structured and supervised intergroup online contact can also improve intergroup

conflict. The present study also indicated that social networking can help develop positive attitudes towards outgroup. In electronic contact status of the individuals is not as vivid as in real encounters so group members' participates more in discussions regardless of their status (Spears et al., 2002). McKenna et al. (2002) stated as compared to real encounters electronically mediated interaction inhibits the activation of stereotypes' which reduces anxiety in people. McKenna et al., (2005) revealed that socially anxious individuals performed as actively as their non-anxious competitors in online tasks. Online interaction lacks situational aspects which can increase or decrease anxiety feelings in social settings like, quick on the spot response, and feeling of being under observation. That is why the participants find it easy to manage online interaction as they feel comfortable and see themselves in charge of the situation. It means online interaction via internet instead of physical interaction, may motivate individuals to share their intimate information with the ones they are attached to.

Two basic aspects of communication, that is, disclosing oneself (Pettigrew, 1998) and accommodating ones communication (Walther, 1996) provide theoretical framework for how social media use could improve intergroup relationships. As social cues are reduced in computer mediated communication, people start sharing personal information which in turn builds positive relationships with others (Joinson, 2001). Similarly, in contact accommodation, in computer-mediated communication people have a chance and time to improve or modify their self-presentation and communication to impress others (Walther, 2007). As compared to the face-to-face interactions, it is likely that individuals possess high degree of both self-disclosure and communication accommodations during online communication with outgroup members.

The second assumption of the study was also approved by the findings, that is, exposure to international channels increased UDO scores (M=75.00) than exposure to just national channels (M=57.88). Mastro and Tukachinsky (2011) have also suggested that exposure to the positive portrayals of outgroup member can positively influence attitudes toward outgroups. Riaz and Arif, (2017) also found a profound impact of foreign TV channels on the lifestyle of people of Pakistan. Their study found that being exposed to diversity increased the UDO scores, suggesting that Pakistani audience watching diverse International channels showed higher scores on UDO towards foreign individuals than only national channel viewers. Studies conducted on physical contact also reveal same findings. The basic variable in these studies was the number of outgroup' acquaintances and friends that developed positive attitudes towards the outgroup (Christian & Lapinski, 2003). For example, Voci and Hewstone's (2003), revealed a positive link between outgroup attitude and their perceived diversity; whereas, an inverse correlation was found between outgroup attitude and prejudice. Orta (2016) also concluded that media representation of disabled people can bring a social change that can foster positive attitudes towards disable individuals and decrease negative stereotypes related to them. Similarly, Tsai et al., (2020) proved that media dependent individuals when watched news on neutral channels it was inversely related with prejudice. Ball-Rokeach, (1976) stated that for information individuals are heavily dependent on media, that is why media's messages change individual's stereotypical attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Ball-Rokeach media dependency theory proposed that when the content of information

and entertainment increases in a media message, audience's dependency on that medium also increases, which is also true during situations of social change and conflict. Being more involved in media have cognitive effects on the audience like changes brought in their attitudes, beliefs, and values, through altering already existing stereotypes. Inclusion of various lifestyles and characters in Pakistani programs can help viewers of Pakistan to understand the diverse cultures and differences in them in turn leading to increase in their UDO scores. People may show high motivation to interact with outgroup in various activities due to reduction of anxiety (Greenland & Brown, 1999). Covert and Dixon (2008) indicated positive representations of outgroup members encourage pleasing attitudes towards the very group. Ortiz and Harwood (2007) also unveiled that positive intergroup attitudes can be yielded from positive interaction between those groups.

Parasocial contact hypothesis postulates that emotional bonds developed with outgroup media characters foster positive attitudes in viewers (Schiappa et al., 2005, 2006). In turn when friendly, close contacts/relations are made with the media figures of out-group it shapes positive attitudes towards the outgroup. Likewise, help can be taken by social cognitive theory to explain Pakistani audience watching intergroup interactions and developing positive attitudes about foreigners. Through travel shows individuals watch and learn ways of engaging in intergroup contact which provides models for positive intergroup interactions that can be imitated in the similar type of intergroup contexts.

The third hypothesis of the study also found that different level of education had significant differences in UDO scores. Students in intermediate program showed lower UDO scores than those enrolled in BS program, who in turn scored lower than graduated and post graduated students. Sawyer and Chen (2012) stated that formal education caters the thinking ability, emotional reactions and psychological states, necessary to accept and not being afraid of outgroups. Accessing information about different perspectives clears the commonly held stereotypes and prejudices which mainly shape our perceptions and acknowledging these stereotypes provides a wider world view. Results can also be understood keeping in mind the type of education and interactions one experiences at university. Universities globally aim to cater student's overall competence, including understanding of diverse perspectives of outgroups as well as effective communication with them (OECD, 2018). Instead of racial preferences, at universities special job training are provided hence a more radical approach is practiced in the face of racial inequality. Study has long indicated that education plays a crucial role in transmitting societal norms and values (Selznick & Steinberg, 1979). According to this body of literature, those with more education should be more aware of these "official values" and view prejudiced attitudes as being anti-intellectual and anti-democratic in democratic societies where liberal values of tolerance and freedom are commonly upheld as essential components. Furthermore, higher levels of education confer a sense of mastery over one's own life situation, resulting in psychological stability and positive self-esteem. Jenssen and Engesbak (1994) succinctly state the core content of the psychodynamic approach: this stability and self-sufficiency will improve one's ability to deal with situations that normally cause insecurity and lack of confidence. Those who believe they have control over their lives are less likely to see other people as a threat. As a result, the desire to

keep immigrants at a social distance and fear of them as competitors is most pronounced among people who, due to a lack of education, believe they are unable to fully control their life situation. Also, more education increases the likelihood that a person's cognitive development will be characterized by adaptable, logical thinking techniques that promote democratic restraint (Nunn et al., 1978) and strengthen one's ability to consider complex issues and apply particular values to novel contexts (Hyman & Wright, 1979). Another reason for intermediate students scoring lower than other groups can be that they are busy in getting prepared for their board examination and EATA test which limits their social interactions. In comparison universities have students from diverse backgrounds with increased social circle than their college times. Similarly, after the completion of their education individuals get jobs in different sectors which may also increase their outgroup interactions.

## Significance

This research throws light on the role of Higher education which should provide planned education via training for educators in the designing and development of curriculum including diversity issues thus preparing the students to appropriately function in a diverse global world by arranging. Media should also paly its positive role by portraying positive images of diverse social groups that will reduce intergroup prejudice. The results also hold possibilities of potential positive impact of SNSs in forming UDO thus facilitating successful mediated intergroup interactions.

## Limitations and suggestions

The sample consisted of only educated adults from Peshawar which makes it less generalizable. In future a survey based on responses from all over Pakistan will make the relationship between the usage of SNSs, exposure to international media content, education and UDO more explicate. Similarly, foreigners could also be surveyed for cross cultural comparison. As the scales were in English which is not the native language of people in Pakistan even educated participants might not have understood some statements or words properly. An adapted or translated version would have given more reliable results.

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