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Social Media and Protest Information: A Case Study of Facebook

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Abstract: *The role of social media in Pakistan has become a favorite domain for researchers in media. In this study, it has been explored that how Facebook is being used as a tool for acquiring protest information. Pakistan, as a country with toppling democracies, religious extremism, sectarian hatred, and a flawed judicial system, has seen many protests to date. Often these protests take the shape of riots or are on the verge of leading to riots. At such a stage, the government, in an attempt to cool down the situation, restricts the media organizations from giving coverage to such protests and riots. This study aims to find the use of Facebook by people as an alternative to acquire protest information. To see how Facebook is replacing mainstream media in case of protest information.*

Key Words: Social Media, Facebook, Protests, News, Information, Mainstream Media

Introduction

Social networks like Facebook and Twitter have become important communication platforms for people and brands around the world. In particular, social networks have become the main news channel. Most people no longer come home to listen to the 60-minute news. To keep up with current events, they swipe theirphones throughout the day to see the headlines. Latest communication technologies have equipped people with a lot of new ways for sending and receiving information. Social media is one of such technologies that have seen a tremendous increase in usage as a source of information (Pepitone, 2010). According to a Pew report, "people use online social tools to gather information, share stories, and discuss concerns" (Fox, 2011, p. 5). We as individuals have not only changed the way we receive information, but the newsnetworks have also had to change the way they bring information to us. News corporations constantly must adapt. Going back through history, beginning with the printing press, to sound

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waves and the radio, to television, to the internet, and now to social media. The information is always going to be given and received, but the forum has a way of changing with time and technology.

The role of social media, especially Facebook, cannot be set aside tofuel the flames of political protests in Arab countries known as the "Arab Spring." People uploaded photos and news to inform people about the protests. Facebook as a platform brought people together to protest against tyrants and dictators and incited them, thus testifying to how the virtual media platform acted as the central force behind the "Arab Spring" to shake and overthrow the governments of rulers who had not even dreamed of it.The objective of the study is to know that to what extent is Facebook used for news and information.

To examine the use of Facebook as a source of protest information. And to explore the use of Facebook as an alternative to traditional media for receivingprotest information when traditional media is restricted.

Literature Review

Social Media use by University Students

Over 70% of teens and young people use at least one website for interpersonal interaction, such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. The use of Twitter increased from 8% in 2009 to 13% in 2010, although the use of blogging by young people has decreased (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). As we all know, social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook are globally used; in fact, around 72% of adult internet users use SNS (Brenner & Smith, 2013). Especially college students are frequent users of SNS (Zickuhr & Madden, 2012). For example, a 2011 Pew report found that more than 80% of surveyed college students were using SNS (Smith, Rainie,& Zickuhr, 2011). Osatuyi (2013) conducted an exploratory survey to investigate the use of socialmedia for sharing information on college students in the US. The survey was conducted online and participated by 122 students. “The study explored four types of shared information, namely sensitive, sensational, political, and casual information, involving five popular social media technologies: social networking sites, microblogging sites, wikis, online forums, and online blogs. The study found that 36.5% of students share information on social networking sites like Facebook”.

Social Media in Pakistan

Social media is penetrating in Pakistan at a very fast rate, with a “17% entrance rate as of January 2020. Practically 76.38 million individuals are Internet clients in the country, and 37 million are active clients of social media”. Strangely, the dominant part (72%) are aged somewhere in the range of 18 and 34 (Datareportal.com, 2020). The Most Popular Social Networking Sites among Pakistanis are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook Messenger (Statcounter, 2020). Bashir, Malik, and Mahmood (2021) conducted a study using a cross-sectional survey of students from the four universities of Faisalabad, Pakistan. To select the exactrequired number of students, they used quota sampling. The results indicate “the students were using various social media platforms. WhatsApp was the most commonly and frequently used, followed by Facebook and YouTube. Twitter and Snapchat were found to be preferred less among the university students in Pakistan” (Bashir et al., 2021,p. 8).

Methodology

The major focus of this study is to find the relationship between Facebook and political information. The aim is to discover how university students use Facebook to obtain protest information, being an alternate to mainstream print/electronicmedia. Hence the core intention of the researcher is to find out how is Facebook used as a tool of protest information and how the users (Facebook users) evaluate the truthfulness of provided information. Research or exploration is an amazing strategy for examining physical or socialmiracles, and generally, all investigators will focus on analyzing and understanding the data. Applied sciences and social sciences are unmistakable in their strategy. Because social miracles are complex and ever-changing, researchers generally use various systems to collect data, such as logical checks, meetings, and review procedures.

In this paper, the researcher used a survey method and shared 200 questionnaires among Islamabad university students who are direct users of online networks and Facebook. Due to the prevailing situation of the COVID-19 pandemic and the universitiesbeing closed, it was not possible for the researcher to distribute the questionnaire physically; therefore, the researcher used google forms and shared the questionnaire with the students online, and their response was collected.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study is young university students from Islamabad who use Facebook in their everyday life. A survey of a large population requires a great amount of economic and physical resources, which a university student cannot even think of affording it. Therefore, here comes the magic of sampling. The researcher has applied a simple random sampling method to collect the required data. A total of 200 students from different universities in Islamabad who were direct users of Facebook were opted to respond to the said survey questionnaire. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2013, p. 87), "A sample is the subset of the population that is taken to be the representative of the entire population." Being the direct users of Facebook, the selected population was easy to be approached by the researcher and was accessible to collect the required data. The researcher was determined to select a bigger population unit for the response, but time and financial constraints became a major obstacle in its way.

The researcher carefully designed a questionnaire consisting of close-ended questions. The questionnaire had questions related to the variables of the study. The questionnaires consisted of research-oriented as well as demographic questions. The survey questionnaire served as a medium of data collection. It was compiled in the English language as all the respondents had a good command of the English language. In the meantime, it was made sure that all the participants were Facebook users and had active Facebook accounts.

Data Analysis

The core purpose of this study was to find out how Facebook is taking a place as a tool for acquiring protest information, especially in the case when traditional media is commanded not to give coverage. It will help in finding out how Facebook is being used by youth to add

up their knowledge about protests. A well research-based questionnaire comprising of close-ended questions was designed and shared online as due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, universities were closed, and university students being the population, could not be approached when universities were closed. Google Form as an alternative was used, and the link to the questionnaire was shared online with the selected participants. An amount of 200 questionnaires were shared with the university students from Islamabad, out of which 173 fulfilled the criteria to be analyzed, whereas the remaining 27 were discarded due to misinformation and false information. The response of all the participants was recorded and was analyzed using a computer software called "Statistical Package for Social Sciences" (SPSS).

Descriptive Analysis

Frequency Tables and Data Narration

Table 1. Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	102	59.0
Female	71	41.0
Total	173	100.0

The questionnaire was shared with the university students of Islamabad online with the help of google forms. Out of 200 students, 173 responded and filled the questionnaire, out of which 102 (59%) were male whereas 71(41%) were female. Out of the remaining questionnaires, some students did not respond, while others responded with incomplete / misleading information.

Table 2. Age

	Frequency	Percent
18-22	85	49.1
23-26	67	38.7
More than 26	21	12.1
Total	173	100.0

The age of respondents was divided into three categories. Out of which 85 respondents made, 49% of the total respondents were aged between 18-22 years. Whereas 39% of the respondents (67) were aged between 23-26 years. And 21respondents (12%) were of age more than 26 years. Collectively we can say that 88% of the respondents were of young age.

Table 3. Qualification

	Frequency	Percent
Undergraduate	129	74.6
Masters	38	22.0
PhD	6	3.5
Total	173	100.0

Of the 173 respondents who gave their opinions and filled the questionnaire, 75% were Undergraduates, 38% were enrolled in master's programs, and 6% were enrolled in Doctorate degree programs.

Table 4. How frequently do you use Facebook?

	Frequency	Percent
"For less than an hour a day	77	44.5
For more than an hour but less than three hours a day	60	34.7
For more than three hours a day"	36	20.8
Total	173	100.0

Respondents were asked how often they used Facebook. 45% of respondents are people "who use Facebook for less than an hour a day", while 35% of respondents "use Facebook for more than an hour but less than three hours a day", and "21% of respondents are people who use Facebook for more than three hours a day".

Table 5. You mostly use Facebook on?

	Frequency	Percent
Smart Phone	169	97.7
Laptop / Tablet	4	2.3
Personal Computer	0	0
Total	173	100.0

The respondents were enquired about on what device they prefer to use on Facebook. Interestingly 98% of the respondents responded that they use Facebook on their Cell Phones, whereas only 2% of the respondents use Facebook on Laptop or Tablet. Surprisingly, none of the respondents use Facebook on PC / Desktop Computer. This shows diffusion of innovation that how Cell Phones took the place of laptops and Desktop Computers, which were once used for surfing Facebook.

Table 6. What do you like to use Facebook for?

	Frequency	Percent
To learn about the latest news and updates	123	71.1

	Frequency	Percent
To check the activities of your friends and family	39	22.5
To promote products and services	1	0.6
To impart technical information to my friends and group members.	1	0.6
Entertainment	1	0.6
To kill my leisure time	1	0.6
Watching videos	1	0.6
Meme's	1	0.6
Entertainment and sometimes for the sake of news	1	0.6
For My social work	1	0.6
For everything	1	0.6
Publishing my Content	1	0.6
Just to waste my time	1	0.6
Total	173	100.0

Respondents were asked what their preferences are when using Facebook. 71%of respondents said they use Facebook to keep up with the latest news and updates. Whereas as 39% of the respondents said that they use Facebook to learn about the activities of their friends and family members. Whereas some of the respondents had totally different views. One of the respondents said that he uses Facebook to promote products and services. Another respondent said that he was using Facebook to impart technical information to his friends and group members. Whereas four of the respondents used Facebook to keep themselves entertained. Similarly, another respondent was using Facebook to kill his leisure time. Whereas one of the respondentswas using Facebook for his social work. While another respondent said that he uses Facebook for everything. And another one responded that he uses Facebook to publish his content. Whereas one of the respondents had a totally opposite view from others ashe used Facebook just to waste his time.

Table 7. What do you think Facebook is the best source for?

	Frequency	Percent
Getting information and updates	94	54.3
Keeping in touch with friends and family	46	26.6
Learning and discussing topics of your interest	30	17.3
To get information as well as entertainment	1	0.6
Best source for business	1	0.6
Advertise	1	0.6
Total	173	100.0

54% of the respondents think that Facebook is the best source to get informationand updates of multiple topics. Whereas 27% of the respondents believe that it is the best mean of

keeping in touch with friends and family. And 17% of the respondents think it to be the best source of learning and discussing topics of their interests.

In the parallel, one of the respondents believes that Facebook is the best sourceof not only information but also entertainment. And another respondent takes it as a best source for doing business, and in the same sense, another respondent believes it to be the best source of advertising your stuff.

Table 8. Information on Facebook

	Frequency	Percent
"Is useful and informative	81	46.8
Is less important but interesting	53	30.6
Is not much important but a waste of time"	39	22.5
Total	173	100.0

47% of the respondents were of the view that Information on Facebook is useful and informative, whereas 31% of the respondents believe that the information on Facebook is less important, but still it is interesting. And the rest of, 22% of the respondents believe had an opinion that Information on Facebook has no importancebut it is only a waste of time.

Table 9. Posts on your Facebook news feed are mostly related to

	Frequency	Percent
Content from pages you liked	100	57.8
News provided by media accounts pages	46	26.6
Progress and achievements of friends	27	15.6
Total	173	100.0

A close-ended question was asked to respondents that what are the posts on their Facebook newsfeed related to? 58% of the respondents said that their Facebook newsfeed consisted of images and videos from the pages that they are following. Whereas 27% were those whose news feed had posts related to the news provided by the social media handles of news media organizations. And 17% were those who had Facebook news feed posts mostly related to progress and achievements of friends.

Table 10. The best source of political news and information is

	Frequency	Percent
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter etc.)	108	62.4
Traditional Media (News Channels and Newspapers)	61	35.3
Only direct tweets are the best source of information	1	0.6

	Frequency	Percent
News Articles	1	0.6
Can say Twitter but not mix with facebook	1	0.6
Transparent Journalists like youtube etc	1	0.6
Total	173	100.0

The respondents were enquired about what they think is the best source of political information and news. 62% of the respondents chose social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), whereas 35% of the students chose traditional media as the best source of political information and news. One of the respondents singled out twitter tweets to bethe best source, while another respondent also mentioned twitter to be the only best source of political information. Similarly, another respondent having a different view termed news articles to be the only best source of political information. Whereas another respondent expressed those transparent journalists on YouTube are the best source of political information.

Table 11. I find news on Facebook which I am not able to get fromtraditional news sources

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	40	23.1
Agree	40	23.1
Neutral	48	27.7
Disagree	25	14.5
Strongly Disagree	20	11.6
Total	173	100.0

Response was recorded for the question to know that people use Facebook to find the news that they are not able to get from traditional news sources. The overall ratio of the respondents who agreed that Facebook is a better place to find news that is not out there was recorded as 46% being 23% strongly agreed, and 23% agreed with the statement. 27% of the respondents remained neutral about the statement, whereas, 14% of the respondents disagreed and 12% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 12. I use Facebook to acquire protest information whentraditional media is restricted to cover

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	36	20.8
Agree	48	27.7
Neutral	48	27.7

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	28	16.2
Strongly Disagree	13	7.5
Total	173	100.0

The respondents were asked to express their views about a question that people use Facebook as an alternative to traditional media for acquiring protest information in case traditional media is restricted to cover anything related to protest. The ratio of the agreement was recorded to be 49%, as 21% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, and 28% of respondents agreed with the statement. The ratio of respondents who remained neutral about the statement remained at 28%. Whereas 16% of the respondents disagreed and 8% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 13. Facebook is a unique package for all protest information atone place

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	30	17.3
Agree	45	26.0
Neutral	59	34.1
Disagree	27	15.6
Strongly Disagree	12	6.9
Total	173	100.0

Table 14. I rely most on Facebook for protest information and news

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	21	12.1
Agree	45	26.0
Neutral	51	29.5
Disagree	27	15.6
Strongly Disagree	29	16.8
Total	173	100.0

The researcher asked the responding population that do they mostly rely on Facebook for acquiring protest information and news. In its response, 12% of the respondents strongly agreed, 26% of the respondents agreed, and 30% of the respondents remained neutral towards the statement. In contrast, 16% disagreed, and 17% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 15. I prefer Facebook on traditional media for protest news andinformation

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	32	18.5
Agree	34	19.7
Neutral	52	30.1
Disagree	31	17.9
Strongly Disagree	24	13.9
Total	173	100.0

As many as 19% of the respondents strongly agreed that they prefer Facebook on traditional media for acquiring protest news and information. 20% of the population agreed whereas 30% remained neutral. Moreover, 20% of the respondents disagreed, whereas 14% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 16. Facebook is replacing all the other sources of information forproviding information about protest activities around me

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	18	10.4
Agree	40	23.1
Neutral	46	26.6
Disagree	38	22.0
Strongly Disagree	31	17.9
Total	173	100.0

The respondents were asked to give their opinion whether Facebook is replacingall other sources of news for providing protest information. 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement and 23% agreed. 27% chose to be neutral, whereas22% disagreed and 18% strongly disagreed.

Table 17. Facebook is an authentic and valid source to obtain protestinformation

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	21	12.1
Agree	30	17.3
Neutral	51	29.5
Disagree	34	19.7
Strongly Disagree	37	21.4
Total	173	100.0

A question was asked to respondents to know what they think about the validity and authenticity of the information which they receive through Facebook. The ratio of the

agreement remained 29%, as 12% of the respondents strongly agreed and 17% agreed. 30% of the respondents remained neutral. Whereas 20% of the respondents disagreed and 21% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 18. Facebook has nothing to do with protest information

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	7	4.0
Agree	30	17.3
Neutral	47	27.2
Disagree	46	26.6
Strongly Disagree	43	24.9
Total	173	100.0

A reverse question was asked to know if respondents are responding truly or giving false information. In its response, only 4% strongly disagreed, whereas 18% agreed. 27% of the respondents remained neutral. The ratio of disagreement was 52%, as 46 respondents disagreed, and 43 respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 19. I am satisfied with the speedy and accurate information aboutprotests I receive from Facebook

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	12	6.9
Agree	40	23.1
Neutral	53	30.6
Disagree	46	26.6
Strongly Disagree	22	12.7
Total	173	100.0

The survey participants were asked whether they were satisfied with the speedy and accurate information regarding protests that they receive from Facebook. 7% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 23% of the respondents agreed. 31% remained neutral. And 27% of the participants disagreed, while 13% strongly disagreed.

Table 20. I know a lot about the current political situation of my countryand mostly took part in political debates on Facebook

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	18	10.4
Agree	44	25.4
Neutral	50	28.9
Disagree	38	22.0

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	23	13.3
Total	173	100.0

The respondents were asked whether they took part in political debates on Facebook and knew more about the current political situation of the country. 10% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 25% agreed. 29% of the respondents remained neutral. In contrast, 22% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, and a mere 13%strongly disagreed.

Table 21. I learnt a lot about strikes, demonstrations, and otherpolitical activities through Facebook

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	16	9.2
Agree	55	31.8
Neutral	53	30.6
Disagree	29	16.8
Strongly Disagree	20	11.6
Total	173	100.0

The researcher asked the respondents whether Facebook helped them in learning about strikes, demonstrations, and other political activities. In their response, 9% of the survey participants strongly agreed, and 32% agreed. 31% of the participants chose to be neutral. Whereas 17% disagreed and 12% strongly disagreed.

Table 22. I actively took part in debates regarding protests onFacebook

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	4.6
Agree	23	13.3
Neutral	47	27.2
Disagree	43	24.9
Strongly Disagree	52	30.1
Total	173	100.0

In a response to a question about whether the respondents took part in ongoing debates regarding protests on Facebook. The ratio of the agreement was less than the ratio of disagreement. As 5% of the participants strongly agreed, whereas 13% only agreed. 25% of the participants remained neutral about it. Moreover, 25% of the selected population disagreed, and 30% strongly disagreed.

Table 23. Debates regarding protests on Facebook are a good source ofunderstanding the developments regarding the protest

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	11	6.4
Agree	45	26.0
Neutral	62	35.8
Disagree	30	17.3
Strongly Disagree	25	14.5
Total	173	100.0

The response was analyzed to be 6% of the respondents strongly agreed withthe statement while 26% agreeing with. Whereas 46% of the participants chose to be neutral. Moreover, 17% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, and 15% strongly disagreed.

Table 24. Facebook helps in getting news about protests from a different angle.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	26	15.0
Agree	57	32.9
Neutral	55	31.8
Disagree	20	11.6
Strongly Disagree	15	8.7
Total	173	100.0

The respondents were asked for their opinion regarding whether they think Facebook helped them in acquiring news of protests from a different angle. The ratio of the agreement remained 47% as 15% of the respondents strongly agreed and 32% agreed. In the meantime, 32% remained neutral. Whereas 12% disagreed and 9% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 25. Facebook is a satisfactory medium for seeking protest information

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	21	12.1
Agree	50	28.9
Neutral	57	32.9
Disagree	23	13.3
Strongly Disagree	22	12.7
Total	173	100.0

In his last question, the researcher asked the participants that do they believe Facebook as a

medium is satisfactory for seeking protest information. 12% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement and 29% agreed with it. 33% of the respondents remained neutral. Whereas 13% of the respondents disagreed and 13% strongly disagreed.

Conclusion

The study was conducted through a well-designed research-based questionnaireof which the target population was the university students of Islamabad. As many as 200 questionnaires were shared with the students online, out of which 173 were selected to be analyzed. The questionnaire was made with the help of google forms which is capable of recording the responses online. The core objective of the study was to find out the penetration of Facebook as a social media as tool for acquiring protest information. To know how Facebook is slowly taking the place of traditional media in case of protest information as Facebook cannot be restricted in contrast to the traditionalnews media. The data from the survey's response was recorded and further analyzed, which led to the findings of the study and helped the author draw its conclusions. The research targeting facebook as a source of protest news and information comprised on the individual interviewed who are direct users of facebook. Of the 173 participants of the survey, 102(59%) were male, whereas 71(41%) were female. Majority ofthe respondents aged between 18-22 years, making them 49% (85) of the respondents. The second bigger age slot comprising between 23-26 years, made up 39% (67) of the totalrespondents. The last age slot with the least amount of people was of people aged morethan 26, which comprised of 12% (21) people. Due to the researcher's focus and beingthe need of the study, the target population (young people) made a total of 88% of the total surveyed population.

A question was asked to the respondents to know how frequently they use Facebook. The responses showed that the majority of the respondents (45%) use Facebookfor less than an hour a day. Whereas 35% of the respondents reported that they useFacebook for more than an hour but less than three hours a day. Whereas the most frequent users whose Facebook usage was more than three hours a day made 21% of the participants. The respondents were asked a question to know which device they prefer for using Facebook. All the possible devices, including smart phones, laptops, tablet, and desktop computers were given as an option. Surprisingly, 98% of the respondents reported that they use Facebook on smart phones whereas only 2% of the respondents preferred laptop/tablet for using Facebook. Whereas none of the respondents use desktop personal computers for surfing Facebook. This shows a major advancement intechnology and the abundance of smart phones in such a manner that it had almost completely replaced personal computers for using social media, especially Facebook.

The respondents were enquired about the purpose of their Facebook use upon which 71% of the respondents reported that they use Facebook to learn about latest happening and acquire news. Whereas 23% of the respondents reported that their Facebook usage consists mostly of checking on the activities of their friends and family members. 11 of the participants had totally different views from the majority as well asfrom each other. One of the respondents (0.6%) was using Facebook for

promoting products and services. Whereas 3 of the respondents (1.8%) reported of their Facebookuse for the sake of entertainment. Another respondent (0.6%) was using Facebook for his social work. Meanwhile, another two respondents (1.2%) reported using Facebookto kill time. Whereas a respondent (0.6%) reported that he uses Facebook for everything. Moreover, one of the respondents (0.6%) also use Facebook to publish his content.

The respondents were asked about their opinion on what is the best source of political news and information for them. Upon which majority of the respondents (62%)chose social media as the best source of political information. Whereas 35% of the respondents opted for traditional media over social media as the best source of political information. Whereas four of the respondents had different view than the other participants. Of which 2 (1.2%) singled out twitter whereas 1 (0.6%) focused on news articles to be the only best source of political information. Meanwhile, another respondent (0.6%) termed YouTube journalists to be the best source. The first research question was designed to know that how much Facebook is used as a tool for acquiring information and news by youth. It was recorded that 71% of the respondents reported that they use Facebook to learn about the latest news and updates,showing a clear sign that majority of the youth has shifted to Facebook to gratify theirneeds regarding the latest news and information. In a response to another question, 54% of the respondents recorded that Facebook is the best source of acquiring news and information. In a similar question, the researcher asked the respondents about their preference regarding the best source of political news and information, of which 62% of the respondents reported to prefer social media (Facebook, Twitter) as a best sourceof political information and news.

The researcher asked the respondents with a question that do they rely mostly on Facebook for protest news and information. Of which 12% of the respondents strongly agreed whereas 26% agreed with. 30% of the respondents remained neutral. Whereas 16% of the respondents disagreed and 17% strongly disagreed. In another statement, the researcher enquired the respondents that whether they prefer Facebook over traditional media for protest news and information. In its response, 19% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement and 20% agreed with making the total ratio of agreement as 39%. 30% of the respondents chose to be neutral about it. While 18% of the respondents did not agree with the statement and 14% strongly disagreed with.

In a similar question, the participants were asked whether they agree with the statement that Facebook helps people in acquiring protest news from a different angle. Of which the ratio of agreement stood 48%, breaking down 15% strongly agreedwith the statement and 33% agreed with. In the meanwhile, 32% of the respondents chose not to disclose their opinion and remained neutral. Whereas 12% of the respondents disagreed and 9% strongly disagreed with the statement. In this way we can say that nearly half of the research population use Facebook for acquiring protest information and they prefer Facebook over the traditional media for such purpose and one of the main reasons is that Facebook as a platform provides the audience with the news from a different angle often which is not covered in traditional media.

Another research question could be, to what extent Facebook is used for protest information when mainstream media is restricted? To make a ground for discussing this research question, the author designed a question to know that whether the audience finds such news on Facebook that it is notable to find on traditional news media. Of which 23% of the respondents strongly agreed and 23% agreed with the statement. Whereas 28% of the participants chose to be neutral about it. While 14% of the respondents disagreed 12% strongly disagreed with the statement. In this way, the author made a ground for his next question becauseif the respondent population does not find unique news on Facebook as compared to the traditional media, then in no case it can find any protest news which is not there ontraditional news media.

In his next question, the researcher asked the respondents whether they use Facebook for acquiring protest information in case the traditional media organizationsare not allowed to give coverage to the protest. The response was overwhelming as nearly half of the participants replied in affirmative. The ratio of agreement stood at 49% as 21% of the respondents strongly agreed with the question statement and 28% agreed. Meanwhile, 28% chose to remain neutral about the statement. Whereas 16% of the respondents disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Protest and demonstration are the beauty of democracy. Whereat one side there is freedom of speech on the other side is the practice of protests for objecting certain behaviors and actions of governments. Pakistan, from the day of its partition till date has also seen different protests often these protests also caused so much to the country.

At the time of partition till late nineteenth century the mass media of disseminating news were only newspapers and radio. The practice of censorship in newspapers at the time of military dictators was very common. Afterwards the technology developed, and televisions came into south Asia and soon almost every home had a television. In this way the flow of information and news increased to the public. In the meanwhile, the same protests which were existing before the electronic media in Pakistan now got more coverage with the more audience reach of new media. Soon the government realized that the protests when become deadly and could provide harm to the country or its subjects should not be given coverage. It was seemed to act as putting water on fire. Atthe same time, social media also started to strengthen its reach in Pakistan. YouTube and Facebook were the two most popular social media at the time. Soon as a fascinating interactive media Facebook got successful in making its place in Pakistan. Two of the main reasons which boomed the success of Facebook were launching smartphones as well as the induction of 3G and 4G internet technology in the telecom sector. Now Facebook also acted as a news platform for many people as it also provided as tool for Citizen Journalism.

The research targeted Facebook as a platform which is being used for disseminating and acquiring protest information. The core part was to determine the role of Facebook as a tool for acquiring protest information, especially in case when mainstream electronic and print media is restricted from giving the coverage. The target population of this study were 200 university students from Islamabad. The young population was selected because it

was believed that young students, especially university students are well educated and are more into using smart devices, internet and social media.

The study found that nearly half of the young population is using Facebook specifically for obtaining news and information around them. This confirms that Facebook has become successful in taking a place as a means of disseminating information and news to the public. It was also found that nearly 40% of the youth use Facebook for protest information whereas 49% of the use especially scroll Facebook for acquiring finding any information and news related to protest in case mainstream and traditional media is not allowed to cover it. In this way, Facebook has become an alternative for finding the information regarding protests as protests affect the lives of many people who continuously follow developments related to protests.

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APPENDIX A

Pie Charts

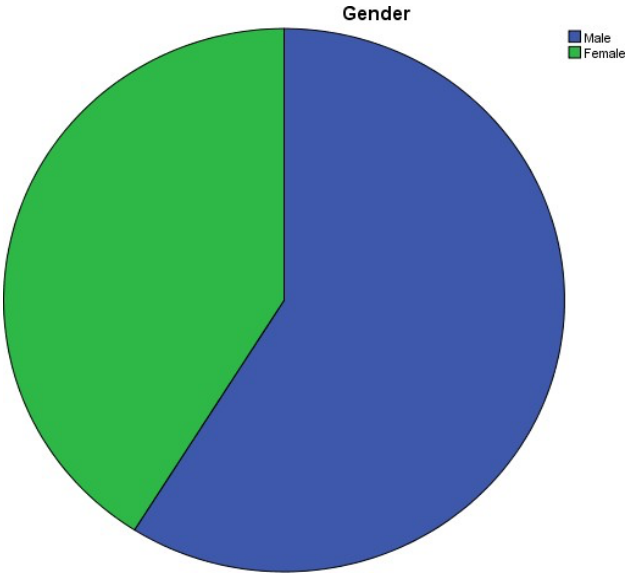


Figure 1.

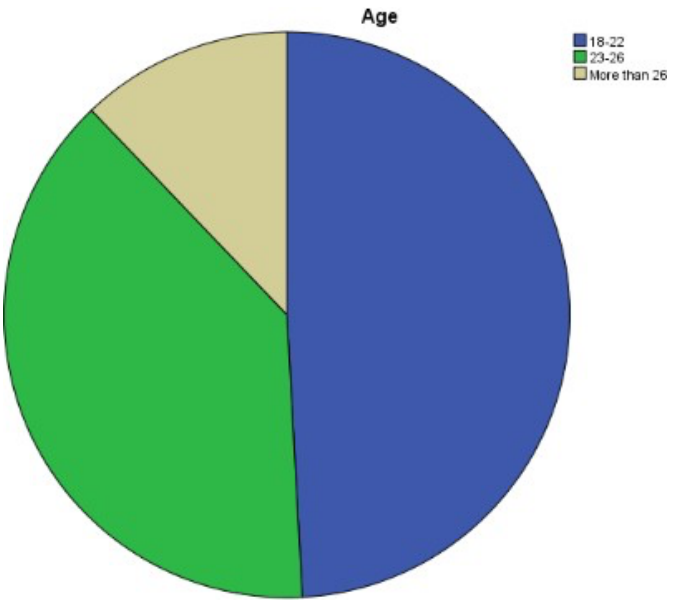
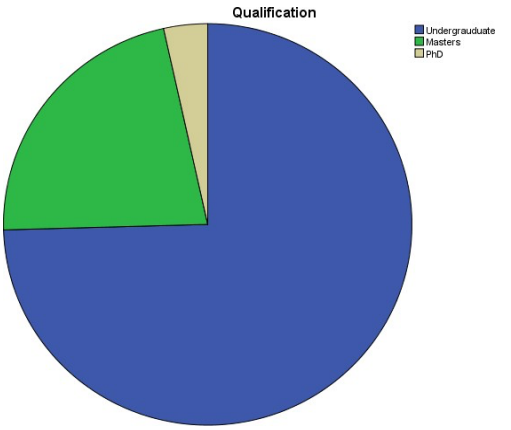


Figure 2.



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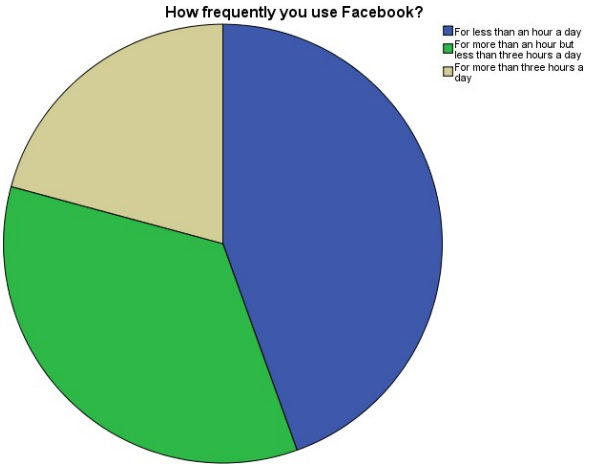

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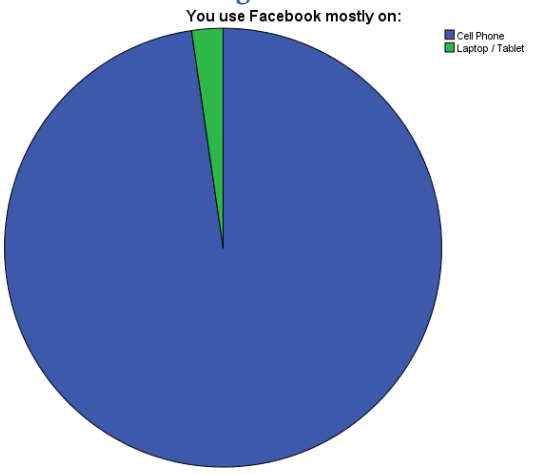


Figure 5.

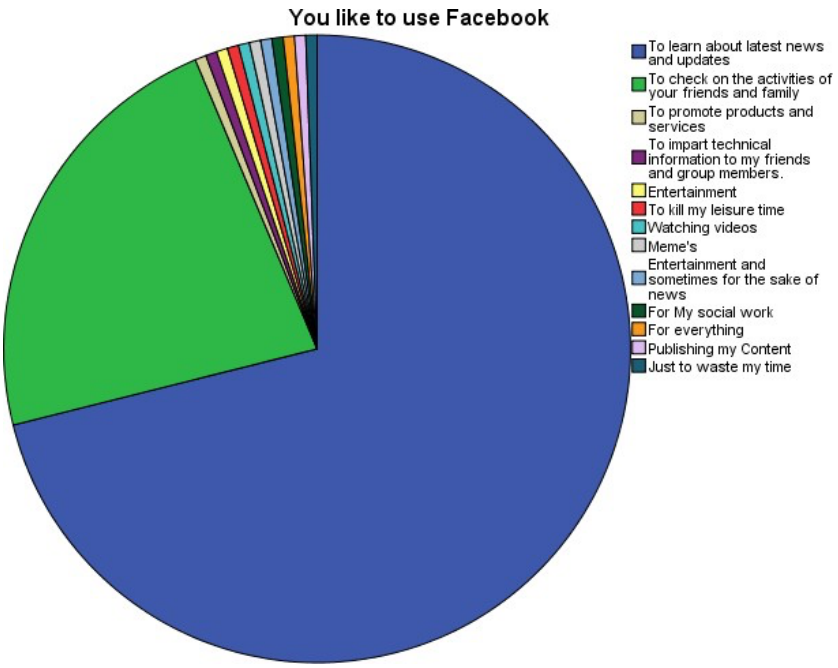


Figure 6.

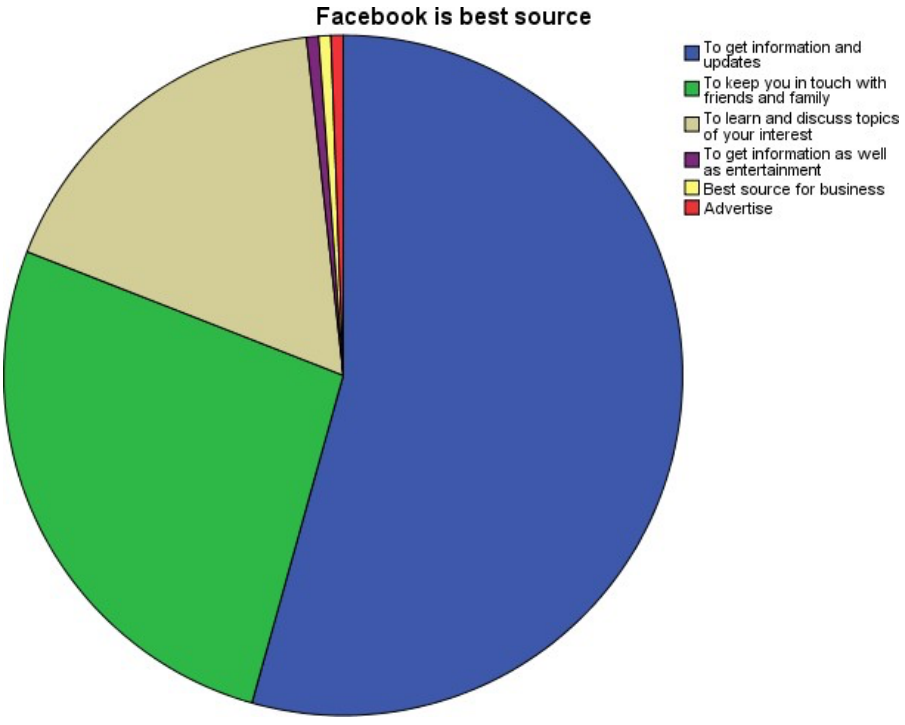
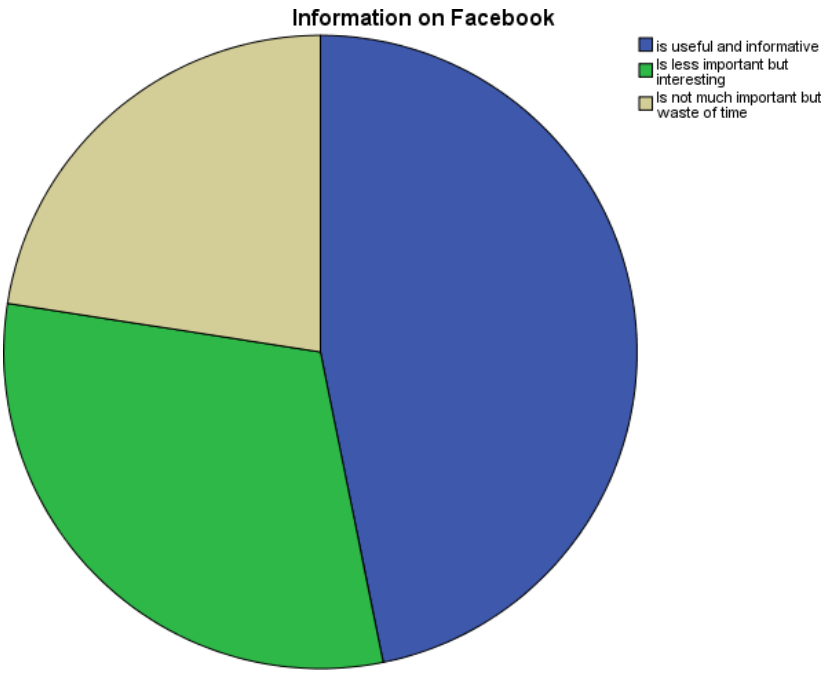


Figure 7.



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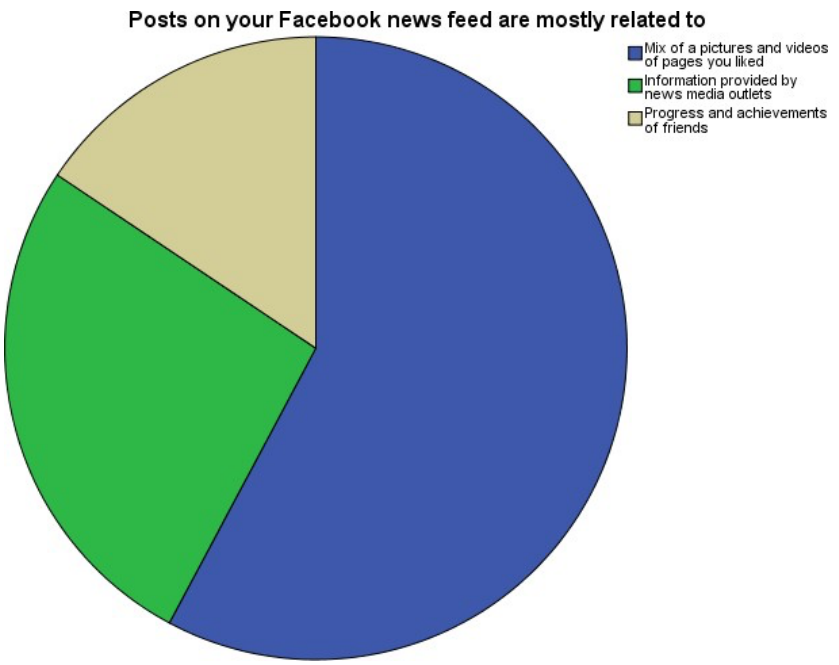

Figure 9.

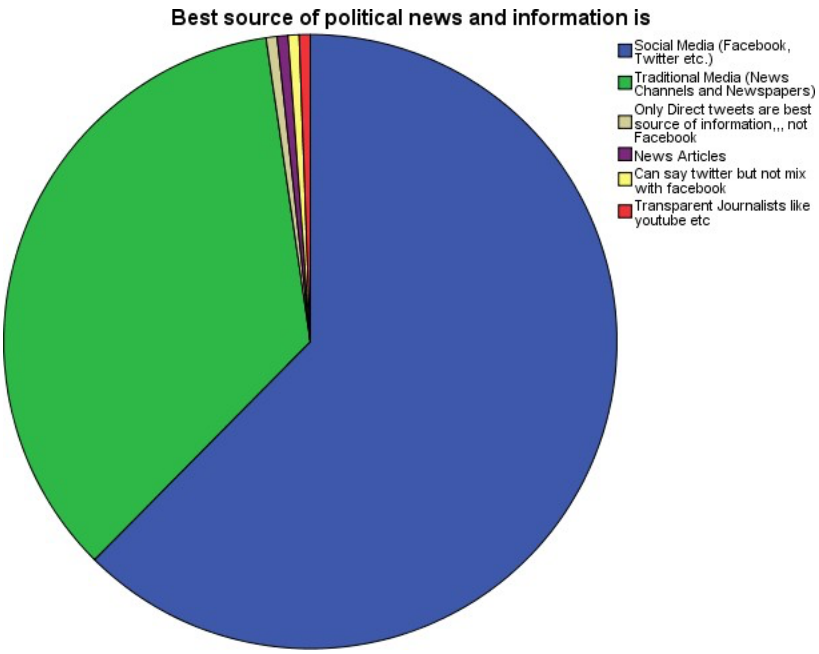
Best source of political news and information is
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter etc.)
Traditional Media (News Channels and Newspapers)
Only Direct tweets are best source of information,,, not Facebook
News Articles
Can say twitter but not mix with facebook
Transparent Journalists like youtube etc

Figure 10.