

Social Media Habits of Youth in Pakistan and the Role in Developing Social Capital

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Abstract

The core objective of the study was trifold in nature (i) to investigate the social media habits among youth. (ii) To analyze the magnitude and direction of relationship among communicative use, friending, self-disclosure, bonding and bridging social capital among youth. (iii) To investigate the magnitude regarding the impact of communicative use, this includes the phenomenon of bonding, friending, bridging social capital and self-disclosure among youth. A cross-sectional research design was followed, and n=384 students were selected from 6 renowned public universities of Punjab, Pakistan. Data was collected through a questionnaire comprised of socioeconomic status, media habits, friending, and self-disclosure, bridging and bonding capital items. Acquired responses were analyzed through SPSS-21, and hypothesis was tested through Pearson Correlation coefficient $p < .01 < 0.5$, and the magnitude of the effect was determined through a linear regression model. There was a significant positive correlation found between friending, communication use, bonding, self-disclosure, and bridging the social capital through social media and regression model findings showed a significant effect of communicative use on bonding social capital and self-disclosure on bridging social capital through social media among youth.

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Introduction

The use of the mobile phone has now become central in routine life; a growing body of prior studies well explained the role of social media in daily life and its effects on an individual and societal level. These effects are categorized into usage specifications, i.e. usage of mobile phone for gaining information increases discussion and political engagement, but on the other side it also improves individual wellbeing through social capital (Chan, 2013; Lee, Kwak & Campbell, 2015). Social capital is a notion that is multidimensional in nature which was established in order to clarify sorts of social life, particularly the main determinants which maintain not only social life but also maintain personal capital. These capitals have been proved to be fruitful in bridging and bonding capital. These sorts of capitals are distinguished in a dual manner: link strong point and sort of possessions given. Bonding capital talks about

resources from strong links comprising family members and peer categorized by high intimacy and trust. People are probable to have high emotional encouragement and impulsive comfort from bonding capital, and bridging capital refers to the assets from scrawny links which associate various clusters within a complex (Chen & Li, 2017; Burt, 2009).

The bulk of previous studies Burke and Kraut (2016), Petersen and Johnston (2015) and Wang et al. (2014) stated that social media is absolutely linked with social capital because it expands the size of social circle, it also facilitates offline affability, directly contributing towards development and sustainability of social capital. For instance, Campbell and Kwak found that social media arbitrated that the communicative use can be operated to preserve family capitals and synchronize a diversity of online accomplishments, e.g. intimate partner meetings

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and family work bring into being. This communicative use of social media increases both bridging and bonding social capital because social media provides ideal shared platforms to uphold associations with strong and weak links (Chan, 2015), the use of social media is considered by technical and social utility of cell phones is enhanced by the social media which creates an environment that increases the association and contacts among the youth to appear rapidly and multiple it with others. Therefore, it can be argued that communicative use of social media helps to build and bridge the social capital among social media users (Chen & Li, 2017).

Apart from communicative use, friending on social media is conduct to inflate social relations. The meaning of friending on social media is highly permitted by mobile phone companies upgraded their apps to further integrate people and make the process of bonding and bridging capital strong. Similar to self-disclosure, friending and the communicative use entails that there exists a significant part when it comes to the issues related to bond and bridge the social capital among social media users. It has mediated deep concern in the scenario of computer-mediated communication, which provides an opportunity for people to present their lifestyle in a particular manner. A growing body of literature indicated that those people who are able to better present themselves on social media are more likely of making strong social capital. It builds not only good relations but also limelight the activities which need attention, develop conviction and wish favorability from scrawny relations (Berg & Derlaga, 2013).

According to [global digital insights \(2020\)](#), there are about 37 million social media users in Pakistan, and the most used social media network is Facebook about 39,240,000 Facebook users were reported in April 2020 these statistics are 18.4% of the whole population among them 78.6% of the people are the age span of 25-34 year. These statistics are high, and it is necessary to investigate the purpose for which people use social media. Previous studies have been conducted by [Chen and Li \(2017\)](#) and [Bohn et al. \(2014\)](#) in the western context, and in Pakistan, a recent study has been conducted by Aksar et al. (2020) to assess the needs of women on social media and social capital in Pakistan.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research study are:

- 1- To discover the socioeconomic status and social media habits among social media users.
- 2- To analyze the magnitude and direction of the relationship between bridging and bonding social capital. Self-disclosure, friending and communicative use among social media users.
- 3- To investigate the magnitude of the effect of the relationship between bridging and bonding social capital. Self-disclosure, friending and communicative use among social media users.

Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis of Association

- H1:** Communicative use, friending, self-disclosure is positively related to bonding social capital among social media users
- H2:** Communicative use, friending, self-disclosure is positively related to bridging social capital among social media users.

Hypothesis of the Magnitude of the Effect

- H3:** There is a significant effect of bridging and bonding social capital: self-disclosure, friending and communicative use among social media users.
- H4:** There is a significant effect of bridging and bonding social capital: self-disclosure, friending and communicative use among social media users.

Theoretical Underpinning and Literature Review

Social Capital Theory

The social capital theory postulated that assets accrued through building social associations are helpful in acclimatizing to life conditions ([Liu & Brown, 2014](#)). It is based on dual concepts, i.e. weak and strong relations differentiated in two distinct manners of social capital. First comes the bridging social capital, second comes the bonding of the social capital. Bridging social capital includes the capability to access assets through broader social relations and social links. Social capital is derived from social relations, which interconnect people with people having distinct life standard and backgrounds who can

give useful information, innovative point of views and other procedures of helpful encouragement. On the other side, bonding social capital comprises more continued support, particularly emotional encouragement from ones with whom one share personal and reciprocal association. Comparatively, bonding social capital fills the space left by bridging social capital from the members of the social network. Disquiets regarding social capital is increased during the tenure of transition from adolescence to the period of youth that needs a redeployment of the social network, i.e. the shift from university hostels in their late adolescence and they self-assured to get benefit from social media networks. This transition establishes distance from and strains associations with developed personal associates, thus intimidating a young individual's bonding capital. The university settings place new theoretical, mental and social requirements on students (Lapsley, Rice & Shahid, 1989; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994) and for which local social capital resources would become obliging. To go with these stresses, students feel essential for rebuilding and

reshaping the social network. According to Maksi & Young (2013), by way of its name, the primary purpose of social relations is to help people's needs, develop and then maintain social relations. Numerous studies, such as Donnath and Boyd's (2004), Greenhhow and Burton (2011), Ellison et al. (2007), suggested that social media important for any purpose, but social media plays a key role to foster bridging social capital and bonding social capital. According to Aksar et al. (2020), communication and interaction patterns are highly influenced by web-based technologies of modern time; it has remodelled the social relations and behavior renovated by the culture. Since 2000, Facebook, Twitter, Google+ Instagram and WhatsApp have become the source of bonding and bridging social capital among all group of people, especially youth. People make online relation to communicate and make friends share the knowledge of their interest, pursue and gain help which creates social capital, and this social capital is later proved helpful for people (Kapoor et al. 2018).

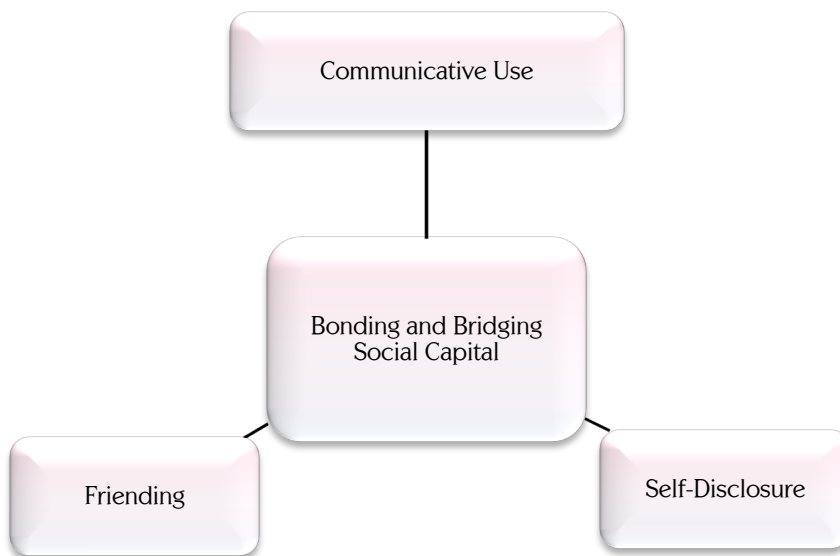
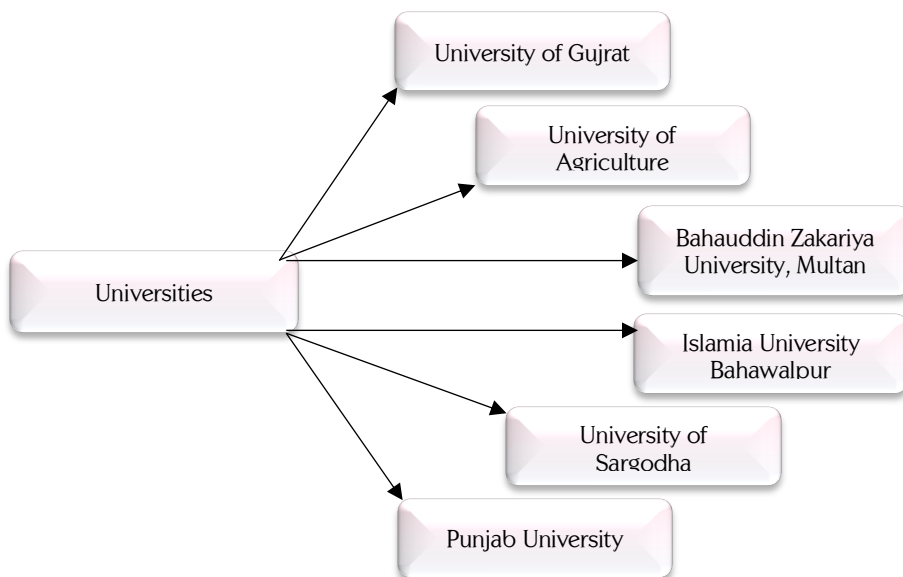


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Study

Material and Methods

Universities structural pathological statistics directed that there were 6 public universities in Punjab with a student population of N=108699.

By following these pathological conditions principal author designed this study.



Participants and Procedure

The sample size was dogged through Krejcie, and Morgan Table (1970) for sample size determination n=384 were selected. Those students who had passed at least one semester of BS, Masters, M.Phil or PhD who were registered for the next one month were targeted. At first, respondents were briefed about the objective and significance of the study, and the researcher allowed them that they could leave the study at any time. The researcher used a multi-stage sampling technique prior used by [Ashraf et al. \(2020\)](#). In the first stage, researchers randomly selected six districts out of thirty-six districts of Punjab. In the second stage, the researcher targeted one university from the selected district, and in the last stage, the researcher selected respondents through a simple random sampling technique.

Measurement

Students reported social capital through tri factors such as self-disclosure, friending and communicative use. The researcher divided the questionnaire into five major parts, i.e. (i) socioeconomic status & social media usage, (ii) communicative use, (iii) self-disclosure, (iv) friending and (v) bonding and bridging social capital. For measuring socioeconomic status it was asked from the respondents to answer about their gender, education, family income per

month, and age, prior asked by [Ashraf et al. \(2019\)](#), preferable usage of social media and social networks similar to [Chen and Li \(2017\)](#). Subsequently, communicative use of social media was measured through the adapted items [Chan \(. 2013\)](#), friending on social media was measured through items that were adapted by [Chen and Chen \(2015\)](#), self-disclosure on social media was measured through the items of [Chen and Li \(2017\)](#), lastly bonding and bridging social capital was measured through the eight adapted items from William (2006). All the items were ranged from 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree and 5= Strongly Agree.

Analytical Strategy

Statistical Package for social sciences (SPSS-21) was utilized for coding, recoding and transforming the study variables. Firstly, SES of the respondents and social media usage was evaluated through frequency and percentage tables and the relationship between predictor and criterion variable, i.e. (communicative use + friending + self-disclosure → bonding and bridging social capital) were analyzed by Pearson correlation matrix, and a stepwise linear regression model was applied on the data to investigate the scale at which effect of communicative use, friending, self-disclosure on both criterion variables, i.e. bonding social

capital and bridging social capital among social media users.

Data Analysis

Table 1. The Respondents were Distributed with Respect to Socioeconomic Status and Social Media use Habit among Social Media users

S. No	Items	Categories	f (%)
1	Age	18-24	158(41.1)
		25-31	189(49.2)
		>31	38(9.89)
2	Gender	Male	227(59.1)
		Female	157(40.8)
3	Level of Education	BS	139(36.1)
		Masters	129(33.5)
		M.Phil.	81(21)
		PhD	35(9.1)
4	Monthly Family income	≤15000PKR	56(14.5)
		16000PKR-30000PKR	49(12.7)
		30001PKR-45000PKR	88(22.9)
		>45000PKR	191(49.7)
5	Time spent on social media per day	1-3 hour	98(25.5)
		4-6 hour	191(49.7)
		7-9 hour	38(9.8)
		>9 hour	57(14.8)
6	Frequent used social media apps	WhatsApp	139(36.1)
		Facebook	129(33.5)
		Twitter	54(14)
		Instagram	42(10.9)
		Snapchat	20(5.2)
7	No. of friends on social media	≤50	62(16.1)
		51-100	171(44.5)
		101-150	98(25.5)
		>150	53(13.8)

n=384, f=frequency, %=percentage

Table no. 1 displays the socioeconomic status and social media usage of respondents that have participated in this research study. Most of the respondents, 49.2% reported their age span from 25-31 year old, 41.1% mentioned their age span from 18-24 year, and 9.89% reported their age above 31 years. When they were asked about their gender, 59.1% reported that they were male, and 40.8% mentioned that they were females. Furthermore, 36.1% of the respondents mentioned that they were BS students, 33.5% reported that they were the students of Masters, 21% said that they were doing M. Phil. and 9.1% were PhD scholars. Respondents were inquired about their monthly family income 49.7% of the respondents reported their monthly family

income >45000PKR, 22.9% mentioned their income 30001PKR-45000PKR, 14.5%.

Correlation Matrix

Relationship between communicative use, friending, self-disclosure, bridging and bonding social capital among social media users.

H1: Communicative use, friending, self-disclosure are positively related to bonding social capital among social media users

H2: Communicative use, friending, self-disclosure are positively related to bridging social capital among social media users.

Table 2

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Communicative Use	28.1	4.925	r	1	.546**	.397**	1.000**	.398**
			p		.000	.000	.000	.000
Friending	25.63	4.763	r		1	.543**	.546**	.544
			p			.000	.000	.000
Self-disclosure	49.63	8.10	r			1	.397**	1.000**
			p				.000	.000
Bridging Capital	28.1	4.92	r				1	.397**
			p					.000
Bonding Capital	49.61	8.102	r					1
			p					

Note: n=384, M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, $p < 0.01 < 0.05^{**}$

Table 2 shows the magnitude and direction of relationship between predictor and criterion variable. A significant linear relationship has been found between communicative use, friending, self-disclosure, bridging social capital and bonding social capital.

Regression Model 1

H3: There is a significant effect of bridging and bonding social capital: self-disclosure, friending and communicative use among social media users.

Table 3. The Magnitude of Effect of Communicative use, Friending, Self-Disclosure on Bonding Social Capital

Dependent Variable	Communicative Use		Friending		Self-Disclosure	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Bonding social Capital	1.000	.000	.564	.044	.241	.029
R	1.000 ^a		.546 ^a		.397 ^a	
R ²	1.000		.298		.158	
ΔR ²	1.000		.296		.156	

n=384, B= Beta coefficient, SE= Standard error $p < 0.05^{**}$

Table 3 shows the magnitude of the effect of predictor and criterion variable, the value of $R=1.000^a$ shows that communicative use was producing $R^2=1.000$, i.e. 100% effect on bonding social capital due to social media, the value of friending $R=.546^a$ and $R^2=.298$, i.e. 29.8% effect on bonding social capital due to social media and the value of self-disclosure $R=.397^a$ and $R^2=.158$.

i.e. 29.6% effect on bonding social capital due to social media among youth.

Regression Model 2

H4: There is a significant effect of bridging and bonding social capital: self-disclosure, friending and communicative use among social media users.

Table 4. The Magnitude of Effect of Communicative use, Friending, Self-Disclosure on Bridging Social Capital

Dependent Variable	Communicative Use		Friending		Self-Disclosure	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Bridging social Capital	.654	.077	.934	.073	1.000	.000
R	.397 ^a		.543 ^a		1.000 ^a	
R ²	.158		.295		1.000	
ΔR ²	.156		.293		1.000	

n=384, B= Beta coefficient, SE= Standard error $p < 0.05^{**}$

Table 4 shows the effect of communicative use, self-disclosure, and friending on bridging social

capital due to social media. The value of $R=.397^a$ and $R^2=.158$ shows that communicative use was

affecting bridging social capital 15.8%, the values of friending show that $R = .543^a$ and $R^2 = .295$ show that friending was affecting bridging social capital 29.5% and the values of self-disclosure $R = 1.000^a$ and $R^2 = 1.000$ effecting bridging social capital 100% among social media users.

Discussion and Conclusion

Bridging and bonding social capital is a multi-facet phenomenon with a variety of definitions in various domains of research and academia. It has been consensually said that social capital is basically the benefits people receive from social relations ([Adler & Kwon, 2002](#)). It can also be perceived as negative because people of an outgroup cannot take benefit from them as the in-group members do. It can be resulted in career development, organizational promotion and is fruitful for lessening the crime statistics among youth. The capability of forming and maintaining social relations is an important prerequisite for the growth of social capital ([Coleman, 1988](#); [Steinfeld, Ellison & Lampe, 2008](#)). This social capital has now become speedier due to mobile phone. The quick embryonic mobile tools have sustained to inflate its affordances in assimilating distinct sorts of media and pleasing to the eye people's association and dealings in routine life.

The core objective of the study was threefold, e.g. (1) To find out the socioeconomic status and social media habits among social media users. (2) To analyze the magnitude and direction of the relationship between communicative use, friending, self-disclosure, bonding and bridging social capital among social media users. (3) To investigate the magnitude of the effect of the relationship between communicative use, friending, self-disclosure, bonding and bridging social capital among social media users. To cover these objectives researcher used frequency and percentage to describe the socioeconomic status and social media usage habits among youth. Findings showed that most of the respondents, 49.2% reported their age span from 25-31 year old, 41.1% mentioned their age span from 18-24 year, and 9.89% reported their age above 31 years. When they were asked about their gender, 59.1% reported that they were male, and 40.8% mentioned that they were females. Furthermore, 36.1% of the respondents mentioned that they were BS students, 33.5% reported that they were the students of Masters, 21% said that they were

doing M. Phil. and 9.1% were PhD scholars. Respondents were inquired about their monthly family income 49.7% of the respondents reported their monthly family income >45000PKR, 22.9% mentioned their income 30001PKR-45000PKR, 14.5%.

Likewise, findings from the Pearson correlation coefficient showed an important linear relationship between communicative use, friending, self-disclosure, bridging social capital and bonding social capital among youth. It means that those people who make more friends on social media, those who present their lives in a better way on social media, are more likely to have benefited from their social relations. These findings were consistent with the findings of Walthers (1996), who discovered a significant positive relationship between self-disclosure, friending and communicative use with bonding and bridging social capital ([Kim & Kim, 2017](#); [Pan et al., 2019](#)). Consequently, communicative use was producing an effect on bonding social capital due to social media, friending also had an effect on bonding social capital due to social media and the value of self-disclosure effect on bonding social capital due to social media among youth. These findings were consistent with the findings of Eadicco (2012) and Kluger (2012), who discovered that communicative use on social media is parallel to bonding and bridging social capital because people use mobiles and audio communication on phone calls and stay close to their social relations instead of taking care of distance they might have which contributed towards the enhancement of bonding social capital.

Similarly, communicative use was affecting bridging social capital; friending was affecting bridging social capital and the values of self-disclosure effecting bridging social capital 100% among social media users. So, it can be said that Bridging capital is highly dependent upon self-disclosure on social media than communicative use and friending. These findings were consistent with the findings of [Berg and Derlaga \(2013\)](#) and [Chen and Li \(2017\)](#). This study concluded that communicative use, friending, self-disclosure plays a vital role in bridging and bonding social capital among the youth of Punjab. People who present themselves in a better way on social media are more likely of making social relations which help them to get benefit from others through the social network.

Practical Implications, Limitations and Recommendations

Findings of the study are fruitful for academician, social media studies and sociologist because these findings addressed a social change occurred in the social spectrum of Pakistan and refer to the digital world where people are using social media to encounter the traditional obstruction of socialization through online medium of bridging and bonding social capital. The results of the present study are limited to educated people living in Punjab, Pakistan. These people had easy access to advanced social media technologies. Consequently, the outcomes cannot be generalized to the whole

population because illiterate people might have no idea of building social capital through social media. The study population was consisting of youth, so it is another limitation of the research. For a detailed understanding of bonding and bridging social capital through social media, it is recommended that a comparative study should be conducted on the elder people and job holders with students to analyze the point of distinction among them, and lastly, it is also recommended that future studies should be conducted by following qualitative research method to explain the variation in the light of cultural impact and factors that are associated with bridging and bonding social capital on social media.

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