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## BOOK REVIEW

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## Exploring factors affecting consumer expenditures on media

Fan-Bin Zeng<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Previous studies on consumer expenditures on media especially focus on the relationship between consumer expenditures on media and Gross National Income (GNI) based on the Principle of Relative Constancy (PRC) from macroeconomic aspect. Researches on consumer expenditures on media from macroeconomic aspect contribute to the understanding of media structure and development of media industry but it is not applicable to microeconomic aspect since it would lead to the ecological fallacy. In order to understand consumers' expenditures on different media products, this study attempts to examine how the income of the audience, time spent on media and attitude influence consumers' expenditures on media. This study reveals that income variable is positively correlated to consumer consumption on newspapers and internet but not magazines and television once other variables are controlled. The study also explores the significance of different media products with reference to their economic characteristics.

**Keywords:** *Consumer expenditures; Media spending; Principle of relative constancy; Media consumption attitudes.*

### Introduction

Since the emergence of popular press, expenditures of advertisers have become an outstanding share of the gross income of media industries. Therefore consumers' expenditures spent on media have become a highlight of the related researches. Advertising revenue of traditional media has become unsustainable after the popularity of new media as

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it is occupying the market of traditional media. The proportion of consumption expenditures spent on media is increasing amazingly in media industries as time goes by. For example, McCombs (1972) found that total consumer expenditures on media in 1968 in the United States' media organizations occupied 48% of the total revenue of media industries, while the amount of advertising spending summed up to 52%. In 1992, American media consumption expenditures accounted for 58% of the total revenue and only 42% was the advertising spending. That is, the income of media industries in the United States has gradually reduced their dependence on advertisers, and shifted towards media buying of consumers.

Previous studies on media buying of audience have focused on the relationship between consumption expenditures on media with Gross National Income based on the Principle of Relative Constancy (PRC) from macroeconomic aspect (Duane, 1994; Dupagne, 1996; McCombs., 1972; McCombs & Son, 1986; Wood, 1986; Wood & O'Hare, 1991). The core of the PRC is that the changes of media consumption expenditures depend on the changes at macro-economic level.

This study is significance for the following: firstly: it is to conduct the survey of media consumption expenditure from microscopic aspect based on Guangzhou citizens and overcome the limitations of per capita cultural entertainment consumer spending provided by government. Secondly, media institution pays more attention to the needs of the advertisers and their attitude rather than audience because it relies on advertising revenue. However, media institution should transform to audiences as their consumption expenditure plays more important role in the revenue of media institution. Since McCombs's (1972) original statement of the principle,

the idea that a constant proportion of disposable income or gross economic revenues is spent on media, has gained some support but also invited considerable criticism. Due to the introduction of new media like the VCR and cable TV, consumer expenditures on media have increased in both absolute value and proportion of the entire national income, which challenged the PRC. Wood (1986) questioned the descriptive accuracy of the consumption expenditures of the PRC, noting in particular that McCombs' correlation coefficients were afflicted by serial correlation. A few years later, Wood and O'Hare (1991) produced evidence that consumers spend more on cable and the VCR than would have been predicted by the PRC. Despite the lack of predictive accuracy of the PRC, Wood and O'Hare found that during the "video revolution," the PRC sustained as a long-term historical generalization. However, Demers (1994) concluded that the PRC is not valid when applied to longitudinal studies. It is argued that the share of national income devoted to advertising increases primarily because society is becoming more complex.

Researches on consumer expenditures on media from macroeconomic aspect contribute to the development of media industry structure but it is applicable to microeconomic aspect since it would lead to the ecological fallacy and be hard to distinguish consumer spending on different media products. In previous researches, based on a national survey of 767 U.S online adults, Chyi (2012) evaluated user paying intent for different newspaper formats for the amount they are willing to pay, as well as user responses to various payment models being considered by the industry and found out the print edition outperforms other formats (Web & "apps") in terms of usage, preference, and paying intent, and is perceived as the most valuable platform. Chyi (2012) explored the status and

influencing factor of willingness to pay and the concept which is correlated to consumption expenditures spent on media from microscopic aspect. However, few studies focused on factors affecting on consumer expenditures on media from microeconomic aspect.

In order to understand the consumers' expenditure on different media products, this study attempts to examine how the income of the audience, time spent on media, and audiences' attitude toward media influence consumption expenditures spent on media from microscopic aspect. This study also intends to know which media products belong to normal product or inferior product category.

This study selected Guangzhou, a city of Southern China, as an interview place as it is one of the earliest cities to embrace reform and open up in China. This phenomenon not only promoted Chinese economic development but also contained a large number of relatively open media. In addition, previous empirical studies on consumer expenditures on media are mostly conducted in the United States, or some European countries, paying little attention to Asian or socialist countries. As an Asian and socialist city, Guangzhou is chosen as an interview place, which would expand the region of the research in consumer expenditures on media.

### **Consumer expenditures on media and income**

It is argued that consumer expenditures on media refer to one's total payment for media including consumer goods or services such as books, home video, internet, newspapers, magazines, box office, recorded music and video games etc. Payment depends on the income of consumers which constrains consumers' ability to pay. Therefore, income and consumption expenditures spent on media are correlated but the correlation depends on different media products.

In micro-economics, normal goods are any goods for which demand increases when income increases and falls when income decreases but price remains constant. This term does not necessarily refer to the quality of the good but an abnormal good would clearly not be in demand except for possibly lower socioeconomic groups. On the contrary, an inferior good is a good that decreases in demand when consumer income rises. In economics, the distinction between normal goods and inferior goods depends on the relationship between its consumption quantity and income rather than quality.

It employs income elasticity of demand to analyze the relationship between consumption quantity and consumer income in economics which measures the responsiveness of the demand for a good to a change in the income of the people demanding the good, *ceteris paribus*. It is calculated as the ratio of the percentage change in demand to the percentage change in income. A negative income elasticity of demand is associated with inferior goods; an increase in income will lead to a fall in the demand and may lead to changes to more luxurious substitutes. While a positive income elasticity of demand is associated with normal goods; an increase in income will lead to a rise in demand. The hypothesis of relative constancy corresponds to unit elasticity ( $e=1$ ) case. It will make a great contribution to the field of media economics when estimating income elasticity for various media and classifying them as inferior ( $e<0$ ), necessity ( $0<e<1$ ) or luxury ( $e>1$ ) goods.

There are few studies on what kind of media products actually belong to inferior, necessity or luxury goods category. According to media economics textbooks, it takes black and white television as inferior good. In 1970s, the color television set was replaced with the

income increase among poor which finally led to the falling demand for the black and white television. However, most media products are assumed to be normal goods. Brooks (2008) discussed a 9% decline in DVD sales in the third quarter of 2008 in the context of the economic crisis negatively affecting consumer income. But there are also some studies which argued that some media products do not belong to normal goods. Based on the data of the survey carried out by Pew research centre, Chyi and Yang (2009) found out consumer expenditures for internet news decreased as consumers' income increased while other conditions remained same. That is, internet news is an inferior product for the audience. However, Chyi only focused internet news rather than internet which not only provides news but also other communication, such as entertainment, expression, etc. Therefore, if we do not confine the usage of internet media products to internet news, the use of the Internet can be seen as normal goods according to the principle of the microeconomics that income determines demand.

### **Consumer expenditures and Time spent on media**

Time spent on media is one aspect of using media and money is another aspect. Audience has to pay for the media consumption unless it is free of charge but they have to spend time on media whichever media they use. Few researches examine the relationship between consumer expenditures and time spent on media. For example, McCombs (1972) discusses time spent on media in the PRC study. The approach of processing time spent on media in the PRC introduces the concept of "opportunity cost". The opportunity cost of any action is simply the next best alternative to that action - or put more simply, "what would you have done if you didn't make the choice that you

did". The concept of opportunity cost changes according to different environment for example, when television just appeared, what is the opportunity costs of watching TV actually come from? May be from the time listening to the radio, but not for all. For some people it may come from the sleep time or from other forms of entertainment and even from working hours. Now, it may be changed from browsing the website. Due to the measurement of opportunity, cost of time spent on media is vague; there are few studies on the relationship between consumer expenditures and time spent on media. This study aims to explore the relationship between consumer expenditures and time spent on media.

On the basis of above arguments, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

**H1:** The more one's income increases, the more one's expenditures on media will increase provided other conditions are controlled.

**H2:** Consumers expenditures on media increases as consumers' attitude towards media increases provided other conditions are controlled.

Attitude is a psychological tendency, a state of readiness, which will affect behavior to some extent. There are literally hundreds of definitions for the term attitude (Heath & Gaeth, 1994). Heath and Gaeth (1994) gave a state-of the-art summary of definitions and example measures of key constructs associated with attitude. However, they do not elaborate on issues surrounding attitude and they choose to adopt one-component view of attitude as a general and enduring negative or positive evaluation of a person, object, or issue. Kim and Littrell (1999) measured the attitude of tourists and found out that the



tourists' attitude towards humanities and the landscape of the place will affect their intention to buy local products. Furthermore, consumers make decisions to maximize utility (Hoskins, McFadyen, & Finn, 2004), which is often called as satisfaction, a concept related with attitude. So if a consumer becomes more satisfied, he or she would have more utility and possibility to buy the product.

Consumption expenditures spent on media is an action predicted by the audience's attitude towards media. For example, studies have shown no interest to the payment of internet news dues to unsatisfied audiences' attitude towards internet news compared with printed news (Chyi & Lasorsa, 1999. In 2004, Online Publishers Association (2004) conducted a survey of 25852 users in 41 major online news sites consumption in 12 countries to compare the similarities and differences of the audience attitudes towards traditional media and internet. The findings indicated that internet is regarded as "unlike", "unsatisfied" and "discontented" as compared to the other media. The findings also suggested that traditional media consumption is more correlated to cultural factors in different countries rather than the income.

For this study the sample is drawn from Guangzhou residents over 16 years of age and are using internet for the past six months during November 2011. It is a quota internet interview. Based on the quota of gender and age provided by the Internet user's statistics data several years ago, each interview is required to complete 9 valid questionnaires in total online survey, which involves 2 ranging from 16 to 22-year-old individual, 3 from 23 to 30, 2 from 31 to 40, 2 over 40. In addition, the ratio of male-female is 5:4. Therefore this sample could represent the characteristics of whole population due to quota

allocation even though it is different from traditional proportionally stratified sampling.

The interviewers are undergraduates who have attended courses taught by the researcher. In order to ensure the reliability of survey, interviewers are requested to sign their name in questionnaires. A total of 1317 respondents are successfully interviewed. After the interviews, the data is preprocessed and the logical relationships between the variables and collate of variables are checked so that unsatisfactory samples and questionnaires with missing data could be omitted. A total of at least 1162 valid data is obtained, accounting for 88.2% rate of total questionnaires which is applicable on the following analysis.

The whole population data for Guangzhou internet users are missing. So the sample is only compared with the statistical data China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) in table 1.

**Table1: Compare sample data with the statistical data of CNNIC**

Variable	Sample (%)	statistical data (%)
Gender		
Male	55.2	55.1
Female	44.8	44.9
Age (Note1)		
16-19	9.0	10.7
20-29	49.9	37.8
30-39	21.7	28.5
40-49	15.6	14.2
50-59	3.5	5.9
60+	0.3	2.9
Education		
primary and secondary	1.2	8.7
junior high school	8.4	35.1

Senior high school or technical secondary school	25.1	33.9
junior college	22.4	10.5
Bachelor	42.9	11.7
Profession		
Student	27.7	29.9
self-employed	13.0	14.6
Unemployed	4.2	9.5
Technical staff	9.1	8.7
Manufacture worker	3.3	4.8
Service worker	9.8	3.6
General staff in company	16.6	10.9
Middle management in company	5.4	4.0
Top management in company	2.8	0.8
General staffs in government institutions	1.6	2.4
Higher lever staffs in government institutions	0.3	1.7
Peasant	0.1	5.3
Retiree	0.5	2.7
Else	5.7	1.0

Note 1: For the reason of no investigation under aged 16, the statistics has discounted the proportion of the age under 16 and re-calculated the proportion of groups over 16 years old.

According to table 1, the deviation of the gender proportion of sample with the statistical data is only 1%; Samples ranged from 20 to 29 year-old is 10% over. The Sample is higher than the statistics in terms of educational background but the deviation of profession is little. The following table compares data with the Sixth Nationwide Population Census data of Guangzhou in 2010

**Table 2: Compare sample data with Population Census data of Guangzhou in 2010**

Varies	sample data (%)	statistical data (%)
Family household district distribution		
Liwan District	8.6	7.1
Yuexiu District	13.5	9.1
Haizhu District	13.2	12.3
Tianhe District	26.5	11.3
Baiyun District	10.9	17.5
Huangpu District	3.8	3.6
Panyu District	11.4	13.9
Huadu District	5.2	7.4
Nansha District	2.5	2.1
Luogang District	0.6	2.9
Zengcheng District	2.4	8.6
Conghua District	1.4	4.7

According to table 2, the deviation of the sample with the statistical data is little except for some household district distribution. For instance, there are more samples from Tianhe district because it is the concentration zone of information technology. Companies and office buildings in Guangzhou compared with other zones. In all, the sample is good enough to represent for Guangzhou Internet users in general in terms of gender, age, profession and household district distribution,

**Dependent variable**

Consumer expenditures on media includes newspapers, magazines, television, and internet. Radio hasn't been included for the spending is almost null for most individuals. Related questions are as follows: (1) How much did you spend on newspaper monthly? (2) How much did you spend on magazine monthly? (3) How much did you spend on TV monthly? (4) How much did you spend on Internet monthly (excluding internet shopping)?

**Independent variables**

The question of income measurement is "how much is your personal average monthly income?" The attitude towards television, newspapers, magazines, Internet was measured by 5-point Likert-type response scale that ranged from 1(don't like at all) to 5 (like it very much). Time spent on newspapers, magazines was measured by 5-point Likert-type response scale that ranged from 1 (don't read newspaper/ read magazines) to 5 (half an hour to an hour). Time spent on television and internet was measured by 5-point Likert-type response scale that ranged from 1 (do not watch TV /do not use the Internet) to 5 (five hours to eight hours).

**Controlled variables**

Previous studies show that the variable of consumer expenditures on media is associated with demographic variables, such as age, gender, education (Stempel & Thomas, 1996; Stempel, Thomas & Joseph, 2000). In order to study the relationship between independent variable and dependent variable, this study chose age, gender, education as control variables according to the standard questionnaire survey.

**Results and Discussion**

Of the 1162 respondents surveyed, the average mean of monthly spending on newspapers is 16.49 RMB; the monthly magazines spending is 18.37 RMB; the monthly watching TV expenditure is 40.56 RMB ; the monthly online spending is 89.78 RMB . Results showed that 33.4% of Guangzhou Internet users didn't read newspaper; 38.0% didn't read magazines. Among the people who read newspaper, most of them read 5 to 15 minutes a day (21.3%). The same did reading magazine (21.3%). 17.6% of Guangzhou Internet users watch TV every day. Among the people who watch TV, they mostly watch it 1 to 2 hours (28.5%), and next is 2 to 5 hours (23.7%). And among the Guangzhou Internet users, most of them spend 2 to 5 hours on Internet (32.4%) and 22.0% spend 5 to 8 hours.

Since the dependent variable of this study is a continuous variable, and the independent variable and control variable is categorical variable (dummy variable) or continuous variable, so we adopt general linear regression analysis on consumer expenditures on newspapers, magazines, television, and internet respectively in table 3.

**Table 3: The analyses of factors affecting of' consumption expenditure spent on media among Guangzhou Internet users (N = 1162)**

	Newspaper	Magazine	TV	Internet
Gender	-.006	.027	.031	-.005
Education	.05	.034	<b>.099***</b>	.012
Age	<b>.175***</b>	.035	.038	.062
Average monthly income	.069*	.04	.016	.091**
Time spend on media	<b>.209***</b>	<b>.335***</b>	<b>.128***</b>	<b>.176***</b>
Attitude towards media	<b>.112***</b>	<b>.193***</b>	-.002	<b>.111***</b>
R SQUARE(%)	16.9	21.8	2.6	5.9
ADJUSTED R SQUARE(%)	16.5	21.4	2.0	5.4
F	38.269	52.472	4.720	11.785
SIG	.000***	.000***	.000***	.000***

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01 \*\*\*p < 0.001

Hypothesis 1 predicts that consumer expenditures on media increase as income increases once other conditions are controlled. According to table 3, results show that when other conditions are controlled, income is the positively significant influencing factors of

both newspaper consumption ( $b = .069$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and internet consumption ( $b = .091$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). But for magazines and television, income has no significant influence on the consumer expenditures. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is partially confirmed. Meanwhile, under controlled conditions, the consumer spending on newspapers and internet increases as income increases, so they are normal product. But the consumer expenditures of magazines and television has nothing to do with income, so they are regarded as abnormal products.

Hypothesis 2 predicts consumer expenditures on media increases as consumer's attitude towards media increases once other conditions are controlled. According to table 3, attitude towards media is the positively significant influencing factor for both newspaper consumption expenditure ( $b=.112$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and magazine consumption expenditure ( $b=.111$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). But for television, attitude towards media has no significant influence to consumption expenditures on media. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is partially confirmed.

Question 1 aimed to find out the relationship between consumer expenditures and time spent on media once other variables are controlled. It is found that all time spent on media shows significantly positive influence on consumer expenditures on media; newspaper ( $b = .209$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), magazines ( $b = .335$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), television ( $b = .128$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), Internet ( $b = .176$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

In the control variables, age is the positively significant influencing factor of both newspaper consumption expenditure ( $b=.175$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Education is the positively significant influencing factor of television consumer spending ( $b = .099$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The R square in the newspaper consumer spending model is equal to 16.9%. R square is coefficient of determination of formula between zero and one. The closer R square value is to one, the greater



the ability of the variable to predict  $y$ . But R square increases as we increase the number of independent variable, even when the linear relation between variable and  $y$  is insignificant. Because R-square would be influenced by the number of variables and sample size, so we adopt Adjusted R square in this model. Adjusted R square in this model is 16.5%, indicating that taking the number of variables into consideration, variables of gender, age, education degree, average monthly income, average time spending on reading newspaper daily and preference of newspaper, can explain 16.5% of the variation in the response variable, which is a relatively large proportion in social science studies. In addition, this formula has pass F-test ( $F=38.269$ ,  $SIG=0.000^{***}$ ). Adjusted R square in magazine consumer spending model is equal to 21.4%, higher than the one of newspaper. But in TV (Adjusted R square =2%) and internet consumer spending model (Adjusted R square =5.4%), Adjusted R square is relatively small. That is to say, introduced variables in newspaper and magazine consumer spending models have a better explanatory ability than TV and internet models. The consumer spending of TV is fixed mandatory charge, and those of internet are usually one-time charge, which leads to a worse prediction.

### **Conclusion and limitations of the study**

Based on Guangzhou internet users, this study revealed that income variable is positively correlated with consumer spending on newspapers and internet but not with magazines and television once other variables are controlled. From macro data, Yu (2008) analyzed the correlation of per capita consumption expenditure and cultural entertainment spending proportion among all Chinese provinces and cities in 2006, and found that the cultural entertainment consumption expenditure, one index of media consumption related, will be more

than those with less consumption expenditure, one index of income related in one province/city. As from micro aspect, Chyi and Yang (2009) have pointed out that the newspaper consumption and income are positively correlated, while internet news consumption and income are negatively correlated. This shows that newspaper is normal product, which has been empirically confirmed in China and other countries. Since "internet consumption" is mainly internet charged and fixed, while internet news is varied, therefore internet consumption and internet news consumption is not the same for Guangzhou citizens, which leads to their relationship and income incomparable. In terms of attitude towards media, attitude has significant influence on the rest of the media (newspapers, magazines, the Internet) and these effects are positive except for television. In other word, the media consumption expenditure would be increased if audience has positive attitude towards this media. Time spent on media is positively correlated to media consumption expenditure, which shows that the more time audience are engaged with media, the more money they will spend on it.

The theoretical significance of this study is explored on economic characteristics of different media products (newspapers, magazines, television and internet). Previous researches proved that consumption expenditure on newspapers and internet are correlated with income so they belong to normal product. Yu (2008) found that per capita consumption expenditure, per capita cultural entertainment spending and the ratios of daily newspaper ownership have significant correlation in Chinese cities, which is 0.863 and 0.754 respectively. This shows that income and newspaper consumption are correlated. Of course, It would need more empirical data that whether magazines and

television consumption expenditure are correlated with income or not and showing the reason of their relation. Secondly, this study concludes that the positive attitude to media influences media consumptions, which might explain some media economics issues, such as the reason of low internet news subscription may be due to lack of audiences' attitude towards internet news. Though McCombs (1972) discussed time spent on media in the Principle of Relative Constancy, but he mixed the media consumption expenditure with time spent on media and didn't clarify the relations between time spent on media and media consumption expenditures, which leads to be questioned by scholars. In comparison, this study argues the variable of time spent on media and that of media consumption expenditure are correlated and addressed McCombs' unsolved problem. This study reveals that audience's consumption expenditure would be higher if they have higher income, better attitude toward media and more time spent on media. In other word, the key to increase audience's consumption expenditure is to increase the user's viscosity and loyalty.

There are certain limitations of the study: first, this study conducted online survey which does not represent the whole population therefore lacks generalization. Second, Guangzhou is a developed city in China for its extremely imbalance economics, According to the data of per capita cultural entertainment consumption expenditure drawn from official public in 2006, one related concept of media consumption expenditure, the amount of Guangdong is 1010.23 RMB per year, lag behind Beijing, Shanghai, but far more exceed than other areas, such as Tibet, which is only 87.44. Therefore, the data of Guangzhou could not represent the national data and further research should be conducted in other cities in China. Third, due to the limitation of the questionnaire, the study did not explore the function of different

media, which a major research realm in related studies. For example, Ghee - Young Noh and August E. Grant (1997) proposed that the relationships between different media were decided by their replacing or complementary function. They revealed that VCR offers a range of functions that implicate both mass communication and interpersonal communication by an examination of audience needs and uses of the VCR. Thus, the VCR is both a functional competitor and a functional complement to existing mass media. This study argued that functional analysis of media may provide an additional explanatory power for the mechanism of consumer spending on mass media. In Guangzhou, the audiences' consumption expenditure on Internet is much higher than those on other media, whose function has been becoming more and more superior to the information and entertainment functions of other media because the Internet can provide unique functions like searching information, communication, and opinion expression. As a result, we should analyze the influence of consumption expenditures spent on media according to the differences of media products' function.

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## **Influence of the social media on political engagement with the electorate during the 2015 presidential election campaign in Nigeria Barikui Nnaane<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

The emergence, popularity and ubiquity of the social media have created enormous potential and impact in many spheres of life in Nigeria. This has been amply demonstrated in all the stages of the 2015 elections in Nigeria. This study focused on the influence of the social media on political engagement with the electorate during 2015 Nigerian presidential election campaign. The research design adopted is survey through 2304 questionnaires distributed across the selected city, in each state and in each of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, while 2054 copies, representing 89.1% are found usable. The sampling techniques used are multi-stage sampling and simple random sampling techniques. One of the key findings of the research is that the respondents through the social media engagement with the two leading candidates and their respective political president Goodluck Jonathan (PDP) and General Muhammadu Buhari (APC), rated them on some core campaign issues like corruption, insecurity, education, health, and infrastructure, among others. The study however recommends that presidential candidates and their respective political parties should hire experts in marketing communication who can manage their social media accounts so that political engagement on the social media should not degenerate to personality attacks, as was evident during the campaign.

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Political Engagement, Electorate, 2015 Presidential Election, Nigeria.*

### **Introduction**

The emergence and popularity of the social media as veritable platforms for creating political awareness and networking with the electorate and even engendering transparency in the voting process first became noticeable during the 2011 presidential election campaign in Nigeria. The then Acting President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the

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People's Democratic Party (PDP), on September 15, 2010, informed his 217,000 Facebook fans about his aspiration to contest the 2011 presidential election. Just within 24 hours, over 4000 fans joined his page and on the day of the elections on April 16, 2011, he garnered over 500,000 fans. Other contestants for the presidency, such as Mallam Nuhu Ribadu of the defunct Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau of the defunct All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), also registered their presence on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. In addition to the use of social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, other election stakeholders were also involved in the 2011 elections such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties, the media, and civil society organizations to engage the electorate on their civic rights and responsibilities (Nnaane, 2013; Okoro & Nwafor, 2013).

It is imperative to note however, that the inspiration to exploit the potential of the social media to engage with the Nigerian electorate, especially the youth, came from the 2008 presidential election campaign of the then Senator Barack Obama who reached five million Americans on 15 different social media platforms, to the extent that as at November 2008, Obama had approximately 2.5 million Facebook supporters; 115,000 followers on Twitter and 50 million viewers of his YouTube Videos (Igbinidu, 2011). Now with the rising use of the social media among Nigerians, especially the youth, candidates and their respective political parties during the 2015 presidential election campaign, left nothing to chance just to get and sustain the attention of this teeming number of the electorate on the social media not only to sell their programs and policies, but also to get their votes.

With over 11 million Nigerians on Facebook, over three million on Twitter, as well as over a million on Blackberry Messenger and

WhatsApp each, the battle for the votes of the electorate moved from podiums and the conventional mass media to the social media, where a good number of these electorate, particularly the youth, have transformed to their own public sphere to debate on the right candidate and political party, and even hauling insults and abuses in the process on the candidate/party they do not like.

Asehinde (2014) underscores the place of the social media in election campaigns as follows:

In 2008, President Obama victory to become the president of the United States of America was digitally driven with integrated Facebook, Twitter, and Google Plus into his campaign strategies and has continued to connect with the constituents on social media well, after winning the elections. This was also experienced in India 2014 elections where social media were pivotal in the sweeping victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). I believe it is time for political aspirants, in Nigeria, to really understand the importance of social media to their campaign successes. It's no secret that the campaign website is the hub of a campaign's online activity, but social media are important supporting casts that can drive valuable traffic to the site and engage voters on a more personal level. Social Media have rapidly grown in importance as for political activism in their different forms. Social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube provide new ways to stimulate citizen engagement in political life, where elections and electoral campaigns have a central role. Personal communication

via social media brings politicians and parties closer to their potential voters. The process allows politicians to communicate faster and reach citizens in a more targeted manner and vice versa, without the intermediate role of mass media (p.1).

It is instructive to note that although Nigeria has 26 registered political parties, out of this number, only 11 fielded candidates for the presidential election. But out of these 11 candidates, the 2015 presidential election was a two-horse race and a straight fight between the incumbent, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the main challenger and veteran presidential candidate, retired General Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC), who contested and lost the 2003, 2007 and the 2011 presidential elections under different political parties. Both of them were the two leading presidential candidates. However, General Buhari defeated the incumbent, Dr. Jonathan, in the presidential election of 2015, by garnering 15,424,921 votes to Dr. Jonathan of the PDP- 12,853,162 votes. Concerning the place of the social media in the 2015 presidential campaign, President Jonathan had over 1,700,000 fans on Facebook and 90,500 followers on Twitter; retired General Buhari had over 101,401 fans on Facebook and over 70,000 followers on Twitter. Also, President Jonathan's party- PDP had 60,000 followers on Facebook and over 28,000 followers on Twitter; while retired General Buhari's party- APC had 97,400 followers on Twitter and over 100,000 Facebook fans (Alagbe, 2015; [www.cp-africa.com](http://www.cp-africa.com) and [www.saharareporters.com](http://www.saharareporters.com)).

It follows therefore that the two leading presidential candidates and their respective parties were constantly engaged with the

electorate, selling their candidatures, programs and policies in order to secure their votes. For instance, the APC tweeted more than 8,000 times, seeking the votes of the electorate, while also attacking the PDP in the process, while Dr. Jonathan wrote on his Facebook page, telling the electorate that “I will never let you down even as I promise to build on the progress already made” (Alagbe, 2015). The campaign of President Jonathan and his party was anchored on “continuity/transformation”; while that of Buhari and his party was woven around “change”. The focus of this research therefore is to evaluate the influence of the social media on political engagement with the electorate by the two leading presidential candidates and their respective parties in the 2015 presidential election campaign.

Before the advent of the social media, the conventional mass media of newspapers, magazines, radio and television, were often used by politicians and their respective political parties to reach out to the electorate. But because of the elitist nature of these media, equal access and participation by the electorate, especially by the youth was often restricted. But with the emergence and popularity of the social media, with certain distinct characteristics like interactivity, networking, sharing and collaboration, the electorate are no longer at the mercy of the propaganda of politicians during campaign, as the social media have made them to be stakeholders in the public sphere and in the political process. In addition, politicians have also discovered the social media to be reliable platforms for campaigning, particularly to approach youth, who are very active on the social media.

In the light of the above, the question comes to the mind that to what extent has the social media campaign of President Jonathan and retired General Buhari and their respective political parties been able to sell their candidatures and manifestoes to the Nigerian youth; how do

the Nigeria youth perceive the candidatures of President Jonathan and their respective political parties through the social media engagement; and what is the extent of impact of the social media engagement (if any) on the Nigerian youth by President Jonathan and retired General Buhari and their respective political parties.

### **Objectives of the study**

In broad terms, this research seeks to evaluate the influence of the social media on political engagement with the electorate in the 2015 presidential election campaign in Nigeria, but specifically it is to:

1. Determine how the Nigerian electorate perceives the social media engagement of President Jonathan and retired General Buhari as well as their respective political parties in the 2015 presidential election campaign.
2. Ascertain the extent to which the social media engagement of President Jonathan and retired General Buhari and their respective political parties centered on their manifestoes than on petty issues.
3. Find out the social media platforms which the Nigerian electorate got engaged more with President Jonathan and retired General Buhari as well as their respective political parties.

The following are the research questions which will guide the study:

How does the electorate perceive the social media engagement of President Jonathan and retired General Buhari as well as their respective political parties in the 2015 presidential election campaign in Nigeria?

To what extent did the social media engagement of President Jonathan and retired General Buhari as well as their respective

political parties centre on their manifestoes than on petty issues?

What were the social media platforms with which the Nigerian electorate got engaged more with President Jonathan and retired General Buhari and their respective political parties?

### **Literature review**

The social media are web-enabled applications used for networking, sharing, collaboration and linkage, among others. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the social media are a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of User-Generated Content (UGC). They identify the 5Cs of the social media to be conversation, contribution, collaboration, connection and community. Similarly, Pavlik and McIntosh (2012), identified their own 5Cs of the social media to include: choice, conversation, curation, creation and collaboration.

According to Dominick (2011), the social media have democratized communication and also mass communication, and that with this revolution, the monopoly over communication by the conventional media has been broken. This view is also shared by Rodman (2010) and Biagi (2012). In the views of Akinola (2013), the social media constitute important tools in the democratization process and can also be effective in monitoring governance. According to Sen (2012), the social media provide avenues for engagement between politicians and the active citizens, instead of the vertical top-down approach is seen in the mainstream mass media. In the views of Ogwuche (2014), the emergence of the social media has provided dynamic ways for the Nigerian youth to engage their leaders. She argues that the social media have helped to boost Nigeria's democratic

values by bringing political parties and the leaders under scrutiny and also providing a more people-centric approach to governance; and that with the 2015 elections, political parties and their candidates are more engaged with youth on the social media.

Ebhota (2015), argues that the use of the social media in today's campaign is not only important, but also critical. He argues further that the political campaign done through the social media has helped politicians to connect with the electorate. He also avers that social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube provide new ways to stimulate citizen engagement in political life, where campaign and elections have a central role to play. In a study by Okoro and Nwafor (2013), they found out that Facebook and Twitter are among the social media tools used most during the 2011 presidential election in Nigeria; and that 86% of the respondents stated that the social media contributed greatly to their participation in the election.

Towner (2015), examines the influence of attention to specific forms of traditional and online media on young adults' online and offline political participation as well as voter turnout during the 2012 presidential election campaign in America. He found out that attention to traditional media did not increase offline and online political participation; instead, participation is heightened by attention to online sources like Facebook, Twitter, blogs and even the Websites of the presidential candidates. Tang and Lee (2013), examine how time spent on Facebook exposure to shared political information, network size, network structural heterogeneity and direct connection with public political actors relate to young people's online and offline political participation. Their study also revealed that participation is explained most prominently by direct connection with political actors and followed by exposure to shared political information. Furthermore,

they also noted that these two variables mediate the impact of other dimensions of Facebook use on political participation.

Baumgartner and Morris (2009), in their study, argue that although the social media are recognised by people, especially the youth as possible sources of news, this does not necessarily transform them to informed citizens or add to democratic discourse. They also noted that in spite of the promise the social media hold for increasing political interest and participation among the people, users are no more inclined to participate in politics than are users of other media. According to the Pew Research Center (2012a), 66% of social media users have employed the platforms to post their thoughts about civic and political issues, react to others' postings, press friends to act on issues and vote, follow candidates, "like" and link to others' content, and belong to groups formed on the social media. Again the Pew Research Center (2012b), also found out that campaign and policy-related materials on the social media play a modest role in influencing most users' views and political activities; that democrats and liberals are most likely to say the social media have impact and are important; and that the politically-engaged stand out in their use of the social media. Other scholars like Skoric, Pan and Poor (2012), as well as Narasimhamurthy (2014) have also studied the impact of the social media on election campaign.

From the literature reviewed so far, studies on the use of the social media during election campaign, especially in Nigeria, are actually scanty. This study will be a modest attempt at filling that gap.

### **Theoretical framework**

This study is anchoring on two theoretical constructs- the Public Sphere Theory and the Technological Determinism Theory. The concept and theory of the public sphere is enunciated and popularized



by Jurgen Habermas. Habermas (1996), argues that the public sphere refers to a network of communicating information and viewpoints; that communication among diverse people in society in respect of political and social issues constitute a fundamental element of participatory democracy; and that freedom of expression and equality in opportunity are essential conditions for the functioning of the public sphere in society. Jacobs (2000), buttresses this by noting that the public sphere is a political space where members of the public come together to engage the state and political actors in mutual discourse over issues of common concern. It follows therefore because the social media are a part of the contemporary public sphere, in which communication is horizontal, the electorate can interrogate political actors and their political parties on their programs and policies.

The Technological Determinism theory on the other hand, traced to Marshall McLuhan, suggests that technology is shaping how individuals in the society think, feel, act, and how the society is moving from one technological epoch to another (tribal, literate/print, electronic and digital). Since the social media are products of the digital revolution, the patterns and dimensions of communication among some people in the society are also changing (McQuail, 2005 and Burton, 2010). In other words, technological devices are now driving socio-cultural and political change in the society. So the way politicians and their respective political parties engage with the electorate during campaign is also changing. So the ability of the social media as products of digital technology, to provide become veritable platforms for political engagement with the electorate during election campaigns can no longer be glossed over.

### **Research Methodology**

The study uses the survey method of scientific inquiry. Survey is quite

appropriate in eliciting people’s views on the issue. According to Babbie (2010), survey is an excellent method for the measurement of attitude and opinions of people within a large population. The population consists of educated, social media-literate and politically conscious across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. A sample of 384 individuals from the selected area of the study, in the selected state from each geopolitical zone is selected. This is based on Cozby (2004) sample size determination table, which states that at + or - 5 margin of error, a population of over 100,000 should have a sample size of 384. It follows therefore that a total sample from all the six geopolitical zones is derived by multiplying 384 by six, which gives 2304 respondents. The multi-stage sampling technique is used to divide Nigeria into six geopolitical zones, and then a state is selected from each of the zones, while the capital of the selected state formed the area of the study. This is represented in the table below:

**Table 1: Areas of the Study by Geo-Political Zones, States and Capitals**

S/N	Geopolitical zones	States	Capitals
1	North-Central	Plateau	Jos
2	North-East	Adamawa	Jalingo
3	North-West	Kaduna	Kaduna
4	South-East	Enugu	Enugu
5	South-South	Rivers	Port-Harcourt
6	South-West	Lagos	Ikeja

Data is collected through questionnaire, designed in a way that it is easily understood by the respondents. The first part of the questionnaire is on the demographics of the respondents, while the second part deals with the research questions. In this study, 2304 copies of questionnaire are distributed in the selected capitals in the selected states across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Out of this figure,

2054 copies, representing 89.1% are found useful. The response rate is very encouraging because according to Ohaja (2003), a response rate that is below 70% may render the research findings suspect. However, the number of copies returned and the percentages, according to geopolitical zones are shown in the table below:

**Table 2:** Number of copies of questionnaire returned by geo-political zone

South-East	South-South	South-West	North-Central	North-East	North-West
344 (89.6%)	345 (89.8%)	347 (90.4%)	340 (88.5%)	338 (88.0%)	340 (88.5%)

**Table 3:** Sex of the Respondents by Geo-Political Zone

Sex	South-East	South-South	South-West	North-Central	North-East	North-West
Male	242 (70%)	231(70%)	217 (63%)	277 (81%)	285 (84%)	262 (77%)
Female	102 (30%)	114 (30%)	130 (37%)	63 (19%)	53 (16%)	78 (23%)
Total	344 (100%)	345 (100%)	347(100%)	340 (100%)	338 (100%)	340(100%)

**Table 4:** Age-Groups of the Respondents by Geo-Political Zone

Age-group	South-East	South-South	South-West	North-Central	North-East	North-West
18-22	66(19.2%)	58(16.8%)	72 (20.7%)	47 (13.8%)	27(27.8%)	34(10%)
23-27	98(28.5%)	101 (29.3%)	89 (25.6%)	93 (27.4%)	74(21.9%)	68(20%)
28-32	92(26.7%)	88 (25.5%)	92 (26.5%)	114 (33.5%)	118(34.9%)	107(31.5%)
33 & above	88(25.6%)	98 (28.4%)	94 (27.1%)	86 (25.3%)	119(35.2%)	131(38.5%)
Total	344 (100%)	345 (100%)	347 (100%)	340 (100%)	338 (100%)	344(100%)

**Table 5:** Educational Level of Respondents by Geo-Political Zone

Party Affiliation/Sympathy	Respondent	Percentage
APC	669	32.6%
PDP	621	30.2%
Others	232	11.3%
None	532	25.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2054</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6:** Party Affiliation/Sympathy of Respondents

Qualification	South-East	South-South	South-West	North-Central	North-East	North-West
Undergraduate	112 (32.6%)	131(38%)	120 (34.6%)	144(42.3%)	170(50.3%)	150(41.2%)
HND/BA/B.Sc/its equivalent	120 (34.9%)	122 (35.4%)	145 (41.8%)	147(43.2%)	137(40.5%)	149(43.8%)
MA/M.Sc/its equivalent	104 (30.2%)	85 (24.6%)	74 (21.3%)	47(13.8%)	30(8.9%)	40(11.8%)
Ph.D	4 (1.7%)	7 (2.0%)	8 (2.3%)	2(0.6%)	1(0.3%)	1(0.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>340</b>

In Table 6 above, 669 of the respondents, representing 32.6%, are either members of, or have sympathies for the All Progressives Congress (APC); 621 (30.2%), are either members of, or have sympathies for the People’s Democratic Party (PDP); 232 (11.3%), belong to, or have sympathies for other political parties; while 532 (25.9%), do not belong to or have sympathies for any political party.

**How does the electorate perceive the social media engagement of President Jonathan and retired General Buhari as well as their respective political parties in the 2015 presidential election campaign in Nigeria?** Before going into this research question properly, some preliminary questions are asked. First of all, the respondents are asked if they followed the social media campaign of two leading candidates- President Jonathan (PDP) and General Buhari (APC) during the 2015 presidential election. All the respondents answered in the affirmative. The respondents are also asked how often they followed the social media of the two leading candidates. Below is the presentation of the results:

**Table 7:** Respondents' Frequency of Following the Social Media Campaign of Dr. Jonathan/PDP and General Buhari/APC during the 2015 Presidential Election

	<b>Very often</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Less often</b>
Dr. Jonathan/PDP	265 (12.9%)	575 (28%)	1214 (59.1%)
General Buhari/APC	1120 (54.5%)	720 (35.1%)	214 (10.4%)

In Table 7 above, 265 of the respondents, representing 12.9%, said they followed the social media campaign of President Jonathan/PDP, "Very often"; 575(28%), said "Often"; while 1214 (59.1%), said "Less often". On the other hand, 1120, representing 54.5%, said they followed the social media campaign of General Buhari/APC, "Very often"; 720 (35.1%), said "Often"; while 214 (10.4%), said "Less often".

In addition, the respondents were equally asked to assess the two leading candidates and their political parties- President Jonathan/PDP and General Buhari/APC on some fundamental campaign issues based on their social media engagement. Below is the presentation of the

results:

**Table 8:** Respondents’ Assessment of the Social Media Engagements of President Jonathan/PDP on Some Core Campaign Issues

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Agriculture	998 (48.6%)	570 (27.8%)	341 (16.6%)	145 (7.1%)
Corruption	82 (4%)	121(5.9%)	207(10.1%)	1644(80.0%)
Education	341(16.7%)	450 (21.9%)	876 (42.6%)	387 (18.8%)
Health	321(15.6%)	440 (21.4%)	833 (40.6%)	460 (22.4%)
Infrastructure	420 (20.4%)	632 (30.8%)	889 (43.3%)	113 (5.5%)
Insecurity	55 (2.7%)	89 (4.3%)	344 (16.7%)	1566 (76.2%)
Women Empowerment	780 (38%)	233 (11.3%)	578 (28.1%)	563 (27.4%)

**Table 9:** Respondents’ Assessment of the Social Media Engagements of General Buhari/APC on Some Core Campaign Issues

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Agriculture	956(46.5 %)	700(34.1 %)	325(15.8 %)	73(3.6%)
Corruption	1678(81.7 %)	376(18.3 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Education	1304(63.5 %)	607(29.6 %)	96(4.7%)	47(2.3%)
Health	1221(59.4 %)	567(27.6 %)	188(9.2%)	78(3.8%)
Infrastructure	1322 (64.4%)	499 (24.3%)	133 (6.5%)	100 (4.9%)
Insecurity	1670 (81.3%)	338 (16.5%)	46 (2.3%)	0 (0%)
Women Empowerment	537 (26.1%)	489 (23.8%)	672 (32.7%)	356 (17.3%)

In Table 9 above, based on the social media engagements during the campaign, 956 of the respondents, representing 46.5%, scored General Buhari/APC “Excellent” in Agriculture; 700(34.1%), scored “Good”; 325(15.8%), scored “Fair”; while 73(3.6%), scored “Poor”. On Corruption, 1678(81.7%), scored “Excellent”; 376(18.3%), while “Fair” and “Poor” had nil (0%). On Education, 1304(63.5%), scored “Excellent”; 607(29.6%), scored “Good”; 96(4.7%), scored “Fair”; while 47(2.3%), scored “Poor”. On Health, 1221(59.4%), scored “Excellent”; 567(27.6%), scored “Good”; 188(9.2%), scored “Fair”; while 78(3.8%), scored “Poor”. On Infrastructure, 1322(64.4%), scored “Excellent”; 499(24.3%), scored “Good”; 133(6.5%), scored “Fair”; while 100(4.9%), scored “Poor”. On Insecurity, 1670(81.3%), scored “Excellent”; 338(16.5%), scored “Good”; 46(2.3%), scored “Fair”; while “Poor” had nil (0%). On Women Empowerment, 537(26.1%), scored “Excellent”; 489(23.8%), scored “Good”; 672(32.7%), scored ‘Fair’; while 356(17.3%), scored “Poor”.

However, to answer the research question proper, the Charles Osgood semantic differential scale was used. The scale has a positive (+) and a Negative (-) side. Therefore to get the mean score for each opposed binary attitudinal values, the scores recorded under Strongly Agree (SA), Fairly Agree (FA) Agree(A), Neutral (N), Agree(A), Fairly Agree(FA) and Strongly Agree(SA) on both sides of the scale, were multiplied by their scale points- 7,6, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1and then divided by the total score- 2054 copies of the questionnaire. The more the respondents ticked to the left or to the right, the more they strongly agreed with the values on either side of the scale. The number 4 position on the scale shows a “neutral” response.

The mean statistics was also employed to show the degree of

agreement with the opposed binary attitudinal values. To get the benchmark for gauging the responses, the total values (7+6+5+4+3+2+1) was divided by the number 7 thus:

$$\frac{7+6+5+4+3+2+1}{7} = \frac{28}{7} = 4$$

Therefore 4 is the cut-off point for this scale. It follows that any mean score that falls below 4 agrees more with the items on the negative (-) side of the scale concerning the perception of the social media engagements of President Jonathan/PDP and General Buhari/APC, during the 2015 presidential election campaign.

**Table 10: Respondents’ Perception of the Social Engagement of President Jonathan/PDP During the 2015 Presidential Election Campaign in Nigeria**

S / N	Items	SA	FA	A	N	A	F A	SA	Items	Mean Score
1	+ Const ructiv e	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	- No t con str uct ive	3.6
2	Enligh tening	200	301	321	214	232	198	588	No t enl igh ten ing	3.6
3	Educa tive	202	305	322	186	244	196	599	No t ed uca	3.6



4	Issues-based	89	256	344	378	478	332	177	Not issues-based	2.9
5	Deep	85	250	340	389	456	422	112	Shallow	3.1
6	Captivating	78	289	345	370	415	420	137	Not captivating	3.8

In Table 10 above, with the mean scores of all the items on the negative (-) side clearly below the benchmark of 4, it means that the respondents believed that the social media engagement of President Jonathan/PDP during the 2015 presidential election campaign was “Not constructive”, “Not enlightening”, “Not educative”, “Not issues-based”, “Shallow” and “Not captivating”.

**Table 11: Respondents’ Perception of the Social Engagement of General Buhari/APC during the 2015 Presidential Election Campaign in Nigeria**

S/N	Items	SA	FA	AN	AS	FS	SA	Items	Mean Score	
	+	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	-	
1	Constructive	478	450	408	427	319	216	163	Not constructive	5.0
2	Enlightening	448	470	440	420	311	214	144	Not enlightening	5.0

	ng		2	4	7	0	1	2	ng	
3	Educative	432	4	4	2	2	1	1	Not educative	4.9
			7	0	7	0	1	5		
			7	1	5	2	5	3		
4	Issues-based	450	4	3	2	2	1	1	Not issues-based	4.8
			2	9	4	3	4	6		
			2	9	5	4	3	1		
5	Deep	300	4	3	4	2	1	1	Shallow	4.1
			0	9	4	1	5	4		
			2	9	5	2	6	0		
6	Captivating	427	4	3	4	2	1	5	Not captivatin g	4.8
			0	8	1	0	2	7		
			5	9	1	2	3			

In Table 11 above, with the mean scores of all the items on the positive (+) side clearly above the benchmark of 4, it means that the respondents believed that the social media engagement of General Buhari/APC during the 2015 presidential election campaign was “Constructive”, “Enlightening”, “Educative”, “Issues-based”, “Deep” and “Captivating”.

**Research Question 2: To what extent did the social media engagement of President Jonathan and retired General Buhari as well as their respective political parties centre on their manifestoes than on petty issues?** The Likert Scale was used to elicit the views of the respondents on this research question. A benchmark of 3.0 was specified for the Likert Scale. It was used to determine the perception of the respondents on the use of negative or attack political advertisements by the two major political parties in the 2015 presidential election. This benchmark is arrived at by dividing the total values on the scale by 5 points, thus:

$$\frac{5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1}{5} = \frac{15}{5} = 3.0$$

Therefore, if a statement has a mean value that equals or is greater than 3.0, then it is accepted, if otherwise, it is rejected. Therefore to get the mean score for each statement, the scores recorded under Strongly Agree (SA), Agree(A), Undecided(U), Disagree(D) and Strongly Disagree(SD) were multiplied by their scale points- 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1and then divided by the total score- 2091 copies of the question returned and found usable . It is important to note that “F” stands for “Frequency”.

**Table 12: Respondents’ Perception of the Extent to which the Social Media Engagement of President Jonathan/PDP and General Buhari Centred on their Parties’ Manifestoes, than on Petty Issue, During the 2015 Presidential Election Campaign**

S / N	Items	SA	A	U	D	S D	Me an Score	Decis ion
		F	F	F	F	F		
1	The social media engagements of President Jonathan/PDP focused more on party manifesto than on petty issues.	314	4 1 5	3 2 0	3 3 5	6 7 0	2.7	Rejec ted
2	The social media engagements of General Buhari/APC focused more on party manifesto than on petty issues.	775	7 4 5	3 0 3	1 0 2	1 2 9	4.7	Acce pted
3	President Jonathan/PDP’s campaign slogan of “transformation” was well received by the people.	306	4 0 5	3 1 0	3 5 5	6 7 8	2.7	Rejec ted

4	General campaign "change" received by the people.	Buhari/APC's slogan was well	800	7 6 7	2 8 8	1 0 1	9 8	4.8	Acce pted
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In Table 12 above, hypothetical statements 1 and 3 were invalid, because they were well below the benchmark of 3.0; while hypothetical statements 2 and 4 were valid because they were above the benchmark of 3.0.

**Research Question 3: What are the social media platforms with which the Nigerian electorate got engaged more with President Jonathan and retired General Buhari and their respective political parties?** This question became necessary in view of the penetration of the social media among Nigerians, especially the youths, and because of the realisation by politicians and their respective political parties of the potential of the social media in the country. Below is the presentation of the results:

**Table 13: Most Used Social Media Platforms for Political engagements by the Electorate during the 2015 Presidential Election Campaign**

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Twitter	808	39.3%
Facebook	789	38.4%
Blogs	372	18.1%
Others	85	4.2%
Total	2054	100%

In Table 13 above, 808 of the respondents, representing 39.3%, said they "Twitter" most; 789(38.4%), said "Facebook"; 372(18.1%), said "Blogs"; while 85(4.2%), said other social media platforms.

**Discussion of Findings**

The potential and impact of the social media in engaging with the electorate in a democracy can no longer be glossed over. Because of the

possibility of online perception translating to offline perception, political candidates and their respective parties now incorporate the social media in their campaign strategy. To underscore the interests shown in the 2015 presidential elections, with the attendant tension and anxiety it generated, all the respondents said they were following the social media engagements of the two leading candidates and their parties. However, the study showed that more people-1120, representing 54.5%, engaged very often with General Buhari/APC on the social media, compared with 265(12.9%), who engaged with President Jonathan. This could be as a result of the cult-like followership that General Buhari enjoyed especially in the North and South-West, Nigeria. In addition, his party's campaign slogan of "change" resonated with millions of Nigerians who are obviously tired of the 16-year (mis)rule of the PDP.

The study also revealed that 998(48.6%) of the respondents scored President Jonathan/PDP "excellent in the areas of agriculture, while 780(38%), also scored them "excellent in the area of women empowerment, in the course of the social media engagement. However, President Jonathan/PDP ratings is low in the areas of education, health, infrastructure, and especially corruption and insecurity. For General Buhari/APC, from the social media engagement with the electorate, 1678(81.7%) of the respondents scored them "excellent" on their strategies of curbing corruption in the country, while 1670(81.3%) of the respondents also scored them "excellent" on their capability to tackle insecurity. This is clearly understood in the light of how terrorism has further dented the image of Nigeria, without much efforts from the government tackle the scourge. Other areas where the respondents scored General Buhari/APC "excellent" are: education (1304:63.5%); health

(1221:59.4%); and infrastructure (1322:64.4%). However, General Buhari/APC are not scored well in the area of women empowerment.

On the perception of the social media engagement of President Jonathan/PDP, the results from the semantic differential scale showed that, the respondents believed that their (President Jonathan/PDP) social media engagement is 'not constructive', "not enlightening", "not educative", "not issues-based", "shallow" and "not captivating". Whereas the respondents believed that the social media engagement of General Buhari/APC, is "constructive", "enlightening", "educative", "issues-based", "deep", and "captivating". For the Likert scale, the hypothetical statement that the social media engagement of President Jonathan/PDP focused more on party manifesto than on petty issues was rejected with a mean score of 2.7; while the hypothetical statement that the social media engagement of General Buhari/APC focused more on party manifesto than on petty issues is accepted with a mean score of 4.7. Furthermore, the hypothetical statement that President Jonathan/PDP's campaign slogan of "transformation" is well received by the people is rejected with a mean score of 2.7; while the hypothetical statement that General Buhari/APC's campaign slogan of "change" is well received by the people is accepted with a mean score of 4.8.

The study also revealed that a majority of the respondents-808(39.3%), used Twitter more in their social media engagement with Both President Jonathan/PDP and General Buhari/APC; 789(38.4%), used Facebook more; 372(18.1%), used Blogs; while 85 (4.2%) used other social media platforms. The implications of the study are that the social media are now a part of the contemporary public sphere where important political issues are being interrogated and candidates/parties' policies and programmes appraised. So it is now

instructive for candidates and their respective political parties to incorporate the social media in their overall campaign strategy during elections. The study has demonstrated the validity of the Public Sphere theory and the Technological Determinism theory. This has been seen in the way and manner the respondents scored the two leading candidates in the areas of corruption, insecurity, infrastructure, among others using the social media.

### **Conclusion**

The major objective of this research was to evaluate the influence of the social media on political engagement with the electorate in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study, while frequency tables, simple percentages, mean scores through Likert scale and Charles Osgood semantic differential scale are used to present and analyze the data. It is imperative to note that political engagement with the electorate during election campaign in this era, does not take place only on the soap box and through political structures again, but also on the social media. With the level of networks on the social media, especially among the youths, who constitute well over 60% of voters in the country, no serious-minded presidential candidate and the party will fail to ignore this demographic class. Based on the above, it is recommended that a code of conduct that will guide constructive social media engagement should be made a part of the Electoral Act, so that candidates, parties, and the electorate will not use the social media to malign people; in other words, social media engagement should be issues-based, unlike what happened during the 2015 presidential election campaign, where there were a lot of personality attacks from the supporters of both President Jonathan/PDP and General Buhari/APC. Also, presidential candidates and their respective political parties should hire seasoned

marketing communication outfits that will manage their social media accounts, so that the ethics of marketing communication can guide the social media engagement. In addition, future studies can examine the impact of social media engagement on voters' choices during elections.

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## Uses and gratifications of selected social network services: Study of Lahore youth

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### Abstract

The Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have drastically transformed the contemporary societies. Social Networking Services (SNS) have overcome time and space distance and increased opportunities of individuals' interactions. This study explores the impact of on students' behavior in Lahore. Utilized survey design where a self-administered questionnaire is the instrument to find out the factors of these sites that had impact on respondents. Through purposive sampling 206 students are selected from two universities of Lahore. Data is analyzed in the backdrop of uses and gratifications theory to determine 'most popular social networking site', 'time consumed on these sites', 'instrumental use or active use' and 'ritualized use or passive use'. The descriptive statistics including percentage and mean is applied. The mean for ritualized or passive use of four items is 84% whereas for instrumental it is only 31%. The other significant statistics related to items include 63% use of Facebook, 61% use of the SNSs for more than two hours, 11% use for serious political debate and 94% use for making fun of political personalities, 91% use for sharing and liking the celebrity photos. This study also highlights future considerations for research in this domain.

**Key Words:** *Uses and gratifications; Social Networking Sites (SNSs), Instrumental media; Ritualized use of media.*

### Introduction

The emergence of new technologies over the past few decades has multiplied chances for audience activity. Audience can now pick and choose, and have power to mould the communication content. In an era of convergence, the paradigm of technology has shifted manifold. The audience is becoming active towards using media and setting

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priorities and participating as citizen journalists which has opened new horizons for researchers to explore and measure the pros and cons of audience participation.

More than half a billion individuals are using SNS today, which has the potential to disclose personally identifiable information such as names, date of birth, email address, cell numbers, home contact numbers on their profiles where some users also relate their political and religious outlooks (Arshad, 2010). Majority of SNS users is youth (Bode, Vraga, Borah & Shah, 2013) who can use SNS to construct a public or semi-public profile within an encircled system; articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection; scrutinize and go over their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd and Ellison, 2007b, p.2).

The greater media involvement has been linked to media orientation towards using media channels (Heran 1989, Perse 1998 & Rubin 1994) where uses and gratifications literature on audience activity identified two saturated media orientations involved intentionally and selectively using media for goal-directed motives such as information seeking, behavior guidance, or arousal and by contrast a ritualized orientation involved using media primarily for diversionary motives such as use that occurred out of habit or for passing time (Metzger & Falanagin, 1998: p339). Ferguson & Perse (2000) argued entertainment as a motive for web use which serves as a source of ritualized distraction while Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) found a more active orientation towards the internet (as cited in Metzger & Flanagan, 1998: p.340).

The SNS are used by the students for socialization in the mediated environment, giving them opportunities of sharing their daily learning experiences and consecrating on a number of guises

(Liccardi et al, 2007). These endow with effortlessness of tie, utility and sharing. An individual can post news, informative matter, videos and images where these features mesmerize students for communication (Cain, 2009).

Boyd and Ellison (2007a) maintain that in the late 1990s SNS born with Web 2.0, brought applications of blogging, posting with the site 'six degree', with the E-messaging facility. A significant majority of popular SNSs today according to Arshad (2010) were introduced after 2003 like Facebook, Twitter, Orkut, MySpace, Hi5, Flickr (p.16) but in September 2005 it allotted, professionals of corporate sectors and higher study students and later in 2006 allowed all and sundry (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Online Social Networking Sites (OSNSs) or can be referred as Social Network Services or Web-based Social Networks are the terms used interchangeably (Aloufi, 2012, p. 2). These sites are the digital format for social networks which allow users to create profiles and share information, experiences, and media with a list of users like family members, friends, colleagues (Aloufi, 2012:1). According to Aloufi (2012) most of these sites have similar functionalities such as private messaging, commenting on a friend's profile, uploading photos or videos, and discussion groups (p.1).

The Social Network Services as categorized by Thelwall (2009) for three objectives: First '*socializing*' where all activities center on social communication between members like on Facebook, Myspace, Hi5 and Cyworld; second '*networking*' means the activities center on non-social communication like in LinkedIn for business links and third '*social navigation*', browsing takes place to get information like YouTube,

CiteUlike and dig (pp. 19-73).

The SNS have considerable influence to gratify an unfathomable necessity that is the desire to explore and chitchat (Donath, 2007 & Tufekci, 2008). Agarwal and Mital(2009) identified three aspects: first the '*widening of perspective*' like understanding business environment and career planning; second the '*sharing of opinions*' like seeking help from people, making plans with friends and contacts and third '*personal socialization*' like staying in touch with friends, family or strangers or managing new friends. The motivations of students to go abroad for job and higher education can be addressed through SNS which can help them to materialize their dream as a high percentage of SNS users belong to the developed nations like U.S. Australia, England and Germany. Li and Bernoff (2008) say that a variety of businesses in order to flourish launch various SNSs applications, incorporating them into corporatization to boost marketing and organizational gain.

The presuppositions of the researchers, that the university students in Pakistan do not use Social Network Services for useful purposes but for useless activities. The escalation rate of Internet consumers is second highest in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) where Pakistan's increase velocity 16.8%, as compared to 28.3% in Maldives,13.6% in Bhutan, 12.1% in Sri Lanka and 7.3 % in India (as cited in Merchant, 2014).

In an article in Daily Times, a survey revealed that there were 30 million Internet users in Pakistan and SNSs use increased by 50% in 2013 since last survey in 2011, fly-by-night 8 million monthly users is last couple of weeks (as cited in Saleem, Malik, Ali &Hanan, n.d). So given the altering drift with increased Pakistani youth using SNSs, it is imperative to explore how much this excessive use is influencing the

behavior pattern of educated youth. The study examines the instrumental and ritualized use of SNS like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn among youth of Lahore. The youth is using these online SNS on mobile phones because these services are cheaper than mobile phone messages and calls and university students are virtually privileged to have an access to internet at university, at home or on cell phone/smart phone.

The study explores the extent to which Facebook is more popular than Twitter and LinkedIn among students in Lahore. Usage patterns of SNS are also explored to determine the instrumental use or ritualized use of SNS in addition to the time consumed on SNSs.

### **Literature Review**

The Social Networking Sites can be used/gratified for various objectives/motives by all age groups like educational, social and political. They may lead to social isolation of children and parents, can enhance self efficacy of students and can give opportunity for political participation. The social and psychological gratifications are classified into five majors by Katz, Gurevitch and Has (1973) after listing thirty five needs from literature of the social and psychological functions of the mass media which are: social integrative, personal integrative, integrative, affective and cognitive (as cited in Sheikh, Dhaha, Igale, 2013).

Uses and Gratifications (U&G) perspective to investigate the undergraduate students' use of Facebook and its gratifications obtained is adopted by Foregger (2008) and the US students demonstrated various motives like passing time, sexual attraction, utility and upkeep, connection, channel use, networking, social comparison, accumulation and to establish old ties.

### **Social Impact**

Saleem, Malik, Ali and Hanan (n.d) researched whether too much use of Social Network Services creates isolation amongst the youth from their strong relationships like peers and family by enhancing their circle with strangers. They conducted the investigation with a sample of 306 Pakistani youth and concluded the strong correlation between time spent on SNSs and isolation and the heavier users of SNSs had a tendency to be more isolated. SNS was used more for interaction with strong ties rather than weak ties (p.41).

### **Educational**

Ellison, Steinfield & Lamp (2007) found that students used SNS roughly 30 minutes per day. Balsamo asserted that SNSs have the potential to diminish social segregation and amplify student's self-efficacy.

### **For Political Participation**

The researchers had considered the motivations of users consuming time on SNS from a U&G purpose like satisfying social interaction, entertainment and information needs and few had thought the political implications (Papacharissi& Rubin, 2000; Ferguson &Perse, 2000 as cited in Bode et al, 2013).

Neuman (1991) argued that instrumental use of new media may direct to a boost in civic participation because the diversity and abundance of information available via new ICTs could invigorate the audience and even if only a few people are to take advantage of the vast information resources available through the new media, the consequences of this in terms of political engagement would be great (as cited in Metzger and Flanagin, 1998: p.349). The relationship between students' motives and civic and political participation where as informational uses are more correlated to civic and political action as



to recreational users are found (Park, Kee & Valenzuela, 2009).

According to Shah, et al (2007) the communication mediation model suggests that media consumption suggests a variety of uses like online news consumption, television watching, newspaper or magazine reading supported a few style of communication which leads to increase in political participation. SNS also facilitates anti-war political activism like during the 2003 Iraq war, views of internet users differed from the mainstream media (Hwand et al as cited in Bode et al., 2013).

The Uses and Gratifications is one of the most cited communication theories for analyzing new media technologies (Ebersole, 2000). The theory is mainly concerned to identify how people use media to gratify their needs so the audience is considered proactive. Individuals use media for what they want to read and see where a variety of media compete to satisfy each individual's needs. According to Severin & Tankard (2001) U&G approach focuses on the goal of the receiver and not the goal of communicator.

U&G approach according to Katz, Blummer and Gurevitch (1974) dates back to the empirical studies on mass media research in 1940s including Lasersfeld-Stanton anthologies of 1942, 1944 and 1949 that focused on quizzes, soap operas, radio music, children and comics and functioning of newspaper reading. The concept of Uses and Gratifications appeared in an article written by Katz in 1959 in rejoinder to Berelson who thought that communication research seemed to be dead but Kats said that filed could survive if the interest converted from persuasion-oriented to people need-oriented. The study applies U&G in the same perspective.

The study is an exploratory in nature as it is used when the researcher has less knowledge about the subject and wants to explore the things, whereas descriptive research uses highly statistical tests to validate the hypotheses. Survey methods utilized to explore the research questions. The self-administered questionnaire is employed as a research instrument for the collection of data. The population of the study fall in the age group of 22-30 in two universities of Lahore districts namely University of the Punjab and Minhaj University. Primarily, a pretest of the questionnaire is administered to a sample of 19 students to explore the reliability and validity. After making the required changes as a result of the pre-testing, a questionnaire is constructed having 11 with 10 dichotomous questions.

Using purposive sampling procedure the questionnaire is distributed amongst 206 respondents who are University students and can access SNS while preparing their assignments at home or in libraries as there is no restriction on using SNS. In a focus group conducted at Minhaj University Lahore with a strength of 15 students, it is found that majority of users preferred using SNSs and especially Facebook in particular for an average of two hours a day. This scale is also established to enhance the response rate from the respondents, as it is observed that students without watching responses ticked the options in the Likert scale, so the Likert scale is not preferred. The activity is done during class hours after lecture and responses are penned down.

Respondents are asked about four items including entertainment or kill time; discussion about entertaining program; making fun of political personalities and posting famous celebrity

photos and these four variables collectively constituted the ritualized gratifications from selected social networking sites or in short the passive use. The item talking about political satire shows is to see the percentage of active students who are coming from offline media of television to participate on online social networking sites.

The categories of instrumental and ritualized use are mutually exclusive as they fall into the major category of uses and gratifications. The four variables considered are: the most popular social networking site, time consumed, instrumental use; and ritualized use. Where the latter two's percentages and mean were compared for analysis using percentage and mean.

Most popular social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Linked in are studied in this research. Similarly, the respondents are asked about the time duration they consumed on SNSs. Descriptive statistics is applied for analyzing data. The scale of yes/no questions is used to measure responses. Whereas, for instrumental and ritualized use of SNS, the mean of four items is calculated to explore the active or passive usage.

## Results

**Table 1: Use of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn among students in Lahore.**

Name of SNS	Percentage(%)
Facebook	63%
Twitter	24%
LinkedIn	9%
Other	4%

The variable considered here is 'the most popular online social networking site.' Among two hundred and six students, 63% were found to use Facebook, 24% used Twitter, 9% used LinkedIn and 4% other online social networking sites.

**Table 2: Time consumed on Social Networking Sites**

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Time Consumption	Percentage (%)
Less than two hours	38%
More than two hours	62%

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\*Among 206 students 38% happened to use the online social networking sites for less than two hours and 62% happened to use them for more than two hours.

**Table 3: Use of Social Networking Sites for instrumental purposes**

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Purpose	Percentage%
1. Information/education	56%
2. Serious political debate	11%
3. Raising voice for vulnerable or Charity	26%
4. Talking about Political Satire Shows	29%

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\*Among 206 respondents, 56% used online social networking

sites for information/education, 11% only considered them for serious political debate, 26% used them for raising voice for vulnerable or for charity and 29% came from offline news media to discuss political issues.

**Table 4: Use of Social Networking Sites for ritualized purposes**

Purpose	Percentage%
1. Entertainment/Kill Time	73%
2. Discussion about entertaining Content	79%
3. Making fun of political personalities	94%
4. Posting famous celebrity photos	91%

\*Among 206 students 73 % also used social networking sites for entertainment/killing time, 79% used them for discussion about entertaining content like posting, liking, sharing, 94% used it for making fun of political personalities or non-serious talking, whereas 91% used it for posting photos of famous celebrity photos.

### Discussion and Analysis

Social Network Services are growing in popularity. All respondents of happened to use SNS. The study found that Facebook is the most popular SNS with the penetration of 63% and agreed with the research of Singh & Kumar (2013). The similar findings are suggested in Malaysia among Somalian students (Ruslan & Dhaha, 2012). Facebook has become a huge platform and its potential for political/civic participation and engagement is undeniable because of its popularity among youth and university students (Valentine, 2011, Abdullah, Said

& Ibrahim, 2011). Facebook has interconnected continents and has formed global citizenship where skepticism can be eradicated if used wisely and this wisdom can be aided by the communication scholars' community, teachers and media.

Investigation about the time being consumed for SNS revealed that only 38% respondents consumed less than two hours for using SNSs and high percentage (62%) used them for more than two hours which contradicts Ellison, Steinfield and Lamp (2007) who suggest that the students use SNSs approximately 30 minutes throughout the day as part of their daily routine. Few studies are seen with longitudinal design to study the habits of using SNS. The contradiction between this study and the previous study leads to social scientists to design longitudinal studies to compare the results at different points in time and among the same respondents. This also requires qualitative studies to see the impact of these technologies in individualist and collective cultures.

Third and fourth factors being considered are for the quality of time spent on these SNS that is split into instrumental and ritualized use. Technologies can control impulses, and users can use these technologies without noticing that technologies are using them because of the unknown requests, side bar advertising on pages, liking, posting, sharing and numerous notifications. Among 206 respondents, 56% used SNSs for information/education, 11% only considered them for serious political debate, 26% used them for raising voice for vulnerable or for charity and 29% came from offline news media to discuss political issues (instrumental use). 73 % used SNSs for entertainment/killing time, 79% used them for discussion about entertaining content like posting, liking, sharing, 94% used it for making fun of political personalities or non-serious talking, whereas

91% used it for posting photos of famous celebrities (ritualized use). It is found that 56% used SNS for seeking information and education which agreed with Greenhow and Robelia (2009), Madge et al (2009) and Selwyn (2009) point of view that SNSs best served educational goal and objectives by connecting students through such informal methods as they allowed students through the process of collaborative sense making. They also agreed with Liccardiey al (2007) who reviewed that the students were socially connected with each other for sharing their daily learning experiences and do conversation on a variety of topics. The study revealed that only 11% used SNS for serious political debate. This is an issue because the students who have access to the technology are the privileged ones and have access to them at home, in corridors, at canteens and libraries. This easy access should be utilized to the maximization of benefits. The 26% of respondents used it for charity and raising voice for vulnerable, which is good sign that students feeling the responsibility and want to do something for themselves without involving in politics. This suggests that the politics of emotions and the aggressive environment for politics is leading the students to stay away from politics. The 29% of respondents talked about the political satire shows broadcasted on cable and satellite television channels of Pakistan. This is healthy as students are coming from the traditional media to new media. It also indicates that traditional media are agenda setters for new media users so the agenda setting theory is very much alive. It is explored that 73% of the respondents used SNS for killing time and this finding agreed with Putnam(2000) that time spent on SNSs could displace the formation of social capital and discourage youth from participation.

The study suggests that the 79% of respondents used SNSs for discussing entertaining content which is in agreement with Kumar and

Kumar (2013) who maintains that the main purpose of using SNSs is entertainment by 92.66%. It is also explored that the 94% used SNS for making fun of the political figures and 91% used for sharing and liking the photos of their favorite celebrities. The mean for ritualized use is 84% which is encouraging that 31% used for instrumental purposes but the university youth is an educated sphere and this percentage is less. It is also observed that the educated youth in Lahore is not politically active on social networking sites and 11% used it for serious political debate as compared to the 94% which used it for making fun of political figures. Civic engagement is also discouraging which is only 26%. However the mean for four variables investigated under the instrumental category is 31% which is less as compared to the mean of ritualized use. Shah et al (2005) argued that online media usage complements traditional media in influencing political discussions and expression and these variables in turn increase behavioral outcomes such as civic participation. However the findings of this study do not endorse Shah's finding as it is noted that the satellite cable channels are popular among youth and lead them to talk about the political satire shows (29%) and celebrities (91%) which suggests their inclination towards entertaining media. The 73% used it for killing time so they are becoming addict.

The study chalks out that the inclination of students towards entertaining use of SNS and time spent for this purpose is alarming and controlling their impulses for using SNS hence making them addict. Serious political participation is lacking. These may affect their studies. This passive use of social networking should be checked by arranging workshops, lectures, seminars and conferences at educational institutes in Lahore for better instrumental use of SNSs. The print and



electronic media should also write features, columns, editorials and broadcast programs during prime time hours on private and government channels to give awareness about the effective use of Information and Communication Technologies.

U.S congress proposed legislation to ban SNS in libraries and for students (Boyd & Ellison, 2007) but this is not the right option and the vitality of ICTs can make a real difference for achieving better grades and collaborative research because SNSs are becoming the interest areas of libraries, documentation centers for implementing new services in libraries and informing their clientele in short time period (Kumar and Kumar, 2013).

Facebook allows the students in the past at the campus to network with each other (Facebook, 2012) as the notion behind establishing it was to share and connect with people with more comfortable ways of controlling over the content they share (Zuckerberg, 2014). This SNS has become the most popular among college students in US. (Foregger, 2008) therefore, the need of the hour is to throw light on the vital potential of this utility and facility in Pakistan.

The political usage of SNS should encourage students for their serious contribution in politics as research has already suggested that both online and offline forms of communication mattered for encouraging participation (Bode, Vraga, borah& Shah, 2013).

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## **Media ethics and students' perceptions: A study of the use of freedom of expression by anchor persons in the light of individualism**

**Rabia Ahmad<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

This research aims at integrating the concept of individualism with the electronic media to explain the condition of media ethics with reference to the freedom of expression; which is the expression of the individual autonomy. It is hypothesized that the freedom of expression is not the license of media ethics violation. Students' perceptions about the exercise of freedom of expression by anchorpersons in political talk shows are examined in the perspective of media ethics violations. Survey method is applied and forty respondents are selected through the convenience sampling technique. The sample consists of both male and female respondents to determine if any relationship exists between anchorpersons' freedom of expression and the underlying situation of media ethics in talk shows. The overwhelming majority of respondents suggested that the anchorpersons are misusing the freedom of expression and hence violate the media ethics.

**Key words:** *Individualism, Freedom of expression, Anchorpersons, Political talk shows, Media ethics*

### **Introduction**

Through the annals of history, from the age of antiquity of Greece, Medieval age, Renaissance, Protestant Reformation and Cartesian thinking, age of enlightenment, the modern age and finally the postmodern era, the concept of individualism has been customized in accordance with the inherent specifications of that particular era.

"Individualism is a moral, political or social outlook that

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stresses human independence and the importance of individual self-reliance and liberty. It opposes most external interference with an individual's choices, whether by society, the state or any other group or institution, and it also opposed the view that tradition, religion or any other form of external moral standard should be used to limit an individual's choice of actions" (Individualism - By Branch / Doctrine - The Basics of Philosophy, n.d.).

Individualism basically is an ethic by doctrine of philosophy. It renders the free will of humans and sets them free from every outer pressure and limitations. Each individual has complete authority to make decisions and perceive things in accordance and consent of their own belief and state of mind.

"The important distinction between the two concepts "individualism" and "individuality" can be visualized from a technical viewpoint; the former is often depicted as social and ethical phenomena of human relations and conduct, while the latter is often depicted as a psychological phenomenon of mental growth." (Individualism; | Philosophy, n.d.)

The concept of individualism in the light of philosophy can best be enthralled by explaining the related concepts of individualism:

**Ethical Individualism:** It argues that individual conscience or reason is the only moral rule, and there is no objective authority or standard which is bound to take into account (Individualism - By Branch / Doctrine - The Basics of Philosophy, n.d.).

**Political Individualism:** It maintains that the state should take a merely defensive role by protecting the liberty of each individual to act as he or she wishes, just as long as he or she does not infringe on the same liberty of another (essentially the laissez-faire position at the heart



of classical liberalism, libertarianism and modern capitalism) (Individualism - By Branch / Doctrine - The Basics of Philosophy, n.d.). The other ethical positions which foster the concept of individualism are the Scottish School of common sense, hedonism, eudemonism, egoists and existentialism.

In the present age the individual autonomy is important and has central role in decision making and all other important phenomena of society and state. "Neither the subject-object nor fact-value nor material-spiritual split puts the Enlightenment into its sharpest focus, however. Its deepest root was a pervasive individual autonomy. What prevailed was the cult of human personality in all its freedom" (Christians, Ferré, & Fackler, 1993; p. 21).

The concept of individuality in the realm of Pakistani electronic media is a debatable phenomenon, being entrenched within the system and has a key role in the process and applicability of media ethics and regulations. The mirror metaphors of the concept of individualism in media are the freedom of expression, freedom of communication, freedom of information and freedom of speech.

Television was introduced by Pakistan Television Corporation in 1964 and remained under state control. However in 2002, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Ordinance was finally promulgated on March 1, 2002. Adaptation of Pakistan Electronic Media from the state owned broadcasting to liberal, privately owned media, was a great triumph and it also played a significant role in diversifying vision of the individuals (Needs assessment on promoting ethics and transparency in Pakistani media, 2014, Pakistan Press Foundation).

The individual rights have always remained an important issue of concern for state as well as for media throughout the world and in Pakistan as well.

"Article 19 of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 provides that every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of press subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law"(Media Ethics and Regulations in Pakistan | Blue Chip Magazine, n.d.). However, after the 18th amendment of the Constitution, fundamental right to information Article 19A was introduced which states that every citizen shall have the right to have access to information in all matters of public importance (Media Ethics and Regulations in Pakistan; Blue Chip Magazine," n.d.).

In the current scenario, media is free and liberal and the media personnel are working unrestrainedly in the light of the legal right guaranteed to them, the freedom of expression.

**Assumptions:**

1. To understand the working of any whole or collective body it's important to recognize the role of individuals.
2. Individuality admirably accepts the diversified and pluralistic aspects of society and media as it celebrates the differences and opposed collectivism.
3. The freedom of media practitioners is an expression of Individual autonomy. (Christians, Ferre & Fackler, 1993, p. 30).
4. Media ethics are not the rules or guidelines assembled for the media outlets; these are basically to guide the media individuals / practitioners as how they are supposed to work as ultimately they represent the whole media community.

5. The individualistic ethical development improves society by stressing self- improvement and individual decision making (Gordon, Kittross, Merrill, & Reuss, 1999, p. 5).
6. Individual differences, backgrounds, values and perceptions strongly influence the decisions the journalists make as they cover news (Gordon, Kittross, Merrill, & Reuss, 1999, pp. 40-41).
7. The collective decisions made by men and women who work for news and entertainment media flow from their individual values (Gordon, Kittross, Merrill, & Reuss, 1999, pp. 40-41).
8. Theories of quantitative research define the phenomena of society on the basis of causal relationship between the variables and the identified parts of any phenomenon; and in the light of that relation the whole is explained.

The researcher has deliberately integrated the conception of individualism to the media landscape. The individual autonomy in media is prevailed by the use of freedom of expression; hence the researcher has incorporated the idea of freedom of expression and its use by the anchorpersons in political talk shows in an effort to illuminate and investigate the observed media ethics violation by the exercise of the power of freedom of expression. It is a fact that media's role as a watchdog of society can only be achieved when it is free and democratic but the power of freedom of expression must not be used as an authority to violate the media ethics. The anchorpersons lead discussions in an authoritative way and have tendency to persuade the audience. The way they express their thought and perception to the audience in the name of freedom of expression is a big question for the authenticity and code of media ethics.

The study aims to analyze the students' perception regarding the use of freedom of expression by anchorpersons and their authenticity compromised in political talk shows. The study also evaluates the condition of media ethics in political talk shows in the light of freedom of expression exercised by anchorpersons.

### **Literature Review**

Freedom of expression is the application of individual autonomy as far as mass media is concerned. It enables the journalists and media professionals to work for the welfare of society, in fact it is a tool through which media can work effectively to eradicate the social evils of society but it is not the license for the violation of media ethics indeed.

Media ethics are not the laws and set rules like in the other professions of science and theology. They are formulated by a continuous process to guide media practitioners for establishing a responsible media system. Media ethics is a field which deals with the issues and courses of action in the endless array of grey areas where things are not final and clear. One cannot in fact find the answers exactly. "Media ethics concern right and wrong, good and bad, better and worse actions taken by people working for media. Media themselves, of course, cannot be ethical or unethical- Only their staff members can. "When we deal with media ethics, we are really concerned with ethical standards of media and what kinds of actions they take" (Gordon, Kittross, Merrill, & Reuss, 1999, p. 1).

Hence media ethics are not the rules and regulations designed for media organization. These are basically the rules and guidelines formulated for media practitioners, devised to enable them to work

properly under the umbrella of these ethics and enjoy the freedom of expression and communication within the limitations of certain values and finally their efforts must be for the good of individuals and society as a whole.

Gordon, Kittross, Merrill & Reuss (1999) defined three broader classes of theories that deal with the ethical issues; 'Deontological Ethical Theory', 'Teleological Ethical Theory' and 'Personalist or Subjective Theory'. First supposes that a journalist has to follow some principles like attributing the source in a news story. The second one deals with the process in which a journalist tries to gauge or assess the consequences of his or her decision in practicing a particular action and its alternatives and consequences as well. And third one is related to intuition, emotions, spirituality and several other moral features.

"A journalist is not simply writing for the consumption of others. He or she is writing as self-expression and self-gratification, and the self is developed by the very act of expression. The processes of deciding to do a story, selecting what will be used, and expressing this material is all impinged on ethics and affect the moral character of the media person. What all media people communicate is, in a very real sense, what they are. They work to influence the lives of the others and leave an impact on their beliefs through the tool of the true essence of their own lives. Through their actions, they existentially make their ethical selves" (Gordon, Kittross, Merrill, & Reuss, 1999, p. 1)

When the media practitioners come up with a certain piece of writing on media, they are not only inclined to deal with the responsibility of the whole society but they deal at the same time with their own selves as well. So, ethics are the phenomena which not only ensure the credible working of media but also identify the role of media professionals as well.

Freedom of expression is considered one of the basic human rights but it is also restricted in the form of defamation, libel etc. "Since the dawn of civilization-from the Hammurabi Code of ancient Babylon to the Torah, Holy Bible, and Koran to the philosophers of the Enlightenment to today-the concept of basic human rights has been developed and debated" (Good, 2003, p.161).

Good (2003) advocates further about the human rights and dignity as we are living in media rich societies: Media is working to grab the attention of people and for this purpose at times seems to be unconcerned about the quality of the programs being aired. Arthur (2003) has discussed the case study of professional Wrestling program, which is quite famous in America, the WWE. A report released by the Indiana University for the Television news program *Inside Edition*. The research team, headed by Dr. Walter Gantz and Raney A. Arthur served as a consultant, analyzed the content of 50 episodes of Raw that was aired between January 1998 and February 1999 and found the following obscenities in the 50 episodes of this wrestling program; nearly 1,000 times use of the word "hell" and about 500 times use of the word "ass"; more than 600 incidents in which a wrestler smashed the head of his or her opponent with a steel chair, stick, or garbage can or threw his or her opponent through a folding table; and more than 300 references to and depictions of sexual activity. The purpose of this research was to highlight the human dignity being ruined in such kinds of wrestling programs (Good, 2003, pp. 163-165).

The importance of basic human rights remains a debatable issue and media, with its ever expanding network and influence, is responsible to safeguard these basic human rights and ensure the empowerment of human dignity. The obscenity of media content and its undesirable

influence on society is a question for media practitioners.

Restatement of Torts, which is prepared by lawyers specializing in tort law and published by the American Law Institute, says: "A communication is defamatory if it tends to harm the reputation of another as to lower him in the estimation of the community or to deter third persons from associating or dealing with him" (Holsinger, 1986, p.87).

In the frame of media, the defamation law concerns to safeguard the individual's rights and reputation in a community. An individual is an important entity of a society which has his own rights and concerns. Media has freedom to talk about the issues of society and to question the arrangements and decisions of government if these are not in public favor or for utmost good.

But this freedom has certain limitations and defamation is one of them, which hinders media to project any stuff against a common person or publicly famed celebrity which can harm or injure one's reputation.

Holsinger (1986) states, "Under the common law a person defamed by any media outlet has the right to sue the person to whom he finds involved in this offensive act". Therefore, the accountability of media persons is important in this regard to ensure ethical and reliable production of content which quintessentially ensures the individual's fair reputation in a community. "A disclosure of private fact occurs when some medium of communication disseminates personal information that the individual involved did not want made public. The information must be of a nature that would be offensive to a person of ordinary sensibilities" (Holsinger, 1986, p. 171).

The law of privacy strives to guarantee one's privacy and the desirability to determine individual's rights. The thesis of individuality can never be underestimated or overlooked by any social phenomenon.

Feintuck & Varney (2006) identified the phenomenon of freedom of expression in the light of power of media. The modern media corporates are using the connotation of freedom of communication to further their own benefits and corporate's concerns.

The concept of freedom of communication facilitates public and media both with a right to actively participate in the process of communication and empower the right of individuals to freely participate and raise their voices on the platform of media. This is the way a media can perform the role of watchdog in a society. However, the problem lies with the present connotation of the thesis of 'freedom of expression' which is being mishandled and misused by corporate media and agencies who are striving for their own benefits rather than to work in the true essence of freedom of expression.

Feintuck & Varney (2006) further explain the power of media as "the central purpose of commercial media is not to deliver products to audiences but to deliver the audience, as a product, to advertisers". The corporate culture of media is basically working for corporate benefits. It is the negative aspect or usage of media power which seems to undermine the basic rights of individuals for commercial benefits by taking society as a market of their products.

"The folklore of the press as watchdog is one clear application of atomism to the world of news reporting. Here the press considers itself staunchly independent: apart from government and unconstrained by business" (Christians, Ferre & Fackler, 1993, p. 70). Freedom of media has legitimized the power of media. This legitimized freedom and power phenomena have granted media the authority and independence to work as a watchdog of society.

The concepts of atomism and individuality advocate that media is free



from outer pressure and is supposed to work as an independent autonomy in society. "Freedom of expression, in particular, came to be seen as a natural right essential to the preservation of individual autonomy. According to libertarianism, freedom of the press is a personal and universal prerogative to publish one's own view freely, a natural right belonging to anyone who cares or has the wherewithal to establish a newspaper, magazine, or broadcasting station" (Christians, Ferre & Fackler , 1993, p. 28).

Freedom of expression empowers the individual autonomy in the society and legitimizes the right to express the personal views openly. It is the sense of enlightenment which fills people with a reason to participate and communicate at the mass level and on the platform of media which is considered to be the fourth pillar of a state. According to Thomas Jefferson, "Where the press is free, all is safe"(Christians, Ferre & Fackler , 1993, p. 30).

The freedom debate is actually the debate of individual autonomy. The concept of individuality is strengthened in a society where laws like freedom of expression and communication exist.

The freedom of expression anticipates the celebration of individual rights and so in a democratic society media should be free and democratic as well.

With the onset of liberal, pluralistic media trend, where the individuals have right to express their views freely on media and issues are discussed with ultimate freedom and liberty; media becomes independent and out of influence of certain powers. Despite all this broad vision and horizon of media, there are some important issues being originated under the claim of freedom of expression and there are some technicalities of this very freedom. The current Pakistani media seems to be entangled with the notion of freedom of expression

and the media ethics.

Media is more like an industry now, which is dealing with the commodities and more inclined towards the corporate benefits rather than portraying true picture of any story. In the run of breaking news and battle for ratings, the news channels are working more for viewership instead of the credibility and accuracy of news content.

News is all about an individual who is the most important entity of a society. In the quest of viewership and sponsors, media outlets are working for the things and issues entitled as news, which would comparatively catch the human interest and grab their attention. In this regard the connotation of freedom of expression which ideally strengthens the human rights and fosters the concept of individuality is being misused by the media people.

The current trend of infotainment programs like 'Khabarnaak' and Hasb-e-Hal, the politicians are being presented in a humiliating way; the projection of their personalities in these programs is a big question about freedom and the ethical limitations of media.

The news channels are giving priority to news on the celebrities' personal life and private concerns. By doing this, media not only spoils the true essence of media freedom but also intrudes illegally to one's personal life and matters. In a democratic society an individual has a complete liberty to spend life according to his/her own choice. Media cannot question this freedom with the weapon of that very freedom granted to them in the name of freedom of expression.

Media corporations are using freedom of expression for their own hidden corporate agendas and have emerged as commercialized corporation where the viewership is more important than credibility and where individuals are suffering with the so called freedom of

expression. Media's freedom of expression is now a question for individuality. The concept of individualism proposes that each individual has his/her own identity and is a free entity of a society. The notion of individualism in terms of mass media deals with the power and authority of mass media in society. This study is an attempt to describe the use of freedom of expression by anchorpersons of political talk shows and how they are violating media ethics.

**Hypotheses and Research Questions:**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The students of Punjab University perceive that the use of freedom of expression by anchorpersons in political talk shows leads towards the violation of media ethics.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** The students of Punjab University perceive that the use of freedom of expression by anchorpersons in political talk shows is not associated with the violation of media ethics.

RQ1.Do the anchorpersons of political talk shows violate media ethics in the name of freedom of expression?

RQ2.Do the anchorpersons in political talk shows disregard the guests in panel?

RQ3.Do the anchorpersons dictate audience by advocating their own stance?

RQ4.Do the anchorpersons use freedom of expression to influence and attain public favors?

RQ5.Do the anchorpersons manipulate the sensitive issues in political talk shows?

**Methodology**

Survey method is used to investigate the perception of students of the University of Punjab about the use of freedom of expression by anchorpersons in political talk shows through online survey.

Convenient sampling is applied as researcher found it more economical and time saving.

**Results**

**Table 1:** Misuse of the power of freedom of expression by anchorpersons.

Strongly Agree	18	45%
Agree	21	52.5%
Neutral	1	2.5%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

**Table 2:** Anchorpersons give biased views towards the political parties.

	15	37.5%
Strongly Agree		
Agree	21	52.5%
Neutral	4	10%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

**Table 3:** The anchorpersons impose their own opinion and thought in political talk shows.

Strongly Agree	7	17.5%
Agree	23	57.5%
Neutral	8	20%
Disagree	2	5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

**Table 4:** Anchorpersons use tactics to create impressions of promoting national interest.

Strongly Agree	<b>11</b>	27.5%
Agree	<b>25</b>	62.5%
Neutral	<b>2</b>	5%
Disagree	<b>2</b>	5%
Strongly Disagree	<b>0</b>	0%

**Table 5:** Anchorpersons compromise authenticity in a struggle to increase ratings.

Strongly Agree	<b>15</b>	37.5%
Agree	<b>17</b>	42.5%
Neutral	<b>5</b>	12.5%
Disagree	<b>3</b>	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	<b>0</b>	0%

**Table 6:** Anchorpersons at times get personal with the guests in panel.

Strongly Agree	<b>16</b>	40%
Agree	<b>17</b>	42.5%
Neutral	<b>5</b>	12.5%
Disagree	<b>2</b>	5%
Strongly Disagree	<b>0</b>	0%

**Table 7:** Anchorpersons use derogatory language for political leaders.

Strongly Agree	<b>8</b>	20%
Agree	<b>25</b>	62.5%
Neutral	<b>4</b>	10%
Disagree	<b>3</b>	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	<b>0</b>	0%

**Table 8:** Projection of political leaders by the anchorpersons is quiet humiliating.

Strongly Agree	11	27.5%
Agree	20	50%
Neutral	9	22.5%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

**Table 9:** Anchorpersons exaggerate the political issues in political talk shows.

Strongly Agree	13	32.5%
Agree	25	62.5%
Neutral	2	5%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

**Table 10:** Anchorpersons at times defame political leaders without any empirical evidence.

Strongly Agree	11	27.5%
Agree	22	55%
Neutral	6	15%
Disagree	1	2.5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

### Findings and Analysis

The study reveals that the freedom of expression facilitates anchorpersons with the power and freedom to speak and share opinion

on the platform of media, the large majority (94%) of respondents agreed with this fact. The (97.5%) respondents perceived that the anchorpersons misuse the power of freedom of expression in their talk shows. The handsome majority (90%) agreed with the fact that anchorpersons give biased interpretations about the political parties in their talk shows.

The study elucidates that majority (75%) of respondents believed that the anchorpersons impose their own views on audience under the phenomenon of freedom of expression. While the large number of people (90%) are of the opinion that the anchorpersons tactfully give audience an image that they are promoting the national stance. The study further explores the fact about the credibility of the political talk shows, hence, the (80%) majority of people agreed with the view that the anchorpersons compromise the credibility of the talk shows to maximize the ratings of their shows.

It is also observed that the anchorpersons get personal and intrude in the personal lives of political leaders while anchoring the shows as large number of people (82.5%) observed the same fact. The findings of the study further illustrate that (82.5%) respondents have opinion that the anchorpersons use derogatory language for political leaders.

Henceforth, the (77.5%) respondents have view point that the

anchorpersons humiliate the political leaders in their talk shows. The results of the study further suggest that the majority (95%) of the respondents have a stance that the anchorpersons in political talk shows manipulate the sensitive issues in their talk shows. Moreover, the 82.5% population from the respondents believed that the anchorpersons defame the political leaders without any empirical evidence or proof.

The results explicate the fact that the freedom of expression, which is an expression for individual autonomy and grants media personnel power and authority, is being misused by anchorpersons in political talk shows. The anchorpersons who are gaining influence in the emerging phenomenon of contemporary mass media are violating the ethics of media in the name of freedom of expression.

The research questions determined the questionnaire. The information and data collected through the questionnaire supported the study. The results and findings supported the claim of the study and hence it is concluded that the majority of respondents perceive that the anchorpersons violate the media ethics in the name of freedom of expression.

The study is conducted in the light of the concept "Individualism". Freedom of expression is the ultimate power and



expression of individual autonomy. The anchorpersons are the emerging phenomenon in contemporary media. The findings and results concluded that the exercise of freedom of expression by anchorpersons leads towards the violation of media ethics.

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## Thematic analysis of the international pages of Pakistani English dailies

Lubna Shaheen<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze the international pages of three most widely read English dailies of Pakistan i.e. the Dawn, The News and the Nation after 9/11. In this paper, the focus has been the analysis of ten years' time period starting from 9/11 incident. Qualitative thematic analysis is done through selecting 42 stories from three newspapers. Themes are operationalized. The results indicated that foreign news agencies had a great impact on what they said and conveyed to the public especially in the underdeveloped countries to the extent that they sometimes influenced the judgments made by the news receiving countries like Pakistan.

**Key Words:** *Pakistani media, conflict, war on terror*

### Introduction

Global press covered all events like 9/11, Afghan war, Iraq war, Al-Qaeda, Taliban factors and terrorist activities according to US policies. These media mostly portrayed one sided picture of all these events which was predominantly influenced by American stance on the issues. Further, the global media have very wide network of journalists all over the world. On the other hand, the print media of developing countries like Pakistan do not have sufficient sources for gathering information and not so wide networks of journalists to visit conflict areas. Besides, US Government never allows access to their secret institutions like CIA or other institutions. As a result the Pakistan media is completely dependent on global print and electronic media

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and news agencies for collection and access to information.

In recent years, media sector has been booming in Pakistan and it has been mainly driven by rising levels of literacy and technological advancements. A large number of newspapers and news channels are being launched regularly. These are positive signs that indicate that Pakistani media has grown in scale, access and influence it yields. Nevertheless, it is also accompanied by a significant improvement in the coverage of news including the international news. However, the fact remains that there is resource concentration i.e. only a very limited number of transnational, news providers which do on-the-field reporting and the remaining recycle their news with slight changes (as it has been established by the content analysis in the case of the most widely read Pakistani English newspapers with 70% of the news coming from only two major news organizations). This trend of over dependence, in case of a democratic nation, is harmful and the harm is mainly caused by paucity of diverse viewpoint. In this age of internet technology, Pakistani journalists visit the websites of global print media and lift the news stories, reports, comments, analysis, and photographs etc. from there tracing the lines of global print media and in this way Pakistani print media is being influenced by foreign media.

In any democracy, people are the prime focus and for citizens to make well-informed decisions regarding their welfare and governance, it is important that they are provided an access to a range of ideas and quality analyses. Thus, Media's job is to bring forward a range of ideas and opinions on the forum of discussion and deliberation. This acquaints the people with the multidimensionality of events thereby allowing them to understand the complexities of a certain situation. This, as a result, enriches the public intelligence on

world events and they are able to make wise decision in their own interest.

This study encompasses a period of ten years of post 9/11 events to see how the international print media has an effect on Pakistani English newspapers. This study also analyzes whether Pakistani newspapers followed the same slant of the stories as they were given in the foreign news media and how far, if at all, they have been able to justify their own position and point of view. At the same time it tried to observe as to what extent they had been influenced by international media in terms of news contents and lay out.

The study aims to see the level of dependency of English newspapers in Pakistan on the foreign press and foreign news agencies of economically strong countries in terms of contents of news items regarding destruction and terrorist activities in the west. The focus is also on exploring whether the English press of Pakistan was able to defend its position vis a vis war on terror, or it has just been pursuing global media agenda of being a subordinate country. Further, whether Pakistani press was the reflection of global press in the process of war against terrorism or it defended Pakistan's position and was able to answer back or to develop a different narrative of its own.

### **Literature review**

A study on the utilization of the expression of war on terror by the Bush administration explains the surrounding of news stories about terror and terrorism and the social development of reality about the war. News transcripts from the ABC, CBS and NBC system evening reports were examined to know predominant subjects from 966 news stories in the initial three years after the 9/11 assault. It was affirmed that Bush has received the expression 'war on terror' as an instrument

to assemble help for his policies. The results demonstrated that media made affiliations and acknowledged political elites. This has been a source for controlling and manipulating public opinion. It was further said that political performers control occasions to their profit by utilizing the receptive public mind by controlling media coverage. Network television news may be a standout amongst the most paramount sources of domination regarding war on terror. The study suggests that media specialists ought to abstain from hooking on to the abuse of such phrases.

In the U.S., the expression War on Terror turned into a socially shared organizing rule through its dispersal by means of the US press. It was more than a policy label. It was a compelling organizing rule and it made a positive news talk atmosphere for military activity in Iraq (Reese, & Lewis, 2009).

In a search article Wiggins and Campbell (2015) say that the US media covered war on terror totally in a different way from other times of war or emergency. It influenced the objectivity of media with the utilization of successful dialect coupled with specific news coverage.

Dooley and Corman (2002) examined Reuter's coverage of September 11 and distinguished examples of impact for deciding topics and examples in scope. They discovered proof of a 'jolt reaction' model, in which an activating occasion, for example, an assault, prompted an institutional military or political reaction and resulting sense-production of the societal effect of the terrorist act (as cited in Oliveira&Papacharissi, 2008).

The proverb goes like 'rehash a lie so frequently that it seems, by all accounts, to be a truth'. The Jewish publicity of 5 million Jews

executed in France had picked up overall sensitivity for them. A couple of years ago, a researcher computed and numerically demonstrated that the figure couldn't surpass 80,000. The story was distributed by 'Liberas' every day. The Jews were so incensed at the shattering of the myth that the main three journalists were sacked and the story was muffled (Hali, 2011).

Dooley and Corman (2002) analyzed Reuter's coverage of September 11 and identified patterns of influence for determining themes and patterns in coverage. They found evidence of a 'stimulus-response' model, in which a triggering event such as an attack, led to an institutional military and/or political response and subsequent sense-making of the societal impact of the terrorist act (as cited in Oliveira & Papacharissi, 2008).

The adage goes like 'repeat a lie so often that it appears to be a truth'. The Jewish propaganda of five million Jews executed in France had gained world-wide sympathy for them. A few years ago, a scientist calculated and mathematically proved that the figure could not exceed 80,000. The story was published by 'Liberas' the French daily. The Jews were so infuriated at the shattering of the myth that the top three correspondents of the daily were sacked and the story was muffled (Hali, 2011).

The 9/11 terrorist attacks were a shock for the entire world and later attacks such as those in London and Madrid were covered in the newspapers of many countries. Ruigrok & Van(2007), studied the international coverage of these events in the context of globalization versus localization and the creation of the dominant post-cold war frame of the War on Terror. Using automatic co-occurrence analysis based on the notion of associative framing, he investigated whether

these events were mainly framed in a local or global way in the American, British, and Dutch press. The authors found that although proximity is still a strong determinant of attention for events, the framing of these events was more affected by the global event of 9/11 than by local considerations.

Dr. Bonn applied the moral panic concept to the Iraq war using quantitative analysis of public opinion polls and presidential rhetoric pre- and post-9/11 in the news media. He demonstrated how the Bush administration created a self-serving public panic in the U.S. after 9/11 over alleged Iraqi (WMDs) weapons of mass destruction with the support of the news media. He presented a critique that the war and occupation of Iraq were a violation of domestic and international law.

That due to heavy reliance on copied material certain narratives arose about Al Qaeda and Pakistan's alleged involvement in 9/11. Those narratives became the center story by which the news outlets were funneled and resultantly public opinion was affected in favor of a biased narrative. The paper aims to describe those narratives with reference to newspapers under study through thematic analysis.

### **Methodology**

The study is based on qualitative thematic analysis which is one of the qualitative analysis methods for 'identifying, analyzing and reporting themes and patterns within data. It interprets various aspects of the research topic.'(Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.79) As Boyatzis (1998) observes in *Transforming Qualitative Information* that the thematic analysis is a process of encoding qualitative information. Boyatzis further explains, "Codes are a list of themes, a complex model with themes, indicators, and qualifications that are causally related; or



something in between these two forms" (p. vii). Boyatzis explains how researcher could take a variety of approaches in using thematic analysis to interpret data.

Time period considered for this study is ten years from 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001 to 11<sup>th</sup> September 2011 to find out the focus of massive media coverage worldwide. The first US media reaction to the 9/11 incident is to declare it as 'war on terror'. The context allows a simultaneous exploration of both global dynamics of news reporting and local coverage. **For** qualitative thematic analysis, three most widely read newspapers i.e. The News, Daily Dawn and The Nation are selected. The international pages of these newspapers are selected for study. Purposive sampling technique is used and the sample size is 45 news stories taken from the defined categories. A purposive sample is a kind of non-probability sample in which the researcher can select a sample in accordance with some fixed criteria that serves the purpose. Thus, the units are selected into a sample on the basis of pre-specified characteristics so that the total sample carries the same distribution of characteristics assumed to exist in the population being study.

The main queries explored in the study include the following:

1. Do global news agencies set the agenda for mainstream English newspapers of Pakistan?
2. Whether Pakistan print media adopted its own independent stance on the taken issues?

In order to obtain the answers of above mentioned question, news stories appeared on international/foreign/and world pages related to these issues are under study. Following categories for qualitative analysis are devised:

- News stories which carried incident of 9/11
- Response of US in the form of war on terror
- All news stories related to Al-Qaeda, Afghan issue and Osama bin Laden
- All news stories related to Iraq war, weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and Saddam Hussain.
- All news stories related to Iran's nuclear program and sanctions by the US

The qualitative data analyzed in this paper concerns the effects of complete reliance of the national newspapers on the foreign news agencies and the one sided image of the post 9/11 events and underlying themes that emerged from the sample as a whole. The overall tone of the news items picked from the foreign news agencies from the western countries in sample is coded as positive, negative or neutral. This is an important aspect of the study as it informs how many of the news items could be regarded as 'positive', 'neutral' or 'negative' and are published as such by our national newspapers without any intervention of their own perspective on a particular issue or event. This analysis focuses on discerning the extent to which newspaper items displayed overtly positive or negative tones and the possible effects. These tones could make an overall thought process in the reader. In cases, where such tones are not identified, the newspaper item is coded as factual and portraying a 'neutral' tone.

Negatively toned article could include descriptions like, 'Muslims being fanatics... You are Al-Qaeda. Go back to your country... etc.', and is relatively straightforward to code. Such descriptions are coded as 'negative' in orientation. Clearly positive descriptions are, by contrast, very few on the ground with very few

articles of the 'good news' variety. The rest of the articles are considered "neutral" in tone.

Tone is closely related to the topic being reported as the dominance of 'coverage of news on Afghanistan and Iraq and the other conflict ridden areas with critical and hypocritical disposition and a preconceived fundamental narrative of 'proven guilty unless proved otherwise'. General trends of negatively oriented stories in the International newspapers are picked up as such and published in the local newspapers resulting in the creation of bad image not only in the minds of the outside world but in the minds of those who are being reported upon in these news items. While those who are coded as positive tend to be linked to the topics of 'humanitarian efforts' and 'the good response' by the Pakistan government as an ally on war on terror. The criticism raised by the French Government on US attack on Iraq to counter terrorism is not highlighted. The research indicates that a 'negative' standpoint appears to dominate coverage of events regarding Muslim countries after 9/11.

The following discussion focuses on trends that emerged in these thematic representations across all the sampled newspapers items.

### **Thematic analysis of coverage**

Themes are fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a piece of writing. Thematic analysis is made of all the news articles in the sample to ascertain the kind of thematic representations that emerged from the coverage. Efforts are made to look beyond the basic descriptive content of an article, and instead focus is to explicitly unveil some of the more subjective and hidden meanings embedded within

the text, including themes, depictions, motives, stereotypes and symbolic images or metaphoric elements.

Studies on the media coverage of post 9/11 are also contextualized while doing this qualitative analysis. It helped to identify the range of possible themes that define media coverage of the post 9/11 events. A list of thirteen different categories of themes have been identified which are as follows:

1. **'Give a dog a bad name and hang him'**: This is a major theme running throughout most of the post 9/11 news stories reporting on the Muslim world. There is a saying in French, "Lorsqu'on veu tnoyer son chien, on dit qu'il a la rage," which translates as 'give a dog a bad name and hang him.' It means that a bad reputation, even sometimes wrongly construed, is a very difficult thing to shake. This has been the dilemma with Muslim world and that is how the image of Muslim world is formulated in the eyes of the West. The use of terms and vocabulary like 'rogue states', 'terrorist nations', 'violators of human rights....etc. highlight the underlying theme. Media can easily manipulate future observations by declaring and stamping someone as 'difficult', 'manipulative', 'violation of law'.
2. **'War on Terror'**: The theme is identified as a fundamental narrative and a central rhetoric in almost all the post 9/11 news as determinant of all the US foreign policy and military issues towards Pakistan, Afghanistan and the other Muslim states.

3. **The Great Divide:** One very strong and recurring theme, in almost all news studied, is the theme of classic great divide between the Muslim and the western world. Most Muslims and Westerners are convinced that relations between them have always been generally bad. Many in the West see Muslims as fanatical, violent, and as lacking tolerance and this has been overtly depicted in the post 9/11 news stories.
4. **Self-fulfilling prophecy:** This theme signifies how self-identity and behavior of individuals may be determined or influenced by the terms used to describe or classify them and whether the 'evaluators' see through the act, or whether they would interpret *any* behavior through the lens of the label. Studies have found that people given power in experiments are more likely to rely on stereotypes when judging others, and they pay less attention to the characteristics that define those other people as individuals. Predisposed to stereotype, they also judge others' attitudes, interests, and need less accurately. Would 'a terrorist' label determine that the professionals would look for evidence for 'terroristic' behavior even in quite normal behavior as the case has been in cases of Iraq, WMD and Pakistan.
5. **'Be careful what you call yourself':** Labeling oneself as a 'type' is dangerously easy. This attitude, with the passage of time, becomes a self-imposed psychological strait jacket which prevents people from doing things which are against the self-assigned label. For example, if somebody sees himself as

'fragile', 'stupid', or 'awkward' it will be much harder for him to behave in a manner that goes against these labels. This theme is prevalent in the news stories in the form of apologetic gestures of the Muslim countries like Iraq and Iran towards the blame game set forth by the west.

6. **'Hypocrisy and contradiction'**: This theme has been identified in common behavior of the western nations and especially the US in indulging a frequent habit of saying one thing and forcing it on others then doing the opposite, even with the best of intentions. The theme is depicted through ideas like, '*The Us is deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation and the protection of innocents*' but at the same time found committing worst human rights violations in the war ridden countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran.
7. **'Helping Hand'**: The common and only point of agreement between the West and Muslims is that both believe that Muslim nations should be more economically prosperous than they are today. Yet both see the problem differently. Muslim countries have an aggrieved view of the West. They blame western policies for their own lack of prosperity. On the other hand, West points out corruption, lack of education and Islamic fundamentalism as the biggest obstacles to Muslim prosperity. This theme emphasizes the importance of aid and humanitarian efforts as a moral or historical obligation on the West depicted through the ideas like '*Every child in Iraq depends to a large extent on us*'.

8. **'Inferior Others':** This theme is identified in the news items through the frequent use of terms like 'corrupt nations', 'failed states', 'despotic leaders and their cronies'. It also includes post-colonial discourses of 'Othering'.
9. **'Special Position' of the US:** This theme places emphasis on US assuming a position of authority and their concern and efforts to combat terrorism and uphold human rights situation.
10. **'Us vs. Them':** This theme emphasizes cultural differences, contrasts and similarities identified in the coverage sometimes in a positive and sometimes in a negative manner.
11. **'Threat Perception':** It is believed that only the perception of threat may lead to statistical incidence that can form and finally drives public opinion. The theme indicates that the US perceives threats from the Islamic culture and values for their national security and people's psyche.
12. **'Conspiracy':** It is an explanatory proposition that accuses two or more persons, a group, or an organization of having caused or covered up, through secret planning and deliberate action, an illegal or harmful event or situation.

**Findings and conclusion:**

Kellner (2003b) noted that prominent private media houses in the U.S, especially broadcasting houses are instrumental in spreading propaganda for the Bush administration and Pentagon during post 9/11 period. The said propaganda involves presenting information of a biased nature to promote a political cause or point of view with no proper and intelligent critique. Certain propaganda techniques are

found in the news coverage of post 9/11 scenario to promote negative tones, themes and the stereotype images with reference to the issues related to Pakistan in specific and the other Islamic countries in general by the local print media unknowingly. Thus Pakistani media itself served as a propaganda tool and promoted the hegemonic discourse. A comparative analysis of news coverage of the conflicts and issues support the argument that Pakistani newspapers served as tools of propaganda and worked against the national interest.

The terror images of 9/11 incident were highlighted and unfolded in a city that is considered to be one of the most media saturated cities in the world. The images of the terrorist planes hitting the World Trade Center twin towers and their collapse were broad casted repeatedly, as if repetitions were necessary to increase the intensity of a highly traumatic event (Kellner, 2003b).

A simple repetitive approach , like 'Ad Nauseam' that is to repeat a slogan enough times so as to be taken as truth, is also used exhaustively by the foreign press. This approach worked best due to media sources being limited and controlled by the few influential propagators. In this study this has been identified as an overlapping theme. At times it appeared as a case of 'Mis-labeled identity' i.e. war on terror and sometimes as a part of recursive name calling in the coverage. Therefore war on terror became a socially shared organizing principle through its transmission via the US press (Reese & Lewis, 2009). In the four news items studied under the theme of mis-labeled identity, the tone of three news stories is found negative and sarcastic. Only one is positive in which Iran invited the UN observers to visit its nuclear plants. Under the theme of war on terror, three news stories are



found and analyzed from which two are found neutral and one is negative.

Likewise, joining on bandwagon and feelings of 'inevitable-victory' appeals are made to persuade audience so as to join hands and take the course of action that the super powers are taking. In the U.S, the private media houses followed the Bush administration in their attempt to demonize Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein while celebrating the U.S. military interventions at the same time (Kellner, 2003b). The theme associated with demonizing the targets is the use of age old adage of giving a dog a bad name and hanging him. Most of the news stories fall under this category. Total of nine news stories are found under this theme and all conveyed a negative tone except one.

The theme of 'inevitable victory' is highlighted to convey a signal to invite those, who are not already on board, to join hand with the winning and on the road to definite victory. Those who are already on board 'the bandwagon' are reassured for taking the best course of action.

Another very prominent theme appeared in the news stories is 'Join the crowd'. This technique reinforces people's natural desire to be on the winning side. This technique is used to convince the audience that the action taken is an expression of an irresistible mass movement and that it is in their best interest to join. This propaganda technique has been identified in themes like 'Special position of the US', 'Inferior others', portrayal of the enemy as an ultimate threat, military threat from oil rich nations, consequential threat to international stability and technological warfare. As these themes provide a model for the analyses and understanding of propaganda content in the press during

these conflicts involving U.S. and British forces, they also provide the background through which general issues regarding propaganda can be discussed. An effort has been made to analyze the role of journalists in the war coverage. Significance of the press increases in a news market which is presently dominated by 'instant' visual media and at the same time the effectiveness of propaganda in specific cultural and political contexts.

The broadcasting apparatus of the U.S. portrayed a sensitive image of the war whereas other western networks highlighted mega view of civilian atrocities committed in war. Coverage in the electronic media was tilted towards patriotism, slogans for the military and propaganda. Whereas, other world networks gave a critical view of the U.S. and the Britain's military actions presented negative images of the assault on Iraq and the high-tech massacre done by the U.S army.(Kellner, 2003a)

A possible underlying effect of dependence on foreign news agencies by Pakistani English newspapers is the assumption of role of de-facto agenda-setting by the foreign news agencies and the recipient news agencies as the propaganda tool. The fact remains that providing a major chunk of stories to these newspapers is not the only role undertaken by foreign news sources.

From September 11, to the start of the U.S war in Afghanistan, the media heightened the war. Slogans of patriotism were raised frantically like 'America is under attack' to 'America strikes back' and 'America's new war' much earlier when any combat was started and it seemed that the media was trying to make up the military response (Kellner, 2003a).

It also influenced the independent' coverage by the media

houses that subscribed to services of foreign news agencies. This indicates that the popular trend is that English newspapers in Pakistan would like to dedicate less space to a foreign story which is about a neighboring country but will highlight stories about US and stories reported by western news agencies. This trend is evident in the set of stories analyzed. This trend of prioritizing the news stories according to the importance given by the foreign news agencies is definitely not reflective of the state's priorities.

Archetti (2008) maintains that a dependent positioning of developed countries in the international system and a lack of resources lead to reporting from wider array of sources. Although this in turn broadens the scope of the news, yet at the same time the news related to less developed countries are influenced more and the possibility increases for the domination of content from the developed countries.

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**Book Review:**

**Fons Van Dyck (2014). *Advertising transformed: The new rules for the digital age*. London: Kogan Page. ISBN-13: 978-0749471484**

**Reviewed by Amna Mumtaz**

*Advertising Transformed*, first published in the UK and the US in 2014 by Kogan Page, serves as a wonderful guide that how advertising needs to be transformed in this digital era where social media is widespread and have overruled the old concept of advertising.

The author, Fons Van Dyck is a specialist in strategic brand advice and is a branding expert and Managing Director of Think BBDO. Moreover his columns get published in De Standard which focuses on consumer trends. In addition to this he teaches strategic brand management and marketing communication management at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel visiting faculty at Ehsal Management School in Brussels.

*Advertising Transformed* offers practical insights to marketing and communication professionals who want to keep abreast of the latest developments of the field. Van Dyck picks up three trends that have reshaped the world of advertising, which are; the emergence of light buyers which are often considered as unfaithful in terms of general business rules; the complementary nature of traditional media and digital platforms; and the role of creativity, which actually gives hype to a brand and generates return on investment. Each chapter of the book ends with a real life case study of Effie award-winning campaigns from brands such as Evian, Mercedes and IBM. Idea of brand is re-conceptualized as an entity which not only helps a business to flourish but also not to suffer by inculcating a feeling of trust and friendship among the consumers. How this trust should be built and kept this is what advertising is all about. Main thrust of the book is the importance of 'light buyers' which are persuaded over a longer period of time by consistency and creativity of a campaign. With the advancement in technology and with the advent of internet and social media, once again a dramatic change has taken place in the field of communication. Similarly in 1960's when television got popular, it brought a revolutionary change, likewise internet and social media have changed the world of marketing and advertising forever.

*Advertising Transformed* explains how the old recipes of advertising are no longer workable. It explains the role of advertising on brand

marketing today and its influence on consumers in digital age. The book is divided into three major parts.

The first part *The Essence of Advertising Today* deals with how to shape a suitable target audience. Marketing strategy and advertising models are discussed in the backdrop of traditional and new media landscape and how the transformations are rampant. However, advertising through traditional means is still of great importance advertising gets success when it reaches out to maximum number of people, majority the light buyers. The book explains how advertising has a direct impact on consumers as well as indirect impact through word of mouth. Many people tend to consume a product after they are influenced by their opinion leaders. In this case advertising acts in a snowball effect. The majority of our day to day conversations about brands occur in real life and not on social media. The ARF model explains six spheres that help to improve the mechanism of advertising. Advertising do cause irritation and this problem is faced by both classic and digital media. Therefore in order to lessen this rage an advertisement should be creative. In this way it would not only be much more effective but it will also meet the brand objectives. To make an advertisement creative it should be relevant towards the target audience and varying to the consumers. Emotional element in such advertisements can create a hype and extra word of mouth. Dyck advises the companies to take proactive steps in order to keep the consumers involved in their advertising campaigns.

Part two *Hybrid Marketing*, discusses current advertising practices. Usually two appeals are used in advertisement either USP or ESP and sometimes both serve for the best. Dyck explains that informative advertisements contain more information about the products which help the consumer to easily understand USP, whereas the curiosity of consumers about the brands can be fulfilled by positive emotional messages. Therefore USP is better for the people with high involvement while ESP works best for people having low level of involvement. In the argument of local and global branding, Dyck is for local one as global brands cannot serve everything. Socio-demographic factors and value system which play an important role in the making of a brand cannot be fully considered at global level. The idea of 'Green' in advertisement is explained that how the nature can nourish the attitudes of consumers and allow them to develop environment friendly behaviour but again a company should be careful about what it commits to offer to its target audience and if it fails to meet its claims

then they will soon be called sanctimonious. Consumers get nostalgic and they often look at the past that it was better than today. Therefore companies and brand should inspire its consumers by giving them confidence that how new is better. This point is analyzed in detail with reference to the case study of Procter & Gamble, Old Spice.

The last part *The Reckoning*, highlights the importance of investment in advertising. Research reveals that even at the time of recession the brands and companies who invested more in advertising had greater benefits for stock market price of their share. Dyck also examines the criticism on the advertisement of brands and companies and sees how they are responding towards such criticism. Consumers always seem to punish the companies that do not trade or advertise ethically. In order to avoid this situation a company can ethically advertise along with accomplishing its commercial objectives. In this way the company not only grows but also regains its integrity in the eyes of society.

The question raised by the author is 'what is the need of the hour' as consumers get irritated by watching certain advertisements that do not meet their criteria. Although there are many advertisements that are a bit long but still got viral on social media and liked by many. It is the creativity with good contents that works behind the success of an advertisement. Dyck concludes that twentieth century advertisement is dead now and therefore twenty first century advertisements have to be innovative in order to survive in this demanding era.

The author considers his book not only a guide but also a source of reflection and inspiration for the strategic questions that are emerging in today's practice. Stephen Loerke, Managing Director of World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) appreciates the efforts of Dyck for presenting enthralling views and strategic insights of the new world of advertising to its readers. The book is provides a great combination of scientific research backed by real life case studies. Dyck suggests how to adapt to the new consumer habits and to upgrade day to day technology. However, he accepts that the book does not provide solution to all sorts of problems and there is still a lot of room for improvement so he welcomes the suggestions and opinions of the readers on the website especially designed in accordance to this book i.e. [www.advertisingtransformed.com](http://www.advertisingtransformed.com).