

YouTube Usage and Political Socialization among Youth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Dr. Noor Nabi Khan¹, Dr. Azam Jan², & Mr. Munir Ahmed³

Abstract

Young people use YouTube for communication, information and entertainment and it also plays a significant part in expanding their political approaches, knowledge and socialization. This research study evaluates the YouTube's role in giving information related to politics and influencing political opinions and Youth's Political socialization in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) is applied on this research study as its theoretical framework. For the data gathering, a quantitative survey technique was implemented with a structured questionnaire as the key research tool. The target population comprised of the students registered in numerous universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A total of 525 survey respondents were chosen using convenience sampling method. The requisite number of participants was calculated with the help of Cochran's formula. Total, 501 survey members completed the questionnaire and returned it. The results indicate that the highest number of youngsters agreed that Political parties and their leaders use YouTube in KP. Most of the survey members shown disagreement that the use of YouTube affects voters' turnout. Nearly all the participants believed that YouTube has supported the linking between voters and parties. The outcomes show that YouTube inspire everybody to join political parties.

Article History

Received 02 August 2026

Revised 15 August 2026

Accepted 25 August 2026

Published 29 August 2026

OPEN ACCESS

Keywords

Usages, You Tube, Youth, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Political Socialization, Pakistan

Introduction

YouTube is an online video sharing medium where individual' especially young people can access a wide variety of topics and it permits users to post different kinds of videos (Hyirli, 2025). This video sharing platform can help youth become politically socialized to get political knowledge and information, enhance their political interest, network with other individuals and take part in political activities. YouTube political videos can support political socialization through three key purposes: seeking information, entertainment and building networks. Utilizing YouTube in order to look for information and form relations was connected to better political self-confidence, participation and interest (Oh, 2008).

YouTube enables political candidates, individuals and political parties to share and upload interviews, campaign messages and political speeches with a wide audience. This kind of content shape voters' opinions and help campaign attach with public more effectively and directly. YouTube is a low cost medium for politician In order to promote their campaign

¹ Lecturer, Department of Media and Communication Studies, Hazara University Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. noor_cms27@yahoo.com

² Assistant Professor, Department of Media and Communication Studies, Hazara University Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Azamjancms@gmail.com

³ Teaching Assistant, Department of Media & Communication Studies, Hazara University Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan . Munir175@gmail.com

messages and interconnect with the people (Gueorguieva, 2008). In the same way, YouTube is the best channel to share and deliver politically comic videos, political messages, material related to campaign and opinions on significant political matters by politician. YouTube can effect public views and elections by offering information related to politics and inspiring voters to take part in political events. Nonetheless, in YouTube the available content may be reliable information as well misinformation, false claim and propaganda. This can affect the audience views and political understanding (Stoilova, 2016).

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out YouTube's usage of political parties and leaders in KP
2. To explore YouTube's role in affecting voters' turn out in KP.
3. To search out YouTube's influence in bringing political parties closer to voters.
4. To investigate YouTube's role of persuading people in joining political protests.

Literature Review

Political socialization can develop through discussion and participation. The youngsters do not only watch videos associated with politics, they may debate and discuss political content with class fellows, friends & relatives and communicate via online comments. The youth use YouTube regularly to get information about social and political matters and discuss about this content with other fellows. The young people prefer to debate political and social videos on YouTube with friends and fellows rather than their teachers. These engagements allow youngsters to exchange political thoughts in order to develop their understanding of social and political concerns (Zimmermann et al., 2022).

YouTube has become a vital location for political communication. It permits political parties, politicians and inhabitants to discuss and share content related to politics. YouTube is the channel of social media in which political campaigns are done in order to connect and communicate with voters (Erhard, 2026). Total 3 118 YouTube videos associated to politics in 12 countries during election campaigns were investigated, observing the tone, popularity and content of every video. The main outcome was that Political campaign videos of YouTube are superior to TV advertising. It has a major effect on campaigns. The 2006 US elections of Midterm are viewed by some experts as the first elections of YouTube. The US elections in 2008 confirmed the YouTube's important part in democracy (Salmond, 2012).

Political parties are trying to upload speeches of their leaders on YouTube channel in order to influence voters. During the election campaign of Obama, more than 1800 video clips were uploaded to his channel. All that were done to persuade the voters. The Obama's response to his Pastor Reverend Jeremiah comments, who had made racially provocative statement, was perhaps the strongest example. The formal talk had dominated the mainstream media until Obama answered to them during a talk to a gathering of supporters on March 18, 2008. The network news aired a short clips of Obama's speech that evening. It was 37 minutes speech, within short time of its uploading on YouTube, it got political and media attention speedily. This video moved to reach the YouTube most watched list in two days and friends began to forward it with each other. Its fame among people discredited the myth the users of YouTube are interested only in entertainment kind of videos and it detached the Wright controversy front newspapers front pages (Hall, 2009).

YouTube offered many possibilities for the politicians and campaigners. They can post unlimited video for free on this site. It is speedy and easy to upload the political content videos. It is helpful in candidate's exposure to young voters because of its increasing popularity. 74% of the individuals aging 13 and more use YouTube in USA. In America, the weekly presidential addresses are posted on the white House YouTube channel on a regular basis (Leo-on, 2012). YouTube videos can easily persuade and attract voters' especially young ones. The voters favored that party which is more active on social media. Women voters feel more effect than males on any conversation taking place on YouTube and they vote easily on Election Day. The more shareable and engaging a video is on YouTube, the more viewers it is to appeal. Thus political videos attract more voters and they can decide easily to vote for a particular party (Biswas et al., 2014).

Significance of the Study

The study is significant because YouTube has become a vital platform for political information and communication partaking among youngster. It inspects how the students of university in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan use YouTube for political socialization and how it may affect their insight, attitudes and awareness. This study will be helpful in understanding how political leaders and parties use the video sharing platform YouTube to interact with younger voters in election campaigns. It also give knowledge and information about the YouTube's role in voter turnout, political participation and political demonstrations. The findings may be valuable for all political parties, media practitioners, government decision-makers and researchers. This survey research study can also assist the upcoming researchers understand the Social networking sites' role especially YouTube in political socialization of young people in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Research Methodology

The research methodology of this survey study is explained as follows.

Research Design

This study followed a quantitative research method and it gathered the data through a survey to observe the YouTube's role in political socialization of KP universities student. The survey technique was suitable because it permitted the researcher to gather information about how students use YouTube, political views and opinions of YouTube's role in political affairs.

Population and Sample

The study's population comprised of university students registered in certain private and public universities located in Peshawar, KP Pakistan. For data collection, four universities were chosen i.e. Islamia College University Peshawar and Peshawar University from the government sector, Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar and Qurtuba University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar from private organizations. The entire population of students in these four selected universities was 26, 234. Total 525 students were chosen for this study by using Cochran's formula and a convenient sampling method. A total of 525 questionnaires were distributed, 501 were returned and analyzed.

Sampling Technique

This survey research used convenience sampling to choose participants from four designated universities. The sample included the students from various study programmes like BS, MA/MSc, MPhil/MS and PhD. The participants of the survey were chosen based on their willingness and availability to take part in this study.

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was designed for data collection. It comprised of questions about respondent's background information, the uses of social media, ways of accessing YouTube, time spend, how frequently YouTube is used and the impact of YouTube in political socialization. The statements about politics addressed with the role YouTube in voter turnout, interaction between voters and political parties, taking part in political protest and rallies and the YouTube's usages by leaders and parties in election campaigns.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher distributed the questionnaire among the members of the four selected universities located in Peshawar. All the students were informed about the aims and objectives of the research study. They were requested to give authentic information about the use of YouTube. The researcher distributed five hundred and twenty five questionnaires. A total of five hundred and one valid questionnaire's responses were retained for data analysis. Incomplete questionnaires were excluded.

Theoretical Framework

The theory Uses and Gratification is applied on this research study. It reflects the users of media as active audiences who choose media in order to gratify their actual needs, requirements and interests. In the perspective of this survey, the students of university use YouTube for various purposes, like getting political information, increasing interests in politics, intermingling with others and engaging with content related to politics. These kinds of uses may increase political awareness, encourage participation and shape their attitudes. Thus, the theory gives an appropriate framework for observing how youngsters' usage of this channel may contribute to their political socialization.

Data Analysis

The gathered data were entered as well as analyzed using SPSS software. The frequency and percentages were used in order to summarize participants' demographic information, YouTube's viewing habits and their opinions about the political role of YouTube. The results were shown in the form of tables and discussed according to the survey research study aims and objectives.

Findings

Table No. (One)

Respondents' demographic information (N=501)

Category	Values	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender.	Men students	352	70.3	70.3
	Women students	149	29.7	100
Universities.	University of Peshawar	261	52.1	52.1
	Islamia College University	124	24.8	76.8
	Qurtuba University Peshawar	25	5	81.8
	Sarhad University Peshawar	91	18.2	100
Field of Study.	(BS)	338	67.5	67.5
	(MA/Msc.)	52	10.4	77.8
	(MPhil/MS)	79	15.8	93.6
	(PhD)	32	6.4	100
Age range.	16-20 years	167	33.3	33.3
	21-25 years	232	46.3	79.6
	26-30 years	58	11.6	91.2
	more than 30	44	8.8	100
Location.	Rural area	226	45.1	45.1
	Urban area	275	54.9	100

According to Table one, a total of five hundred and twenty five students took part in this survey. After excluding missing and unfinished questionnaires, 501 legal answers were examined. Of these, 70.3 percent were men participants and 29.9 percent were female members. Among the participants, 24.8% from Islamia College University Peshawar, 52.1% were from the Peshawar University, 5% from Qurtuba University of Science and Technology and 18.2% from Sarhad University Peshawar. Most students 67.7 percent belonged to BS program, followed by the students enrolled in MA/MSc (10.4%), MPhil/MS (15.8%) and PhD (6.4) percent. In terms of age, 46.3 percent were between 21-25 years old, 33.3 percent were 16 to 20 years of age, 11.6 percent were 26-30, and 8.8% were above 30 years of age. Regarding location, 54.9 percent belonged to urban regions while 45.1 percent belonged to rural regions of KP.

Table No. (Two)
SNS Usage Habits

Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Facebook (FB)	196	39.1	39.1
X(Twitter)	90	18	57.1
Instagram	62	12.4	69.5
YouTube	118	23.6	93
WhatsApp	35	7	100

Table two indicates that Facebook was the favourite medium that the survey respondents used (39.1) percent, next was YouTube (23.6) percent, then Twitter (X) (18%), Instagram (12.4) percent and (7) percent WhatsApp.

Table No. (Three)

Ways of accessing YouTube.

Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Laptop	46	9.2	9.2
PC	19	3.8	13
Mobile Phone	436	87	100

Table three displays 87% of the survey participants access the internet through cell phones and that's the major portion who accessed through mobile phones, followed by laptops (9.2) and PCs (3.8) respectively.

Table No. (Four)

Use of Real & Fake Identities.

Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	433	86.4	86.4
No	68	13.6	100

Table four observed that 86.4% of students join YouTube in their real identities, while 13.6% of survey pupil use fake identities when using social media.

Table No. (Five)

Frequency of using YouTube.

Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Once a day	63	12.6	12.6
Twice a day	52	10.4	23
Three times a day	69	13.8	36.7
Four times a day	48	9.6	46.3
More than four times a day	269	53.7	100

Table five demonstrates that 53.7% of the survey members use YouTube more than four times per day. Next (13.8%) use it three times per day, once (12.6%), twice (10.4%), and four times (9.6) percent on a typical day.

Table No (six)

YouTube viewing time.

Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0-1 hour	46	9.2	9.2
1-2 hours (hrs)	85	17	26.1
2-3 hrs	106	21.2	47.3
3-4 hrs	99	19.8	67.1
More than four hrs	165	32.9	100

Table six unveils that 32.9 percent of students use more than four hours per day watching the videos of YouTube, followed by 2 to 3 hours (21.2%), 3 to 4 hours (19.8%), 01 to 2 hours (17%) (N=85), and 0 to1 hour (9.2%).

Table No. (Seven)**YouTube's effects on voter turnout.**

Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD (Strongly Disagree)	95	19	19
D (Disagree)	94	18.8	37.7
N (Neutral)	141	28.1	65.9
A (Agree)	89	17.8	83.6
SA (Strongly Agree)	82	16.4	100

Table seven discloses that 34.2 percent of the survey respondents showed agreement that viewing the videos on YouTube effects the voter turnout, whereas 37.8 percent showed disagreement. In contrast, 28.1 percent of students chose the neutral option.

Table No. (Eight)**YouTube helps political parties connect with voters.**

Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
(SD)	57	11.4	11.4
(D)	97	19.4	30.7
(N)	159	31.7	62.5
(A)	111	22.2	84.6
(SA)	77	15.4	100

Table eight proves that 37.6% of students believed that YouTube helps politician and parties reach voters, though 30.8% of the participants disagreed, 31.7 percent stayed neutral.

Table No. (Nine)**YouTube motivates people to join political rallies.**

Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
(S.D)	59	11.8	11.8
(D)	80	16	27.7
(N)	173	34.5	62.3
(A)	118	23.6	85.8

(S.A)	71	14.2	100
Table nine points out that 37.8% of the research survey male and female students showed agreement and 27.8% said that they are disagreed with the assertion that YouTube inspire public to partake in political protests. 34.5% presented impartiality in reaction to the same statement.			

Table No. (Ten)**YouTube and election campaign.**

Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
(S.D)	69	13.8	13.8
(D.)	62	12.4	26.1
(N.)	151	30.1	56.3
(A.)	118	23.6	79.8
(S.A.)	101	20.2	100

Table ten establishes that 43.8% of the survey members agreed with the claim on the usage of You Tube in parties' election campaigns, whereas 26.2% of members did not disagree. 30.1% of respondents to the similar statement, although, provided a neutral reaction.

Conclusion

This research study explored how university students belonging to KP, Pakistan utilize the video sharing podium YouTube to involve in political socialization. The study's first objective was to investigate YouTube usage by Political leaders and parties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The results displayed that 43.8% of the survey members agreed that parties use this channel during election campaigns but 26.2% showed disagreement and 30.1 % stayed neutral. This specifies that YouTube is known as a vital platform for election campaigns and political communication.

The second one was to examine the role of YouTube in influencing the voters' turnout. The outcomes showed that 37.7% of the participants disagreed to the statements, though 34.2% agreed and 28.1 % of the students kept on neutral. Hence, the direct impact of the channel on turnout of voter appears to be restricted.

The third aim was to observe whether YouTube helps bring political parties closer to the target voters. The conclusion indicated that 37.6 percent of the pupils agreed that this video sharing podium assists politicians and political parties to connect with voters, whereas 30.8 percent showed disagreement and neutral ones were 31.7 %. This recommends that YouTube can work as beneficial platform for communication between politicians and citizens.

Lastly, this survey explored the role of YouTube in motivating public to join political protest and rallies. The results designated that 37.8% of the survey members showed agreement of the statement, while 27.8% fully disagreed and 34.5% continued as neutral.

In general, this study concludes that YouTube is an essential platform for political socialization and communication among youngsters in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Even though its direct effect on voter turnout was not powerfully confirmed, the results

propose that YouTube can assist parties to connect and communicate with voters and may boost participation in activities related to politics.

References

- Biswas, A., Ingle, N., & Roy, M. (2014). Influence of social media on voting behavior. *Journal of Power, Politics & Governance*, 2(2), 127–155.
- Erhard, L. (2026). Anti-elitism gets the views: Populist communication and popularity on German political YouTube. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612261468863>
- Gueorguieva, V. (2008). Voters, MySpace, and YouTube: The impact of alternative communication channels on the 2006 election cycle and beyond. *Social Science Computer Review*, 26(3), 288–300. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439307305636>
- Gulzar, A. A. (2020). *Agencies of socialization*. Educare. <https://www.educarepk.com/agencies-of-socialization.html>
- Hall, E. (2009). *Politics in the YouTube age: Transforming the political and media culture*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.
- Hayirli, O. (2025). YouTube as an educational and self-development tool. *European Journal of Teaching and Education*, 7(1), 89–108. <https://doi.org/10.33422/ejte.v7i1.1461>
- Lev-On, A. (2012). YouTube usage in low-visibility political campaigns. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 9(2), 205–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2011.645360>
- Nelson, P. M. (2004). *Montana Boys' State and Montana Girls' State: Political socialization of adolescents in transition to adulthood in the context of family, school, and community* (Doctoral dissertation, Montana State University).
- Oh, D. Y. (2018). Learning effects of political video use in YouTube on political socialization: Focusing on political efficacy, interest and participation. *Educational Culture Research*, 24(1), 97–115. <https://doi.org/10.24159/joec.2018.24.1.97>
- Salmond, R. (2012). *MeTube: Political advertising, election campaigns, and YouTube* (Issues in Technology Innovation No. 16). Brookings Institution.
- Stoilova, V. (2016). YouTube effect and its impact on global politics. In *International Conference Knowledge-Based Organization* (Vol. 22, pp. 149–152).
- Zimmermann, D., Noll, C., Gräßer, L., Hugger, K.-U., Braun, L. M., Nowak, T., & Kaspar, K. (2022). Influencers on YouTube: A quantitative study on young people's use and perception of videos about political and societal topics. *Current Psychology*, 41, 6808–6824. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-01164-7>