



RESEARCH PAPER

The Intersection of Politics, the Print Media, and Young Voters: An Examination of the 2018 General Election

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the content analysis of advertisements of major political parties in national dailies regarding mobilization of young voters. The major objective of the study was to find out the different types of advertisement appeals framed in ads to attract the youth by major political parties i.e. PML (N), PPPP and PTI. The design of the study was descriptive. Three national dailies i.e. Nawa-i-Waqt, Jang and Express, from January 24, 2018 to July 24, 2018 were taken as study area. The sample of the study was taken through purposive sampling technique. Major findings revealed that political parties allocated significant proportion of their political ads for youth. PTI paid the highest attention to young voters and got a huge success in general election 2018. However, PML (N) used the least proportion. On the basis of research, a major recommendation of vital role of print media was provided by the researcher.

Keywords: General Elections 2018, Pakistan, Political Ads, Political Parties, Youth

Introduction

The news media has grown into an effective vehicle for political, social, cultural, and economic transformation (Ferguson, 2000; Quigley, 2006). The rapid availability of information has become more vital than ever, particularly in urban settings. Media outlets including TV, radio, newspapers, and the internet have shaped people's attitudes, values, and way of life in the modern era (Hussain et al., 2018).

In recent history, three revolutions have stood out. These are revolutions in agriculture, manufacturing, and information technology. The information revolution has improved awareness, worldwide connectivity, and knowledge among all strata of the world's societies. A significant advancement in media technology can be seen, resulting in a constant flow of vast amounts of information to the public. It has increased public awareness in all areas, including politics (Kroll-Smith et al., 2002).

When the media disseminates information without any filter or censor, an excessive flow of information can have a harmful impact on society. As a result, it is critical to carefully examine the information and its source before making decisions based on it. Youth, in particular, require special attention in this regard because they have recently been targeted by most media groups in order to fulfil their or someone else's political and social goals. If the media is used correctly, it may be a very strong tool for bolstering the right cause of deserving individuals at the right time. Efficient media exposes the audience to a wide range of information that helps them decide between incorrect and appropriate actions (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1996; Ferguson, 2000; McQuail, 1996; West, 1996).

Internet marketing and the usage of information and communication technology (ICT) are becoming more popular around the world. This progress has decreased the role of print media, particularly in metropolitan areas. The young generation's attachment to PCs,

mobile phones, tablets, and other hand-held internet gadgets has grown dramatically, but we cannot disregard the importance of print media (Reed, 2005).

This study helps to explore the importance of print media in political process to convince the young voters. It has not lost its lustre as a result of its importance in rural areas where access to ICT is limited. Independent of urban and rural groups, young are still attracted to print media due to the publication of content of relevance to them, such as job postings, marriage adverts, immigration and abroad study opportunities (Ferguson, 2000). Furthermore, there are some other reasons to keep print media in the market, such as a lack of access to private TV channels and internet in some areas, particularly rural areas, energy difficulties, and a lack of purchasing power for electronic media and internet gadgets (Kral A., 2003).

Literature Review

Since media coverage has a substantial impact on people's attitudes and decision-making processes (Cieri & Peeps, 2000; Ferguson, 2000; Gamson, 2001; McChesney et al., 2005; Klandermans & Goslinga, 1996; Reed, 2005; West, 2005), political parties always use this tool print media, in particular, because of its accessibility and authenticity for their election campaigns.

The Pakistan Peoples' Party Parliamentary effectively employed this medium following Benazir Bhutto's assassination in the 2008 election campaign. One of the factors that led to the overthrow of Musharraf's government was this campaign. With heartfelt advertisements, PPPP won over voters' sympathies and became the federal government as well as the governments of two provinces (Hussain et al., 2018).

Other parties, such as the PTI, use print media to win the hearts and minds of voters, particularly young people. The PML (N) uses print media to spread its message and gain people's trust through advertisements. These three major parties are attempting to disseminate their messages through print media in order to win the hearts and minds of voters, particularly youth, who make up half of Pakistan's population. Ads for laptops, land allotments to agrarians, the yellow cab scheme, the slogan of change, and green tractors, among other things, are examples of ads used by the three major parties to win the votes of young people.

In response to political parties' frequent use of print media to mobilize the youth, this study chose three national Urdu dailies, namely Nawa-i-Waqt, Express, and Jang. These papers were chosen because of their market impact and credibility. Furthermore, these are the oldest papers, with a large following among young readers due to job and admissions advertisements. Whereas the daily Nawa-i-Waqt and Jang are controlled by two opposing mind sets, the Daily Express is chosen for its neutrality.

As a result, major political parties like the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentary (PPPP), Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Group (PML (N)), and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) prefer to use these papers to mobilize Pakistan's youth. With the importance of the contents of such advertisements in mind, this study was designed to conduct a content analysis to investigate the role of advertisements in mobilizing the youth (18 to 30 years), who account for nearly 60 million votes (Hussain et al., 2018). In this regard, advertisements from these three papers were taken from January 24, 2018 to July 24, 2018.

Print media is widely used by political and social actors to mobilize people, particularly youth (Campbell et al., 2000). Several studies have examined the role of media in the social mobilization of youth. This study, on the other hand, has specifically focused on the role of media in mobilizing youth in the context of a specific political event. Media, like in other countries, has a significant impact on the behavior, choices, and lifestyle of

Pakistan's youth. Recognizing these facts, all major parties in Pakistan's general elections in 2018 attempted to win the hearts of the youth. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first attempt in Pakistan to investigate the impact of political campaigns on youth voting choices regarding general election 2018. The study chose three political parties, namely the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Group (PML (N)), the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian (PPPP), and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI). Researcher examined the content of their advertisements published in three leading national Urdu dailies, namely Nawa-i-Waqt, Express, and Jang, between January 24, 2018 and July 24, 2018. In general, the study looked into the use and importance of print media in motivating young people to support political causes during election campaigns.

Hypotheses

H₀: Political parties did not use ads in significant proportion to persuade young voters for general election 2018.

H_A: Political parties used ads in significant proportion to persuade young voters for general election 2018.

H₀: PTI was not the number one party in using of youth-oriented contents in their ads.

H_A: PTI was the number one party in using of youth-oriented contents in their ads.

H₀: Political parties did not use diverse contents/appeals in their ads to attract the youth.

H_A: Political parties used diverse contents/appeals in their ads to attract the youth.

Material and Methods

This study is mainly based on content analysis of advertisements of major political parties in national Urdu Dailies from January 2018 to July 2018 in order to attract the attention of young voters. Content analysis is used to gather and analyse information given in advertisements. Merely rigorous analytical tools used in the physical and social sciences cannot be applied in cultural and communication sciences. Analysis in communication sciences necessitates in-depth comprehension of the contents/texts of videos, advertisements, stories, and so on; thus, researchers cannot rely solely on numbers. They must analyse the content qualitatively in order to establish appropriate logical statements and interpret them appropriately (Alan, 2001). As a result, media studies cannot limit their scope of analysis to the limitations of rigorous tools. Because of the reluctance to adopt strict methodologies, there is a huge scope for acquiring deep knowledge of contents/texts in media sciences.

Population and Sample

This study is mainly based on content analysis of advertisements of major political parties published in leading newspapers during the period from January 2018 to July 2018 in order to attract the attention of young voters. The study chose the purposive method to select the number of political parties (3 major parties), newspapers (i.e. three Urdu dailies), and advertisements (youth-oriented only) due mainly to the time constraint for this academic research. Regarding the selection of ads, the focus of the study was only those advertisements, which contained the youth-oriented contents related to for General Elections 2018 in Pakistan. Selection of political parties, i.e. PML (N), PPPP and PTI, was based on their popularity and the high degree of media use. Similarly, three national Urdu dailies, Nawa-i-Waqt, Express, and Jang, were chosen based on their market impact and credibility. Furthermore, these are the oldest papers, with a large following among young

readers due to job and admissions advertisements. As a result, selected political parties preferred to use these papers as tools to mobilize Pakistan's youth.

Table 1
Design for Sampling

| Population | Sample | Method of selection |
|--|--|---------------------|
| *The Election Commission of Pakistan assigned symbols to 103 political parties for the 2018 general elections. | Three major parties only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPPP • PML (N) • PTI | Purposive |
| **424 Dailies (Newspapers) being published in Pakistan | Three national Urdu Dailies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nawa-i-Waqt • Express • Jang | Purposive |
| All political election-related advertisements | Youth-oriented advertisements only | Purposive |

Sources: EUEOMP, 2018; **APNS, 2018

In Table 1, sampling design has been presented. Around 103 political parties were allotted with election symbols by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for General Elections 2018. Out of those, only three leading political titans, i.e. PPPP, PTI, and PML (N) were chosen purposively. Likewise, only three leading Urdu Dailies were selected out of total 424 Dailies which were being published in Pakistan at the time of Elections. The most importantly, the focus of the study was to investigate youth oriented ads (Table 1).

Because Lahore is considered the media industry's hub, the Lahore editions of all three dailies were chosen to collect political party advertisements. Almost all national dailies have offices and operate from here. Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) has been in operation since the country's inception, with its headquarters in Lahore. A total of 609 advertisements were collected from the 24th of January 2018 to the 24th of July 2018. 144 of them were youth-oriented, with motivational content to attract them.

Instrumentation

'Instrument' is the common term being used by researchers for research measurement tools, i.e. data size, sampling technique, checklist, questionnaire, test etc. However, the 'instrumentation' is the process of developing, testing, and using the measurement tools. In social sciences, instrumentation starts with the selection of appropriate research design and ends up with the formulation of socio metric tools to test the hypotheses. There are several steps between starting and ending points. In media studies especially those with content analysis, instrumentation is significantly different from conventional social studies because these studies are not confined within any defined measurement framework. Rather, these studies go beyond the limits and try to gather as much content information as they can. Based on content/textual analysis, logical statements are made to validate the established hypotheses. This study mainly depends on content analysis, therefore instrumentation is formulated accordingly (Table 2).

Table 2
Instrumentation

| Instruments | Specification |
|---|---|
| Research design | Research was designed as contextual study. Content analysis was done to analyse the content of advertisements |
| Rationalizing the subject & focus of research | General elections 2018 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| | Youth-oriented ads of political parties for the period from 24th January 2018 to 24th July 2018 in Urdu Dailies as a part of election campaigns. |
| Priority ranking for data sources | A simple 'Priority Ranking' tool was chosen to select the newspapers and political parties for this study. Based on this, three Urdu Dailies, i.e. Nawa-i-Waqt, Express & Jang, were selected. Circulation, readership, years of publication and preference of political parties were the criteria for prioritization. Three major parties, PML (N), PPP & PTI, were selected based on their popularity among the young voters, their utilization of print media for campaigns & the extent of competition they have. |
| Study Checklists | Date-wise checklist was prepared to collect youth-oriented ads from the above mentioned papers. |
| Analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis: Content-wise and newspaper-wise, sorting out of ads given by each party. Looking at how much focus given to youth in ads for fetching their attention in general elections. • Use of descriptive statistics: % of general ads & % of youth-oriented ads, and newspaper-wise and party-wise frequencies comparative statistics) |
| Hypothesis testing | Validating the hypotheses based on the findings arising from analysis |

Data Analysis

It was assessed Newspaper-wise and party-wise that how much attention was given to youth in ads to attain their attention in General Elections 2018. In first step, newspaper-wise, facts and figures were explored; whereas in second step, party-wise statistics were revealed to find out the proportion of youth oriented ads in total number of ads published in selected Urdu Dailies. In ads, the identified categories of contents/appeals in case of all parties were emotional contents, youth-oriented, endorsement, play on cards and statistics. To present the facts and figures, data analysis tools, i.e. frequencies & percentages, were used in this study.

Software for Analysis and Hypotheses Testing

Microsoft Excel was used for data analysis because it was capable of estimating the descriptive statistics for this study. Very importantly, this study is scientifically categorized as qualitative case study with extensive qualitative information and smaller sample size. Moreover it is mainly based on content analysis. That's why statistical tests are not statistically robust for such studies to test the established hypotheses. In such case, qualitative statements, descriptive statistics, or nature of contents are observed and used to test the hypotheses. Following the same principle, in this study, descriptive statistics and nature of contents are observed and used for hypotheses testing.

Results and Discussion

Youth-oriented ads Published by Political Parties

Political parties presented their election manifestos and attempted to attract the attention of the most influential segments of society, such as rural people/farmers and the youth, in advertisements published between January 24, 2018 and July 24, 2018, prior to the general elections 2018. To test the hypothesis that political parties have paid close attention to young voters, youth-oriented advertisements were separated from all other

types of political advertisements. The results showed that PML (N) published the most advertisements in Urdu dailies, including Express, Nawa-i-Waqt, and Jang (Table 3). The total number of ads published by two parties, PTI and PPPP, was less than the total number of PML (N). PTI published the most youth-oriented advertisements of any of the three parties. According to statistics, they published more than 40% of ads with content aimed at attracting young voters (Table 3). PML (N) and PPPP ran nearly identical advertisements for young voters. However, the PML (N) published only 13% of their advertisements to motivate voters to vote in the general election. Their most of the ads were focusing other groups and issues in the society. Findings revealed that political parties in general and PTI in particular gave very high importance to young voters in their political ads validated the set hypothesis regarding the importance of youth in election campaign ads.

Table 3
Ads published by Political Parties in Urdu Dailies

| Parties | Total ads | | Youth-oriented ads | | Other political ads | |
|---------|-----------|-----|--------------------|----|---------------------|----|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| PML (N) | 326 | 100 | 41 | 13 | 285 | 87 |
| PTI | 154 | 100 | 63 | 41 | 91 | 59 |
| PPPP | 129 | 100 | 40 | 31 | 89 | 69 |

Newspaper-Wise Distribution of ads

Further, newspaper-wise fragmentation has been made to investigate the distribution of ads (Table 3). In Daily Express, PML (N) published the highest number of ads with the least proportion of youth oriented ads (14%). PPPP and PTI published almost equal number of ads, however the proportion of youth oriented ads was significantly higher for PTI (42%) compared to PPPP (30%). It reveals that PTI was the most prominent political party for publishing the youth oriented ads in Daily Express.

Nawa-i-Waqt remained the number one choice for PML (N) for publishing ads. They published total 211 ads during the campaign period in this Urdu Daily (Table 5). However, the proportion of youth oriented ads remained nearly 10% which was the least among all three political parties.

Table 4
Ads Published by Major Political Parties in Daily Express

| Parties | Total ads | | Youth-oriented ads | | Other political ads | |
|---------|-----------|-----|--------------------|----|---------------------|----|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| PML (N) | 92 | 100 | 13 | 14 | 79 | 86 |
| PTI | 62 | 100 | 26 | 42 | 36 | 58 |
| PPPP | 60 | 100 | 18 | 30 | 42 | 70 |

PTI's number of ads in Nawa-i-Waqt was even less than the half of the ads published by PML (N) but their proportion for youth oriented ads was the highest (36%). Once again, PPPP published the least number of ads but their proportion for youth was more than the double of PML (N)'s proportion for the same.

Table 5
Ads Published by Major Political Parties in Daily Nawa-i-Waqt

| Parties | Total ads | | Youth-oriented ads | | Other political ads | |
|---------|-----------|-----|--------------------|----|---------------------|----|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| PML (N) | 211 | 100 | 18 | 9 | 193 | 91 |
| PTI | 80 | 100 | 29 | 36 | 51 | 64 |
| PPPP | 55 | 100 | 13 | 24 | 42 | 76 |

Jang was less preferred by political parties for publishing election-related advertisements than the other two Urdu dailies. All three political parties gave this

newspaper the fewest advertisements. PML (N) remained the number one party in terms of total number of ads published in Daily Jang (6). In terms of proportion of ads for youth, there is not a significant difference among political parties. However, PML (N)'s proportion of ads for youth was slightly more than that of other two.

Table 6
Ads Published by Major Political Parties in Daily Jang

| Parties | Total ads | | Youth-oriented ads | | Other political ads | |
|---------|-----------|-----|--------------------|----|---------------------|----|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| PML (N) | 23 | 100 | 10 | 44 | 13 | 56 |
| PTI | 12 | 100 | 08 | 67 | 04 | 33 |
| PPPP | 14 | 100 | 09 | 64 | 05 | 36 |

Ranking of Political Parties based on Youth-oriented ads

Political parties were ranked based on the number and proportion of youth-oriented advertisements in order to determine which party paid the most attention to attracting young voters. PTI ranks first in terms of the number of youth-oriented advertisements. Also, they published the highest number of ads in Daily Express and Nawa-i-Waqt. However, they were placed at third place as far as publication of youth-oriented ads in Daily Jang was concerned. Between PML (N) and PPPP, the former may be ranked at second position taking the overall (2) and newspaper-wise ranks (3, 2, and 1) into account. However, PPPP may be ranked at third place based on their overall (3) and newspaper-wise (2, 3, 2) ranks.

PTI remains number one in terms of the proportion of youth-oriented ads in total ads. They remained number one in terms of proportion of overall and newspaper-wise youth-oriented ads (Table 7). PPPP came in second, with PML (N) coming in third. In conclusion, PTI focused the most on youth voters in their political ads, both in terms of absolute number and proportion of youth-oriented ads. PPPP and ML (N) were ranked second and third, respectively, in terms of the number and proportion of youth-oriented advertisements (Table 7).

Table 7
Youth-oriented ads: Comparative Analysis of Political Parties

| Parties | Ranking based on number of ads | | | | Ranking based on proportion of ads | | | |
|---------|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|------------|------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|------------|
| | Overall | Daily Express | Daily Nawa-i-Waqt | Daily Jang | Overall | Daily Express | Daily Nawa-i-Waqt | Daily Jang |
| PML (N) | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| PTI | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| PPPP | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Content of Youth-oriented ads

In order to attract the attention of young people in the general election, political parties used a variety of persuasive techniques in their youth-oriented advertisements. The following types of appeals/contents have been identified in youth-oriented advertisements based on content analysis.

Emotion words / sensitivity appeals

In some cases, contents were found with certain emotions revealing past sufferings, sacrifices, excitement, pity, fear, and injustice. Such emotional contents may make the voters to sympathize with the party. Some key examples were killing of Benazir Bhutto in terrorist

attack, Nawaz family's proscription, Imran Khan's sensitizing contents on corruption eradication etc

Personal appeals

Appeals were found containing contents about the positive features of their leaders to attract or influence the youth. Some examples were contents on Imran Khan's honesty and leadership, transparent distribution of tickets to youth, Nawaz Sharif's patriotism, and Asif Zardari's connection to the poor through highlighting Benazir Income Support Programme. Several other tricks and features were also used by political parties to attain the attention of the youth.

Endorsement

In certain cases, ads were containing contents which used popular figures/celebrities for convincing the youth. Political parties gave tickets to some celebrities who were already popular among the youth. Celebrities' appeals were considered one of the most useful techniques to influence youth. Moreover, their chairman Imran Khan's personality as a cricket idol was also an influencing factor. It was assumed that young voters may transfer their respect or admiration for the celebrity to the party. One good example was giving away the ticket to Abrar-ul-Haq by PTI.

Play on words

Advertisements also made effective use of incentives to convince the youth. Political parties promised to offer scholarships, higher education, Agricultural land, loans, income opportunities, vehicles, computers to youth in their ads.

Statistics

Political parties also used past achievements, statistics and figures to improve their popularity among the youth. Some key examples were Nawaz government's project of motor way, Sasti roti and nuclear tests, Imran Khan's cancer hospital, NAMAL college and services for cricket, and PPP's achievements, i.e. Initiation of Aghaz-e-Haqooq-Balochistan Package and Higher Education devolution to provincial level etc. There were several other statistics used to influence the youth of Pakistan.

Content of Youth-oriented ads Published by PTI

There were a total of 189 appeals in PTI's 63 youth-oriented advertisements (Table 8). Almost half of the appeals were endorsements, with the remaining 25% detailing their leader's personality and devotion to national interests. They used 6% fewer emotional contents and 5% fewer prior statistics. Their 15% appeals were filled with youth-oriented promises and incentives (Table 8). Overall, in their youth-oriented advertisements, the PTI used endorsements and personal appeals to gain their attention for the 2018 general elections.

Table 8
Content/Appeal-wise Analysis of ads of PTI

| Kinds of Appeals | Number of Appeals | % |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Emotional words | 11 | 6 |
| Personal appeals | 47 | 25 |
| Endorsement | 93 | 49 |
| Play on words | 29 | 15 |
| Statistics | 09 | 5 |
| Total | 189 | 100 |

Content of youth-oriented ads published by PPPP

There were 182 appeals found in 40 PPPP youth-oriented ads (Table 9). To persuade youth to vote in general elections, they primarily used endorsement (31%), past statistics (26%), and promises and incentives (29%), as shown in Table 3.7. They used fewer emotional words (3%), as well as fewer personal appeals (12%).

It reveals that PPPP mainly used their previous tenure's achievements as a toll to convince the young voters. They also used influential people or celebrities (endorsement) to attract the youth. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari not only delivered speeches during election campaigns but also he appealed youth in ads to vote for PPPP.

Table 9
Content/Appeal-wise Analysis of ads of PPPP

| Kinds of Appeals | Number of Appeals | % |
|------------------|-------------------|-----|
| Emotional words | 5 | 3 |
| Personal appeals | 21 | 12 |
| Endorsement | 56 | 31 |
| Play on words | 52 | 29 |
| Statistics | 48 | 26 |
| Total | 182 | 100 |

Content of Youth-oriented ads Published by PML (N)

PML (N) published 41 youth-oriented ads in the Urdu Dailies during the study period before general elections (Table 10). In these 41 ads, total 362 appeals were used to influence the youth. Two-third appeals were having endorsement content to attract the youth (Table 10).

Table 10
Content/Appeal-wise Analysis of ads of PML (N)

| Kinds of Appeals | Number of Appeals | % |
|------------------|-------------------|-----|
| Emotional words | 2 | 1 |
| Personal appeals | 22 | 6 |
| Endorsement | 240 | 66 |
| Play on words | 81 | 22 |
| Statistics | 17 | 5 |
| Total | 362 | 100 |

Their 22% appeals were containing the content of incentives and promises for the youth. Smaller proportions of appeals were having contents of personal attractiveness, past statistics and emotional words

Possible reason/agenda of attracting Youth

It is clear that all three major political parties attempted to capture the attention of young voters ahead of the 2018 general election. There could be several reasons for motivating young people. However, some of the identified reasons from the advertisement content are listed below.

1. Young people are more influential within the family to convince the other members of the family to vote for the particular party. Also, they are more productive to convince the people in neighbourhood, universities, streets, villages and towns.
2. Young voters may play very important role for parties in door to door election campaigns, and may also bring other voters out of their homes so actively to vote for

the particular party on the Election Day. They are more effective in polling process, handling polling camps and booths, and controlling any kind of violence and ragging during the election.

3. They may become the parties' future power, and they may serve for a longer period of time as voters and workers. Moving beyond political interests, they have the potential to serve the country very effectively if they are effectively groomed through robust educational, technical, and political processes of political parties. As a result, parties seek future success in their youth.
4. For protests, strikes, rallies, and gatherings in the name of change, youth are the most powerful tool for political parties in gathering public support, organizing, and managing political events. They may also be very effective at organizing productive events at the local, regional, and national levels, such as sporting events, academic competitions, festivals, conferences, and workshops, among other things.
5. Youth is also a very effective tool for raising funds for parties and disaster relief. The reasons stated above are very important in Pakistan politics, leading political parties to focus on young voters. However, there may be several other factors that differ from party to party depending on their interests.

By selecting three Urdu Dailies, i.e. Nawa-i-Waqt, Express and Jang, this study investigated the role of political ads, published by Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Group (PML (N)), Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian (PPPP) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI), in mobilizing the youth (18 to 30 years). In this regard, ads of these three papers were taken for the period from January 24, 2018 to July 24, 2018. It revealed some interesting findings. Summary of those are presented in the following table (11).

Table 11
Summary of Findings

| Questions | Hypotheses | Findings | Hypothesis testing |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1. How important was youth motivation in political advertisements by political parties? | <p>H₀: Political parties did not use ads in significant proportion to persuade young voters for general election 2018.</p> <p>H_A: Political parties used ads in significant proportion to persuade young voters for general election 2018.</p> | Political parties used considerable proportion of their political ads to influence the young voters. PTI, PPPP and PML (N) used respectively 41%, 31% and 13% ads to influence the young voters. Investigation of the youth oriented ads separately in all three Dailies, i.e. Nawa-i-Waqt, Express and Jang, also revealed almost similar results. | Null hypothesis (H ₀) is rejected, and Alternative hypothesis (H _A) is accepted. |
| 2. Which political party emphasized youth the most in their advertisements? | <p>H₀: PTI was not the number one party in using of youth-oriented contents in their ads.</p> <p>H_A: PTI was the number one party in using of youth-oriented contents in their ads.</p> | PTI was ranked number one, taking both absolute number and proportion of youth-oriented ads into account. PPPP and ML (N) were positioned at second and third place respectively based on both number and proportion of youth-oriented ads | Null hypothesis (H ₀) is rejected, and Alternative hypothesis (H _A) is accepted. |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| 3. What types of advertisement appeals were used to attract youth? | <p>H₀: Political parties did not use diverse contents/appeals in their ads to attract the youth.</p> <p>H_A: Political parties used diverse contents/appeals in their ads to attract the youth.</p> | To attract the attention of young voters in the 2018 general elections, political parties used various persuasive techniques, such as emotional words, personal appeals, endorsement, play on words, and statistics, in their youth-oriented advertisements. | Null hypothesis (H ₀) is rejected, and Alternative hypothesis (H _A) is accepted. |
|--|--|--|--|

Conclusion

In Pakistan, youth constitute the majority of the population, and their role in bringing about political, social, and economic change in the country is critical. The country's youth population accounts for approximately 60 million votes. Political parties in Pakistan have recognized the importance of youth in political change. They spent a significant portion of their resources on publishing youth-oriented ads during the 'General Elections 2018' campaigns in order to capture the attention of the youth. Generally, young voters are highly useful for political parties, and they are easier to be convinced primarily due to their naivety, over-passion and volatility in thoughts. According to the findings of this study, the possible reasons for using youth-oriented advertisements include youth's influence within families, their importance in door-to-door campaigns, active participation during the voting process, their potential and future role in party flourishing, role and energy in protests, strikes, and rallies, and importance in party fund raising.

Findings revealed that political parties allocated a significant proportion of their political ads for youth. PTI paid the highest attention to young voters. Their focus on youth brought success for them in the General Elections 2018. They won around 176 National Assembly seats, and secured government in 2 provinces, i.e. "Punjab" and "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa". Among all three parties, PML (N) paid the least attention to publish youth oriented ads. It is very interesting that PML (N) achieved less success in the General Elections 2018 but they secured more than PPPP. Regarding the content of ads, the political parties used diverse persuasive techniques, i.e. emotional words, personal appeals, endorsement, play on words and statistics, in their youth-oriented ads to attract the attention of young voters in the general elections. PTI used the highest proportion of celebrity appeals (endorsement' type of appeals/contents) to influence youth in their youth-oriented ads. They also used considerable proportions of personal appeals and made effective use of incentives to convince the youth (play on words). PPPP used content mostly comprising of celebrity appeals (endorsement), attractive incentives (plays on words) and past statistics. However, PML (N) mainly used celebrity appeals (endorsement) in their youth-oriented ads. All three parties marginally used emotional words to attract the youth.

Conclusively, it has been found that political parties realized the importance of youth in terms of their voting strength and their role in tangible and non-tangible party benefits. Corresponding to this, they paid notable attention to this segment of society in their political campaigns for 'General Elections 2018' while publishing ads in leading Urdu Dailies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, some possible recommendations have been made. These are presented below.

1. While it is commendable to focus on youth in election campaigns, over-promising in campaign content may have a negative impact on society. If young people are promised something during election campaigns, it is imperative that they receive it, as failure to do so

may cause them to become extremely frustrated, leading to an increase in crime and unrest in society. Because political parties in general, and the PTI in particular, have paid more attention to the youth, it is suggested that youth be used in the best interests of the country rather than just targeting their voting strength and expected role in tangible and intangible benefits of parties. In short, whether they win or lose the election, youth should not be abandoned.

2. It is suggested that such content be used in political advertisements to motivate youth to use their potential most productively. In this regard, incentives such as higher education opportunities, technical skills and capacity, and sports activities may be very beneficial in not only attracting youth but also educating them on their future role in the country's development.

3. It is recommended that financial promises and excessive use of overwhelming past statistics be avoided in youth-oriented advertisements because these contents may raise youth expectations of political parties. The country's economic situation is constantly changing, and similar projects for youth may no longer be feasible. It is recommended that only realistic content and promises be used. Similarly, in terms of implications, financial incentives have some limitations.

Future Research

This study provides insights into youth-oriented election campaigns and clearly ranks the parties in terms of their proportion of youth-oriented advertisements in total advertisements published in leading Urdu dailies. PTI paid the most attention to youth in their political advertisements and was very successful in gaining their attention. They won approximately 176 National Assembly (NA) seats in the 2018 General Elections, compared to only 35 NA seats in the 2013 elections. However, the fact that the political party 'PML (N),' which focused the least on young voters among the three parties compared, won around 85 seats in the national assembly in the 'General Elections 2018' raises a valid question. Given this, this study paved the way for future research on the following topics;

1. Despite the fact that the youth segment in Pakistan has around 60 million votes and is the most useful in attracting other voters due to their influence within households and society, a political party that focused the least on this segment won more than 80 seats in the national assembly. What are the reasons for this?
2. To what extent is the PTI attempting to keep the promises made in their youth-ad campaigns during election campaigns?

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