

**RESEARCH PAPER****Exploring the Relationship between Media Literacy and Political Engagement****¹SyedaAmmarahBano* ²Sofia Mubbsher, and ³LubnaZaheer**

1. M. Phil Scholar, School of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, , Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. PhD Scholar, Centre for Media & Communication Studies, University of Gujrat,, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Professor, Department of Film and Broadcast, School of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

Corresponding Author

sofia.mubbasher@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the relationship between media literacy and political engagement, addressing assumptions and concerns regarding their association. While scholars and educators anticipate a positive correlation between media education and prosocial objectives like political and civic engagement, empirical evidence supporting this link remains limited. Cross-sectional design employs survey method to collect data from sample of 357 university students. Multistage sampling techniques are utilized to ensure representativeness. Valid and reliable survey instruments assess participants' levels of media literacy and their engagement with political activities. The findings reveal significant relationships between news media literacy and key measures of political engagement: political activities, current events knowledge and internal political efficacy. Additionally, certain dimensions of news media literacy are associated with lower levels of political trust among participants. The study recommends integrating comprehensive media literacy programs in university curricula to enhance political engagement. Further research should explore these dynamics across different populations.

Keywords: News Media Literacy, Political Engagements, Efficacy, Political Trust, University Students

Introduction

Democracy is a governance system where citizen believes free exchange of ideas and opinions in a manner, ultimately truth will prevail over falsehood. Common ground can be found and compromises can be made through these free exchanges of dialogues (Parikh & Pahad 2011). Mass media is undoubtedly massively momentous and indispensable for flourishing the modern democracy. Particularly in the present age when social media have become a significant attribute in our daily routine. Digital media platforms enable people to participate online and share information in effective way with result of integration in conversation (Bastos, 2014; Burkell et al., 2014). For conceptualizing active digital citizenship is crucial for connecting media literacy within media saturated convergence culture to the ethical, social and emancipatory features of information societies (Ramasubramanian & Darzabi, 2020).

Mihailidis (2014, p. 14) conceptualized the notion of media literacy, "media literacy is the path towards more active and robust civic engagement in the 21st century". With rapid digitalization and proliferation of social networks, digital media education has now become fundamental in the good citizenship practices (Hobbs 2010a, 16). Media education proponents have supported media literacy's participatory role in democracy long time ago (Masterman 1997). They have expectation that media education has positively associated with individual's political and civic involvement (Ashley, Maksl & Craft, 2017).

Innovations in social media communication technologies offered young people to interactive platforms for political activities (Allam, Azim, & Sakrani, 2020). Hence online environments especially for young people are becoming central to their political life. They take part in many political activities like political discussions, share political ideologies, perspectives on political issues, mobilize other individuals, fundraising, pressurize the government and other organizations. These online political activities that happen within a media ecology can be described as participatory culture (Jenkins, H., R. Purushotma, K. Clinton, M. Weigel, and A. J. Robison. [2009]. No doubt young people have considerable media impact as they have more exposure to media (Kelly & Payton, 2019), therefore, in present online realm media literacy offering an ethical media usage guideline (Aufderheide, 1992) and emphasizing the integrity of political participation in young people in social media (Sufiean et al., 2020). Young people having media literacy skills are more critical in making choice of credible sources and platforms to access political information (Silverstone, 2004) and turn into critical thinker (Hobbs & Frost, 2003) to generate fresh perception of knowledge (Ashley et al., 2010). Researchers, Ashley and Maksl (2017) and Calabrese (2008) explored that recent literature on media literacy and political participation is huge contribution in establishing accurate direction. In early era people consume information through accessible media platforms i.e. community media (Aufderheide, 1992; Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2015). However, in recent age after the proliferation of digital and social media apps scenario has been changed, now people have bulk of information sources and they chose credible sources for information. But when it comes to youth, transformation becomes visible (Loader, 2007). According to Krueger (2002) youth is leading different political activities through digital media innovatively. However, it is observed that young people more involved in online political activities as compare to older (Zaheer, 2016; Smith, 2013), this phenomenon also evident that a number of young people disengaged themselves from the political and civic engagements and lemmatized their participation to online environment (Zaheer, 2016; Alvidrez & Franco-Rodríguez, 2016). Consequently, young people didn't produce political scientist, they just access media for information (Alvidrez & Franco-Rodríguez, 2016), and O'Neill (2010) observed positive impact on the youths' political knowledge and high integrity level of political participation. Martens and Hobbs (2015) described valid reason of media exposure and ability of critically analyse the media content have significant influence on the civic activities and also have impact on the quality life of young people (Rebecca & Matthew, 2008) and it also reinforced social norms and political trust (Zhang & Chia, 2006). Respectively, study reported that media literacy education can be promoted political and civic activities among young people (Martens & Hobbs, 2015), leading to lowered political scepticism and apathy (Vesnic-Alujevic, 2012) that fortified critical evaluation of political issues among young people in social media.

The evaluation of media literacy in political communication has garnered significant attention in academia. The world has been altered due to widespread access to information and its greatest impact being felt by the youth Young people spent their lots of time on the social and digital platforms but still there is question regarding critical ability to evaluate the information consumed via social networks. Research further supported the link between political participation and media literacy but relation with enhance citizenship is still limited. There are also arguments, if young people became more aware about the media content they may become politically disengaged, leading to increase cynicism and apathy (Ashley et al., 2017). This particular study aims to explore relationship between media literacy and news consumption, as well as the effect of high media literacy on understanding current events, political activities, political trust, and efficacy. It further examined the relationship between media literacy and measures of political participation. For understanding these relationship this study based on the previous literature on the political participation and media literacy. This concept is too broad so current study seeks to deal these issues with existing established measuring instruments like news media literacy scale developed by Maksl, Ashley, and Craft (2015) and measures related to political participation

(Muzaffar, 2016; Verba&Nie, 1972; Zaheer, 2016), political efficacy (Niemi et al., 1996) and political trust and knowledge (Jennings &Zeitner, 2003).

Literature review

News Media Literacy

News media literacy is the ability to acquire, assess critically, and understand news content; thus, it fosters an awareness of the media environment. Media literacy has been identified by experts in the field as a literacy approach of the twenty-first century that aims to enlighten the general public (Muzaffar, et. al., 2019; Thoman & Jolls, 2003). The application of critical thinking goes beyond simple news consumption and requires individuals to possess the capacity to distinguish between trustworthy journalistic sources and misleading narratives (Hobbs, 2018). In a time characterized by an abundance of information originating from diverse media sources, news media literacy emerges as an essential skill for those who wish to effectively navigate the intricate domain of news and information. According to Malik (2008), this is a particularly crucial skill set for the younger generation, given their constant exposure to an excessive volume of information that requires them to have an enhanced ability to discern and navigate the dynamic media landscape (Livingstone &Sefton-Green, 2016). The ability to comprehend and utilize news media is crucial for individuals to participate actively in the information age. Malik (2008) emphasizes that “it is an instinct to question what lies behind media productions—the motives, the money, the values, and the ownership—and to be aware of how these factors influence content.” Jeong, Cho, and Hwang (2012) conducted a Meta analysis and explored the interventions of media literacy education have positively effect on the knowledge, criticism and perceived reality of media, as well as influence the behaviour, beliefs, self efficacy and attitudes and behaviour. However, the finding of this study is not conclusive regarding news and media literacy education, though they indicated some linkage between educational interventions and behaviour. Consequently, it suggests the potential of a similar relationship between news media literacy and political participation. Furthermore, a group of researchers Maksl, Ashley, and Craft (2015) operationalized the potter’s theoretical model and created the news media literacy scale and give authenticated responses on the different dimension (“Media Knowledge Structures”, “Need for Cognition” and “Media Locus of Control”) related to news media literacy. Fleming (2015) described the importance of the news media literacy scale, “among the first empirically sound and statistically significant attempts to define and measure NML knowledge”.

The media landscape in Pakistan is constantly evolving, mirroring the diverse and pluralistic nature of the country’s society. It is a reflection of the ever-changing global media landscape. Over the past few years, the way information is shared and consumed has been completely transformed by digital technologies. Social media platforms have emerged as influential forces in shaping public conversations (Eshet-Alkalai&Soffer, 2012). With the expanding reach of digital technologies, it is becoming more and more important for people in Pakistan to develop news media literacy skills. With the rise of digital platforms like social media and multimedia, it’s become crucial to have a solid grasp on how to navigate the abundance of news content available (Hobbs, 2018).

Media literacy and Political participation

Media education has long been established relationship among political and civic activities. it also will help in fostering social change and improved citizenship. Masterman known as media literacy’s forefather proclaimed that democratization of institutions and then evolution of participatory democracy is highly dependent on the citizens’ ability of take control and, logical decision make and act as change agent and perhaps effectively use of media ((Muzaffar, et. al., 2020). Current scenario of the world is more relevant depiction of masterman’s notion, further described by the Mihailidis and Benjamin (2013) “Present-day

discussions on the tenets of citizenship cannot avoid including the role of media in civic participation and engagement” (p. 1611). Research literature illustrates that for participatory democracy media literacy is core capability to engage people in the process. It focused on three main outcomes for media literate persons, ability to critically think, content creation and communication and social change agent. There was evident apprehension among media literacy scholars and media education within social and political context (Hobbs 1998; Kellner and Share 2005; Lewis and Jhally 1998). However, it is now clear to social scientists that digital social societies and political communication topics are obligatory (Ashley et al., 2017). In response to rise in popularity of online political engagement, educators apprehensively promote and give opportunity to learn and design various civic and platforms of media literacy so may the next generation fully participate or engage in participatory democracy (Hobbs 2010; Jenkins et al. 2009; Mihailidis and Thevenin 2013). In his latest work Mihailidis (2018) anticipated new concept “civic intentionally”, although he found online political and civic engagements promote common ideas by the people, however, still there is not have comprehensive evidence of influence of political civic engagement by the digital media at that point of time. Media literacy education requires systematic support for civic engagement (Martens &, 2015). As McGrew et al. (2017) examined how the educational interventions may influence the ability to judge the online content credibility among young people. Same like authors Garcia, Seglem, and Share (2013) developed the critical media literacy framework and another researcher found the opportunities and challenges related with online discussion (Hodgin 2016). However, use of media for public affairs information is the strongest predictor of political participation (Tan, 1981). In a way exposure to news media may influence students’ civic engagement in online discussions regarding political and social issues (Reichert & 2017). Kahne, Lee, and Feezell (2012) determined that digital media literacy education is positively linked with online political engagement and diverse perspective also enhanced. It is evident, research consistently showed a positive relationship between media literacy and political engagement (Ashley, 2017). Conversely, Hobbs et al. (2013) found positive correlation among media literacy and active civic engagement, and attitude regarding news and take active part in production of videos. They also found that students who have nuanced observation of journalism and society are depicted highest degree of media literacy. Correspondingly, “media literacy is a path for emerging citizens to thrive in a digital culture—leading an active, engaged, and participatory generation”. Generally, on the basis of previous empirical findings leads to following hypotheses:

H1: Students with high level of news media literacy have more knowledge about current events compared to those with lower levels of news media literacy

H2: Students with high level of news media literacy are more actively political participate compared to those with lower levels of news media literacy

Political Engagement, Trust and Efficacy

Dudley and Gitelson (2002) stated that although political knowledge is necessary for civic engagement but might be not an adequate condition. Consequently, massive pool of research has given emphasize to variety of moderate and confounding variables in political communication domain regarding political and civic engagement (Delli, Carpini, & Keeter, 1996; Eveland & Scheufele, 2000). Groups and individuals have high level of information regarding to politics may also have higher level of political knowledge, trust, efficacy and participation (Wolfsfeld, 2016). Kehne et al (2012) found that recent researches stress on the young people online political engagement should be measure on such scales. They also highlighted the effects of media on the various factors of political engagements like knowledge, activities, trust and efficacy. Although media use linked commonly with political knowledge, participation and trust but difficult to demonstrate the casual relationship (Eveland et al., 2005). However, Ashley et al. (2017) found that respondents

who have high score on media literacy have high trust on the politics and internal and external efficacy. So in the light of previous studies constructed following hypothesis:

H3: Students with high level of news media literacy exhibit greater political trust exhibit compared to those with lower levels of news media literacy

Researchers also found that media exposure often influence both type of political efficacy, internal and external. The concept of political efficacy can be defined as “the feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process” (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller 1954, 187) and “the belief that one has the skills to influence the political system” (Zimmerman, 1989, p. 554).

When individual has ability to create political influence by their own called Internal political efficacy, while external political efficacy has concept of influence political system influenced by the individuals. Various studies have found positive relationship with political engagement and internal external political efficacy (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006; Chan 2014; Hoffman & Thompson 2009; Jordan, Pope, Wallis, & Iyer 2014). Recent literature also confirmed the relationship between political efficacy and news media literacy (Geer, 2020. Ashley et al., 2017). Research constantly proves positive relationship between with news media literacy related with current events knowledge and internal political efficacy (Ashley, 2017). This association auxiliary hold by the Geers (2020) findings that educational interventions on media literacy may develop political efficacy and knowledge, even among less educated young people (Geers, 2020). Overall, previous studies emphasize the potential of media literacy in enhancing political knowledge and efficacy, and ultimately, political engagement. Constructed following hypotheses:

H4: Students with high level of news media literacy exhibit greater external political efficacy compared to those with lower levels of news media literacy

H5: Students with high level of news media literacy exhibit greater internal political efficacy compared to those with lower levels of news media literacy

Material and Methods

This cross-sectional study employs a survey method to collect data from university students across various disciplines. The study aims to analyze the relationship between news media literacy and political engagement among these students.

Population and Sample Size

The sample size consists of 357 university students. Simple random sampling technique is employed to ensure the sample is representative of the university population.

Demographics

Socioeconomic Status: Majority of participants belong to the middle class (44.6%), with fewer from lower and elite classes. Gender Distribution: Male participants make up 67.8%, while female participants constitute 32.2%. Age Distribution: 90% of the students are aged between 18-24 years (M=21.24, SD=3.83).

Instrument Validity and Reliability

The study uses an existing, validated survey instrument developed by Maksl, Ashley, and Craft (2015) to assess news media literacy which is based on cognitive model of media literacy presented by Potter in 2004. Before collecting whole data, pilot study has been

conducted for ensure the scale validity and reliability. The instrument includes the following independent constructs:

Media Knowledge Structures assesses a person's awareness of potential consequences of news material on individuals as well as their understanding of the organizations that create it and how it is produced. A 10-item scale ($\alpha = .882$) adapted from Maksl et al. (2017) developed multiple-choice questions with a correct answer for this dimension. For instance, the survey inquired about respondents' knowledge of the following: that the majority of Pakistani news outlets are for-profit companies; that political campaigns are more often covered like horse races than as in-depth examinations of the candidates; and that individuals who watch a lot of television news are more likely to believe that there is more violence in the world than there actually is.

Need for Cognition, the second dimension, was assessed using a five-item scale ($\alpha = .781$) that had been employed in earlier studies (Epstein et al., 1996). Items like "I like complicated over simple one" and "I dislike to think a lot. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with each statement on a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). A mean was calculated by computed the items in order to create a final score.

Media Locus of Control, the degree to which a person believes she is in charge of whether and how news media influences her is known as her Media Locus of charge. A scale that was previously used to gauge how much a person believes they are in charge of their own health was modified by Maksl et al. (2015), originated from (Wallston, Wallston, and DeVellis 1977) and adapted in the context of Pakistani student. This led to the creation of a six-item scale ($\alpha = .797$) on which respondents were asked to rate their agreement with statements such as "I am in control of the information I get from the news media" and "I can avoid being misinformed if I pay attention to different sources of news." A greater internal media locus of control was indicated by a higher score. An Media Locus score was generated overall by computing a mean.

Dependent measures include: Current Events Knowledge, assessed with 5 questions about recent political events, coded as correct or incorrect. Respondents were presented with multiple-choice questions, and items were dummy-coded into correct or incorrect. The total number of correct answers for each respondent was recorded as an overall current events knowledge score.

Political Participation, a list of eight activities was given to respondents, and they were asked if they had participated in each one in order to gauge political participation. Voting, helping a political candidate, getting in touch with a government representative, and making financial or voluntary contributions to political organizations were among the activities. This measurement was modified from Verba et al. (1995). The eight items ($\alpha = .817$) were added together to generate an index. The items were dummy-coded as yes (1) or no (0). A responder was more politically active if their score on this index was greater.

Political Trust, Political trust was measured using a scale previously used by Jennings and Zeitner 2003 have ($\alpha = .882$). Responses taken on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Participants were given five statements to rate their agreement with, such as whether they believe government officials are dishonest, whether they trust those in Washington to do the right thing, and whether the government is run by competent people. The items were scored so that higher scores reflected higher levels of trust. The average of these scores was then calculated to create an overall political trust score.

Political Efficacy To measure political efficacy, we used two well-established measures from the National Election Survey (Jennings and Zeitner 2003). Each type of

political efficacy was assessed with two statements. Internal political efficacy is about feeling capable of understanding and participating in politics. This was measured with statements like "Voting is the only way people like me can have any say about how the government runs things" and "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on" ($\alpha = .644$). External political efficacy is about trusting that the government responds to people's demands. This was measured with statements like "I don't think public officials care much what people like me think" and "People like me don't have any say about what the government does" ($\alpha = .564$). The items were scored so that higher scores indicated a higher sense of efficacy. The average scores were calculated to create an overall score for each type of political efficacy.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Participants were informed about the study's purpose and their consent was obtained prior to their involvement. They were also assured that all their information would be kept confidential and used exclusively for research purposes. The study poses minimal risk to participants, as it focuses solely on survey responses related to media literacy and political engagement.

Data Analysis

The study's hypotheses focus on the relationship between high and low scores on the news media literacy scale and levels of political engagement. Data will be analyzed using statistical linear regression model to test these relationships, with demographic variables such as age, gender, and education included as controls.

Results and Discussion

In order to examine first hypothesis (H1), students with high level of news media literacy have more knowledge about current events compared to those with lower levels of news media literacy. A linear regression analysis was performed, where age, gender and education were dealt as control variables. All independent News media Literacy measurements with demographics factors were loaded in same block. The overall model was statistically significant ($F(6, 204) = 6.945, p < .001$), explaining a total variance 17.0 % in current event knowledge and R square was significant ($R^2 = 0.170$) and described predictor included education ($\beta = -0.076, p = 0.001$), media locus for control ($\beta = -0.293, p = 0.001$), and media knowledge structure ($\beta = 0.088, p = 0.002$). Non-significant predictors were age ($\beta = -0.010, p = 0.894$), gender ($\beta = -0.040, p = 0.645$), and need for cognition ($\beta = 0.020, p = 0.085$). However, statistical result determined that some independents variables such as like education, media locus for control, and media knowledge structure significantly influence current event knowledge significant predictor s of current event knowledge, as shown in Table 1. Hence, H1 result supported partially.

Table 1
Linear regression model predicting the current event knowledge

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.132	.190		11.218	.000
Age	-.010	.079	-.010	-.133	.894
Gender	-.040	.087	-.031	-.461	.645
Education	-.076	.023	-.232	-3.346	.001
Interest in public affair					
Need for cognition	.020	.011	.119	1.730	.085
Media Locus for control	-.293	.087	-.234	-3.382	.001
Media knowledge structure	.088	.028	.223	3.088	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Current Event Knowledge

Second hypothesis (H2), students with high level of news media literacy are more actively political participate compared to those with lower levels of news media literacy. A linear regression analysis was performed, age, gender and education were dealt as control variables. All independent News media Literacy measurements with demographics factors were loaded in a same block. The overall model was statistically significant ($F(7, 203) = 9.450$ $p < .001$), explaining a total variance 24.60 % in political participation and R square was significant ($R^2 = 0.246$) and described predictor included age ($\beta = 0.144$, $p = 0.031$), interest in public affairs ($\beta = 0.233$, $p = 0.002$), need for cognition ($\beta = 0.280$, $p < 0.001$), media locus for control ($\beta = -0.176$, $p = 0.008$), and media knowledge structure ($\beta = 0.134$, $p = 0.006$). Non-significant predictors were gender ($\beta = 0.092$, $p = 0.161$) and education ($\beta = 0.050$, $p = 0.436$). Linear model of regression explained a moderate variance in Political Participation. While age, interest in public affairs, need for cognition, media locus for control, and media knowledge structure significantly influence political participation. However, variables like gender and education do not have a significant impact on the political participation. Statistical analysis results supported the H2 at full length as it suggested that cognitive and media informational features, alongside with interest and age, play important roles in determining political participation.

Table 2
Linear regression predicting the political participation

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.802	.437		1.837	.068
Age	.249	.114	.144	2.178	.031
Gender	.179	.127	.092	1.406	.161
Education	.101	.130	.050	.781	.436
Interest in Public affair	.304	.095	.233	3.189	.002
Need for cognition	.278	.065	.280	4.240	.000
Media Locus for control	-.231	.086	-.176	-2.684	.008
Media knowledge structure	.309	.076	.134	1.510	.006

a. Dependent Variable: Political Participation.

The third hypothesis stated H3: Students with high level of news media literacy exhibit greater political trust exhibit compared to those with lower levels of news media literacy. A linear regression analyses employed which adding up accounted of 31.6% variance in political trust, the overall model was statistically significant ($F(7, 203) = 13.373$, $p < 0.001$). Significant predictors included age ($\beta = -0.312$, $p = 0.000$) and need for cognition ($\beta = -0.415$, $p = 0.000$). Marginally significant predictors were interest in public affairs ($\beta = 0.112$, $p = 0.081$) and media locus for control ($\beta = -0.114$, $p = 0.068$). Non-significant predictors were gender ($\beta = -0.054$, $p = 0.387$), education ($\beta = -0.001$, $p = 0.986$), and media knowledge structure ($\beta = -0.022$, $p = 0.730$). The analysis showed that one measure of news media literacy "Need for Cognition" were significant predictor of the political trust, while media locus fro control marginally predict the political trust (See Table 3). It also shown the reciprocal relationship of media literacy with the political trust, a high level of news media literacy predicts low level of political trust.

Table3
Linear regression predicting the political trust

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.408	1.797		2.453	.015
Age	-.140	.030	-.312	-4.679	.000
Gender	-.554	.639	-.054	-.866	.387
Education	-.004	.244	-.001	-.018	.986
Interest in Public Affairs	.545	.311	.112	1.752	.081
Need for cognition	.410	.061	.415	6.727	.000
Media Locus for control	.840	.458	.114	1.837	.068

Media knowledge structure	-.052	.150	-.022	-.345	.730
---------------------------	-------	------	-------	-------	------

a. Dependent Variable: Political Trust

In order to measure the political efficacy two hypotheses were posit. H4) students with high level of news media literacy exhibit greater external political efficacy compared to those with lower levels of news media literacy and (H5) students with high level of news media literacy exhibit greater internal political efficacy compared to those with lower levels of news media literacy. In order measure to internal political efficacy, linear regression explaining 21.9% of the variance in political internal efficacy ($R^2=0.219$), the overall model was statistically significant ($F(7,203)=8.142, p<0.001$). Significant predictors included age ($\beta=0.175, p=0.016$), education ($\beta=0.342, p=0.000$), interest in public affairs ($\beta=-0.151, p=0.037$), need for cognition ($\beta=0.151, p=0.027$), and media knowledge structure ($\beta=0.217, p=0.004$). Non-significant predictors were gender ($\beta=0.042, p=0.522$) and media locus for control ($\beta=-0.064, p=0.353$) (See Table 4).

Table 4
Linear regression predicting the internal Political Efficacy

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.228	.164		13.554	.000
Age	.011	.005	.175	2.419	.016
Gender	6.702E-7	.000	.042	.642	.522
Education	.233	.047	.342	4.928	.000
Interest in Public Interest	-.021	.010	-.151	-2.095	.037
Need for cognition	.156	.070	.151	2.221	.027
Media Locus for control	-.021	.023	-.064	-.931	.353
Media knowledge structure	.031	.011	.217	2.906	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Political internal Efficacy

On the other hand not a single dimension of news media literacy was predicted the external efficacy so in a way H5 hypothesis refute the assumption regarding the prediction .Regression analysis, the overall model was statistically significant ($F(7,203)=3.625, p = 0.001, p=0.001$), explaining 11.1% of the variance in political external efficacy ($R^2=0.111$). Significant predictors included gender ($\beta=0.185, p=0.010$). Marginally significant predictors were interest in public affairs ($\beta=0.143, p=0.052$). Non-significant predictors were age ($\beta=-0.029, p=0.706$), education ($\beta=-0.085, p=0.229$), need for cognition ($\beta=0.117, p=0.097$), media locus for control ($\beta=0.071, p=0.319$), and media knowledge structure ($\beta=-0.027, p=0.711$).

Table 5
Linear regression predicting the External Political Efficacy

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.675	.306		5.477	.000
Age	-.002	.005	-.029	-.377	.706
Gender	.282	.109	.185	2.588	.010
Education	-.050	.041	-.085	-1.206	.229
Interest in public affairs	.103	.053	.143	1.953	.052
Need for cognition	.017	.010	.117	1.667	.097
Media Locus for control	.078	.078	.071	.999	.319
Media knowledge structure	-.010	.026	-.027	-.371	.711

a. Dependent Variable: Political External Efficacy

Discussion

Media literacy and political engagement has proven significant relationship from the existing literature (Ashely, 2017;). This study also has confirmed important relationship with certain news media literacy dimensions and some of the political engagements. This study observed partial support to embrace the media literacy as an essential component of the citizenship democracy. Finding explored that high level of news media literacy often relate to high level of the current event knowledge while high level of news media literate student exhibit lower level of current event knowledge and high level of political internal efficacy. The presence of relationship between these variables were consistent with existing literature and support the notion that political and civic engagement may increased with media education.

However statistical findings upon the news media literacy measures revealed that although significant variance increased in the model of regression but few variables were significant predictor of the political engagement. Potter' model (2004) consist of "media knowledge structure", "need for cognition", and media locus and all these measures were adopted by the Maksl et al. (2015) to construct news media literacy. However , in their previous research only American media knowledge structures and cognition need were the significant predictors components.

The result of first hypothesis suggested that media knowledge of structure was positive predictor of current event knowledge, means that individuals who have better understanding of the knowledge of their countries media structure are able to identify the hidden meaning and objectives of news. Conversely, media knowledge regarding structure has negative association with political trust which showed that understanding regarding news media make individuals to concern less favour to politics. Results also found relationship between all news media literacy measures and political participation as participants reported high level of political activities. These statistical results suggested university students actively participated in political activities as the data collection has been done during high time of election campaigns. Research literature illustrates that for participatory democracy media literacy is core capability to engage people in the process. There was evident apprehension among media literacy scholars and media education within social and political context (Hobbs 1998; Kellner and Share 2005; Lewis and Jhally 1998). Mihailidis also (2018) anticipated new concept "civic intentionally", although he found online political and civic engagements promote common ideas by the people. It is evident, research consistently showed a positive relationship between media literacy and political engagement (Ashley, 2017). "Need for Cognition" has positive association with internal political efficacy suggested induced individuals more confidence in their selves to participate in political engagement. Also need for cognition and media knowledge have negative associated with political trust, suggested that media induced skeptical views of politics among the individuals. And politically engagement increased the political trust of people. However, there is no relationship found between external political efficacy and media literacy measures. Previous literature also supported that media education often linked with internal efficacy while external efficacy showed little or no association with media education of news media literacy (Ashley et al., 2017; Jung et al., 2011; Zhou & Pinkleton 2012). Groups and individuals have high level of information regarding to politics may also have higher level of political knowledge, trust, efficacy and participation (Wolfsfeld, 2016). However, Ashley et al. (2017) found that respondents who have high score on media literacy have high trust on the politics and internal efficacy.

In the light of current research findings, we suggested that media literacy based on one's own critical thinking process as the Pakistani education system didn't provide course or subject on the media education. So in the future, research can be done on individual media literacy level as how their socio economic background and education level influenced on the political engagement. As McGrewet al. (2017) examined how the educational interventions

may influence the ability to judge the online content credibility among young people. Same like authors Garcia, Seglem, and Share (2013) developed the critical media literacy framework and another researcher found the opportunities and challenges related with online discussion (Hodgin 2016). However, use of media for public affairs information is the strongest predictor of political participation (Tan, 1981). In a way exposure to news media may influence students' civic engagement in online discussions regarding political and social issues (Reichert & 2017).

Conclusion

This study substantiates the significant relationships between specific dimensions of news media literacy and various facets of political engagement. The findings underscore the necessity of integrating media literacy as a fundamental element of democratic citizenship education. The results indicate that high levels of news media literacy generally correlate with elevated levels of current event knowledge. Paradoxically, students demonstrating advanced news media literacy exhibited lower levels of current event knowledge but higher levels of internal political efficacy. These findings suggest that media education plays a crucial role in enhancing political and civic engagement. This paradox highlights the complexity of media literacy's impact, suggesting that while detailed current event knowledge may vary, the confidence and competence to participate in political processes are significantly bolstered through media literacy.

Recommendations

Depended on the significant relations between news media literacy and political engagements, this study identified media literacy gap in educational institute. People are political influenced and relate themselves to political and civic engagement. Country like Pakistan, there should be implication of media literacy education to make electoral process smooth and tame raw sentiments of people into responsible citizens. So that media literacy education should be the part of the curriculum at school and college level. The aim of media education should be to provide equal knowledge of media to take part in political and social life engagements.

The current study focused on the university students, who are young and actively participate in the political activities and hag facilities of social media apps. The future research should be on the school and college student whom are preparing themselves to take part in the future electoral process. Although this study helped to define critical relationship between news medeia literacy and political engagement but still there is need to find nuanced relationship between the variables. Currently, it described empirical evidence of the important relationships between news media literacy education and political engagement and strength belief that democracy depends on a well educated citizen.

References

- Ashley, S., Maksl, A., & Craft, S. (2013). Developing a news media literacy scale. *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, 68 (1), 7-21.
- Maksl, A., Ashley, S., & Craft, S. (2015). Measuring news media literacy. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 6(3), 29-45.
- Ashley, S., Maksl, A., & Craft, S. (2017). News Media Literacy and Political Engagement: What's the Connection?. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 9(1), 79-98.
- Ashley, S., Poepsel, M., & Willis, E. (2010). Media literacy and news credibility: Does knowledge of media ownership increase skepticism in news consumers? *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 2(1), 37-46.
- Aufderheide, P., & Firestone, C. (1993). *Media literacy: A report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy*. Aspen Institute.
- Baumgartner, J., & Morris, J. S. (2006). The Daily Show effect. *American Politics Research*, 34(3), 341-367.
- Beyerstein, L. (2014). Can news literacy grow up? *Columbia Journalism Review*. Retrieved June 18, 2015, from http://www.cjr.org/feature/can_news_literacy_grow_up.php
- Campbell, A., Gurin, G., & Miller, W. E. (1954). *The voter decides*. Row, Peterson.
- Chan, M. (2014). Exploring the contingent effects of political efficacy and partisan strength on the relationship between online news use and democratic engagement. *International Journal of Communication*, 8, 1195-1215.
- DelliCarpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (1996). *What Americans know about politics and why it matters*. Yale University Press.
- Dewey, C. (2015). If you use Facebook to get your news, please—for the love of democracy—read this first. *Washington Post*. Retrieved June 18, 2015, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2015/06/03/if-you-use-facebook-to-get-your-news-please-for-the-love-of-democracy-read-this-first/>
- Dudley, R. L., & Gitelson, A. R. (2002). Political literacy, civic education, and civic engagement: A return to political socialization. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6(4), 175-182.
- Epstein, S., Pacini, R., Denes-Raj, V., & Heier, H. (1996). Individual differences in intuitive-experiential and analytical-rational thinking styles. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(2), 390-405.
- Eveland, W. P., & Scheufele, D. A. (2000). Connecting news media use with gaps in knowledge and participation. *Political Communication*, 17(3), 215-237.
- Eveland, W. P., Hayes, A. F., Shah, D. V., & Kwak, N. (2005). Understanding the relationship between communication and political knowledge: A model comparison approach using panel data. *Political Communication*, 22(4), 423-446.
- Fleming, J. (2014). Media literacy, news literacy, or news appreciation? A case study of the news literacy program at Stony Brook University. *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, 69(2), 146-165.

- Fleming, J. (2015). What do facts have to do with it? Exploring instructional emphasis in Stony Brook news literacy curriculum. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 7(1), 73-92.
- Hargittai, E. (2010). Digital na(t)ives? Variation in internet skills and uses among members of the net generation. *Sociological Inquiry*, 80(1), 92-113.
- Hobbs, R. (1998). The seven great debates in the media literacy movement. *Journal of Communication*, 48(1), 16-32.
- Hobbs, R. (2010a). *Digital and media literacy: A plan of action*. Aspen Institute.
- Hobbs, R. (2010b). News literacy: What works and what doesn't. Paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference, Denver, CO.
- Hobbs, R. (2011). The state of media literacy: A response to Potter. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 55(3), 419-430.
- Hobbs, R., Donnelly, K., Friesem, J., & Moen, M. (2013). Learning to engage: How positive attitudes about the news, media literacy, and video production contribute to adolescent civic engagement. *Educational Media International*, 50(4), 231-246.
- Hoffman, L. H., & Thomson, T. L. (2009). The effect of television viewing on adolescents' civic participation: Political efficacy as a mediating mechanism. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 53(1), 3-21.
- Jennings, M. K., & Zeitner, V. (2003). Internet use and civic engagement. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 67(3), 311-334.
- Jeong, S.-H., Cho, H., & Hwang, Y. (2012). Media literacy interventions: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Communication*, 62(3), 454-472.
- Jolly, J. (2014). News literacy vs. media literacy. *Columbia Journalism Review*. Retrieved June 18, 2015, from http://www.cjr.org/news_literacy/news_literacy_vs_media_literacy.php
- Jordan, G., Pope, M., Wallis, P., & Iyer, S. (2014). The relationship between openness to experience and willingness to engage in online political participation is influenced by news consumption. *Social Science Computer Review*, 33(2), 181-197.
- Jung, N., Kim, Y., & Gil de Zuniga, H. (2011). The mediating role of knowledge and efficacy in the effects of communication on political participation. *Mass Communication and Society*, 14(4), 407-430.
- Kahne, J., Lee, N.-J., & Feezell, J. T. (2012). Digital media literacy education and online civic and political participation. *International Journal of Communication*, 6, 1-24.
- Kellner, D., & Share, J. (2005). Toward critical media literacy: Core concepts, debates, organizations, and policy. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 26(3), 369-386.
- Lewis, J., & Jhally, S. (1998). The struggle over media literacy. *Journal of Communication*, 48(1), 109-120.
- Maksl, A., Ashley, S., & Craft, S. (2015). Measuring news media literacy. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 6(3), 29-45.

- Maksl, A., Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Miller, D. (2016). The usefulness of a news media literacy measure in evaluating a news literacy curriculum. *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695816651970>
- Masterman, L. (1997). A rationale for media education. In R. Kubey (Ed.), *Media literacy in the information age* (pp. 15-68). Transaction.
- Mihailidis, P. (2014). *Media literacy and the emerging citizen: Youth, engagement and participation in digital culture*. Peter Lang.
- Mihailidis, P., & Thevenin, B. (2013). Media literacy as a core competency for engaged citizenship in participatory democracy. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 57(11), 1611-1622.
- Mitchell, A., Gottfried, J., & Matsa, K. (2015). Facebook top source for political news among millennials. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved June 18, 2015, from <http://www.journalism.org/2015/06/01/facebook-top-source-for-political-news-among-millennials/>
- Mitchell, A., Kiley, J., Gottfried, J., & Guskin, E. (2013). The role of news on Facebook. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved June 18, 2015, from <http://www.journalism.org/2013/10/24/the-role-of-news-on-facebook/>
- Moeller, J., de Vreese, C., Esser, F., & Kunz, R. (2014). Pathway to political participation: The influence of online and offline news media on internal efficacy and turnout of first-time voters. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 58(5), 689-700.
- Muzaffar, M. (2016). Educational Institutions and Political Awareness in Pakistan: A Case of Punjab, Unpublished Ph. D Dissertation, International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan
- Muzaffar, M., Chohdhry, S., & Afzal, N. (2019). Social Media and Political Awareness in Pakistan: A Case Study of Youth, *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 3 (II), 1-13
- Muzaffar, M., Yaseen, Z., Safdar, S. (2020). Role of Social Media in Political Campaigns in Pakistan: A Case of Study of 2018 Elections, *Journal of Political Studies*, 27 (2), 141-151
- Potter, W. J. (2004). *Theory of media literacy: A cognitive approach*. Sage Publications.
- Potter, W. J. (2010). The state of media literacy. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 54(4), 675-696.
- Toepfl, F. (2014). Four facets of critical news literacy in a non-democratic regime: How young Russians navigate their news. *European Journal of Communication*, 29(1), 69-82.
- Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., & Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics*. Harvard University Press.
- Vraga, E. K., & Tully, M. (2015). Media literacy messages and hostile media perceptions: Processing of nonpartisan versus partisan political information. *Mass Communication and Society*, 18(4), 422-448.
- Vraga, E. K., Tully, M., & Rojas, H. (2009). Media literacy training reduces perceptions of bias. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 30(4), 68-81.

- Vraga, E. K., Tully, M., Akin, H., & Rojas, H. (2012). Modifying perceptions of hostility and credibility of news coverage of an environmental controversy through media literacy. *Journalism, 13*(7), 942-959.
- Vraga, E. K., Tully, M., Kotcher, J. E., Smithson, A.-B., & Broeckelman-Post, M. (2015). A multi-dimensional approach to measuring news media literacy. *Journal of Media Literacy Education, 7*(3), 41-53.
- Wallston, K. A., Wallston, B. S., & DeVellis, R. (1978). Development of the multidimensional health locus of control scales. *Health Education and Behavior, 6*(2), 160-170.
- Zhou, Y., & Pinkleton, B. E. (2012). Modeling the effects of political information source use and online expression on young adults' political efficacy. *Mass Communication and Society, 15*(6), 813-830.
- Zimmerman, M. A. (1989). The relationship between political efficacy and citizen participation: Construct validation studies. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 53*(3), 554-566.