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**Investigating the Influence of Political Marketing through Digital Divide: A Study of  
Pakistan General Election 2024**

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**Abstract**

The phrase digital divide was used to describe the difference between connected and unconnected countries but it is not limited to contrasting people who reside in the same city, pitting the affluent, youthful, metropolitan population against the elderly, disabled, suburban residents who lack technological sophistication. This research study was planned and data was collected during the general elections of Pakistan 2024 to check the level and interest of digital divide and political marketing connection among the youth of Sargodha division. For purpose of this research study, a stratified sample was drawn using convenience sampling method for data collection. Three hundred and sixty male and female respondents were carefully randomly selected from four districts of Sargodha division. These districts are Sargodha, Khushab, Mianwali and Bhakkar. Study empirical results reveal that there are huge digital divide between youth of Sargodha division on basis of rural and urban division. Urban youth is having more internet resources as compare to rural areas of Sargodha division. Furthermore, this study results reveals that this digital divide impact on political marketing and cause effects on voting decision and behavior of selected population.

**Keywords:** Digital divide, Political Marketing, Social Media, Internet, Political Parties, Voting Decision, Voting Behavior.

## **Introduction**

The internet has widened the divide in politics and technology. Candidates for lower-level positions in America are less likely to utilize internet during election campaigns as compare to presidential and congressional candidates. Some minorities are less likely to exploit it then Americans due to their lower levels of education (Herrnson, etal. 2007). The research scholars discover that politicians who have younger and more educated constituents engage more online campaigning using data, characterizing state legislative candidates' profiles, their campaigns, and regions. It also matters how long a candidate has been involved in politics. The structural and strategic aspects of the campaign significantly influence the use of internet (Norris, 2003). Candidates use varieties of technologies to connect with voters and win elections. The internet has become more widely used campaign tool in recent years. Many candidates for federal and state governments utilize websites to present information about their credentials, professional and personal accomplishments, and policy stances. Candidate official home pages are now often used to plan events, raise funds, rally supporters, and disseminate information during political campaigns (Towner & Dulio, 2012).

### **1.1 Definition of Digital Divide**

The disparity between people who have access to the internet and those who do not might be referred to as the digital divide. However, the digital divide is complicated and encompasses a wide variety of factors, including affordability, relevance, quality, and accessibility. Warschauer (2004) asserted that the digital divide is not a binary issue. Some of the elements that affect how different people have access to the internet are as follows.

#### **1.1.1 Availability**

Is the internet available where you live? Is there an internet access point in the area? If so, this is only the first step towards gaining access to the internet.

#### **1.1.2 Affordability**

Are you able to obtain that access? How much does it cost in comparison to similar necessities? What percentage of your pay must go towards access expenses?

### **1.2 Historical background**

The historical roots of the digital divide in Europe may be found in the widening divide between those who could access the real-time computation, decision-making, and visualization given by written and printed media throughout the early modern period (Van Dijk, 2012). Moral discussions on the relationship between education and the free flow of knowledge take place in this context. It advocated for government action to guarantee that economic benefits are spread fairly and meaningfully across all segments of society. Rousseau's theory aided in the justification of bad legislation that established a safety net for individuals who were hurt by new forms of production during the industrial revolution in Great Britain. In the future, when the telegraph and postal systems developed, many argued for complete access to those services, even if it meant subsidizing residents who were difficult to serve (Van Dijk & Hacker, 2003). Thus, the term universal services alluded to changes in taxes and legislation that would enable phone companies like AT&T in the United States to provide service to rural subscribers. The Federal Commission passed the Telecommunications Services Act in 1996. Telecommunications corporations amalgamated with internet service providers in an effort to overcome the digital divide (Van Dijk, 2006). It served as the catalyst for a significant global

movement that quickly spread to all areas of the global economy in an endeavor to close the digital divide. President Bill Clinton in his State of the Union speech used the idiom in 2000. There are occasionally noticeable discrepancies in rural, distant, and even metropolitan areas, even in countries with high rates of overall connectivity. Other disparities, such as income and gender-based inequality, typically coexist with these divisions. Despite the high overall connectivity rates in the United States, there is a glaring absence of affordable and reliable internet connectivity in native lands, for example (Jaeger et al. 2012). The digital divide takes many different forms and types. It affects who has access to Information and Communication Technology among the striking disparities in digital inequality.

### **1.2.1 Gender Divide**

The gender divide on the internet is stark, especially in developing countries. Even though mobile connectivity is growing quickly, it is not doing so fairly. Women are still falling behind in access of digital technology in third world countries. Studies show that women in developing nations are 15% less likely than males to own an android cell phone. The majority of women who own mobile phones do not have internet access globally.

### **1.2.2 Knowledge Divide**

Some academics contend that the digital divide is also becoming a knowledge divide because of the reduction in the gender, age, ethnic, financial, and educational inequalities in comparison to earlier levels. A knowledge divide in technology raises the potential that the divide has widened beyond resources and access to information communication technology (ICT) to interpretation and comprehension of the information provided once linked.

### **1.3 Social Media Digital Divide**

Using the internet, people with similar interests may connect and create social networks. It is based on common interests using platforms like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Google, and others form online peer groups. It is evident that there is social stratification between people who use the internet and those who do not. Because they cannot profit from the advantages enjoyed by internet organizations and offline groups are excluded.

### **1.4 Access the Digital Divide**

The major challenges in this field are the absence of a solid communications infrastructure, the high cost, and the inability to purchase the necessary tools. As a result, access to technology is constrained. However, according to studies, the digital divide is more complicated than just an issue with access, and it cannot be closed by merely providing the necessary tools. At least three of the forces are information accessibility, information usage, and information receptivity. People must be able to utilize the communication and informational resources that are available to them in a community. Further, having access to them. Information professionals may bridge the digital divide by providing reference and information services to assist people learn how to use the technology they currently have access, regardless of their financial condition. Internet connectivity is available in a wide range of locations, including homes, offices, companies, schools, libraries, public spaces, internet cafés, and others. Furthermore, connectivity differs across urban, suburban, and rural areas.

### **1.5 Overcoming the Digital Divide**

In order to increase social and cultural capital and produce massive increases in productivity, a person must be able to connect with internet. Access is thus a prerequisite for closing the digital

divide (Sassi, 2005). Income constraints are substantial obstacles to ICT access. 3% of worldwide income is the average amount spent on ICT. Reduced ICT expenses, which include low-cost technology and shared access via telecaster, are one possible answer. Additionally, even while some people may be able to use the internet, many are prevented from doing so by entry-level obstacles including a lack of infrastructure and lack of understanding of the information the internet delivers. Two significant barriers to widespread connection are a deficient infrastructure and lack of awareness. These obstacles restrict people's capacities in terms of what they can do and accomplish while using technology. Some people can connect, but they lack the expertise necessary to take use of the information communication technology (ICT). As a result, there is an emphasis on talents and skills as well as awareness to go beyond ICT and access to ICT usage.

### **1.6 Challenges and Problems of Digital Divide**

In many respects, the problem of the digital divide is similar to the problem of insurgency that consumes. Both are powered by the same force, which results in a horizontal lift for common people but an accumulation of power in the hands of the few. Regarding connectedness, equal opportunity, and the rise of wealth, there are several ways to twist the conundrum we aim to solve (Gorski, 2005). Over 7 billion people live on the planet, yet only 0.6 billion of them have access to a broadband connection. In the same manner, 2 billion people lack phones and 4 billion do not have access to the internet. Our coverage only extends to the population. Therefore, it is not yet possible to provide ubiquity for our future way of life, which is being imagined by smart cities, smart grids, and smart transportation (World Bank Group, 2016). Technology can fix the connectivity challenge. With today's technology, one could cover the entire planet if they had an endless budget, or if they discovered a very affordable technology. The problem of coverage could be resolved right away. We must find inspiration to link those 4 billion individuals in this regard. According to a conventional viewpoint, our cell carriers and our governments should be responsible for this, but neither of them is inventive when it comes to accessible technological financial resources (Howard & Hussain, 2011). Even mobile providers have been struggling to make ends meet for years because of declining earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization. The same idea is not too distant from a historical strata that illustrates the same reason and has progressed through many economic evolutionary phases and been gradually placed on one other as the structure of capitalism was formed (Abu-Lughod & Hay, 2013).

### **1.7 Political Marketing**

According to Jamil & Hesti (2019), political marketing is the application of a marketing strategy to the political sphere. Political marketing focuses on utilizing marketing to increase the inexperience and effectiveness of candidates and political groups in creating bonds with voters and society. This connection is seen in a very broad context, encompassing both direct verbal communication through media statistics and indirect verbal communication throughout an advertising and marketing campaign. Political and commercial marketing are frequently distinct from one another (Harmes, 2020). Political marketing is a notion that explains how a political party and candidate could create a plan that tackles voter as opposed to simply advertising political events and candidates to local voters. The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines political marketing as marketing intended to persuade target audiences to support a specific candidate, party and proposition (Henneberg et al. 2002). Political marketing is also a strategy for maintaining one-way interaction with the public. According to Schedler (2002), in order to succeed, a candidate must comprehend the market, particularly the people and their

basic goals, in line with their objectives and the constituency they hope to serve. According to Sofyan et al. (2015), political marketing is a sophisticated tool that involves all of the features of political communication from politicians and highlights the fact that political marketing is the primary mode of political speech. His opinion is that political discourse now includes a crucial and vital component. In terms of both political events and electoral systems, democratic regimes are advancing and developing. Political campaigns were influenced by the mass media's rapid advancement and increased popularity, particularly in the second half of the 20th century. Political marketing sought to determine whether marketing tactics might be applied in a political context. This idea has already begun to gain traction, just as it did in the US in the 1950s and 1960s. Regarding Turkey, it has long been established that office work has altered because of political campaigns. Growing populations and use of political marketing organizations increased the effectiveness of propaganda, creating a demand for universal mass media usage (Votmer, 2008). The power of social media is one of the marketing tools political events utilize to attract voters. Since the introduction of the internet in the early 1990s, the number of individuals who are connected online has expanded from low masses of hundreds to low billions. At the same time, social media has turned into an unwelcome reality for global civil society. Social media allows individuals the opportunity to receive information much more easily and provides more opportunities for public speech, which makes the networked population more significant and powerful as the communications environment grows more intricate and participative. People's ability to engage in group political action is thereby enhanced (Henneberg, 2003).

### **1.8 Mass Media in Political Marketing**

According to argument, if a political party adopts a marketing attitude, it will aim to meet local objectives and requirements in order to eventually satisfy voters and, in doing so, gain support from voters in order to further its own goals (Marshment, 2006). Before that, it was thought that political marketing had the special ability to affect the direction of political activity. Political concerns are strategically planned, prepared, designed and packaged leading to the dissemination of political data that is very dependent on public segmentation. The ultimate objective is to unify all political factions and individuals in fantastic, peaceful, and unified society. Political events may target voter problems and objectives through marketing research, planning, execution, and management of political and electoral advertising campaigns. It is another benefit of using marketing in political marketing. Meaning that the main objective of political marketing is to enable political events and individuals to make the best and most informed decisions possible (Scammell, 2016). Political marketing's distinctive contribution, according to Cogburn et al. (2011), is the formation of strategic challenges related to the needs and preferences of the public. Goals, priorities, and rules all change because of the techniques used in election campaigns. However, this element of the technique really endangers democratic procedures. since political marketing contains reciprocity but propaganda does not, the two should be separated from one another. The emphasis on approach, which shifts away from the employment of promotional strategies and focuses on the broader strategic goals of events and candidates, ushers in a modern awareness. According to Scammell (1999), this new awareness successfully shifts the viewpoint provided by the use of political communications procedures and research from apolitical marketing. It is no simply a bigger processes, now includes political communications. Today, political marketing is a component of the traditional marketing mix.

## **1.9 Political Marketing in Political Communication**

Political marketing is a multi-level academic issue. In order to provide an explanation for the political domain, it first includes explanatory constructs for political marketing, management, and sports activities as used by political leaders in practice. More precisely, political marketing research is interested in concerns about democracy in general and how they relate to political marketing management and its guiding principles, such as voter and market orientation (Vankov, 2013). This extends beyond more narrowly focused inquiries concerning the application of political marketing activities to politics, such as it is moral to focus only on floaters in a focused election campaign. The crucial query regarding the ethics of political marketing management is the point of departure of this research work. The way the question is worded makes it less clear in certain ways what structures we would support through political marketing's strategic components in a democracy (Henneberg, 2008).

## **1.9 Political Marketing in Pakistan**

Eighty percent of the PTI candidates who were nominated to run for office had no prior experience. Therefore, if they needed to win, they would only be able to do it based on the popularity of Imran Khan and his political party. The difference between many of the two criteria became quite close in the case of the alternative political activities of the PMLN and PPP since the bulk of their candidates were industrialists and feudal lords from powerful families who have been running their political system for many years (Yilmaz & Shakil, 2021). The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was more aggressive in their campaigns, criticizing the errors and ineffective governance of different governments since they lacked the facts that exceptional parties like the PMLN and PPP did previously. Teenagers in particular were prompted by this to seek out more contemporary means of communication, such as online blogs, social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, and mobile cellular smartphone networks (Baruah, 2012). Social networking networks may offer teenagers a useful forum for raising awareness of their political rights. The turnout ratio was never especially notable in the six desired elections held between 1988 and 2008 and constantly dropped below (50 %), peaking at (35.17 %) in the 1997 elections. In order to motivate a group of individuals who had not actively engaged in the election procedures, such as women, the election commission in Pakistan created a variety of marketing initiatives. A number of classified ads were produced in 1999 and 2000 elections scenario to persuade women to vote in an effort to increase turnout. In light of the above discussion, a comparative approach to understanding the political marketing of Pakistan's three most significant political activities provide affluence of information for analyzing political communication.

### **1.10 Problem statement**

The major tools for evaluating the success of political marketing are election outcomes and public opinion polls. Election results are a trustworthy source of information, but they offer few feedback loops and no clues as to whether or not a marketing campaign's overall performance is what was expected and why it is succeeding or failing now. Election results no longer give an accurate marketing evaluation of candidate political outcomes, nor do they provide information on the benefits and drawbacks of a political marketing plan, which is new problem with utilizing election results to evaluate political candidates. Election results are also routinely made public years after the incident and after the previous election. The most well-known technique for gauging the viability of political parties and forecasting election results during the campaign season is political polling. Albeit it has its limitations, much as the use of election results. The

research of the political poll literature revealed discrepancies in the opinions of academics about the accuracy and dependability of forecasting election results using public opinion and political surveys. Because there are no reliable diagnostic techniques for identifying voter preferences, the reliability of polls is erratic and changes over time. Traditional public opinion polls are unable to pinpoint the elements that affect the success and failure of political events. The significance of changes in election outcomes since they concentrate on respondents' voting intentions and preferences. Neither election results nor public opinion polls, from the perspective of political marketing, offer much direction and information about political parties are functioning as expected. Researchers have created more precise methods to judge the fairness of the marketing process. The strategy is expanded and applied to the dissemination of technological information, and researchers discover that it is far more adaptable to non-business markets and disciplines. The majority of political leaders lack a thorough knowledge of how to advance their political due to these factors, it is expected that the voter will be prepared to answer challenging question in which they must weigh the opportunity costs of each problem against the benefit they would get. Hence, it should come as no surprise that marketing has an increasingly important role in politics. This is because political leaders today not only behave in accordance with marketing norms but also consider using marketing terminology in their political actions (Brennan & Lomasky, 1997).

### **1.11 Significance of the Study**

According to the marketing saliency principle, political marketing institutions' energy, particularly the quantity of marketing that is assigned to them, is a crucial measure of their overall success and their ability to achieve their destiny. This dimension gives the political marketing sector a completely new chance to use developments in the political marketing evaluation dimension, expanding an opportunity for a political marketing assessment approach to political polls. If the approach is effectively implemented to the political environment, political marketing managers may be given access to a trustworthy assessment tool that offers extra details regarding the performance of political marketing and the overall efficiency of a political party or flesh presser. It offers a way for assessing voting intention in particular that may be far less volatile. As a result, forecast election results are more precisely than conventional political polls. Using a specified set of political marketing elements and political policies, the technique may also give an evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of political marketing. Nevertheless, no one strategy has yet been demonstrated in scientific approaches.

### **1.12 Main Questions of research study**

1. What are different patterns used in 2024 general elections of Pakistan to evaluate digital divide in political marketing?
2. What are the attributes provided by political marketing like voter trust, voter loyalty, and voter intention?

### **1.13 Main Objectives of Research Study**

1. To check the digital divide patterns of social and electronic media regarding political marketing.
2. To pinpoint the major aspects of political marketing that are appropriate to Pakistan's current political environment.

3. To find out the significance of social media as a source of information regarding political marketing and digital divide.
4. To explore the role of social media and electronic media in the diffusion of political marketing.

#### **1.14 Hypotheses of research study**

1. It is more likely assumed that socio-demographic factors caused the digital divide between youth of Sargodha.
2. It is more likely assumed that political marketing is effected through the digital divide among youth in Sargodha.
3. It is assumed that social media is a more popular medium among the youth of Sargodha as compared to electronic media.

#### **Literature Review**

The 2004 presidential campaign showed how the internet might have a big influence on certain candidates' capacity to mobilize followers and obtain campaign financing. Websites assisted candidates in finding hundreds of thousands of campaign volunteers, and little-known politicians like John Kerry and Howard Dean were able to earn tens of millions of dollars through tiny online donations. According to Hindman (2005), the internet has expanded in importance in political campaigning and has significantly impacted many people's daily lives. The majority of online research on campaigning has focused on candidates for statewide, federal, presidential posts (Herrnson et al. 2007). However, certain lines of reasoning imply that, in the end, the internet's influence may be more notable in elections for lower-level posts, which are often low-information events that get minimal coverage in traditional media. Some analysts contend that because of the internet, it is a cheap method of unmediated communication, it may favor candidates and parties with low funding (Margolis et al., 2003). The social and economic inequalities that contribute to the digital divide are often reflected in elements including money, infrastructure, education, geography, race, ethnicity, and gender Mossberger et al. (2003). These different aspects might be present in different amounts, depending on the circumstance. The digital divide refers to unequal access to digital tools including computers, telephones, tablets, and the internet. Inequality and disagreement over access to resources and information are fostered by the digital divide (Stiakakis et al., 2010). In the information era, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have replaced manufacturing technologies as the cornerstone of international economies and social ties. From socioeconomic perspective, without access to the internet and other ICT are called as digital divide among population (Warf, 2019). The primary subjects of debate are the global and national digital divides as well as these cultural differences across countries. The study of the digital divide as a brand-new instance of social exclusion has recently been a popular issue in media and ICT research, according to speculation about the phenomenon. A meta-research regarding the digital divide conducted by a Canadian researcher (Acharya, 2017), there were more than 14,000 such publications by the end of the 20th century. There are two main categories of academic research that have a clear social emphasis that have existed since the year 2000. The first examines the qualitative development of ICT from a vertical viewpoint, emphasizing developing digital divides. The second uses a horizontal approach, focusing on regional and international disparities. The early forecasts of social disparity in the information age serves as the foundation for the study of the digital divide. At first, researchers from all over



the world were interested in information poverty, which was assessed by unequal access to ICT and the network infrastructure (Compaine, 2001).

In certainty, the initial phase of the digital divide study was formed by unequal access to technical networks and infrastructure, which led to unequal access to the information and online services that they deliver (van Dijk, 2013). Obviously, a distinct political economics approach was present in the early stages of the digital divide study. Pippa Norris (2001) who said that, it supports and unleashes already-existing power and wealth divides between the rich, poor, and activists. It disengaged likened ICT to a Pandora's Box like the internet reduces or increases public and political involvement among citizens and it has been crucial topic of discussion among academics. Three points of view may be separated in this argument. According to a utopian viewpoint; the internet will encourage individuals to participate more actively in political life (Chen & Wellman et al., 2001). Political marketing is a very broader area of study and is undeveloped, despite the two main disciplines of marketing and politics having well-established research (Kooyman, 2018). Despite the fact that political marketing is garnering more and more attention from academics, politicians, journalists, and the general public, a number of studies have highlighted the rising influence of marketing in politics (Andrews, 1996). Marketing may be characterized as having control over locating and satisfying societal and human needs. Moreover, being profitable is included. In this instance, marketing is profitably achieving political dreams (Kotler, 2009). The idea of political marketing is no longer limited to the exchange of political objectives and services but now includes the dissemination of ideas (Donovan, 2005). In recent years, political marketing research has advanced significantly. It has succeeded in constructing a literature of decent size, scope, and cost by bringing together scholars, students, professional practitioners, and engaged observers from various backgrounds. It is more easily recognized as a wonderful sub-subject. Politics, elections, referenda, governing, lobbying, public service management, etc. are all thought to be highly dependent on political marketing, which is widely believed to have exceptional significance in politics.

Political marketing is defined as to persuade voters to support a particular candidate, set of candidates for public office. The structure of political parties, political communication, and marketing tactics all influence politicians' success. Through marketing evaluation, planning, implementation, and manipulation of political campaigns, marketing may also assist political activities in addressing the issues and aspirations of a variety of voters. Elections involve masses of procedures, marketing, and marketing contests, with outcomes carefully advocated with the resources of the marketing efforts of candidates and the associated political activities, that is, the voting behavior. Positioning is the act of designing a political leader's offer and picture so you can get a unique region in the mind of the voter. The goal is to place the political party hobby in the minds of voters to maximize the functionality blessings for the political party. Political marketing is essential, in particular the quick marketing and publicity concerning political records, affairs, issues, and so forth (Clarke et al., 2009). Political marketing is thought to have originated in business organizations before transforming into modern politics (Lees-Marshment, 2006). The comparison of literature focuses on the comparison of cutting-edge political marketing techniques as well as marketing models and, in particular, the exclusion of the media's influence from contemporary political marketing models. With the use of marketing experts during the past three decades, political marketing is on the rise (Negrine, 2003). Political marketing is a fascinating circumstance that is considerably less common and has many additional factors that are important enough to be discussed. Block (2016) asserts that maintaining one's political marketing is a journey but no longer a means of controlling one's

future. According to the experts' second opinions, every political party engaged in attempts to increase records in the field of political marketing wants to continue assessing via a variety of sports, research sports, seminars, writing, and publications. Political marketing is a concept that has the potential to be supported by research and broadened to include just the social sciences. Political marketing, which differs greatly from older forms of political salesmanship, can be viewed as a few issues resolved by the use of democratically elected politicians and activities.

Scammell (1999) said that political marketing provides a contemporary method of disseminating information and overseeing innovative politics. Political marketing encourages political participation and allows people to contribute to a good message. According to Butler and Collins (1994), political marketing is the promotion of ideas and beliefs around public, political, and candidate-related topics. Political marketing describes how political organizations apply corporate marketing concepts to further their own objectives. Additionally Grönroos (1990) makes the case that political marketing aims to create, preserve, and improve a long-term connection with the electorate for societal and political activities, not only to fulfil the objectives of the particular political leader and organizations concerned. This may be accomplished by utilizing mutual alternatives and ensuring success. According to O'cass (1996), reputation, diagram, and control evaluation are crucial in politics and the service industries. Although, according to Kotler (1981), whose research places a greater emphasis on marketing management, political marketing recognition also contributes to managerial issues, He mentions that some of the topics that spark interest in political marketing literature are related to the application of marketing requirements and structural trends in gadgets and marketing. Another topic in political marketing is client research that is pertinent to voters as it pertains to voters in the realm of industrial organizations (Newman, 1985). The authors may draw the conclusion that political marketing has several key terms that can be considered activity, party, candidates, marketing concept, voter, and formulation based on the information and expert opinions. With the use of marketing and marketing professionals over the past three decades, political marketing is on the increase. While there may be evidence of political marketing dating back to the earliest phases of political interest, the term's origins as a place of study, though very practice-related can be seen in the works of early authors, including Kelley (1956), who coined the phrase to refer to this area of interest.

The use of Rothschild's (1978) work on political marketing efficacy and segmentation, as well as his later work is extending this to social insurance and political insurance making, has significantly benefited the evolution of the situation. With the aid of the increasing professionalism of marketing campaign management, particularly in the west, these early roots of political marketing research have been enhanced. Political marketing research has advanced significantly in recent years, as demonstrated by the use of private, subscriber-only editions of international marketing journals, handbooks, etc. Political marketing has become a more popular subject of study published in top situational journals and dedicated academic and practitioner conferences. Researchers, students, professionals, and active observers from a variety of backgrounds have all come together to create a substantial body of affordable literature. It is becoming more and more recognizable as a wonderful sub-subject. Yet, the context, information and technique issues that obstruct idea creation in this circumstance still abound (Butler and Collins 1999). Previous research has shown that the political marketing idea has a significant direct impact on voters' voting decisions in some circumstances. According to Quelch and Jocz (2007), effective political marketing promotes democracy, and the social price produced by using marketers is deserving of more recognition. This complicated marketing idea aids in the growth of political marketing. The conduct of elections, which are a cornerstone of

civil society, is likely to reflect the weight of the law, the authority of the state and the democratic mandate. Because elections still present a contradiction at times throughout the world, political marketing's involvement will become more crucial. Yet political marketing tends to feel compelled to defend and justify itself to critics.

Henneberg (2004) in his research study argues that despite the fact, this is not fair because every new entrant wants to be accepted and validated. The Association of National Advertisers in America chose Obama after he won the Marketing Age Marketer of the Year award in November 2008. Obama's election was supported by three components of the changing circumstances. This has been noted, modern-day era of political marketing is only assisted Obama in winning but also provided evidence for the wise application of marketing in politics. Political marketing, which differs greatly from older forms of political salesmanship, can be viewed as a few issues resolved by the use of democratically elected politicians and activities. Similarly, O' Cass (1996) contends that political marketing encourages political activity and allows people to take part in constructive discourse. According to Butler and Collins (1994), political marketing is the promotion of ideas and beliefs around public, political and candidate-related topics. According to O' Shaughnessy (2001), political marketing strives to build, maintain, and enhance a long-term connection with voters for the benefit of society and political activities rather than only to achieve the goals of the specific political leader and parties involved. This may be achieved by utilizing mutually beneficial options and guaranteeing achievement. Then, reputation, personality, and control evaluation are essential elements of leadership in the political and service sectors (Scammell (1999). Crucial vulnerability in these models is the failure to recognize that the messenger is not always objective, as it is in the presentation of marketing and communications. It is obvious that political marketing strategies and tactics play a significant role in the political environment at some point in the developed world, regardless of whether the importance of political marketing has been discussed in academic literature (Savigny & Temple, 2010).

Politicians become more involved in the selection of voters and are concerned to understand their voting motives. Recent studies of political marketing are giving greater recognition to having a look at the voting reasons of the voters. This is the proxy for voting behavior (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1968). Personal political partying is defined as an attempt, with the resource of someone's usage, to govern the assessment of others in competition to him, even more in advance than there can be a right away contact. Everyone must have a non-public political party, but that is not always enough to be classified as unique and without trouble remembered with the resources of the overall public. A decision to vote is a preference to select one of several options; a person can only make a selection preference if there are options available. The preference to vote is an integration gadget that combines records to assess greater possibility behaviors and chooses one of them to vote. After seeing the effect that may have on buyers, marketers must look at how voters make their selection decisions (Jones, 1994). Boulianne (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of 38 research on the effects of internet use on political and civic involvement. The findings do not indicate a significant positive effect either, despite the study finding hardly any negative effects, which supports the normalization theory. However, a comparable review of the research by Anduiza et al. (2009) reveals that internet use is more strongly connected with online political involvement than offline political participation, suggesting that a distinction between both types of participation is required.

## **Theoretical Background and Theoretical Framework**

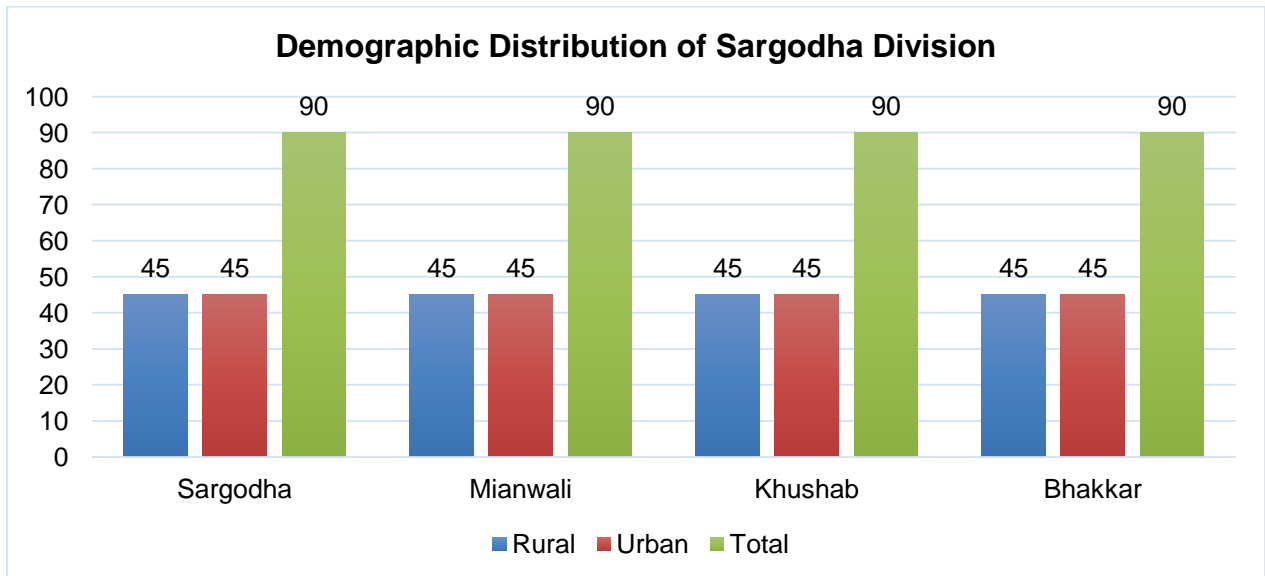
### **3.1 Internet Use's Impact on Political Marketing**

Academics occasionally use the term digital divide to describe the intricate relationships between Information and Communication Technology (ICT), individuals and groups that come from socioeconomic disadvantage and inequality. In the 1990s, the early research on these links mostly focused on access divides and inequalities to computer and ICT technologies, including ownership, accessibility, cost, and infrastructure. This, is referred to as a first-order impact, is how unequal access to ICTs is represented. By the turn of the twenty-first century, the analysis of the digital divide had expanded to identify certain digital skills and competencies. Second-order effects, which describe disparities in the digital competence are talents necessary for ICT use, are what this is. Harfouche (2010) used a third-order effect to show the differences in ICT acceptance. Numerous studies on the digital divide have been conducted since the 1990s using a large range of analytical units, including individuals, families, organizations, communities, regions, and nations. The digital divide may be measured both nationally and globally (Cilan et al. 2009; Stump et al. 2008). The disparity in ICT access and expertise between citizens of the same country is known as the domestic digital divide. The disparity between countries is known as the international digital divide. It is challenging to establish the correct measurements of a digital divide since there is no theoretical framework to describe the information society and the digital divide. Vehovar et al. (2006) concur that there is a need for a comprehensive conceptual framework and emphasize the need to explore several divisions rather than simply one. We may not have specific theories about the information society and the digital divide. To understand social inequality and disadvantage, investigations employing theoretical lenses have been performed. These works have been predominated by a sociological perspective. This has led to the identification of social-demographic features in a sizable body of literature. Economic and econometric theories have addressed informational capital, regional and national disparities. The diffusion of innovation theory has been used to study how public services and home technologies are adopted. The focus has been on creating interfaces that encourage the usage of technology. Critical and discourse theories have contributed to our understanding of the power of metaphor and the justifications for a divide. The interaction and effect of political factors on the uptake of technology has been made clear via political lenses. It may be concluded that a variety of factors may contribute to the digital divide. A multifaceted and multi-perspective study is required to fully understand the digital divide since it is rooted in a socioeconomic, demographic, cultural, and political context (Helbig et al. 2009). It contends that political participation is made possible by the internet since doing so makes it easier and more convenient to obtain political information. On the one hand, this new possibility may encourage existing politically engaged persons to get involved. The dystopian perspective, often known as the displacement hypothesis, contends that time spent online will simply take up time that was previously used for social and political activities (Putnam, 1995). Therefore, it is anticipated that internet use would reduce political involvement. Finally, the normalization thesis asserts that neither manner would the internet affect participation patterns. The internet would enhance rather than disrupt prevailing patterns of involvement and power since it has become simply another mass media. Numerous studies investigated these claims using actual data and examined how using the internet affected political involvement. These results held true in a variety of cultural settings.

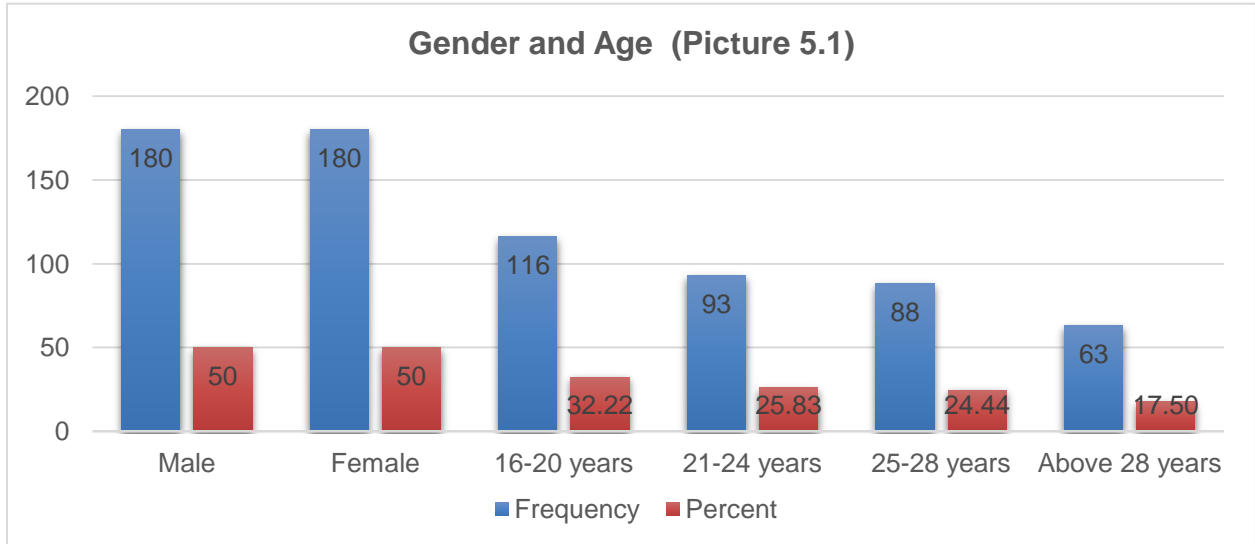
### Methodology

Based on the theoretical works mentioned above, researcher of this research work evaluates three assumptions based as the foundation of study methodology. Researcher analyzed the connections between political marketing and digital divide based on socio-democratic traits including age, gender, and level of education. There are significant differences between the demographic groups. In this study, the political marketing of various demographic groups as well as the processes of digital divide are not equitably dispersed throughout society due to unequal access and usage of internet and social media. The inconsistencies in access to social media and digital divide have pointed, but the differences are still present. As digitization advances, there are still lot of disparities in social media usage, including good use habits and internet access.

#### 4.1 Methods

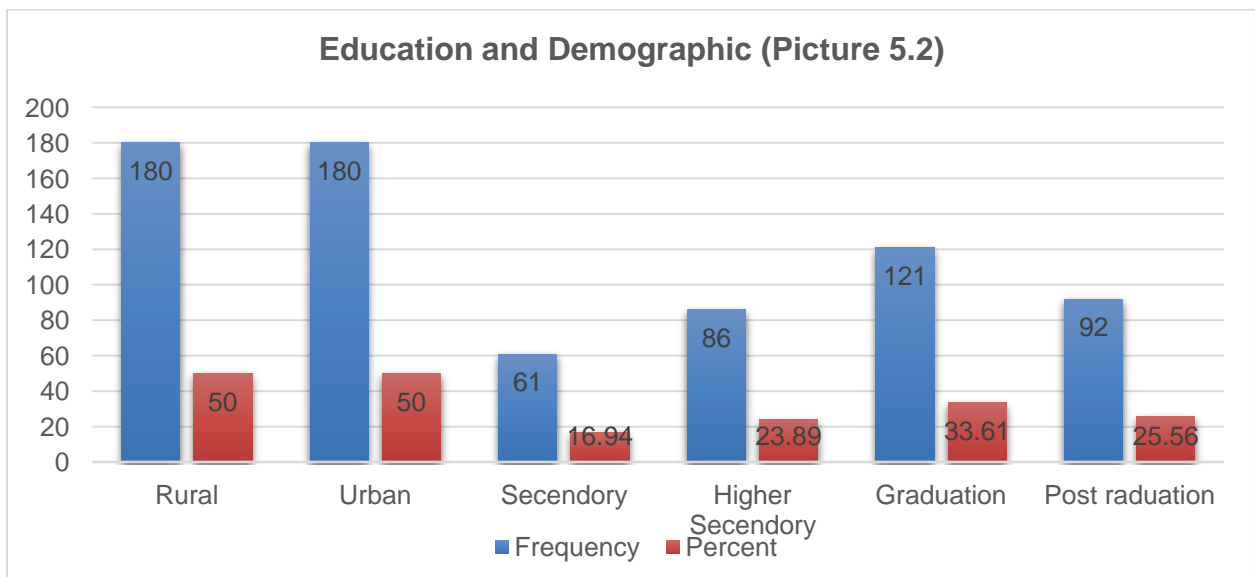


Survey information collected in the Sargodha Division between December 2023 and February 2024 was used in this study. For the purposes of data gathering, four Sargodha Division districts are chosen at random. Sargodha, Khushab, Mianwali, and Bhakkr are these districts. Rural and urban regions are deliberately allocated evenly throughout all of Sargodha Division's districts. Based on the convenience sample approach, 90 male and female respondents were chosen from each of the districts in the Sargodha Division. The teenagers ages 16 and older who received the survey questionnaires in physical copy were picked at random. The researcher balanced the distributions of age, gender, and education using post-stratification weights to match the population's distributions.



**(Picture 5.1) Gender and Age of Respondents (N=360)**

The findings of the sample chosen for the purpose of data collection are shown in the aforementioned image (Picture 5.1). According to the empirical findings, 360 respondents were picked at random from the Sargodha Division's target population. The population's gender is randomly selected and distributed equally. 180 men and 180 women are deliberately picked at random from the Sargodha Division's general population. Even yet, the age group shows only slight variances. The majority of respondents (32.22%) from the age range (16-20 Years) of the chosen sample voiced their thoughts on the thoughtfully created questionnaire by the researcher. (25.83%) of respondents in the second age bracket, between the ages of 21 and 24, gave their thoughts on pools. In the third respondent age range of 25 to 28 years, some (24.44%) respondents were picked for their thoughts, and in the fourth respondent age range of above 28 years, which comprised 17.5% of the overall population.



**Demographics and Education of Respondents (N=360)**

Additionally, educational questions are posed to the desired responders. There are four categories for respondents' for their levels of education. There are four categories for education in the survey: secondary, higher secondary, graduation, and post-graduate. Secondary education had the responses (16.94%) from respondents, followed by respondents in the higher secondary age group (23.89%), in that order. Graduates of the answer group made up (33.61 %) of the population, while respondents with postgraduate degrees made up the remaining population (25.56%) of overall selected population.

**Use of Media (Table 5.1)**

Duration of Use	Social Media		Electronic Media	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 year	56	15.56	72	20
1 - 2 years	112	31.11	83	23.89
2 - 3 years	110	30.56	99	27.22
Above 3 years	82	22.78	106	28.89
Total	360	100.00	360	100.00

Time period of Use of selected Media (N=360)

(Table 5.1) displays the findings for the time in which the respondent is using the selected medium. This question offered two media options and four response categories. According to empirical findings, respondents who use social media (15.56 %) and respondents who use electronic media (20 %) in the first answer group have used such medium for less than a year. In the second response group, those who used social media (31.11%) and those who used electronic media one to two years prior (23.89%) both gave positive responses. However, among respondents aged two to three years, (30.56 %) said they used social media, while (27.22 %) said they used electronic media. A sizable majority of respondents in the respondent category with a response age of above three year uses electronic and social media (28.89 %) and (22.78 %), respectively. This suggests that the vast majority of the respondents have been using electronic and social media for a long period.

**Per Day Time Consumption on selected Media (Table 5.2)**

	Social Media		Electronic Media	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 hour	52	14.44	80	22.22
1 - 2 Hours	80	22.22	102	28.33
2 - 3 Hours	106	29.44	66	18.33
3 - 4 Hours	76	21.11	82	22.78
Above 4 Hours	46	12.78	30	8.33
Total	360	100	360	100

Daily Time Consumption on Selected Media (N = 360)

The table (Table 5.2) above displays the respondents' daily time utilization on selected medium. The two media kinds selected for this question's five time response categories was selected to answer the question related to electronic and social media. These response groups were less than one hour, between 1 and two hours, between 2 and three hours, and above four hours. Empirical results show that respondents often use electronic media. According to empirical findings, respondents utilize social media more frequently than other forms of electronic media. In the first responder group, which included responses received in under an hour, respondents

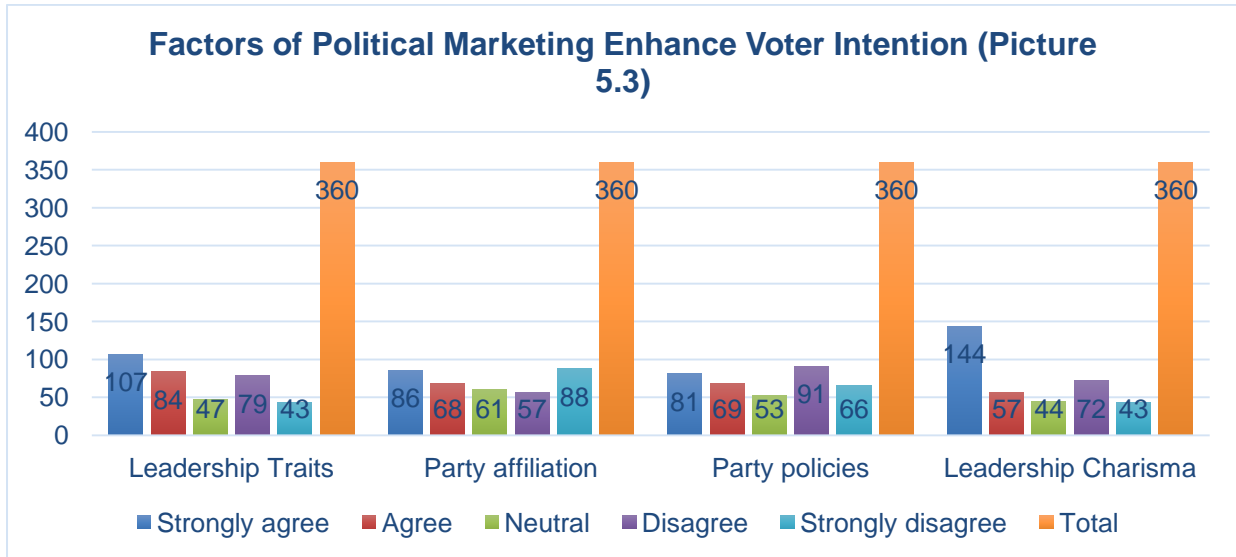
(14.44%) voted in favor of social media while (22.22%) voted in favor of electronic media. In the second response category of using the chosen medium for 1-2 hours, social media had a lower percentage of responses (22.22%) than electronic media (28.33%). In the third category of responses, more respondents (29.44%) for social media than respondents (18.33%) who use electronic media 2–3 hours per day, Although (22.78%) said that they paid their attention to electronic media in the fourth response group of time utilization of 3–4 hours per day, furthermore (21.11%) answered in favor of social media. in last response category, The majority of respondents (12.78%) use social media more than 4 hours per day, while respondents who use electronic media more than 4 hours per day (8.33%) are next. It appears that the vast majority of respondents use social media for longer than four hours each day.

**Which Media Provides information related to Political Marketing portrayed by Political Parties (Table 5.3)**

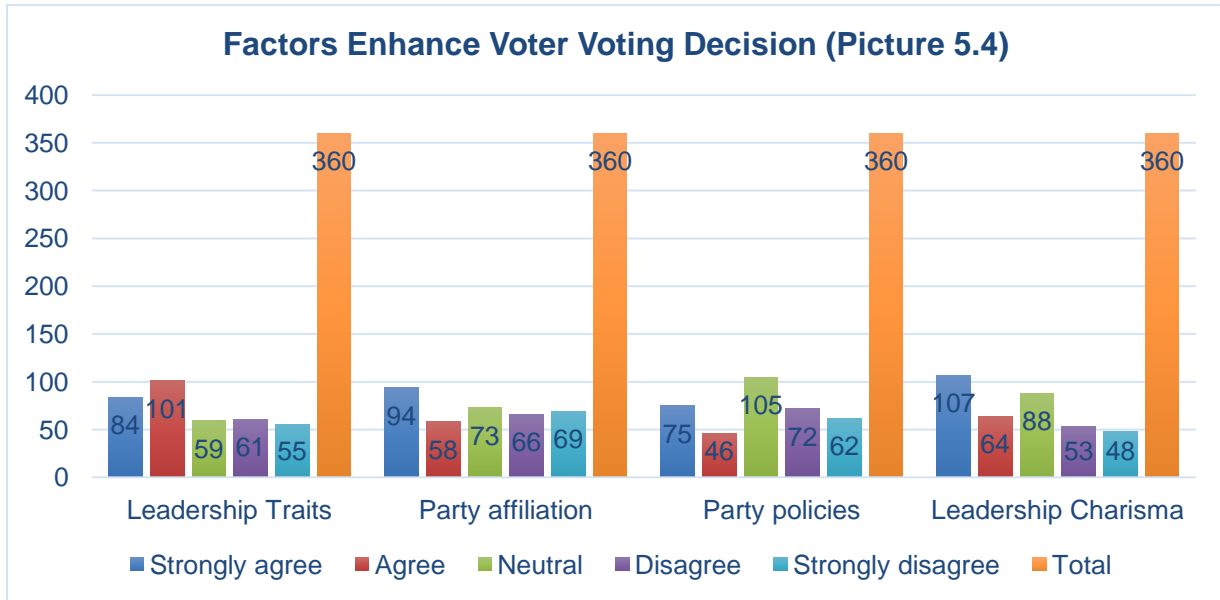
	Electronic Media		Social Media	
Strongly Agree	122	33.89	100	27.78
Agree	86	23.89	119	33.06
Neutral	44	12.22	66	18.33
Disagree	72	20.00	42	11.67
Strongly Disagree	36	10.00	33	9.17
Total	360	100	360	100
Information related to Political Marketing (N=360)				

The aforementioned (Table 5.3) presents the empirical results of a study comparing social media and electronic media information related to political marketing. These results offer comprehensive and in-depth knowledge on the information given in electronic and social media. Various contents deliver different types of information in various formats on some media channels and websites. The findings show that electronic media contents are more extensive and detailed than social media contents. While (33.89 %) strongly agree, (23.89%) agree, and (12.22%) are neutral, (27.78%) strongly agree, (33.6%) agree, and (18.33%) agree that social media offers more comprehensive and in-depth information than electronic media. Furthermore, the data reveals that when it comes to social media posts that provide in-depth and comprehensive information linked to political marketing, (20%) disagree and (10%) strongly disagree for social media, whereas (11.67%) respondents disagree and (9.17%) strongly disagree for electronic media.





A number of factors can boost voter support for a political party or candidate. These components include leadership charisma, party policies, and leadership traits. The above-mentioned chart (Picture 5.3) displays the results of political marketing variables that raise voter intention towards political parties and their leadership. Respondents think that political leaders' charisma is a more pervasive factor that boosts political voter intention than other factors. (n = 144) strongly agree, (n = 57) agree, (n = 44) neutral, and (n = 72) disagree with this notion, followed by (n = 43) strongly disagree with this notion. (n = 107) strongly agree, while (n = 84) agree, and they believe that leadership traits are a quality that attracts voter voting intention. Although (n = 47) are neutral, (n = 79) disagree, followed by (n = 43) respondents who strongly disagree for leadership traits as a powerful notion for attraction of voting intention. Party affiliation received replies from (n = 87) as strongly agreeing, (n = 68) agreeing, and (n = 61) neutral, then (n = 57) disagreeing, and (n = 88) strongly disagreeing with this theory because they did not believe that party affiliation is a strong factor that enhances party connection. Depending on party policy and other factors, the answer changes. In this case, (n = 81) of the respondents strongly agreed, (n = 69) agreed, and (n = 53) were neutral. Furthermore, empirical results reveal that (n = 91) disagree with this notion and (n = 66) strongly disagree with party policies as the best voting intention. On the other hand, when it came to the notion that party affiliation had a substantial impact on voters' intentions, (n = 86) of respondents strongly agreed, followed by (n = 68) of respondents who agreed. although (n = 61) are neutral and (n = 57) disagree, followed by (n = 88) respondents who rejected the notion. Leadership charisma is a key factor in boosting political party commitment. Despite the fact that respondents strongly disagree with the idea that leadership charisma influences voting intention,



Political party leaders regularly use social media to attract voters’ attention and influence voting decisions. Numerous factors might influence a voter's choice of ballot. These components include leadership charisma, party policies, and leadership traits. (n = 84) strongly agree and (n = 101) agree, whereas (n = 101) of respondents are neutral and (n = 61) of respondents disagree, and (n = 55) strongly disagree with this notion when it comes to leadership characteristics as a factor affecting voters' voting decisions. Party affiliation is another factor that influences how voters vote. (n = 94) strongly agree, (n = 58) agree, and (n = 73) are neutral about the importance of party affiliation in influencing people's voting decisions. Furthermore, study results reveal that (n = 66) disagree and (n = 69) strongly disagree with this idea asked by the researcher. Party policies also have a positive impact on voters' decisions. (n = 75) of respondents strongly agree, and the plurality (n = 46) agree that party policies influence voters' decisions. Despite the fact that (n = 72) of respondents disagree and (n = 62) strongly disagree with this assumption, The last factor that respondents were asked about was leadership charisma. (n = 107) of the respondents rated this remark as strongly agreeable, (n = 64) as agreeable, and (n = 88) as neutral. Only a tiny minority (n = 53), including n = 48, strongly disagree with this statement. It is also recognized that charisma and leadership abilities are the most powerful factors influencing people's voting decisions compared to party affiliation and party policies.

**Discussion**

With 88% of the population having access, Pakistan is one of the South Asian nations with internet services. Beginning in the 1990s, internet usage in Pakistan has increased over the years. In actuality, 61.34 million people in Pakistan used the internet in January 2021, up 21% over the previous year. However, the World Bank estimates that there are roughly 221 million people living in Pakistan as of 2020. In addition, around 15 million individuals in Pakistan use mobile devices to access the internet. There are a million users. People in Pakistan to access the internet the second most frequently use cellular devices. Pakistan's internet is ranked 20th in the world despite having a sizable population and around 61.34 million users. Unfortunately, many people are still left out of this digital revolution, especially in underdeveloped nations. Only 46% of Pakistan's 185 million cellphone users have access to 3G or 4G services. Even fewer people possess the knowledge and abilities necessary to use technology to their advantage in order to learn new things. A digital divide is a sign of economic stagnation in a world where

technology controls every part of our lives, including education, employment, business prospects, and personal and professional advancement. Additionally, it promotes inequity. Some claim that the digital divide is closing because of Pakistan's growing smartphone usage and the fact that more individuals have access to basic technology. However, this is only a fantasy. Access is undoubtedly a significant factor in closing this divide, but without knowledge about how to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) for individual, professional, and social growth, the divide just increases and only serves a small portion of society. Pakistan has 10 DSL and 5 broadband internet service providers. In Pakistan, using a broadband connection and a computer to access the internet is the most popular method of access.

An uncritical embrace of technology should not ignore the fact that access to these technologies is still a luxury for many and that internet availability is very low in nations like Pakistan, according to a joint statement from the Digital Rights Foundation and Bolo Bhi, a civil society organization engaged in advocacy, policy, and research in digital rights. Uneven internet access has several causes, including insufficient infrastructure, the difference between rural and urban areas, and economic inequality in Pakistan. Internet connectivity is not widely available in Pakistan's remote and underdeveloped areas. The digital divide's effects on Pakistani education also affect the professional growth of teachers. Teachers have much easier access to professional development options thanks to technology and the internet. Online professional development programmes are available to teachers who have access to technology and the internet, which may help them keep current on the most effective methods of instruction. However, Pakistan's digital divide makes it challenging for educators in rural regions to take part in these initiatives, which restricts their capacity to advance their knowledge and abilities. This thus reduces the level of instruction they can offer their students. To sum up, it can be said that the digital divide has a substantial influence on Pakistani education since it prevents instructors and students from fully using the many advantages of digital technology for learning. This inequality worsens social and economic inequality and makes it harder for pupils to get ready for the digital era. It is crucial to make investments in technological infrastructure, teacher preparation, and initiatives that support fair access to technology for all children in order to solve this problem. Pakistan may start to close the deficit by doing this. Researchers to include social media and other emerging online communication channels quickly expanded the investigation. Since social media is expressly designed to promote self-expression, content production, and user interaction. Several writers anticipated that it would alter the dynamics of online and offline participation.

Social media would tempt people into perpetual image management, which would eventually lead to collectivism rather than active participation (Whyte, 2018). According to Zhang et al. (2009), social networking site use significantly affects political involvement. Hoffmann & Lutz (2021) discover a high correlation between political self-expression in political participation. Internet use is sometimes judged by how frequently it is used, how much time is spent online and how much experience a person has with the Internet. However, Pasek et al. (2009) emphasize the need of differentiating across internet usage kinds when evaluating the impact on involvement. They discovered in their study that using various SNS produced various results. Similar to this, Moy et al. (2005) demonstrate that different aspects of Internet use have varying impacts on political participation. Based on data gathered from German Internet users. This initial research model is capturing political self-expression online. Numerous research has revealed that individuals are not all equally prone to engage in online activity. Participating online necessitates the acquisition of new abilities as well as the application of prior information to a new setting. According to Hargittai (2010), these factors are significantly influenced by

socioeconomic position as well as the social and technical surroundings in which the individuals live. A crucial concept in the research on the digital divide is socio-economic status (SES), which can be determined by education and finance. Because they possess the means and abilities to actively use online media, those with high Social Economic Status are expected to benefit from the internet more readily. Therefore, it is projected that high-SES individuals would utilize the Internet in a more beneficial in term of political marketing. The digital divide in productive internet usage may contribute to exacerbate the socioeconomic stratification of political engagement since, in accordance with resource theory, political marketing also demands a certain set of resources, including time, money, and skills. Online political involvement will also be more prevalent among heavy internet users, who are also considered more politically active. This will encourage political participation even more. In fact, it has been demonstrated that both wealth and education have a favorable impact on online participation.

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