



## Social Media: A Prospective or a Dilemma The case of Pakistan

Muqqadas Rehman<sup>1</sup>, Khansa Irem<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Ilyas<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to explore the role of social media in creating societal transformation particularly in the context of developing countries like Pakistan. This is an exploratory research which focuses around the role and power of social media in creating societal transformation. Semi structure and focus group discussions have been conducted from 40 participants (parents, teachers, and youth). Moreover, thematic analysis was used for the analysis of data. Findings revealed that social media is playing a significant role in improving standard of living by providing an open access to the global markets, financial services and employment opportunities. The young generation has more opportunities for socialization in less time with minimum cost. Social interaction with friends, peers, colleagues, family across the globe has become easier and cheaper. However, the dark side of the use of social media in the forms of privacy breach, unethical practices, detachment from family and less concentration on studies has crippled the society to a big extent. This study contributes towards enhancing the in-depth understanding of social media in shaping societal changes in a developing country like Pakistan and paves the way for future research.

**Keywords:** *Social media, Societal Transformation, Youth, Parents, Teachers.*

### INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, media has become a symbol to speak freely and express your feeling to the society. The landscape of media is not only the source of information (i.e. news, sports, entertainment, education etc.) but also influences the human perceptions, feelings, understanding, and cultural value that collectively account for societal transformation (Dattoo, 2010). These new modes of communication have intertwined in every aspect of human life, the way people communicate ultimately influences the way society behaves (Prianti

---

1. Lecturer, Hailey College of Commerce, Lahore. Email: iluvnabi.saaw@gmail.com

2. PhD Scholar at Superior University, Lahore, Pakistan

3. Dean of Research, Superior University, Lahore, Pakistan

et al., 2012). In this regard, social media is an emerging phenomenon to be considered in studying media and society because it comes out as a new part of public sphere (Waltz, 2005). Likewise, this emerging and growing phenomenon around the globe has lured the scholar's attention enormously for many years (Ahn, 2011; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Dickey and Lewis, 2011).

It has been observed in the literature that the growth of social media in previous decade is undeniable. Wikipedia was developed in 2001; presently, this social networking tool has more than 13 million articles in its repository that are available in 200 different languages. Another social networking tool created in 2004 shows a remarkable response in the trajectory of social media. Today, Facebook is facilitating more than 300 million members globally to stay in touch with one another through the concept of Global Village. Even, it is commonly stated now that if Facebook were a country, it would be ranked 4th owing to its size. Definitely, the enormous growth of twitter network (established in 2006) with the growth rate of almost 1400% cannot be ignored (Qualman, 2009).

This growing trend of social media is not limited to developed countries. This specter of social media shows exponential growth in developing countries like Pakistan. In this context, the use of social media has grown by 50% in the year 2012 (Reader telecom exclusive May, 2013, accessed 1 May, 2014). Pakistan is a country of 193 million people (Haque, 2013). Statistics shows that there are almost 8 million social network users, 121 million mobile subscribers and 29 million internet users in Pakistan<sup>1</sup> (Reader telecom exclusive May, 2013, accessed 1 May, 2014). The growing usage of social networking sites (SNS) is significantly noted in recent years such as presently, Facebook has acquaintance with 10 million registered users and Twitter the youngest member of the SNS family has almost 2 million internet users on its panel (Haque, 2013). Pakistan has almost 1.7 registered bloggers on bloggers.com (Alam, 2012) and 1.5 million registered Linked Inn users on linked inn.com (Yusuf, 2013). Considering aforementioned statistics, the Pakistani audience rising trend towards social media usage is clearly evident. According to Express Tribune 2013, most of the SNS sites

<sup>1</sup> This percentage of internet users is quite high in Pakistan that is almost 11 percent of total population. It is surprising to discuss that in South Asian Region, the tendency of internet usage is much higher in Pakistan as compare to other countries, even in India the internet users percentage is only 6 percent.



users are in the age group of 18-24. This shows that SNS sites are mostly used by youth of Pakistan (Eijaz, 2013).

The conception of social media has been widely discussed in the literature, covering diverse perspective such as education (Ahn, 2011), branding and marketing (Naveed, 2012), consumer attitudes (Mir, 2012), teen and parenting (Yardi and Bruckman, 2011), catalyst for communication (Kugelman, 2012), and politics (Ali, Jan and Iqbal, 2013), youth and society (Jalil, Jalil and Latiff, 2010). But the role of social media in bringing societal change is still in its infancy specifically in the context of Pakistani youth. Therefore, the present study is going to address this gap by studying the innate perception of societal reformers including parents, teachers and youth towards the role of social media in bringing societal transformation<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of this research study is to explore the role of social media in creating societal transformation particularly in the context of developing countries like Pakistan. This is an exploratory research which focuses on the role and power of social media in creating societal transformation.

The remaining of the paper are as follows: research context of social media and youth, methodology employed for the paper, findings regarding the perceptions of participants (teachers, parents and youths), discussion, conclusion and limitations.

## RESEARCH CONTEXT

### **Social media: an emerging phenomenon**

Social media is one of the most profound elements of interaction in the society. It is the major revolution of the current era transforming the communication landscape (Edwards, 2011). It is highlighted in literature that social media is comprised of different internet tools to facilitate conversation among different users where these users can freely share different facts, information and material related to their interest with one another within or across borders (Kumar, Hsiao, & Chiu, 2009; Edwards, 2011). The development of social media heralded the exchange of information much faster and more convenient for the society as compare to old traditional media. Users of this social network have different interpretation for the word social media

---

<sup>2</sup> Literature has used various terminologies for youth such as adolescents, adults, teenagers. We have used these terminologies interchangeably throughout the text for the age group of 15-25.

which depends on their usage pattern of this mode of communication. This broad spectrum of social media fuses various kinds of contents that form social networks (i.e. blogs, forums, audio, videos, and avatars on social networking websites), status update and more. The formation of social media is based on personalised user generated content that allows users with no specialised knowledge of web development to post and upload contents instantaneously.

Social media is rapidly growing phenomenon in developing countries of Asian continent and Arab world countries. Such as in Arab world countries, it is already considered as catalyst for change agent. Mourtada and Saleem (2011) conducted study on the role of social media in empowering Arab women. They found that this revelation of social media has swept the conventional patriarchal culture of Arab world by providing an open platform for Arab woman to raise her voice on prevailing issues. Likewise, the studies conducted in Malaysia (Jalil, Jalil & Latiff, 2010) and India (Neelamalar & Chitra, 2009) highlighted the intimacy of youth with social media making this emerging as utmost importance in developing countries region.

Moreover, talking about further exploration of this emerging phenomenon, the situation is not very different in case of Pakistan. Pakistan telecommunication industry is growing very rapidly in past decade due to privatisation (Ansari and Khan, 2009). The rising competition among telecommunication companies have significantly contributed to offer internet at reasonable prices. The penetration of internet usage is swiftly increasing due to affordability and accessibility of the internet. The criticism on the Pakistani government after taking decision to impose ban on Facebook, Youtube, and twitter is the warrant to support this intimate social media-public relationship. Solangi (2013) further asserts that Pakistan official telecommunication authority (PTA) was largely criticised by the public when they passed order to ban one social networking site 'Twitter' for more than 8 hours on May, 20. Hence, the government takes back the decision and once again activates the Twitter for public. Nonetheless, the academic scholars highlighted the society intimate relationship with social media networking websites in the Pakistani context (Kugelman, 2012; Ali, Jan & Iqbal, 2013; Nasir, Vel, & Mateen, 2012) but literature is still silent on exploring the youth perception towards usage of social media in the Pakistani context. This prevailing gap



really motivates us to explore the role of social media in bringing societal transformation specifically from youth perspective.

### **Socio-Tech through youth lens**

The use of different social media tools (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, FourSquare, texting, hyperconnectivity) brings a massive cultural shift towards the use of technological tools (Lanier, 2010). This massive cultural shift is becoming more challenging in the context of technology use among the youth because the trend of using social media is largely noticed among young citizen of the society (Valenzuela, Park, and Kee, 2009). These young citizens are also called early adopter of internet technology (media print).

The increasing use of social media tools among youth is a global phenomenon. It is largely noticed that teenagers are kept themselves busy in messaging, gaming, facebooking and youtubeing (Livingstone, 2008). Lenhart (2009) mentioned the statistics of Per internet & American life projects December, 2008 tracking survey that the use of social network sites is almost quadrupled during the last 4 years (8% in 2005 to 35% in 2009). This increasing ratio of social network usage is more in adults as compared with their counterparts (older generation). He discussed that almost 75% of the young people having age group of 18-25 are using social networking sites, however, this usage ratio is very nominal (almost 7%) among their older counterparts. Likewise, it is revealed in National Survey (2009) that 73% of the teenagers use social networking sites. Three years earlier this usage was only 55% (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith and Zikuhr, 2010). At its core, use of online social networks is still a phenomenon of a youth.

Youth is a key player of society that always plays an active role in bringing societal change (Neelamalar & Chitra, 2009; Jalil, Jalil & Latiff, 2010; Ali, Jan & Iqbal, 2013). They are using social media tools to share their ideas and thoughts openly so their role cannot be ignored. In spite of the fact that the usage of social networking tools has enormously increased in the youth and youth is giving much of their time to these sites only but still few questions remain in our mind. How are youths using these social media tools? How do they perceive that what social media is actually mean to them? How do they use this social media? Is social media creating differences among youth offline relationships (i.e parents, teachers)?

Youth is not only the single victim of this social media viral. The key constituents that are exposed to this technology also include parents and teachers. Although parents (socio cultural development of youth) and teachers (developing academic career of youth) play the key part in shaping youth life but the growing trend of social media among youth is also becoming very challenging for them (Yardi & Bruckman, 2011). Nonetheless, both incumbents have colossal contribution to influence youth perception, behaviour and thoughts but due to emerging revelation of social media, the situation is completely changed. The exponential growth of social media (Cabral, 2011) has substantial effect on the perception, thoughts and experiences of young people.

Both incumbents have daily interaction with adolescents. Literature is still silent on the understanding of the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding social media and how it is performing the role of change catalyst for youth of the country. So it is important to further explore their role and perception towards this emerging specter of social media and address these questions: what are the key challenges faced by parents/teachers due to immense use of social media among youth? What are the strategies that should be adapted to overcome this overflowing use of social media?

## **METHODOLOGY**

Based on the methodological and philosophical assumption, a qualitative research approach (Creswell, 2003; Bryman & Bell, 2008) was adopted to develop the understanding about the role and power of social media in creating societal transformation specifically in the context of youth. Multiple perceptions of parents, teachers and youth have been recorded to take the deeper understanding of the phenomenon of social media. To best of our understanding, no research has been found that explores the perception of youth and key constituents (teachers, parents) of the society to understand the role and power of social media in the context of Pakistan.

Drawing on the interpretive assumption of small sample selection in natural setting (Hussey and Hussey, 1997), a purposeful or convenience sample technique was appropriate for the selection of sample from population. Therefore, a purposeful sampling technique was used for the selection of a sample of 40 participants (Marshall, 1996). Table 1 illustrates the selection



criteria used for the selection of sample.

**Table 1. Participants Selection Criteria**

Participants	Criteria
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The minimum age of the teenager should be above 15</li><li>▪ Parents should be aware with the use of social media</li></ul>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The minimum teaching experience is of 5 years</li><li>▪ Teachers should be aware with the use of social media</li></ul>
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The age range lies between 15-25</li><li>▪ Minimum education should be higher secondary</li><li>▪ Active user of social media</li></ul>

The research is divided into two sections: in the first phase of the study, in depth semi-structured interviews were conducted for the collection of data from 20 participants individually (10 parents and 10 teachers) in order to understand their perception regarding social media and what they feel about the role of social media in bringing societal transformation specifically in the context of youth. The interviews have been conducted both in English and Urdu languages as per convenience of the participants. Each participant was allowed to withdraw from discussion at any time. Whereas, for the second phase of the study was concerned, focused group discussions were conducted by involving 20 participants as youth having the age group of 15 to 25 years in order to know about their opinion regarding social media. Thematic analysis (Stirling and Attride, 2001) was used for the analysis of the interpretation of the participants. The key question of the research study is to study the role of social media in creating societal transformation specifically in the context of youth. However, the key question is further divided into following sub-question:

- What is the youth perception about social media?
  - o What do they feel about it?
- What is the perception of parents and teachers about social media and how they think that this mode of communication is affecting the life of youth these days?
  - o What are the current challenges faced by parents/teachers due to the immense use of social media among youth?
  - o What are the strategies that should be adapted to overcome this overflowing use of social media?



## Demographic profile of the participants

The demographic profile of the participants has been presented in the Table 2, 3 & 4 respectively (see Annexure 1). Table 2 exhibits the parents demographic information related to age, gender, qualification, and number of children. There are more male (6 out of 10) parents participants as compared to female parent's participants (4 out of 10). The ages of the parents are predominately between 40-45 (6 out of 10). However, 4 parents are aged between 35-40. Most of the parents have average children of 2-3 (8 out of 10) and having master degree (6 out of 10) as the highest qualification. Though, rest of the parents mentioned bachelor and intermediate degree as their highest qualification.

Likewise Table 3 shows that the participation of male teachers (7 out of 10) is substantial as compared with female teachers (3 out of 10). It can be significantly noted that most of the teachers have age bracket of 30-35 (5 out of 10), however, remaining teachers are in the age group of 35-40 (3 out of 10) and 25-30 (2 out of 10). The highest qualification of teachers is M.Phil (3 out 10) and rest of them mentioned bachelors (2 out of 10) and masters (5 out of 10) degree as their highest qualification. It can also be noted that the participants have diversified range experience in the teaching profession ranges between 5 to 15.

Table 4 reported the demographic profile of the adolescents (participated in focus group discussion) showing equal representation of males (10 out of 20) and females (10 out of 20) participants. The age and qualification of the participants ranges between 17 to 22 and between matric to bachelor respectively.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Conceptualising social media

The conceptualisation of social media is considered as one of the most profound phenomenon of this era of socialisation. Parents are considered as the key decision maker of the family. They are performing the role of engine that drives rest of the family members and have substantial influence on the thoughts, behaviours, and action of the member of the family. Although literature has enriched conceptualisation of the phenomenon 'social media' but it is important to understand the parent's perception that how they view





this growing trend of new media. What sorts of comments they keep in their pockets are based on their experiences for the terminology of social media. The interview findings on the conception of social media highlighted that social media is an open gateway of communication to interact with the society around the globe. It is highlighted in the literature that social media is a personalised user generated content format that provides user a full control over its use on content generation (Dickey and Lewis, 2011). The similar opinion has been noticed from the excerpts of many parents. One of the similar excerpts as articulated by Haseeb

Social media is content generated tools used by the media consumers for interaction and gratification.

It is embedded in the literature that social media is a major revolution of this era of globalisation (Edwards, 2011) where the member of societies apart from which culture, religion and society they belong is no more a matter of concern for the people of the virtual communities. Another conception has been discussed in the excerpts by parents that social media is such a platform that gives one freedom to interact with other members of the society and builds online relationships. One of the parents, Sami, opines that, Social media gives us freedom to express, share and convey our message in a more convenient way.

The aforementioned account of the parents explicitly perceive social media a tool that gives you freedom of expression. These echoes of parents are consistent with the study of Ghannam (2011) that discussed social media as a tool of freedom for an individual to share his/her thoughts openly within the society (Ghannam, 2011).

It is discussed earlier that the parents are performing the role of engine that molds their families according to prevailing culture and need of the society. Similarly, the role of a nation builder-teacher cannot be put at a side when it comes to discuss about societal reforms in the context of youth. Teachers play a significant role in developing future generations. It can also be stated that teachers are the architect who builds intellectual minds for the society on the basis of their knowledge, professionalism and pedagogical practices. When the teachers were asked to shed light on the concept of social media then most of the teachers had same voice for the conception of this growing

phenomenon. They considered it a key major revolution in the history of media. The teacher's accounts considered social media a user driven technological device for interaction. Some considered it an instrumental development in the history of internet that helped people to keep themselves connected with outer world. Such as Shehzad accounts illuminates that,

Social media is a user driven interactive forums which is available through internet.

Another participants Mubashir highlighted that,

I think it is very instrumental and social media is something which is more indefinable, more diverse which is itself a new thing. So, we can say that this sort of media actually helps people to socialise in a mediated environment.

These mentioned accounts give us the similar thoughts as discussed in literature that social media is a tool to interact with the societies in a mediated environment. Some other interesting findings have given a novel conception of social media that is not rooted in the literature yet. One of the participants Asim having an experience of 8 years annotates this conception of social media with 'Farari' that gives a chance to the members of society to experience a different drive on a motorway,

I think it is just like a Farari which is given to us that we can use on motorway where we suppose to keep an eye on others cars like what they are doing and it is basically a platform where a person can find a most appropriate solution of his/her isolation.

One of the accounts Asim opinion almost resonates with Ahmed Fareed thoughts that,

Social media is just like a hide park which gives spirit to alone people to get socialised and interact on a mediated place.

Hence, a number of conceptions have been identified that can be considered an important contribution in the literature of social media. In summing up the discussion, it can be stated that social media is a tool used for transforming generational identities into technological identities where user itself is a manufacturer and consumer of the contents (Dickey & Lewis, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).



### **Social media: a revolutionary change agent**

Many years ago, Andy Warhol, a famous artist, made statement that “In fifteen minutes everybody will be famous” (Warhol, 1979:48). The prediction of Warhol is getting true with the emergence of new digital media tools. One of the powerful digital media tool-social media has come up with the idea where information, contents, identities are shared (Curtis, 2011) across societies within seconds. Nonetheless technology plays a substantial role in changing society dynamics (i.e. culture, lifestyle, thinking pattern, and family structures) at macro level but the intensity of these societal changes is at sedate pace. These changes are now become radical due to the inception of social media networks. It is becoming difficult for the societies to stop these radical changes among victims of social media. Similarly, in Pakistan, social media becomes a major specter that causes these radical changes in socio-cultural dynamic of Pakistan.

Previously, before the inception of the social media, the socio-culture dynamics of Pakistan is quite different such as it is a country that has not very liberal culture in keeping cross-gender friendships. The cross-gender friendships cannot be openly practised within the domain of the society. People prefer to have ongoing social gatherings with friends, families and peers. People love to dress up in a traditional style of shalwar qameez. But social media drastically plays a significant role in changing these socio-economic dynamics of the society of Pakistan. Most of the accounts echo about the enculturation of social media in Pakistan. They articulate that use of social media made it easy to keep cross gender friendships on social networking sites, changed the youth dress up pattern from shalwar qameez to jeans and t-shirt, attachment of youth with online identities and isolation with offline identities. One of the accounts Zunaira resonates that,

Social media has cut off the children with the offline relationships (parents, brother, sister, friends) and their immediacy is swiftly shifting towards developing and maintaining online identities with unknown accounts.

Another Aliya explicitly states that,

Social media is allowing people to interact, express and identify themselves in really appreciating way.

Likewise most of the people are living in joint family system where tradition to eat lunch, dinner together is considered a general practice. But social

media substantially changes this practice among families. First we have family room for TV but now dining table is the only place where families can spend some time together but adolescents keep themselves busy in texting and chatting with friends. One of the parents Rizwan highlighted it as follows:

It is basically creating a huge family gap among parents and children, sister and brother etc. You don't have anything to say when you are sitting with your family. There is just a simple hello and then you move towards your system to interact with outer world or you can say to interact with unknown community to whom you consider your best friend.

Sami and Rizwan highlighted the true reality of changing family norms and traditions of Pakistan (Zaidi and Sharif, 2011). Adolescents are getting more materialistic and dehumanising their emotions. Sohail articulates her account that

It keeps us more towards materialistic approach which creates clashes within family because when the children check their friend's status then they get depressed and feel inferior in front of them.

It has been noted in many excerpts that social media is creating a significant parent-teen generational gap. It is also discussed in literature that new technological revolution is creating generation gap among youth and older people of the society (Crowley & Florin, 2011). The youth is becoming more sophisticated user of social media tools as compared to older generation. It is getting hard for parents to educate the youth because proliferation of social media is already creating impact on the minds of youth.

The teachers were also asked to share their perception on the revolutionary impact of social media in creating societal changes. Most of teachers consider social media as a key change agent in bringing socio-economic revolutions in the society. It is discussed that youth is busier in internet chatting with unknown friends rather than to use this medium of communication for learning. However, this ample use of social networking sites causes youth disillusion towards their goals. Bilal reported that social media is gradually changing the face of society in terms of the way people interact, express, and identify themselves in outer world. His account illuminates,

Social media is improving the freedom of conscious and expression and which can, of course, gradually lead to a lot of changes in the society in



terms of the way people interact, identify themselves, express themselves and criticise those ideas which they can never criticise in main stream media. If people are free to express their opinion changes are invertible over there.

It is evident from the above excerpts of the teachers that social media is significantly contributing to change socio-economic dynamics of the Pakistani society. This new web ecology has become an important element to keep your identities alive in the virtual communities.

When the youth were asked to illustrate their perception on the role of social media as change agent and how this growing trend of using social media is changing their living patterns then most of the teenager reported that social media is providing them a platform where they can share their isolation with online friends. The reason of this isolation is the negligence of parents towards their children. The families in Pakistan are now shifting from joint family system to nuclear families (Crispin, G. & Mehlar, M. 2013). Both incumbents mother and father are supposed to earn to meet family expenses. Resultantly, parents do not have time to spend with their children which ultimately shift their attention towards online socialisation. One of the teenagers Sitara reported that

The level of satisfaction is changed as parents are too much busy in their practical life that they don't give us the time to share with them our feelings so, we use social media to share our feelings and experiences on web page. While talking with youth about social media as change agent, another important finding is the generational parent-teen gap with respect adaptation of technology. Parents are not fully adapted this mode of communication so, children are supposed to keep them involved in making unknown friendships and share their thoughts and identities with those unknown friends. However, many of the students reported that the learning dynamics are becoming technology oriented which is a good thing for them. They opine that educational institutes are encouraging the use of social networking site for learning purposes. One of the teenagers Zahid reported

In educational institutes, students are advised to make their accounts for getting their assignment checked online or institutes have their pages on SNS so, all updated information is uploaded their pages.

Hence the reported findings of all the participants warrant that social media

is bringing societal changes either it is economics, social, cultural, or ethical.

### **Challenges of social media**

Social media is infantilising the mind of people of the society where they can develop their online identities to share their thoughts and emotions around the world. However, the growing trend of using social media tools is also becoming very challenging for the youth of the society. The participants (parent, teacher, youth) were asked to share their perceptions on the non-productive side of social media. Many key challenges discussed by the participants are further divided into sub themes: psychological context, isolation, and real identities are changing into online identities. The detail of these sub themes is given below:

#### **Psychological context**

The psychologist suggests that behaviours are learned through positive and negative reinforcement (Shteingart & Loewenstein, 2014). Unfortunately, the negative reinforcement of social media is adversely affecting the psychology of youth in many forms such as inferiority complex, cross-gender relationships, early age maturity and sleep deprivation as highlighted in the accounts of many participants. One of the participants Shehzad allude that, The increase use of social networking sites allows the user to access plethora of useful information but apart from the provision of this information, social media has also become a gateway to online victimisation for adolescents of the society.

Similarly another account Asma articulates,

No one can ignore the importance of social media but the flip side effect of media is in the shape of wastage of time, health related issues and flaws in personality.

These excerpts are highlighting the negative connotation of social media as a medium of communication. It is discussed in the narratives of participants that youth is getting distracted from their studies and is more involved in cross gender relationships. Such society where male and female are not allowed to be in relationship before marriage, now it has become easier for them to be in a cross gender relationships. Similarly, the accounts also



discussed the early age maturity issues that swiftly erode our moral values. One participant Rizwan explicates,

Immaturity is one of the main issues which we are facing in this world. As the teen is not mature he is not able to keep his privacy as he/she should. So, this is the biggest problem of social media.

Hence it is clearly noted in literature that youth is getting involved in distractive activities that are spoiling their lives. Their social activities are just retracted to stay in their bedroom and keep themselves connected with virtual community. They do not have any physical activities to perform such as exercise, walk or sports. The element of patients is getting abolished among the youth. When they see their friends' picture with expensive cars or somewhere on a round trip of another country, they get frustrated with their prevailing circumstances that ultimately lead towards depression, stress, isolation and fighting with others.

### **Real identities change into online identities**

Many of the participants highlighted that individuals are losing their personal identities and they do not bother about their offline realities. Youth is more interested to develop their online identities. The element of dehumanising is increasing due to the enormous use of social media networks. Many participants reported that real identities are changing into online identities which are swiftly eroding the beauty of individuality among youth. Youth is always trying to fantasise the things and often forgets about realities which are actually prevailing around them. Asma account articulates that,

The enormous use of social media is badly affecting the individuality of teenagers. Due to emerging cultures, they are deviating from their norms and culture for example, a common practice of engraving tattoos on body. Piercing of lips, noses and eyes is largely affecting the actual identities of youth.

It is very alarming that youth is getting more involved in changing their individual personalities. In Pakistani religion, it is strictly prohibited to engrave tattoos on body but this specter of social media is swiftly eroding the cultural, religious and ethical value of the society.



### Strategies to combat prevailing challenges of social media

Table 5 provides the summary of strategies that are extracting from the excerpts of the participants (teachers and parents). It is highlighted from the accounts of parents that parents should have proper check and balance on the systems of their children so, they can check the activities which are going on. Secondly, parents can join on their related web pages like Facebook to know how what is happening and what are they doing? Similarly, it has also been found that parents, being social pressure on children, should develop friendship and good relations with their children instead of using violence or abusive language which is creating many issues for children who resist their behaviour and deviate from the norms of the society.

**Table 5. Strategies to combat prevailing challenges of social media**

<b>Table 5. Strategies to combat prevailing challenges of social media</b>	
<b>Strategies (parental perspective)</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
Presence on social media (social networking websites) for proper supervision	7
Developing friendship and good relations with their children instead of using violence or abusive language	9
Character building of a teen	10
<b>Strategies (teacher perspective)</b>	
Development of regulatory body consisting of media professional, telecommunication authorities and civil society consumer for the equal representation in devising policies	4
Seminars, counseling session and training on the productive use of social media can be included in weekly discussion with students	5
Teacher presence on social media websites and we can join students groups and create some healthy debates on social media forums	8

One important thing that should impinge is the presence of some regulatory body to keep proper check and balance on the content shared and generated on various social media networks. Many of the participants respond that this regulatory should be comprised of multiple bodies such as media professional, user of social media, journalist and telecommunication media authorities. However, one participant states that there is only one solution and that is just to accept it and to practice it because the society is going through a very radical change and there is need to maintain a very open minded perspective because this is the time to break the Meta narratives. Hence, there is need to keep an eye on youth currently adapting practices of social media usage and develop your own online identities to bring change in the minds of youth instead of imposing restrictions on them.



## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study contributes towards enhancing the in-depth understanding of social media in shaping societal changes in a developing country like Pakistan. The study can be valuable for developing certain regulatory body for social media that provides a proper code of conduct on using pattern of such social networking sites. Such institutions should be developed which provide trainings to parents in order to keep themselves aware with the use of such new social networking sites. The journal community, the technologist and the government should join hands together in order to tackle the privacy related matters. Owing to the dearth of extra curriculum activities, youth is more interested to use web page instead of availing those opportunities.

### Limitations and Future research direction

The first and the foremost limitation is that the study focuses on a small sample relatively which raises an issue of generalisability of this particular study in other sectors or with larger population. The findings reflect the opinions of participants from urban areas who have desirable level of education. Furthermore, a quantitative research can be conducted to check the generalisability of the themes at massive level. A comparative cross gender studies can also be conducted to see the significant changes in the usage pattern of male and female individually.

## REFERENCES

- Ahn, J. (2011). The effect of social network sites on adolescents' social and academic development: Current theories and controversies. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 62(8), 1435-1445.
- Alam, A. M. (2012). Seeding Innovation: Introducing New Digital Tools for Social Change in Pakistan. Retrieved May 2, 2014 from [http://innovation.internews.org/sites/default/files/research/PK%20Seeding%20Innovation.web\\_.pdf](http://innovation.internews.org/sites/default/files/research/PK%20Seeding%20Innovation.web_.pdf)
- Ali, Z., Jan, M., & Iqbal, A. (2013). Social media implications on politics of Pakistan; measuring the impact of facebook. *The international Asian research journal*, 1(1), 13-21
- Ansari, S., & Khan A. (2009). Telecommunication trends in Pakistan. Re-

- trieved 24 April, 2014 from <http://www.pafkiet.edu.pk/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=u7RC2hLlgQ0%3D&tabid=515&mid=1805>
- Bryman, A. A., & Bell, E. (2008). *Business research methods*. (2nd ed.), Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Cabral, J. (2011). Is Generation Y Addicted to Social Media? *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communication*, 2 (1), 5-14.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crispin, G., & Mehlar, M. (2013). Sources of hire 2013: perception is reality. Retrieved May 23, 2014 from <http://www.careerxroads.com/news/SourcesOfHire2013.pdf>
- Crowley, M., & Florin, H. (2011). The new generation gap. *Time*, 178(19), 36-40.
- Curtis, A. (2011). The brief history of social media. *The Brief History of Social Media*. Retrieved May 2, 2014 from <http://www.uncp.edu/home.acurtis/NewMedia/SocialMedia/SocialMediaHistory.html>
- Dattoo, A. K. (2010). Media and Youth Identity in Pakistan: Global-Local Dynamics and Disjuncture. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*, 2.
- Dickey, I. J., & Lewis, W. F. (2011). An Overview of Digital Media and Advertising. *Digital Media and Advertising: User Generated Content Consumption*, 1-31.
- Edwards, S. M. (2011). A social media mindset. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 12(1), 1-3.
- Eijaz, A. (2013). Impact of New Media on Dynamics of Pakistan Politics. *Journal of Political Studies*, 20(1).
- Express Tribune, (2013). Pakistan crosses 10 million Facebook users. Retrieved 24 April, 2014 from <http://tribune.com.pk/story/609177/pakistan-crosses-10-million-facebook-users/>
- Ghannam, J. (2011). Social Media in the Arab World: Leading up to the Uprisings of 2011. Center for International Media Assistance, 3.
- Haque, J. (2013). Pakistan Internet Landscape. Retrieved May 2, 2014, from Bytes for all: <http://content.bytesforall.pk/sites/default/files/MappingReportFinal%20-%20Published.pdf>
- Hussey, J., & Hussey, R. (1997). *Business Research. A Practical Guide for*



- Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students. Palgrave: Basingstoke.
- Jalil, S. A., Jalil, K. A., & Latiff, A. A. (2010). Social Media and our youth today: Exploring the impact of social media on Malaysian youth. In International Conference on Communications and Media, Bayview Hotel, Malacca (pp. 18-20).
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
- Kugelman, M. (2012). Social media in Pakistan: Catalyst for communication not change. NOREF Report. Retrieved May 2, 2014 from [http://www.peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow\\_site/storage/original/application/70df3ab24b007358a91879dfd3354e96.pdf](http://www.peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/70df3ab24b007358a91879dfd3354e96.pdf)
- Kumar, P., Hsiao, M., & Chiu, B. (2009). Generations of consumers and the consumer generated. *Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications*, 20-26.
- Lanier, J. (2010). *You are not a gadget: A manifesto*. New York: Random House
- Lenhart, A. (2009). Adults and social network websites. Pew Internet & American Life Project, January, 14, 2009, Retrieved May 2, 2014 from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Infographics/Growth-in-Adult-SNS-Use-20052009.aspx>
- Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zikuhr, K. (2010). Pew Internet Life Project. Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults.
- Livingstone, S. (2008). Taking risky opportunities in youthful content creation: teenagers' use of social networking sites for intimacy, privacy and self-expression. *New media & society*, 10(3), 393-411.
- Marshall, M. N. (1996). Sampling for qualitative research. *Family practice*, 13(6), 522-526.
- Mir, A. I. (2012). Consumer attitudinal insights about social media advertising: A south Asian perspective. *The Romanian economic journal*, 45, 265-287
- Mourtada, R., & Salem, F. (2011). The Role of Social Media in Arab Women's Empowerment. Dubai, Dubai School of Government 1: 26.
- Nasir, S., Vel, P. & Mateen, H. (2012). Social Media and Buying Behavior

- of Women in Pakistan toward Purchase of Textile Garments. *Business Management Dynamics*, 2(2), 61-69.
- Naveed, N. (2012). Role of social media on public relation, brand involvement and brand commitment. *Interdisciplinary journal of contemporary research in business*, 3(9), 904-912.
- Neelamalar, M. & Chitra. P. (2009). New media and society: A Study on the impact of social networking sites on Indian youth. University of Beira Interior. Retrieved May 2, 2014 from <http://www.ec.ubi.pt/ec/06/pdf/neelamalar-new-media.pdf>
- Prianti, D. D., Comn, M., Amaliah, A., & Ikom, S. (2012). Social media as the new word of mouth study on indonesian largest internet forum (kaskus). *International conference of communication, media, technology and design*, Istanbul, Turkey
- Qualman, Eric. (2009). Statistics Show Social Media is Bigger than You Think. Retrieved 31 March 2014 from <http://socialnomics.net/2009/08/11/statistics-show-social-media-is-bigger-than-you-think/>
- Reader Telecom Exclusive, (2013). Social Media entrench in Pakistan, Trends & Infographic. Retrieved 1st May, 2014 from <http://www.reader.pk/2013/05/31/social-media-trends-in-pakistan.html>
- Shteingart, H., & Loewenstein, Y. (2014). Reinforcement learning and human behavior. *Current Opinion in Neurobiology*, 25, 93-98.
- Solangi, S. (2013). Social media in Pak politics. Retrieved May 2, 2014 from <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=158448>.
- Stirling A. & Attride, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytical tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 1: 385–405.
- Valenzuela, S., Park, N., & Kee, K. F. (2009). Is There Social Capital in a Social Network Site?: Facebook Use and College Students' Life Satisfaction, Trust, and Participation<sup>1</sup>. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14(4), 875-901.
- Waltz, M. (2005). *Alternative and activist media*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Warhol, A. & Colacello, B. (1979). *Andy Warhol's Exposures*. London: Hutchinson.
- Yardi, S., & Bruckman, A. (2011). Social and technical challenges in parenting teens' social media use. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Confer-*



ence on Human Factors in Computing Systems (pp. 3237-3246). ACM.

Yusuf, H. (2013). Mapping Digital Media: Pakistan. Retrieved 5th may, 2014 from <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/mapping-digital-media-pakistan-20130902.pdf>

Zaidi, S., & Sharif, K. (2011). Effects of Third Wave of Revolution on Pakistani Society. Global Media Journal: Pakistan Edition, 4(2).

## Annexure 1

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Parents

Sr. #.	Interviewee	Gender	Age	Qualification	No. of Children
1	Muhammad Haseeb	Male	35-40	Masters	3
2	Abdul Jabbar	Male	40-45	Intermediate	2
3	Noshaba	Female	40-45	Masters	4
4	Mughees	Male	40-45	Masters	3
5	Asma	Female	35-40	Bachelor	2
6	Aliya	Female	35-40	Intermediate+ diploma in architecture	3
7	Rizwan	Male	40-45	Bachelor	3
8	Sohail	Male	40-45	Masters	4
9	Sami	Male	40-45	Masters	3
10	Zunaira	Female	35-40	Masters	3

Table 3. Demographic Profile of Teachers

Sr. No.	Interviewee	Gender	Age	Qualification	Experience
1	Ahmed Fareed	Male	30-35	Master	10
2	Asim	Male	30-35	M.Phil	8
3	Shehzad	Male	30-35	Bachelor	8
4	Bilal	Male	35-40	Master	7
5	Mubashir	Male	35-40	Bachelor	15
6	Maria	Female	25-30	M.Phil	5
7	Nadia	Female	30-35	M.Phil	6
8	Afshan	Female	25-30	Master	5
9	Haris	Male	30-35	Master	7
10	Adnan	Male	35-40	Master	9

Table 4. Demographic Profile of Adolescents

Sr. No.	Interviewee	Gender	Age	Qualification <sup>1</sup>
1	Ali	Male	17	Metric + diploma in textile spinning technology
2	Zainab	Female	15	Metric
3	Shabnam	Female	22	Bachelor
4	Zaigham	Male	16	Intermediate
5	Farhan	Male	17	Bachelor
6	Maryam	Female	18	Bachelor
7	Aliya	Female	19	Bachelor
8	Saleem	Male	18	Metric + professional courses of network designing
9	Zaman	Male	17	Bachelor
10	Zaniya	Female	21	Metric+ diploma in fashion designing
11	Nimra	Female	16	Intermediate
12	Aimen	Female	22	Bachelor
13	Waqas	Male	15	Metric
14	Shafaat	Male	22	Bachelor
15	Farrukh	Male	21	Bachelor
16	Adnan	Male	21	Metric + professional courses of fashion designing
17	Zahid	Male	21	Bachelor
18	Sumaiya	Female	19	Bachelor
19	Sitara	Female	22	Bachelor
20	Ayehsa	Female	17	Metric + Diploma of fine arts

<sup>3</sup> We have mentioned the qualifications of adolescents in which they are currently enrolled