

Ph.D. Thesis

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND LEVEL OF  
POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE: ANALYZING THE  
EFFECTS OF TWITTER AND FACEBOOK**



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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Media and Communication Studies at  
Faculty of Social Sciences,  
International Islamic University, Islamabad

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## **DEDICATION**

**To All Those Who Have Always Dreamt of Pakistan As Tolerant Society And  
Resisted All Forms of Intolerance.**

## **DECLARATION**

I certify that this thesis for the award of PhD is entirely my own work, that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not, to the best of my knowledge, breach any law of copyright, and has been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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## Abstract

This Ph.D. thesis explores the relationship between social media use and intolerance, specifically focusing on the effects of two major platforms, Facebook and Twitter (X). The study utilizes survey research methods to measure both political and religious intolerance among Pakistani social media users. The main objectives of the research are to analyze and compare the role and effects of Facebook and Twitter on the level of political and religious intolerance, examine the interdependent relationship between social media consumption and intolerance, and determine whether these platforms reinforce existing political and religious intolerance among Pakistani users. Through the analysis of survey data, the study confirms the existence of strong relationships between Facebook and Twitter usage and religious and political intolerance among Pakistani social media users. The findings suggest that these platforms contribute to the promotion and reinforcement of intolerance, exacerbating existing divisions within society. The study throws light on the specific ways social media use, influences the level of intolerance and highlights the need for interventions to address this issue. This study found that the excessive use of social media leads to intolerant behavior among users. The findings of the study have significant implications for government social media regulatory authorities, social media platforms, and society as a whole. Recognizing the negative impact of social media on intolerance, it is crucial to develop public awareness campaigns, implement effective social media policies, enhance algorithmic transparency, promote digital literacy and critical thinking skills, foster diverse and inclusive online communities, and encourage multi-stakeholder collaboration. By addressing the limitations and challenges posed by social media platforms, we can work towards creating a more tolerant and inclusive online environment. In short, this thesis contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the relationship between social media use and intolerance.

**Keywords:** Facebook, Twitter, Political Intolerance, Religious Intolerance, Social Media, Users.

# CHAPTER NO 1

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has profoundly impacted global society, reshaping perspectives and daily experiences on the planet Earth. Human interaction has undergone intricate transformations due to technological advancements, with one-on-one communication and relationships now heavily influenced by digital tools. Individuals increasingly rely on gadgets and technology to navigate their thoughts and actions, leading to lifestyles deeply intertwined with technological innovations. The pervasive presence of technology in our lives, evident in the time spent engaging with various devices, defines our modern world. This study rigorously attempts to explore the relationship between usage of social media platforms and its impact on their behavior.

The growth of computer-enabled technologies and applications and, their mass usage by everyone has helped in realizing the dream of a perceived 'networking society'. The constant growth and consumption of virtual realities have opened endless exploration possibilities for researchers and social scientists. It has generated considerable interest within the realm of new media and their effects on individual life and the society. Social science researchers in general and media researchers in particular are continuing to investigate aspects of technology-driven social media platforms thus creating debates on the linkages of media effects research with the new formats of media. Social effects of different computer or cell phone-supported communication means have provided the basis for numerous new theories for a better understanding of human attitudes. Studies have investigated and suggested how social networking is carried out by individuals and communities to their advantage and at times to the disadvantage of others.

The previous literature has emphasized that people considerably rely on social media platforms to gratify their communication needs, human to technology relations and human-to-human relations are being mediated and carried forward with the help of these platforms. Other studies have suggested how human beings have fallen prey to the addictive nature of modern-day technologies and social media Apps, used to connect and display varied forms of human feelings and relations.

Likewise, social media sites and applications have gradually attained so much importance given their innovative nature and usefulness of the purpose, be it sharing of ideas, posting of family pictures, propagation of political or religious thoughts, or celebration of a success or an anniversary. Social Networking Sites (SNS) have become powerful tools not only for expressing opinions on social, political, cultural, and religious issues but also for mediating relations and feelings among users.

Social media platforms, as defined by Rathnayake and Winter (2017), require users to possess new skills. Boyd and Ellison (2007) emphasize the need for users to adapt to the diverse audiences found on social media, including the challenge of handling context collapse where previously separate audiences collide on social network sites (SNS). Rathnayake and Winter (2017) argue that political attributes, such as tolerance and dogmatism, play a crucial role in developing these skills for online interaction in general and online political engagement specifically. They suggest that individuals with a highly dogmatic mindset may struggle when engaging with people from different social backgrounds, while those with high levels of tolerance may find it easier to interact with a diverse network of online "friends." Nevertheless, they (2017) elaborate on the potential consequences of a lack of tolerance or excessive dogmatism. They highlight that these

attitudes can lead to unacceptable behaviors such as hate speech and defamation, which in turn can disrupt political engagement on social media. Thus, it becomes imperative for social media policies and designs to account for how these attributes shape user gratifications, ultimately influencing variations in online political behavior. Above said, it is widely believed that Pakistan is a society full of too much political activity. Traditional media and now social media provide a readily available stage for all those desirous to perform as political actors. Therefore, the expression of political and religious views, with the attributes of tolerance or intolerance, as the case may be, through different ways and means on social media is of utmost importance.

Social media platforms and networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Reddit, Pinterest, Flickr, LinkedIn, and others have made their inroads in the lives of individuals making them dependent on these apps one way or the other. Among them, Facebook and Twitter are considered the most popular, especially when it comes to displaying personal thoughts and activities and sharing or posting of content. This study focuses on two major social media platforms/Apps i.e. Facebook and Twitter, as both are very popular among social media users in Pakistan. Being called the ‘alternative media’, social media have emerged as the major source of communication and networking when it comes to sharing news in general and political news in particular. In July 2023, Musk, CEO of X unveiled plans for a rebranding of Twitter to X, indicating the retirement of both the iconic bird logo and the name Twitter. However, for this study, Twitter was consistently utilized due to its approval by numerous committees. So, the researcher tended to refer to the platform as Twitter throughout the thesis, rather than X.

According to globalstates, the latest percentage of the users in Pakistan in 2023 is

80.87% Facebook, 11.27% Twitter, 6.03% YouTube, 1.36% Instagram, 0.38% Pinterest, and 0.04% LinkedIn (GlobalStats, 2023).

According to Ravey (2020), Gandhi once said, "Those who think religion and politics are unrelated don't understand either". It is generally acknowledged that these two subjects have a deep and established relationship. Given that 97% population of Pakistan is Muslim, religion and religiosity appear to be very widespread in the daily lives of Pakistanis. Religion is not only a source of knowledge for day-to-day affairs but also impacts the lives of followers in many ways such as spiritual practices and political decision-making.

The researchers have extensively investigated the association between religion and political orientation. In a study by Lee et al., (2018), it was revealed that religiosity exhibited a correlation with right-wing political orientation. This finding was based on a sample encompassing 33 different countries. Interestingly, within the sample from the United States, the correlation was even stronger than in the overall sample (Lee et al., 2018). These results provide additional evidence supporting the interconnectedness of religion and politics, suggesting a prevailing conservative trend in this relationship. It is crucial to acknowledge that numerous factors can influence an individual's beliefs and affiliations, indicating the complexity of these associations.

### **1.1 Starting Point for Intolerance: Hatred of “Those Who Are Different”**

Intolerance towards those who are perceived as different is a multifaceted issue that has been extensively researched by social scientists. Fear and hatred are common starting points for intolerance, and these emotions may arise from a variety of factors, including cultural norms, personal experiences, and biological predispositions (Stephan & Renfro,

2002).

One factor that contributes to intolerance is a perceived threat to one's identity and status. Research indicates that individuals who view members of other groups as a threat to their own identity and status are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward those groups (Esses et al., 2008). This threat may arise from differences in race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and nationality.

A lack of exposure and understanding towards people who are different is another factor that contributes to intolerance. Studies have found that individuals who have limited contact with members of other groups are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward those groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). This lack of exposure can be reinforced by cultural or societal norms that value conformity and homogeneity.

Intolerance can also be perpetuated through misinformation or stereotypes. For instance, negative stereotypes about certain racial or ethnic groups can be perpetuated through media portrayals, which can reinforce negative attitudes toward those groups (Dixon & Linz, 2000). Intolerance has serious consequences for both individuals who are targeted and society as a whole, such as discrimination, violence, and exclusion, creating a climate of fear and division. To combat intolerance, it is crucial to cultivate empathy and understanding towards people who are different from ourselves. This can involve seeking out opportunities for exposure and interaction with members of other groups, as well as challenging negative stereotypes and misinformation when we come across them. By actively working towards empathy and understanding, we can create a more inclusive and accepting society.



## **1.2 Political Intolerance**

Tolerance is defined as a non-judgmental and unbiased acceptance of any speech or action. Political tolerance, on the other hand, entails a readiness to grant fundamental constitutional rights such as freedom of speech, publishing, and candidacy to groups and ideas that may be considered offensive, as well as civil liberties to individuals with different views than one's own. Political intolerance refers to the unwillingness to grant basic rights and civil liberties to individuals with opposing political views. Even in well-established democracies, some level of intolerance can exist, especially during times of crisis or perceived threat (Merolla & Zechmeister, 2009). Developing countries such as Pakistan may experience even higher levels of political intolerance. Political tolerance has been recognized as a crucial factor for societal progress and peaceful co-existence, particularly in multicultural and pluralistic societies (see, e.g., Oskarsson & Widmalm, 2016). Therefore, it has garnered significant attention in recent years. Political tolerance is characterized by the willingness to tolerate and express ideas that are not only disliked but actively opposed, even if they challenge one's way of life (Heyd, 2003).

Our society is suffering from detrimental polarization, which has led to mutual mistrust among groups and created divisions, intolerance, and a breakdown in societal bonds (Saleem, 2021). Political party affiliations have become a defining aspect of our social identity, and hate speech and aggressive language have become the norm when addressing opponents. The use of religion in politics has only added to the problem. This has resulted in dangerous trends such as making baseless allegations, accusations, and indictments without a fair trial and giving harsh punishments without judicial review. These trends have caused anxiety among those concerned with national integration in

Pakistan. Pakistan was founded as a country where Muslims could practice their religion freely and where minorities were guaranteed equal rights under the constitution (Niazi, 2012).

National integration refers to the continuous development of providing equal opportunities and rights to all citizens without any discrimination (Afridi et al., 2019). It also fosters a sense of belonging that binds all segments of society together in a cohesive manner to serve and develop the nation. Therefore, national interests should be given priority over politics (Lodhi, 2020). The diversity of language, religion, ethnicity, and race adds value to nationhood and should be effectively harmonized and utilized in the form of a social contract between the state and society. It is a well-established fact that when the social contract between the state and society is strong and progressive, both entities are incentivized and compelled to work for each other. However, it is unfortunate that in Pakistan, this social contract has largely been ignored, and society feels excluded due to various factors such as governance, underdevelopment, rampant corruption, and lack of equal opportunities and development, to name a few.

Crawford and Pilanski (2014) researched political intolerance, examining not only a single issue such as anti-American or anti-Arab speech, but rather delving into eight distinct political issues. These encompassed topics such as gay rights, abortion rights, separation of church and state, affirmative action, health care reform, criticism of political leaders, political party activism, and immigration policy. By exploring a broad range of issues, their study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of political intolerance across multiple domains.

In their research, Crawford and Pilanski incorporated the insights of Lindner and

Nosek (2009) by examining intolerance directed at both left-wing and right-wing targets. They adopted the innovative experimental approach proposed by Lindner and Nosek to investigate political intolerance. While Lindner and Nosek interpreted their findings as being consistent with previous empirical evidence that associates conservatism with intolerance, they exercised caution in not making broad generalizations based on their specific experiments. They acknowledged that their experiments primarily focused on intolerance towards "racially charged speech," which may differ in nature from intolerance towards speech originating from individuals with opposing ideologies. To further explore these questions, Lindner and Nosek encouraged other political psychologists to utilize a variety of statements that represent extreme left-wing or extreme right-wing ideological positions (emphasis in original) (p. 89). Crawford and Pilanski conducted a noteworthy study that explored the determinants of political intolerance, including authoritarianism and normative threats, among others. Their research sheds light on the concept that in a democratic society, it is not necessary to agree with political opponents, but it is essential to acknowledge their right to free speech, assembly, and the advocacy of their political objectives. This notion of political tolerance is defined by scholars as the extent to which we extend civil liberties and rights, such as those mentioned, to groups or individuals with whom we hold differing viewpoints (Crawford & Pilanski, 2014). Their study provides valuable insights into the understanding of political tolerance within democratic contexts. Garcia et al., (2015) note, that political polarization is necessary for a democratic system to work, but too much of it can result in deadlock or even violent confrontation. This explains the fact that social media have vast potential to provide platforms for political deliberations. More and more work needs to be done to explore to what extent these

platforms help promote intolerant behavior on political issues or helping in undermining such tendencies shown by users of different social networking sites.

Miller et al., (2015) in their study have discussed how Facebook is used as a platform for politics. The study looks at the connection between Facebook location and political debate. It has mapped the friendship links among students at a university and calculated their centralities in that network using a survey name generator. Positively correlated with more frequent political debates on Facebook is social closeness inside the university network. Political behavior of individuals using social media platforms is of significant interest to new media and social media researchers and theories such as 'Social Learning Theory' and 'Uses and Gratification' have been applied to gauge various patterns and levels of the political activity of the users and particular groups they may belong to.

Considerable effort has been put into defining political intolerance by past scholars, and at this point, the fundamental aspects of the concept are comprehended. The act of tolerating entails permitting, but despite the simplicity of this definition, several complicated issues arise when attempting to clarify what should be permitted, by whom, and under what conditions. One commonly accepted explanation of political tolerance maintains that toleration necessitates enduring opinions that one disagrees with. This definition highlights the crucial "objection precondition," which implies that one cannot be tolerant of concepts that align with their personal beliefs. Political tolerance involves the act of refraining from repressing one's political adversaries. Democrats may not tolerate fellow Democrats, but they might or might not tolerate Communists. The concept of political tolerance pertains to permitting political actions by those who are considered political foes. However, it raises the question of what exactly should be allowed. Every

society has some legitimate boundaries on the political activities that groups can engage in, and it is generally agreed that political violence or terrorism cannot be tolerated. Nevertheless, numerous other activities fall outside the category of illegal but are still subject to disagreements. The difficult task is to establish a principled stance from which the scope of acceptable behaviors can be determined.

### **1.3 Social Psychology of Political Tolerance**

Conspiratorial thinking serves as a major psychological mechanism for making sense of social realities that are threatening or unsettling, according to studies conducted by Douglas et al. (2019) and Uscinski & Parent (2014). In the face of chaotic or hazardous occurrences such as natural disasters, pandemics, economic crises, or social change that challenge an individual's sense of control over their environment, some individuals resort to conspiracy theories as a coping mechanism (Prooijen & Acker, 2015). In the field of social psychology, the concepts of de-politicization and politicization are commonly examined within the context of efforts to enhance the rights, power, and influence of marginalized minority groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Successful social change often requires collective action from minority members, particularly when they perceive the intergroup structure as unjust and unstable. The social identity model of collective action (Zomeren et al., 2008) proposes that collective action is influenced by three key factors: perceived injustice, a sense of collective efficacy, and a strong politicized minority identity. These factors, either independently or in combination, predict the likelihood of engaging in collective action. Consequently, when compared to instances of explicit or subtle biases (Sohi & Singh, 2015), a higher level of tolerance may result in minority members paying less attention to group-based inequalities. This reduced focus on disparities may

subsequently decrease their inclination towards collective action aimed at addressing these issues.

#### **1.4 Conceptual and Operational Approaches to Political Tolerance**

As defined by social scientists, political tolerance pertains to a willingness to grant all members of the polity the right of citizenship, which involves granting political freedoms to those with opposing political views. According to Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus (1979), tolerance suggests being able to "put up with" ideas that one disagrees with and allowing the expression of those ideas or interests that one opposes. A tolerant individual or regime permits a wide range of ideas that challenge their way of life. Other scholars define tolerance similarly, such as Prothro and Grigg (1960). However, the question remains, what type of activities should be allowed to challenge political views? The first attempt to measure political tolerance considered not only the rights of speech and assembly but also the right to not be excluded based on political affiliation from having one's book in a library, working as an entertainer or singer, teaching in a school, or working in a defense plant, (Stouffer,1955).

Prothro and Grigg (1960), for instance, propose that democracy consists of two critical components, namely, majority rule and minority rights, which include the freedom to dissent. Stouffer (1955) emphasized the importance of political tolerance for nonconformists, while McClosky (1964) expanded on the key dimensions of democracy. According to McClosky and Chong (1980), consent, accountability, limited or constitutional government, representation, majority rule, minority rights, freedom of speech and assembly, equality of opportunity, religious toleration, equality before the law, the right to legal representation, and personal autonomy in a variety of intimate matters are

among them (McClosky and Chong, 1980). As a result, a diverse range of actions has been identified that must be tolerated, but there is a notable lack of agreement on the norms that must be accepted and the activities that should be tolerated. Most researchers (except McClosky) who study political tolerance have not provided clear and detailed definitions or ways to measure the various sub-dimensions of the concept, except McClosky. For example, while support for free speech is often included in measures of tolerance, there is no clear conceptualization or operationalization of this continuum. The Stouffer item on free speech, which simply asks about a person's abstract commitment to freedom, is not an adequate measure of willingness to protect free speech. Overall, current approaches do not break down the larger concept of political tolerance into its theoretical subcomponents. Instead, tolerance is treated as a single attitude, rather than a belief system with multiple dimensions.

Dahl (1970) views that our research aims to provide a more rigorous understanding of political tolerance by identifying its specific sub-dimensions. Rather than attempting to define tolerance exhaustively, which may not be feasible given the diverse perspectives on the topic, we concentrate on the endorsement of institutional safeguards for political opposition. In particular, political tolerance refers to the opposition against state actions that impede the ability of citizens, either individually or collectively, to compete for political power, which includes the right to vote, participate in political parties, and engage in political organization. It also involves the opportunity to engage in political persuasion, such as the freedom of speech and assembly. Our approach highlights the relevance of tolerance for democratic regimes, where competition and contestation are essential. While it is widely acknowledged that freedom of speech is vital for democratic societies, the

precise activities that warrant protection under this right remain contested. The literature on political tolerance has focused more on the identity of groups rather than the content of their speech, leaving little guidance on which types of speech should be protected. A common approach to measuring political tolerance involves asking participants whether minority political groups, both presumed and verified as unpopular, should have the right to deliver speeches. However, without clarifying the nature of the speech in question, respondents' attitudes towards the group often override their views on the specific content of their speech. For example, when asked whether a communist should be permitted to speak, responses are often influenced by people's preconceptions and evaluations of the communist ideology, making it difficult to isolate attitudes towards speech itself.

In addition, this method creates an incorrect assumption that the public would approve of a total prohibition on communist speeches, when in reality they may only wish to restrict certain types of speeches, irrespective of the speaker's affiliation. To develop accurate measures of support for civil liberties, it is crucial to define the context in which liberty is being exercised. Without context, the question posed to respondents is too ambiguous and may not have a shared meaning. For example, in Lawrence's study, participants were asked whether "people should be allowed to hold a peaceful demonstration to ask the government to act on some issue" (Lawrence 1976), but the context of the demonstration was not specified. To improve control over attitudes towards activities, it is preferable for the analyst, rather than the respondent, to specify and control the contextual domain, just as better control over attitudes towards groups must be achieved. Hence, it is important to acknowledge that exercising civil liberties can create conflict between values. While democracy demands free speech, it also requires some level



of social order, and there needs to be a balance between the various requirements of democracy. As seen from the considerable difference in responses between abstract and specific questions in the survey, exercising civil liberties can be a conflicting, zero-sum activity.

In societies with diverse populations, exercising one's liberty often comes at the expense of others. The contentious and sometimes violent history of debates surrounding freedom of speech in the United States highlights the zero-sum nature of exercising one's rights. In various cases, speech has been prohibited due to concerns about violence, obscenity, the authority of schools over students, support for war, minority group membership, and attachment to the status quo. When exercising rights, there are often costs involved, and these costs can be significant enough to cause conflict. Therefore, asking about "a speech in my community" (Lewis, 1952) is insufficient because it does not provide enough information to respondents about the potential conflicts that may arise within a specific context due to exercising one's rights.

## **1.5 Religious Intolerance**

Religious tolerance refers to the act of permitting others to hold beliefs about God(s) that differ from one's own. The world today is plagued with religious intolerance, driven by the belief that one religion is superior to all others, while the rest are false, distorted, or nonexistent (Nussbaum, 2004). The United Nations General Assembly declared in 1981 the need to eliminate all forms of intolerance and discrimination that are rooted in religion or belief (United Nations, 1981).

There is plenty of literature available on how intolerance is displayed in public behavior concerning religion or anything concerning religion. For instance, research in

many Western countries has lately seen a focus on intolerance being shown towards alien religions, especially Islam. Europe's liberalism and multi-culturalism philosophies have been challenged or re-aligned following the new dimensions and settings related to immigration and diaspora issues. Concepts and philosophies such as anti-Semitism and religious obscurantism are being debated afresh versus rationalism and secularism.

Religious tolerance and intolerance are widely debated topics in Pakistan, attracting attention from both scholars and non-scholars alike. These issues have been covered in various media outlets, including social media, newspapers, and academic journals. One key concern is the issue of intergroup relations and the growing lack of religious tolerance. For instance, there have been discussions on social media regarding religious matters such as expressions of hatred towards Jews and Christians, rejection of differences among Islamic groups, terrorism, and related issues (Fahmi, 2018). The issue of religious intolerance has gained widespread attention and is related to the destructive actions of individuals exhibiting religious intolerance. Several instances of destruction of places of worship by specific groups have been reported in Minahasa, Mojokerto, Aceh, and Surabaya, which have further fueled discussions on the issue (Amindoni et al., 2019). Additionally, the proliferation of social media has given people the freedom to discuss and express their opinions about religious matters. However, this freedom of discussion has also led to the spreading of hatred and disrupted social harmony, as seen in Pakistan in recent years (Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2016).

Religious extremism has been present in South Asia for a long time, with some claiming its origins date back to the Indus Valley Civilization in 2500 BCE (Malik et al., 2002). Pakistan has had its share of such movements, including the declaration of Ahmadis

as a non-Muslim minority in 1973 by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who played a key role in drafting the country's constitution. In 1984, Ordinance XX was enacted by Zia ul Haq, leading to severe persecution of Ahmadis, with the "Mullah and Madrassah culture" at its peak (Khan, 2012). This period marked the beginning of real Islamisation in Pakistan, which has been described as religious extremism and suppression (Malik et al., 2002). In many nations throughout the world, the enactment of blasphemy laws disguised as legislation against religious slander has wreaked devastation (Human Rights First, 2012). Conflicts between Muslims and other religious groups are not the only instances of religious violence; episodes of violence also happen among various Islamic sects (Wild et. al., 2012). One of Pakistan's most serious manifestations of extremism has been characterized as sectarian bloodshed, and it has led to conflicts of identity between Sunni and Shia Muslims. This divide has been exploited by militant groups, who have used it as a political weapon rather than a religious cause (Nasr, 2000). The issues such as 'Reflexive Jew-hatred', as the sociologist Mark Elchardus has documented within Moroccan immigrant communities, are being addressed with media representation. Additionally, political leaders and the upper class have utilized their positions to create discriminatory pressure on certain groups for their self-interest (Toor, 2011).

Krausz (2017) studied the General Elections held in the Netherlands on March 15, 2017. The research highlighted the prevalence of anti-immigration and anti-Muslim sentiments during that period. As the elections approached, questions of tolerance and intolerance were at the forefront of many people's minds throughout the country.

The connection between religiosity and tolerance has been explored by Allport and Kramer (1946). Their research revealed that higher levels of religiosity were associated with lower levels of tolerance. Additionally, Davis (2002) highlights that religious intolerance has been a topic of

debate for many years. As a statement that defends religious freedom globally, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief from 1981 is extremely noteworthy. One of the most important international agreements addressing religious freedom and outlawing prejudice or discrimination based on religion or belief is commonly considered as such. During the drafting process of the document, there was a disagreement among the communists regarding the use of the term 'religion.' They contended that by solely using this term, the principle of intolerance did not extend to atheism. Davis elaborates on their perspective, explaining that they believed nonbelief should receive the same level of protection as belief, and using the term 'religion' seemed to favor belief over non-belief. To address this concern, a compromise was reached by incorporating the word 'whatever' before 'belief.' This modification ensured that the declaration now safeguards all worldviews, including agnosticism, atheism, and rationalism.

Iuhas (2019) conducted a content analysis study that explores how the ongoing conflicts and intolerance among followers of various religions in Romania are portrayed in the press. According to him, media content plays a crucial role in disseminating messages that can shape societal perceptions. In his study, he emphasizes the importance of confronting contemporary challenges including racism, exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination as well as intolerance, terrorism, xenophobia, and violent nationalism. As an illustration, he cites the "Declaration of Principles on Tolerance," which the UNESCO General Conference enacted on November 16, 1995, declaring that day to be the International Day of Tolerance. This declaration serves as a reminder of the importance of fostering tolerance in a world confronted by various crises and social challenges.

There were ample studies conducted to explore the contours of tolerance level

about religion in Pakistan society. Ispahani (2017) has discussed the role of clergy and the state in letting extremism spread. She has listed some factors making things worse such as the radicalization of Pakistani society, educational curriculum based on hatred for minorities, and judicial system not protecting minorities. Hanif et.al. (2020) while discussing various factors causing discrimination against religious minorities in Pakistan have termed 'religious intolerance' a significant challenge besides other social challenges. Going into the historical background, the study tells that intolerance has been growing in Pakistan since the 1970s. The study also tried to explore linkages between religious tolerance and religiosity and found out through different previous studies that the higher the level of religiosity, the lower the tolerance. Among many others, the study quotes Bilgili (2015) concluding that the past studies on tolerance and religiosity in Turkey showed that religious people are less tolerant. While there were a good number of studies conducted on religiosity and tolerance there isn't much significant work gone into exploring the relationship between social media usage and religious intolerance.

In the world, Pakistan has one of the largest number of reported incidents related to religious extremism and animosity against religious minorities, all justified under the guise of religion (Human Rights First, 2012). As per the Jinnah Institute, a secular organization, the condition of non-Muslims in Pakistan has worsened to an unprecedented degree (Faruqi, 2010). Their ability to obtain education, employment, and healthcare has been declining, and there have been multiple instances of violent assaults against them. Furthermore, the public perception of the situation is also deteriorating (Khan, 2012). Instances of religious violence are not limited to conflicts between Muslims and other religious groups. Violent incidents also occur between different sects and sub-sects of

Islam (Yusuf, 2012). Sectarian violence is considered to be one of the most extreme forms of extremism in Pakistan, particularly due to the divide between Sunnis and Shias which has resulted in conflicts of identity. This divide has become a potent political weapon, with militant groups exploiting it for their agenda rather than for any religious cause (Nasr, 2000). Furthermore, the ruling class and upper echelons of society use their influence to create discriminatory peer pressure for various self-serving motives, (Toor, 2011).

The deep ethnic and sectarian divisions in Pakistan have left the country exposed to external influence and praetorianism (Haleem, 2003). Pakistan is of significant interest to external powers such as NATO and Al-Qaeda, particularly in matters related to terrorism, militancy, religious discrimination, and other extremist activities (Toor, 2011). The ongoing situation in Afghanistan has had a significant negative impact on Pakistan, and continues to do so (Kibaroglu, 2012). Various social factors have been identified as causes and consequences of religious intolerance. Discrimination against religious minorities such as Ahmadis, Sikhs, and Christians is rampant due to a lack of social justice (Sikand, 2020). The political crisis that arose due to Ordinance XX in 1984 resulted in widespread hate and discrimination against Ahmadis (Mahmud, 1995). In 2009, the Sikhs were forcibly displaced and required to pay a religious tax (Jizya) in FATA as a result of a rift between the Pakistani government and the Taliban (Gaur, 2010). Additionally, Christians in Pakistan face terror from multiple sources, including false accusations, mob attacks, targeted killings, burning of churches, and destruction of the Bible (The Religion of Peace, 2016). Mahmud (1995) further underscores the lack of social justice towards religious minorities in Pakistan.

According to Nussbaum (2004), the most perilous manifestation of religious

intolerance is when a religious majority group attempts to coerce others to alter their religious beliefs. In Pakistan, one form of prejudice against religious minorities is the distribution of hate literature in the form of pamphlets and brochures, which has a lasting negative impact on people's minds and contributes to inequality (Kibaroglu, 2012). The editorial policies of newspapers in Pakistan have resulted in greater coverage of Christians than other religious minority groups in the media. In contrast, the Ahmadi community is either ignored or portrayed in a negative light (Ali & Jalaluddin, 2010).

The Pakistani educational system is marred by inequality. Discrimination based on religion is prevalent in madrassas, which follow a religious curriculum, and public schools (Howard et. al., 2011). In Pakistan's class-based society, where religion is central, intolerance is systematically cultivated at the grassroots level due to the distinct types of educational institutions (Rahman, 2020). The national school curriculum in Pakistan, which spans from primary to secondary education, has failed to achieve its intended purpose of developing enlightened and progressive young individuals (Nayyar & Salim, 2005). Under the Zia regime, the school curriculum was extensively Islamized and intertwined with national identity (Harraguchi & Lall, 2015). More recently, the criticism of other sects' teachings has been cited as a factor contributing to the rise of sectarian violence in Pakistan (Rahman, 2020).

## **1.6 Social Psychology of Religious Tolerance**

The field of psychology has shown an increasing interest in dual and multiple social identities, as evidenced by recent research (Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2017). Cultural and religious diversity often leads to situations where individuals are faced with opposing beliefs, norms, and practices of different groups, which may conflict with their values,

moral beliefs, and sense of self (Crawford and Pilanski, 2014).

The Enlightenment is often credited with the growth of religious tolerance in Europe. When beginning college, freshmen have high expectations that their institution will support their emotional and spiritual development, and help them understand their values and express their spirituality. Differences in levels of spirituality and religiosity can significantly affect a student's political and social beliefs. Additionally, religious beliefs and practices can impact a student's overall well-being, both psychologically and physically. Engaging in religious activities can provide a source of social support outside of the home, helping to combat feelings of loneliness and isolation that may lead to mental health issues (Sherkat & Ellison, 1999).

## **1.7 Defining Social Media**

Although social media and social networking are frequently used synonymously, social media refers primarily to online groups and website software that promotes social engagement. Web-based and mobile apps that allow people and organizations to develop, connect, and share ideas or material through different digital interactions are collectively referred to as social media technology (SMT). Social media provides online communities where people can interact with each other (Wild et. al., 2012)

Social media has revolutionized networking by enabling individuals to exchange ideas, experiences, and contacts in a virtual space. The terms social networks and social media are often used interchangeably, and websites are frequently employed as a platform for online social networks. This offers significant potential for businesses and customers alike (Young, 2011). According to Neil Selwyn, social networking sites are personalized and interactive spaces online where users can share content based on their profiles, which



showcase individual information, interests, pictures, and more, and allow users to connect with others. Facebook, Twitter, and Bebo are some of the most prominent examples of social networking sites (Selwyn, 2009).

Burke (2012) defines social networking sites as platforms where people can freely interact and communicate through websites. The internet has enabled users to build numerous relationships with others regardless of geographical distance. Social networking sites serve as tools for creating virtual communities where individuals with similar cultural backgrounds, lifestyles, interests, and behaviors can connect (Bolotaeva & Cata, 2010). Initially, online communities were assumed to facilitate connections between users outside their existing social circles. However, early research has shown that offline and online networks often intersect. Recent studies indicate that most social network sites primarily reinforce existing social relationships. These platforms support the maintenance and strengthening of offline connections while also facilitating the formation of new ones (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Certain applications on social media are synchronous, such as instant messengers, social networking sites, and microblogging. Conversely, some are asynchronous, like emailing, blogging, chrome, and browsers, among others. These classifications can be divided into two categories:

**Synchronous Communication Tools:** These tools facilitate real-time communication and collaboration in the "same time different place" mode, providing users with immediate feedback and spontaneous reactions. Examples include instant messengers, social networking sites, and microblogging, which are mostly utilized for chatting and audio-video conferencing.

**Asynchronous Communication Tools:** This feature enables adult ESL learners to connect and collaborate through a "different time-different place" mode, providing widespread flexibility in asynchronous ESL enhancement. There are two forms of this approach: facilitated and self-paced peers.

## **1.8 Social Media in Pakistan**

Javed et al. (2023), claim that social media is increasingly vital in shaping public opinion and fostering peace in the ongoing fight against extremism. Pakistan has placed significant importance on developing a counter-narrative to effectively address extremism. Their research primarily examines the potential and effectiveness of social media in promoting counter-narratives against extremism and combating radicalization in Pakistan. The study underscores the involvement of diverse stakeholders, including government institutions, journalists, and peace builders. Data collection involved the distribution of questionnaires to 120 journalists and peace builders throughout Pakistan. The findings reveal that while social media is a popular information source, it is perceived as both unreliable and inaccessible in many regions and among specific populations. The analysis of social media platforms highlights the criticality of targeting the appropriate audience through a suitable platform. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that social media possesses significant potential in countering extremism in Pakistan. Nonetheless, both governmental and non-governmental organizations must effectively harness its power.

Baig et al. (2023) conducted research investigating the influence of social media platforms on the dissemination of religious narratives by Islamic scholars from various sects. A significant number of young individuals on social media choose to follow their preferred Islamic scholars. Mahmood et al., (2022) conducted a qualitative study

investigating why social media is perceived as a platform for freedom of speech by religious minorities in Pakistan. The study includes four in-depth interviews with Christian activists in the country. The research reveals significant challenges in providing media coverage to religious minorities in Pakistan. The findings indicate that religious minorities face discrimination due to biased decisions made by higher authorities, lack of information about their beliefs and practices, and limited support from both minority and majority communities, which hinders the establishment of peace. The study highlights that English media, whether in print or electronic form, offers adequate coverage to religious minorities in Pakistan. Additionally, it is observed that religious minorities in Pakistan prefer using social networking sites such as Facebook to exercise their freedom of speech and expression, as it provides a convenient platform to convey their message without any intermediaries shaping their narratives.

In 2019, the Supreme Court ruling enabled Christians to legally register their marriages with a marriage certificate, marking a significant development (Rai et al., 2021). Research suggests that the use of Facebook groups facilitates problem-solving within the Christian community and correlates with increased awareness of social issues (Batool et al., 2021). However, despite constitutional protection, marginalized groups, including religious minorities, face limited access to free speech. The absence of freedom of speech and information rights for religious minorities in Pakistan remains a concern. To address this, changes should be made to existing laws that discriminate against religious minorities and disproportionately impact them. Sections 20 (criminal defamation) and 37 (content moderation) of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act of 2016 need to be reviewed to ensure compliance with international human rights frameworks (Shahid et al., 2020). While

social media plays a role, it is equally important to foster an inclusive educational environment where textbooks do not contain hate speech. Students should be taught to appreciate the contributions of individuals from diverse faiths, including Hindu, Sikh, Christian, and Ahmadi, while also discussing historical figures.

Jin et al., (2020) say that the internet has provided a platform for politicians and the public to engage in political discourse and address the traumas associated with conflicts and discrimination against minority politicians based on their appearance. Political parties have embraced social media platforms to promote their agendas and combat hate speech directed toward opposing parties. Social media also has a significant influence on the voting decisions of innocent individuals through political campaigns aimed at motivating them to vote. However, managing the content on social media, particularly during election campaigns, poses challenges. He highlights that political actors often employ Twitter companies for their campaigns, but these companies may inadvertently promote fake advertisements, negatively impacting parties that are not favored. Unfortunately, illiterate individuals tend to blindly trust fake news and vote based on information from hired accounts.

Digital media is not a new invention in political communication, as it has evolved alongside the growth of communication channels over time. A few decades ago, political parties had websites with limited options for disseminating political messages. However, during election campaigns, social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube introduced new tools for sharing information and engaging in interactive discourse (Fox & Weisberg, 2011). Over the last few years, the advent of the internet, coupled with the emergence of various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, has

significantly altered the way we perceive political communication (Gibson, 2005). According to Raof et al., (2013), social networking sites have been analyzed as a means of driving political change. The researchers noted that social media have been widely used as an interactive tool for communication between voters and political candidates.

Twitter has become a popular social media platform worldwide since its inception in 2006. Several studies have been carried out to examine the data available on Twitter (Shu et al., 2011). Twitter serves as a platform for communication and sharing content, such as images, videos, and thoughts (Java et al., 2007). Biswas et al., (2014) investigated the impact of social media on voting behavior in India and found that social media can help create links with political parties. Twitter has become a crucial tool in virtual politics (Muñoz, et al., 2017). In recent years, many politicians have utilized Twitter to promote themselves, with 577 politicians having signed up for Twitter accounts, three-quarters of whom did so in 2009 (Caplan, 2013). Twitter has revolutionized political communication by breaking the traditional one-way flow of communication dominated by political actors and mass media, where citizens had limited participation (Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2014). Twitter has become a popular channel for communication where the general public may openly engage with political players without going through media filters (Chadwick, 2013). Furthermore, politicians frequently utilize Twitter as a key social media tool to debate political matters, governmental policy, and neighborhood events. Politicians use Twitter to share information, discuss goals, and engage with the general public.

The relationship between people, politics, and the modes of contact that link these groups has been discussed regarding how Twitter has developed into a crucial platform for political communication activities. These connections are made through utilizing the

rhetorical devices of pathos, ethos, logos, and modalities of persuasion. Media may be used to develop and exchange thoughts and ideas among associated entities, political institutions, public authorities, and citizens in political communication with followers. This entails discussions during political regimes in global, national, state, and local political systems, as well as how information might be used to further political goals. Many politicians and research studies worldwide have concluded that Twitter has become an increasingly popular tool for political communication, widely used by political candidates in various countries, including the United States of America, Finland, Australia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (Abubakar et al., 2018).

Social networking sites and applications have become an integral part of our lives, with both positive and negative effects on our youth. Many young people are addicted to these tools, and some sites are responsible for promoting vulgarity. The government and cyber cells should take action and ban such sites. During the 2013 elections in Pakistan, many political party members used social networks to communicate their positions to voters and encourage them to cast their votes. Social networking sites are also used in Pakistan to raise awareness of political issues and educate the public. In fact, during the 2008 election, the government and political parties of Pakistan used new media technologies to reach out to voters. Today, many websites in Pakistan still operate to promote political awareness among the public (Hussain et al., 2016).

### **1.9 Participatory Culture on Social Networking Sites**

The emergence of new media has prompted individuals to contemplate discussing various social, political, and cultural aspects of society through these platforms (Goodling, 2021). The utilization of new media, particularly social media, is primarily practiced by

the younger generation, creating a generational divide that empowers young people to engage in online activities. However, other scholars suggest that this divide is based on participation, where the well-educated and elite class leads the lower class in their roles on social media (Rotman et al., 2011). The use of social media and communication technologies has also played a significant role in managing crises, as digital activism has transformed business trends, consumer behaviors, and lifestyles (Goodling, 2021). Moreover, it has mobilized individuals from various states to voice their opinions for social change and bring democracy (Fairclough, 2007).

With the advancement of Web 2.0 technologies, various online social networking tools and services have been created, including weblogs, forums, social networking sites, and instant messaging (Johnston et al., 2013). These tools and services facilitate virtual communities, where individuals can interact and share resources through computer-mediated relationships. Typically, online social networks comprise individuals with similar interests (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are the most popular and widely recognized online social networks, catering to people of all ages and segments of society (Governatori & Iannella, 2011). A group of web-based services that allow users to create a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, list other users with whom they have a connection, and discover their connections as well as those made by others within their system can be referred to as an online social network site (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

The act of individuals addressing social issues through activities such as signing petitions, donating, campaigning for a social cause, and voting is known as civic engagement. The concept of civic engagement has been defined by various scholars

including Putnam (2000), Ehrlich (2000), Shah et al. (2001), Hay (2007), Raynes-Goldie & Walker (2008). According to Putnam (1995b), civic engagement is primarily linked with people's connections within their communities. Putnam believes that civic participation involves participating in community organizations and establishing mutual trust among community members (Putnam, 1995; 2000). Different scholars have given various definitions of civic engagement. According to Ehrlich (2000), it is a means to promote the quality of life in a community by working through political or non-political processes. Carpini (2004) defines it as activities aimed at addressing community concerns through non-governmental or no electoral means, such as volunteering or working on a community project. Scholars have also conducted research to measure civic participation through the use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) (Zhang et al., 2009; Zúñiga et al., 2012; Valenzuela et al., 2009). In this study, civic participation is considered a multifaceted concept that encompasses various notions of Internet activism, such as gathering information, disseminating information, engaging in dialogue with others, coordinating activities, and lobbying decision-makers for change (Denning, 2000).

### **1.10 Use of Social Media for the Escalation of Intolerance**

This study is set with the assumption that intolerance in political and religious domains is a widely displayed attitude of social media users in Pakistan when they use social media space for creating, sharing, re-sharing, posting, and re-posting material in written, visual, or graphical form. Therefore, the researcher would try to analyze the level of political and religious intolerance among Pakistani social media users about their exposure to social media content of a corresponding nature. The research study shall also focus on exploring the relationship between the usage of social media and the intolerant



behavior of users in political and religious domains.

According to Gruzina & Melnichuk (2018), tolerance can be viewed in two ways: firstly, as a state of relation, akin to "patience," and secondly, as a form of behavior or activity, similar to "non-violence." The concept of "intolerance" refers to the refusal to accept differences that can lead to feelings of hatred or dislike. This idea is often associated with xenophobia, which is characterized by a fear or disgust of anything that is perceived as strange, unusual, or different. In general, the opposite of tolerance is discrimination. Social media can also have negative effects, including the potential for harm. Sander and Lim and Sander (2013) categorized two types of harm: cultural, social-psychological, and cognitive issues, which they referred to as "attention deficit disorder," and business and macro-economic problems, referred to as "financial deficit." Teenagers are increasingly moving away from conventional media like television and radio and towards social media these days. Adolescents may be in danger while they use and experiment with social media due to their low self-regulation skills and vulnerability to peer pressure. According to research, online behaviors like bullying, joining cliques, and participating in sexual experimentation can mimic offline behaviors and result in problems including sexting, cyber bullying, privacy concerns, and sleep deprivation.

### **1.11 Problem Statement**

Owing to the popularity of social media platforms and networking sites in countries across the world, it has been an attractive area for researchers interested in gauging various effects of social media on users and what users do with these platforms when they use them. Studies have suggested how social media platforms are consumed by users to display their social, cultural, and political behavior on a range of issues and

problems. Although research is being conducted on the pros and cons of the internet and the content available on it from the early days of its popularity, particularly in advanced countries, societies like Pakistan are still in a kind of learning phase where negative effects continue to be debated versus the usefulness of the social media applications.

The understanding of Pakistan society is a complicated affair given its social, ethnic, religious, and cultural divides and intricacies. It poses a clear challenge to examine to what extent social media platforms are being used for positive or negative purposes in their social contexts. Not much-consolidated research work has so far been carried out to ascertain any such effects on the users and how these platforms are used to gratify the range of individual needs. Skimming through the literature available on social media usage and its effects on users, it was revealed that there exists a vast gap in the popularity of this particular segment of media and the analysis of the impact it might have generated in changing the behavior patterns of the users or per se reinforcing their existing behavior in terms of their social, cultural, religious and political leanings.

## **1.12 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are:

- To analyze and compare the role and effects of two major social media platforms namely Facebook and Twitter on the political and religious intolerance level of Pakistani users.
- To examine the interdependent relationship, if any, between social media consumption and the level of political and religious intolerance among Pakistani social media users.
- To analyze whether the Facebook and Twitter platforms contribute in reinforcing already existing political and religious perceived intolerance in Pakistani social media users

## **1.13 Significance of the Study**

Social media sites are arguably the latest market places of ideas where social, political, cultural, and religious discussions and debates are carried out by the users. In the words of Jurgen Habermas, they form the modern-day ‘public sphere’, allowing netizens to deliberate on issues of mutual interest and concerning society. For this study, the literature was reviewed to ascertain whether the consumption of various social media sites has any links and impacts on individual opinions and attitudes.

Whereas several studies have been conducted to judge social media consumption in many different political and social settings, no significant study was found regarding the relationship of social media usage with intolerance, be it political or religious, particularly set in a Pakistani context. While there might have been research related to the role of social

media in enhancing intolerance in Western settings, no such study was found where social media as an independent variable was applied to the dependent variables of political and religious intolerance in a society similar to Pakistan. Since reflection of intolerance in the behavior of individuals is of utmost importance in the Pakistani context given its social, political, cultural, and religious settings, this study would help explain what are various levels and patterns of linkages, if any, between usage of social media among Pakistani users and their perceived level of political and religious intolerance and how that is being displayed. This work is expected to be new as no previous study have been found discussing this very important aspect of social media use in Pakistan.

## **CHAPTER NO 2**

### **2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Since this study's main focus remains on the effects of social media platforms on the online behaviour of individual users of Pakistan concerning the level of intolerance, it is imperative to understand what we mean by the term 'intolerance' in this study. Based on various definitions dug from the relevant literature, we will try to provide a nominal and conceptual definition of intolerance to make the parts of this study aligned with each other. The summary of various approaches to defining intolerance in the literature related to sociology, psychology, and other social sciences can be summarized as intolerance as unwillingness to accept views, beliefs, or behavior that differ from one's own.

It can resemble bigotry and narrow-mindedness. There can be several dimensions and manifestations of intolerance such as fanaticism, dogmatism, parochialism, provincialism, sectarianism, localism, partisanship, prejudice, bigotry, bias, inflexibility, insularity, illiberality, and so on. Intolerance can also have some other categories based on different behavioral aspects of individuals and groups. That may include religious intolerance, social intolerance, political intolerance, and so on. Since this study's prime focus remains two forms of intolerance i.e., Political and Religious, efforts shall be made to review the literature on these two particular aspects of the vast literature present on intolerance. Similarly, the study aims to focus on the usage of social media among Pakistani users, the previous studies on these two elements shall also be focused.

In Political Psychology, Lindner and Nosek (2009) reviewed literature that explored the correlation between political conservatism and political tolerance, which is the degree to which people allow civil liberties and rights to those who differ from them

(Sullivan et al., 1979). The authors noted that some political commentators argue that political censorship happens on both ends of the political spectrum (Murnen et al, 2002); however, the evidence they reviewed demonstrated that political conservatism was a more reliable indicator of political intolerance (Viswesvaran et. al., 1999).

Lindner and Nosek (2009) conducted an experimental study to investigate the relationship between political ideology and tolerance towards different types of speech. The study manipulated the content of a speech act by presenting participants with a news article about a person who had posted a poster on their garage door, either stating "Americans are the problem" or "Arabs are the problem." Results from the study, which utilized explicit and implicit measures of political ideology, revealed that conservatism predicted intolerance towards anti-American speech, while liberalism did not predict intolerance towards anti-Arab speech. However, Lindner and Nosek (2009) were cautious in their interpretation of the findings and acknowledged that the study only examined intolerance towards racially charged speech, which may differ from intolerance towards speech with opposing ideologies. The researchers suggested that future studies should investigate this further by utilizing a range of statements representative of extreme left-wing or right-wing positions.

## **2.1 Literature on Social Media**

The variable under study, i.e., the use of social media, has been the subject of extensive research, with a focus on various aspects of social and online media. Scholars have explored human behavior, changing consumption patterns, and the broader impact of social media on individuals and societies (Rau et al., 2008). These platforms, often regarded as tools for social interaction, leverage powerful and easily accessible

communication technologies.

Social media or networking sites provide individuals with the opportunity to create public or semi-public profiles, connect with others, and share updates and information. These platforms play a significant role in shaping modern communication and social interaction, allowing users to establish connections, maintain relationships, and engage with content (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Literature abounds with concepts related to social media, such as "Facebook Depression," which refers to the manifestation of depressive symptoms linked to excessive use of platforms like Facebook. Research has also explored the potential of social media in measuring the onset of depression and developing tools for early detection (Aichner & Jacob, 2015; Choudhury et al., 2013). Additionally, studies have highlighted disparities in social media usage based on factors such as gender, race, and socio-economic status, contributing to digital inequality (Hargittai, 2007).

Motivations for using social media vary among individuals, with reasons ranging from connecting with new friends to seeking social validation and self-expression. Platforms like Facebook are designed to enhance social functions, offering features for self-presentation, interaction, and networking. However, concerns have been raised regarding privacy, jealousy, and the impact of social media on relationships (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Sonia, 2010).

Research employing the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) has shed light on the diverse needs and motivations driving social media usage, including entertainment, information seeking, and socialization (Urista et al., 2009; Hicks et al., 2012). User experience plays a crucial role in engagement and satisfaction, with personality traits

influencing usage patterns (Chen & Chen, 2010; Correa et al., 2010).

Despite extensive research on social media, there remains a gap in understanding users' attitudes and behaviors, particularly concerning political and religious intolerance. Studies exploring these topics in the context of Pakistani users are notably lacking (Nelson, 2019).

Existing research on social media encompasses a wide range of topics, from individual behaviors to societal implications. By employing theoretical frameworks like UGT and exploring platform-oriented measures, researchers can gain deeper insights into users' motivations and experiences on social media platforms.

## **2.2 Politics and Religion**

Political socialization, as defined by Ferris and Stein (2018), is a complex process through which individuals acquire political knowledge, behaviors, and customs that become integrated into their lives. This process, outlined by Kezar (2002), is influenced by various factors such as family, institutions, and media, with media playing a pivotal role in connecting individuals with state authorities (Khan, 2012). Similarly, religion, as described by Geertz (1973) and Soukup (2001), serves as a symbol system that shapes emotions, motivations, and coping mechanisms. Religion, according to Khraim (2010) and Berger (1961), profoundly influences individual and social behavior, shaping norms, values, and interpersonal relationships. However, the adoption of new technologies, including social media platforms, can challenge cultural and religious norms, leading to resistance and conflict (Dashti et al., 2014).

## **2.3 Religion and Tolerance**

The literature suggests that religion can foster intolerant attitudes, often referred to



as "political tolerance" (Sullivan et al., 1979). Religiosity, religious denomination, and church attendance have been negatively associated with political tolerance (Katnik, 2002), with greater religious involvement correlating with greater intolerance (Beatty & Walter, 1984; Ellison, 1993). Adolescent beliefs are influenced by religious and parental involvement, as well as peer networks, leading to exclusivist attitudes (Ravey, 2020).

While exposure to diverse perspectives is advocated for promoting tolerance (Habermas, 1989; Mill, 1981), Mutz (2002) suggests that it may not necessarily lead to increased tolerance but can foster an understanding of alternative views. Civility is highlighted as crucial for enhancing the positive effects of exposure to different viewpoints (Mutz, 2002). Pearce and Denton (2011) explore religious pluralism among young adults, revealing continuous modifications in religious and spiritual inclinations. Ravey's (2020) study on American adolescents underscores the tension between specific religious beliefs and acceptance of other traditions, with many adolescents adjusting their exclusivist statements to acknowledge their limited knowledge about other religions.

## **2.4 Politics and Polarization**

The discourse surrounding political polarization is multifaceted, with various theories positing its origins and implications. One school of thought suggests that political parties are experiencing increasing ideological divides, leading to polarization based on differences in platform and philosophy (Bafumi & Shapiro, 2009). Conversely, an alternative perspective argues that polarization is driven more by social identification and emotional attachment to political ideologies (Campbell et al., 2011). Groenedyk's integrated model provides further insight, suggesting that individuals strive to balance their allegiance to their party with their responsibilities as citizens (Groenedyk, 2013).

In contemporary society, the youth's engagement with politics diverges from traditional norms, with social media serving as a powerful tool for personalized political activism (Boyle et al., 2012; Wilkinson et al., 2011). This shift towards online participation encompasses diverse behaviors, ranging from financial donations to active involvement in protests and social media endorsements (Skoric et al., 2016). Social media platforms, by providing new communication avenues, foster political discussions and augment citizens' engagement with political issues (Vitak et al., 2011).

Empirical evidence underscores the significant role of social media in enhancing political activism, particularly among young people (Conroy et al., 2012; Gurin et al., 2013). The proliferation of online networks facilitates the dissemination of political information and encourages participatory behavior among citizens (Valenzuela et al., 2009). Moreover, social media platforms serve as a dynamic public sphere, nurturing political discourse and influencing the societal political agenda (Cogburn & Espinoza, 2011).

However, the potential of social media to facilitate political discourse also brings challenges, notably the risk of exacerbating political polarization. While some degree of polarization is inherent in a functional democratic system, excessive polarization can lead to gridlock and societal discord (Garcia et al., 2015). Therefore, research endeavors must identify mechanisms to promote healthy communication among individuals with diverse political perspectives, fostering a more inclusive and tolerant political environment on social media platforms.

Despite the extensive research on political polarization and social media in various

contexts, there remains a gap in understanding the dynamics of these phenomena in specific regions like Pakistan (Talib, 2016; Arif & Farooqi, 2014). Future studies should focus on exploring the relationship between the internet and social media use, political activism, and the networked public sphere in Pakistan to contribute to the academic discourse on youth political engagement and its implications.

To fostering beneficial political interactions on social media requires openness and a willingness to engage with diverse opinions. While acknowledging the importance of political polarization in a democratic system, efforts must be made to mitigate its negative effects by cultivating positive interactions and promoting productive political discourse among individuals with differing viewpoints. By doing so, we can create a more tolerant and inclusive political environment on social media platforms.

## **2.5 Religion in the Age of Social Media**

Religion in the age of social media presents a complex landscape, characterized by both positive and negative ramifications. Social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools facilitating connections among individuals sharing religious beliefs, enabling religious organizations to propagate their teachings and activities, and granting access to diverse religious perspectives. However, the anonymity and lack of accountability inherent in social media have also fostered the proliferation of misinformation, hate speech, and intolerance. Extremist groups exploit these platforms to disseminate their divisive messages, leading to instances of religious-based cyberbullying and harassment. Efforts to mitigate these challenges are underway, with social media companies implementing policies and tools to combat hate speech, misinformation, and online harassment.

Recent research by Campbell et al. (2023) underscores the increasing integration of the internet into daily spiritual practices, highlighting its significance in the intersection of religion and digital media. Despite initial resistance, faith communities have embraced digital technology, particularly amidst the pandemic, recognizing its indispensable role in their survival. Rogers (2022) advocates for a proactive approach among religious leaders and spiritual caregivers in navigating the digital landscape, emphasizing the need to harness technology's potential while remaining vigilant against its pitfalls.

In the realm of social media, religious content garners substantial engagement, with Facebook pages like the Jerusalem Prayer Team and Jesus Daily amassing millions of followers. These platforms serve as vital channels for religious promotion, allowing users to access and share religious content globally via smartphones. Faimau and Behrens (2016) elucidate how interactions on Facebook contribute to the construction of a shared religious identity, shaping users' online personas and facilitating the expression of religious beliefs.

Drawing on Berger's theoretical framework (1969), the evolving religious landscape intersects with technological advancements, particularly among younger demographics known for their early adoption of new technologies. This dynamic interplay between religion and technology underscores the need for nuanced analyses, as modernity fosters diverse perspectives on religion and its expression in the digital age.

The integration of religion into social media reflects a complex interplay of opportunities and challenges. While social media platforms offer unprecedented avenues for religious expression and engagement, they also pose risks such as the spread of misinformation and intolerance. Navigating this digital landscape requires proactive measures from religious leaders and users alike, leveraging technology's potential while

safeguarding against its pitfalls to foster a more inclusive and informed religious discourse.

## **2.6 Online Religious Communities**

Online religious communities, also known as virtual religious communities, are groups of people who share a common religious affiliation and use the internet and social media to connect and interact with each other. These communities can include forums, social media groups, and websites where they can share religious texts, teachings, and personal experiences, as well as ask questions and receive guidance from religious leaders or other community members. Online religious communities can be beneficial for people who live in remote or isolated areas, for those who are unable to attend traditional religious services, or for those who wish to connect with a specific subgroup within their religion. However, just as with any online community, online religious communities are not immune to the spread of misinformation, hate speech, or cyberbullying. Therefore, it is important for a number of online religious communities to be critical consumers of information and to be aware of the potential dangers of online interactions. Additionally, online religious communities may not provide the same level of personal interaction and accountability as traditional in-person religious communities, and members should be aware of this limitation.

What is Digital Theology and how does it differ from Digital Religion? Digital Theology refers to the intellectual conceptualization of a particular faith as a digital representation, which is distinct from its predecessor, digital religion. While the latter explores the integration of technology within religious practices, Digital Theology takes the perspective of a specific faith tradition.

Hatred is the starting point for all kinds of intolerance. According to Darwin (1979), the origins of hatred lie in the natural human response to self-defense and revenge. In his

view, if we perceive someone as harmful to us or expect them to cause us injury, we tend to develop dislike and animosity towards them, which can quickly turn into hatred. Darwin's observation suggests that hatred is an emotional reaction to perceived threats and aggression towards oneself.

Similarly, Dozier et al., (2002) define hatred as a primal emotion that identifies things or individuals that pose a danger to our survival or reproduction. Dozier suggests that this innate response marks them for either attack or avoidance. Her perspective emphasizes that the experience of hate is triggered when we sense a potential threat to our well-being and can thus arise from a variety of sources.

It is essential to understand that hatred is a complex emotion that can emerge from several factors, including cultural and social contexts. As such, a multidisciplinary approach is necessary to understand the causes and manifestations of hate. By taking into account diverse perspectives, we can begin to comprehend the complexities of human emotions and work towards creating a more peaceful and equitable society.

In their study, Muzaffar et al., (2020) examine the impact of two social networks, Facebook and Twitter, on the emotions (tolerance and intolerance) of individuals during the political campaigns of the general elections held in Pakistan on July 25, 2018. The main political parties utilized both social media and traditional campaign methods to engage with the public. Throughout the election campaign, the parties made efforts to secure extensive news coverage and advertisements to influence voters' perspectives. Notably, Facebook and Twitter played significant roles in the 2018 elections, with people using the internet to stay updated on campaign developments. Social media platforms presented a comprehensive view of the competing parties, showcasing both favorable and unfavorable

aspects. The study findings indicated a higher inclination of Facebook users towards the PML-N party, while a majority of Twitter users showed greater support for PTI.

Shabir et al., (2014) highlight the increasing usage of social media in Pakistan over the last few years, with a majority of users belonging to the youth demographic. This shift in socio-political growth in Pakistan, which was previously dominated by conventional privileged and tribal groups, has considerably changed due to the emergence of social media and online conferencing platforms. Zafar (2013) stated that Facebook is a platform that reveals the behavior of the youth to the public, demonstrating their attitudes towards society and showcasing their good and bad habits. Due to the excessive use of social media, the youth's interest in research has decreased, and they have become passive in their approach towards shared information. They have developed habits of curiosity and impulsivity in sharing information on social media without verifying its authenticity. Some groups create and spread fake news against their rivals on social media. This has led to an increase in intolerance and sectarianism, which is a concerning issue. Hassan (2009) conducted a study that shed light on the significant impact on the daily life and socialization, communication, and entertainment needs of the youth. Facebook has emerged as the most popular social networking site and has become the new communication preference for the youth. While it has made socialization and communication more convenient, it is essential to be aware and cautious about its use in terms of promoting oneself and sharing personal information such as photos and videos. According to Khan (2012), social media is primarily used for entertainment by students between the ages of 15 and 25. The study also found that 60% of male students use social media to gather information.

Kamal et al., (2015) suggest that social media can be a waste of time, as students tend to spend more time on it than on their studies. This excessive use of social media often leads to students missing early morning classes because they stay up late at night using social media. Such unnecessary use of social media can negatively impact students' interest in education. The study also reveals that the exposure of university students to social media has a significant effect on their academic performance. The results further indicate that students are mostly influenced by social media in a negative way as their attention is focused on conversations and music rather than their educational activities, which are often neglected and suffer as a result.

Batool and Akram (2014) suggest that social media has become an integral part of students' lives. Even though social networking sites enhance self-confidence, improve self-image, aid in personal growth, and develop social skills, they have negative impacts on education, health, personality, and family relationships. These negative effects include physical isolation, anxiety, and depression among users, as well as an increase in propaganda, cyberbullying, and online identity theft. Male students have been found to misuse social media platforms to harm others, while female students engage in activities such as sharing food recipes, academic discussions, and fashion trends. Although students are aware of the negative impacts of social media use, they continue to use it because they believe that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. Social networking has both positive and negative effects on youth, and it is up to them to decide how to use these platforms. As per Mansoor et al., (2011) views, Facebook has gained immense popularity among the youth and is widely used as a social networking site. It is considered an integral part of their daily routine and has become the preferred mode of social interaction and leisure activity due to



its wide-ranging connectivity and effective services. Users engage in various activities such as liking posts, commenting, uploading videos, and chatting with friends. Facebook's efficient applications offer ease and convenience to its users, enabling them to fulfill their diverse needs with ease.

Zia et al., (2012) confirmed that YouTube is also a popular platform among the youth in Lahore, who use it for both entertainment and information purposes. However, since the internet has a strong influence on users, caution must be exercised while using it. The study revealed that YouTube has become an integral part of the daily routine of young people. Sometimes, adolescents may become overly engrossed in watching videos for entertainment purposes, and it is recommended that parents and elders monitor their activities. Additionally, the study suggests that the impact of these entertainment videos should be investigated in future research.

## **2.7 The consequences of political intolerance**

The relevance of political intolerance is a subject of inquiry. Over the past fifty years, a substantial amount of research has been conducted on Pakistan to investigate the origins and effects of intolerance. However, the recent rapid surge in intolerance in Pakistan since the beginning of the 21st century remains largely unexplored and unanswered. It is widely recognized that intolerance poses a constant threat to democratic politics, and fostering more accepting individuals and societies is therefore a vital endeavor for supporters of democracy. Despite making some progress in comprehending the sources and outcomes of political intolerance, several unresolved issues continue to perplex scholars.

The relationship between media exposure and political and religious intolerance

has received significant attention from scholars in modern communication science. Given the significance of political and religious intolerance as a major global issue, it is understandable that social scientists have invested considerable resources in researching this topic. With increased cultural exchange through social media, clashes between different cultures have frequently emerged since the start of the 21st century. Tolerance is a crucial factor in mitigating the tensions and conflicts brought about by multiculturalism and political diversity, and it is a fundamental component of a democratic society.

There is an equally important puzzle in the relationship between social and political intolerance, which is not as well-known as it should be. Despite prejudice being a form of intolerance, it is not necessarily closely related to political intolerance. The traditional belief that both types of intolerance stem from similar personality traits, such as authoritarianism, has been challenged in at least two distinct research contexts. Thus far, no theory has provided a distinct explanation of the origins of social and political intolerance, resulting in a lack of a unified theory to explain the etiology of intolerance.

The measurement of intolerance is becoming an increasingly important issue to consider. The development of the "least-liked" measurement method by Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus (1979) has been met with reservations from various scholars regarding the reliability and validity of the resulting data. More recently, there has been found a thought-provoking proposition that tolerance is dichotomous rather than continuous. These concerns about the accuracy of intolerance measurements have the potential to undermine the progress made thus far in comprehending this complex phenomenon.

It is commonly assumed that tolerance and intolerance are opposing points on a single, one-dimensional spectrum. However, recent evidence indicates that these two

attitudes have distinct differences that have significant implications for psychometrics and real-world politics. Unfortunately, current research suggests that intolerance is a powerful attitude, whereas tolerance is relatively weak. As a result, intolerant views have a more significant impact on politics than tolerant views. Further research is needed to investigate the relationships between tolerance, intolerance, and other attitudes towards democracy, as well as majority and minority rights.

For half a century in the past, public opinion scholars have been concerned about how tolerant ordinary people are, a topic that was first researched by sociologist Samuel Stouffer in 1955. The central question in this field of research is whether citizens are willing to accept objectionable political ideas, and to what extent they will support civil liberties for all, including groups with highly disagreeable ideologies. There have been three main approaches to measuring attitudes towards political tolerance and support for civil liberties since the 1980s. The first approach, based on Stouffer's work, involves identifying fringe political groups that researchers use to query whether certain political activities should be tolerated, as is the case with groups included in the GSS surveys.

Secondly, the "least-liked" technique was suggested by Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus (1979) as an alternate way to gauge political tolerance. Using this method, respondents can choose which groups are the subject of the tolerance questions. The tolerance questions are then adjusted to the group that the respondents identify as their main political rivals after instructing them to select their most despised group(s) from a list presented to them. In addition to being used to a lesser extent in the World Values Surveys (e.g., Peffley & Rohrschneider, 2003), this "least-liked" method has been used in a significant amount of recent tolerance research (e.g., Gibson and Gouws, 2003).

A third method for measuring political tolerance focuses on people's approval of policies that would restrict the civil liberties of all Americans. In this approach, researchers examine whether respondents support policies that limit the freedoms of all citizens, rather than just certain groups. For example, Bingham (1985) studied support for laws passed in Skokie, Illinois, which aimed to prohibit demonstrations, including those by American Nazis. Instead of asking respondents about their views on specific groups, Gibson and Bingham asked about general aspects of the laws, such as the ban on demonstrations in "military-style" uniforms. Similarly, Davis (2002) investigated people's opinions on laws that limit the civil liberties of all citizens, such as government tracking of e-mail. This method continues to be popular among researchers from various disciplines (e.g., Hetherington and Suhay 2011).

## **2.8 Political Economy of Social Media**

The political economy of social media is a multifaceted realm that encompasses the strategic utilization of popular platforms by political candidates, as highlighted by Rodley and Pollard (2009). These platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, serve as crucial communication channels for candidates seeking to engage with young voters, with follower counts on these platforms serving as indicators of campaign messages reaching a wide audience. Furthermore, Vonderschmitt (2012) emphasizes the interactive design of Obama's website, which not only facilitated easy navigation but also fostered a sense of involvement among users. This interactive nature of candidate websites is essential as it enables individuals to feel connected to the political process, thereby contributing to civic participation, a vital aspect of a healthy democracy. Additionally, Vonderschmitt's study underscores the website's role in facilitating the rapid formation of grassroots support

groups, highlighting the power of digital platforms in mobilizing networks of support for political candidates.

Moreover, candidate websites serve as effective tools for fundraising, as evidenced by the significant sums raised through online methods during the 2008 election campaign (Rodley and Pollard, 2009). Despite economic challenges, donors contributed generously to support candidates' causes, underscoring the emergence of online civic culture and the potential of social media to democratize political fundraising. The ease of online donations and the ability to reach a broad audience quickly have transformed the fundraising landscape, empowering candidates to finance their campaigns through grassroots support rather than relying solely on traditional fundraising methods.

In addition to their role in communication and fundraising, social media platforms like Twitter have introduced new dynamics to political advertising strategies. Prior (2006) notes the existing financial and informational advantages of established players in the United States political arena. However, research by Urban and Niebler (2014) suggests that the introduction of Twitter did not significantly alter traditional television advertising spending in politics. This finding underscores the complex interplay between traditional and digital advertising strategies in political campaigns, highlighting the need for further research to understand the evolving dynamics of political communication in the digital age.

Overall, the political economy of social media reflects the evolving landscape of political communication and fundraising, influenced by the strategic use of online platforms by candidates and the interplay between traditional and digital advertising strategies. As social media continues to play an increasingly central role in political discourse, it is essential for researchers and policymakers to closely examine its impact on

democratic processes and civic engagement, ensuring that these platforms are leveraged to enhance transparency, accountability, and public participation in political decision-making.

## **2.9 Psychological Impact of social media on Users**

Rolfe and Gilbert (2006) underscore the transformative impact of technology on the relationships of young people, noting a significant increase in the depth and breadth of their interpersonal networks. DeGennaro (2008) further highlights the importance of these relationships for youth development, emphasizing the role of social networking platforms like Twitter and Facebook in strengthening connections among peers. Despite concerns about the digital nature of these interactions, contemporary youth are leveraging instant messaging, texting, and social networking apps to nurture relationships, as emphasized by Jha et al. (2011). However, this increased reliance on social media is not without consequences, as revealed in a study by Sabir et al. (2014), which found associations between social media use and emotional disorders among teenagers, highlighting the nuanced impact of digital connectivity on youth well-being.

Boyle et al. (2012) draw attention to the challenges posed by social media, including privacy breaches and security vulnerabilities that expose users to risks such as cyber harassment and identity theft. Indeed, social media platforms represent a double-edged sword, with their potential for fostering mutual understanding and harmony among diverse groups, as articulated by Boyle et al. (2012). Conversely, as argued by Hossin & Siddiquee (2004), social media can also be weaponized to propagate radical ideologies, such as fundamentalism and Jihadism, through the dissemination of martyrdom videos and religious propaganda. The proliferation of such content, observed in various geopolitical

contexts, underscores the complex role of social media in shaping religious discourse and political extremism on a global scale.

The intertwining of social media with youth relationships and religious extremism underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of its impact on society. While social media offers unprecedented opportunities for connectivity and empowerment, its unchecked proliferation can also perpetuate harm and exacerbate existing social tensions. As policymakers and stakeholders navigate this complex landscape, it is imperative to promote responsible digital citizenship and safeguard the well-being of individuals and communities in the digital age.

## **2.10 Summary of Literature Review**

This literature review chapter provides an overview of research conducted on the relationship between social media use and political and religious intolerance, with a specific focus on Twitter and Facebook. The following points summarize the key findings from the literature review:

- The literature review begins by providing a background of the research field. It discusses the growing prevalence and impact of social media platforms in contemporary society, highlighting their influence on communication, information dissemination, and social interactions.
- The review explores the widespread use of social media platforms, specifically Twitter and Facebook. It examines the extent to which individuals engage with these platforms, including the frequency and duration of use, as well as the purposes for which they are utilized.

- The literature review explores the intersection of politics and religion in the context of social media. It examines how these platforms have become significant spaces for political discussions, religious expression, and activism. The influence of social media on shaping political and religious narratives and fostering engagement is examined.
- The review investigates the concept of tolerance, both in political and religious contexts. It explores the importance of promoting tolerance to foster social harmony and peaceful coexistence. The role of social media in either facilitating or hindering political and religious tolerance is examined.
- The literature review delves into instances where social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Twitter, have been associated with political and religious intolerance. It examines how these platforms can contribute to the spread of divisive ideologies, echo chambers, and the perpetuation of online harassment and hate speech.
- Various theoretical frameworks relevant to the current research are discussed in the literature review to understand the effects of social media use. Theories such as social identity theory, social influence theory, and selective exposure theory are examined, providing insights into the psychological and sociological mechanisms that shape social media behavior.
- The review explores different approaches and methodologies used to measure intolerance, particularly in the context of social media. It discusses quantitative measures such as surveys and sentiment analysis, as well as qualitative approaches involving content analysis and case studies. These methods aid in assessing the prevalence and manifestations of intolerance within online spaces.



- The literature review discusses research studies conducted at the national level that focus on the relationship between social media use and intolerance. It examines the findings and insights gained from these studies, highlighting the specific contexts and demographics considered.
- The review also explores research conducted at the international level, examining cross-cultural perspectives on social media use and intolerance. It compares findings from different countries and regions, identifying commonalities and differences in the relationship between social media and intolerance.
- Based on the reviewed literature, the literature review identifies a research gap in understanding the nuanced relationship between social media use, Twitter and Facebook specifically, and intolerance. It emphasizes the need for further investigation to address this gap and provide deeper insights into the topic.

## **2.11 Theoretical Framework**

The extensive use of social media has been linked to an increase in intolerance among its users (Srinivasan & Barclay, 2021). Social media platforms have created an environment where individuals can easily form groups and connect with others who share their beliefs and values. However, these groups often lead to the formation of echo chambers, where individuals are exposed only to information that reinforces their pre-existing beliefs and are unlikely to engage with diverse perspectives. This can lead to an increase in intolerance towards those who hold different beliefs and opinions, as users may feel more justified in their intolerance when they are surrounded by like-minded individuals (Lane, et al, 2019). Additionally, social media can amplify the spread of misinformation and hatred against others, which can further fuel intolerance towards

certain groups. Therefore, it is important to understand the potential negative effects of social media use on individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards others and take steps to promote positive intergroup relations.

The Social learning Theory along with its development has been taken as theoretical ground for this dissertation. Social Learning Theory developed by Albert Bandura provided foundations for Social Cognitive Theory, which enhanced its scope, and then Social Cognitive Theory provided foundations for Social Judgment Theory. This string of psychology theories is being extensively used to measure intolerance in the field by multidisciplinary scholarship. According to the social learning theory's theoretical underpinnings, people pick up new behaviors, attitudes, and values by paying attention to other people and the results of their activities. According to this notion, people may learn from others around them, including their family, peers, and the media (Akers & Jennings, 2015).

In the context of this study, the social learning theory suggests that people who use social media may be exposed to intolerant attitudes and behaviors displayed by others. This exposure to intolerant content can influence their attitudes and behaviors, leading to an increase in intolerance. The social learning theory emphasizes the importance of reinforcement in the learning process. If individuals observe others being rewarded for intolerant behavior or attitudes on social media, they may be more likely to engage in similar behavior themselves. Likewise, if they see others being punished or criticized for intolerant behavior, they may be less likely to engage in such behavior (Akers & Jennings, 2015). The social learning theory provides a useful framework for understanding how the use of social media can contribute to an increase in intolerance. By identifying the specific

social and environmental factors that influence the learning process, researchers can develop effective strategies to mitigate the negative effects of social media use on individuals' attitudes and behavior.

The Social Judgment Theory as a theoretical framework that explains how people form and change their attitudes based on the degree of consistency or inconsistency between their attitudes and a persuasive message. This theory posits that people have a range of attitudes toward an issue, and the degree of their attitude towards the issue affects their likelihood of being persuaded by a message. The Social Judgment Theory suggests that social media may influence an individual's attitude towards tolerance and intolerance. Social media can present messages that may be consistent or inconsistent with an individual's existing attitudes toward tolerance and intolerance (Rajpaul, 2022).

The theory also suggests that people can hold multiple attitudes towards a particular issue, and social media may present messages that appeal to these different attitudes. For example, an individual may hold an attitude of tolerance towards a particular group but may also hold an attitude of intolerance towards a particular behavior associated with that group. Social media may present messages that appeal to one attitude over the other, leading to a shift in the individual's overall attitude toward tolerance and intolerance. The Social Judgment Theory emphasizes the role of perceived credibility and social norms in the persuasion process. Messages presented on social media may be perceived as more or less credible depending on the source of the message, and social norms may influence how individuals respond to messages related to tolerance and intolerance. The Social Judgment Theory provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how social media can influence an individual's attitudes toward tolerance and intolerance (Rajpaul, 2022). By understanding

the different factors that affect persuasion, researchers can develop effective strategies to promote tolerance and reduce intolerance on social media platforms.

### **2.11.1 Social Cognitive Theory**

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by psychologist Albert Bandura, posits that individuals learn through observing others within the context of social interactions, experiences, and media influences. This theory emphasizes the dynamic interplay between personal factors, environmental influences, and behavior, proposing that these three factors interact to shape learning and behavior. Observational Learning, also known as modeling or vicarious learning, is a central concept within SCT, demonstrating how individuals imitate behavior they observe in others. Bandura's famous Bobo doll experiment highlighted this phenomenon, showing how children imitated the aggressive behavior they witnessed in adults. SCT also emphasizes reciprocal determinism, suggesting that behavior, personal factors (e.g., thoughts, beliefs, attitudes), and environmental influences (e.g., social norms, media) interact bidirectionally to influence each other. Self-efficacy, or one's belief in their ability to perform a specific task or behavior, plays a crucial role in SCT, influencing motivation, effort, and persistence in pursuing goals. Additionally, outcome expectations, behavioral capability, and social influences are key components of SCT, which has been widely applied in fields such as education, health promotion, psychology, and communication, influencing interventions aimed at behavior change and skill development by emphasizing the role of observational learning, self-regulation, and social influences in shaping human behavior.

### **2.11.2 Social Learning Theory**

Social learning theory is a psychological theory that suggests that people learn through observation, modeling, and imitation of the behavior, attitudes, and values of others. It posits that learning is a social process that occurs through interaction with others in a social environment. According to this theory, people learn by observing the behavior of others and the consequences of that behavior. They then adjust their behavior based on what they have learned from these observations. This learning process can occur through direct observation or media such as television, movies, or social media.

Social learning theory also emphasizes the importance of reinforcement in the learning process. When individuals observe others being rewarded for a particular behavior, they are more likely to imitate that behavior. Conversely, when they observe others being punished or experiencing negative consequences for a behavior, they are less likely to imitate it. Social learning theory has been applied to a wide range of areas, including education, criminology, and health behavior. It is particularly relevant in the study of aggression, as it suggests that violent behavior can be learned through observation of others who engage in violent behavior, particularly in the media (Lane, et al, 2019).

The social learning theory is a valuable lens for understanding how individuals learn from the people and social environments around them, and how this learning influences their behavior and attitudes.

### **2.11.3 Social Judgment Theory**

Social judgment theory is a psychological theory that describes how individuals process and respond to persuasive messages. The theory proposes that people have a “latitude of acceptance,” which is the range of opinions or beliefs that an individual is

willing to accept without being critical or rejecting the message. Messages that fall within this latitude are seen as acceptable, while messages that fall outside of it are seen as unacceptable.

The Social Judgment Theory (SJT) (SJT; Sherif, 1936; Sherif, & Nebergall, 1965) proposes that the effectiveness of a persuasive message on a particular issue depends on how the receiver evaluates the position presented in the message. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct formative research during the creation and testing of campaign messages to determine how the audience evaluates the position of the message in relation to the possible alternatives defined by extreme positions on the issue.

The theory also proposes that people have a “latitude of non-commitment,” which is the range of opinions or beliefs that an individual is not committed to, but is still willing to consider. Messages that fall within this latitude are seen as potentially acceptable, while messages that fall outside of it are seen as not acceptable.

Finally, Social Judgment Theory also proposes that people have a “latitude of rejection,” which is the range of opinions or beliefs that an individual is not willing to accept or consider. Messages that fall within this latitude are seen as acceptable, while messages that fall outside of it are seen as unacceptable.

The Theory suggests that when an individual is exposed to a persuasive message, they will compare it to their own current beliefs and attitudes to determine whether it falls within their latitude of acceptance, non-commitment, or rejection. The individual’s attitude towards the messages will be influenced by their evaluation of the message’s perceived relevance and credibility, as well as their motivation to change their attitude.

To effectively gauge the target audience's attitudes, it is crucial to assess the overall

range of acceptance, non-commitment, and rejection within which their norms lie. By identifying these actual norms, we can determine the most suitable approach for campaign messages based on the Social Judgment Theory (SJT). When the actual norms align with the latitude of non-commitment and are incorporated into the campaign message, they are more likely to be accepted and remembered by the audience. Conversely, if the actual norms align with the latitudes of acceptance or rejection, they are less likely to be accepted or retained due to the assimilation and contrast effects, respectively. Understanding these dynamics is essential for crafting persuasive and impactful communication strategies (Rajpaul, 2022).

To develop effective health campaigns based on norms, it is crucial to identify the target audience's latitudes of acceptance, non-commitment, and rejection. This enables the creation of persuasive and credible messages. The fundamental principle of the Social Judgment Theory (SJT) emphasizes that the impact of a persuasive message on a specific issue depends on how the recipient evaluates the advocated position (Sherif & Hovland, 1961). According to O'Keefe (1990), an individual's attitude towards a behavior or issue cannot be accurately represented by a single alternative among the available options. Within the SJT framework, research is conducted to determine the boundaries of a receiver's position to the extreme positions on the issue, defining the latitudes of acceptance, non-commitment, and rejection. Each receiver independently assesses the range of alternatives, and these judgments can be combined to reflect the prevailing consensus and social norms among a specific group (O'Keefe, 1990). Consequently, SJT allows for the identification of group patterns emerging from individuals' perceptions.

Moreover, according to the Social Judgment Theory (SJT), the patterns that arise

from individual perceptions also exert an influence on the population as a whole. Sherif (1965) emphasizes that group members develop and embrace a range of practices, customs, traditions, and definitions that establish boundaries for acceptable attitudes and behaviors, as well as objectionable ones, in matters deemed significant to the group. These shared practices and evaluative definitions constitute the group's norms (Sheriff, 1965).

Tolerance is acceptance of people from different races, colors, ideologies, religions, cultures, political and religious ideologies, and economic groups.

## **2.12 Common Assumptions of the Theories for this Study**

1. People learn from observing the behavior of others and the consequences of that behavior. People who use social media may be exposed to intolerant attitudes and behaviors displayed by others. This exposure to intolerant content can influence their attitudes and behaviors, leading to an increase in intolerance.

2. Reinforcement plays a key role in the learning process. If individuals observe others being rewarded for intolerant behavior or attitudes on social media, they may be more likely to engage in similar behavior themselves. Likewise, if they see others being punished or criticized for intolerant behavior, they may be less likely to engage in such behavior.

3. Attitudes can be influenced by persuasive messages that are consistent or inconsistent with an individual's existing attitudes. Social media can present messages consistent or inconsistent with an individual's attitudes toward tolerance and intolerance. These messages can influence an individual's overall attitude towards tolerance and intolerance.



4. Perceived credibility and social norms can influence the persuasion process. Messages presented on social media may be perceived as more or less credible depending on the source of the message, and social norms may influence how individuals respond to messages related to tolerance and intolerance.

5. Assumptions drawn from the Social Learning Theory and Social Judgment Theory provide a useful framework for understanding how social media can influence an individual's attitudes toward tolerance and intolerance. By understanding the learning and persuasion processes involved, researchers can develop effective strategies to promote tolerance and reduce intolerance on social media platforms.

### **2.13 Research Questions**

RQ1: What is the relationship, if any, between the usage of Facebook and political intolerance?

RQ2: What is the relationship, if any, between the usage of Facebook and religious intolerance?

RQ3: What is the relationship, if any, between the usage of Twitter and political intolerance?

RQ4: What is the relationship, if any, between the usage of Twitter and religious intolerance?

RQ5: What are the various forms and levels of individual attitudes reflecting political and religious intolerance among users of Facebook and Twitter?

## **2.14 Research Hypotheses**

The following are the main hypotheses of the study:

H1: The higher the use of social media platforms, the higher the intolerance level among Pakistani users.

H1a: The higher the use of social media platforms, the higher the political intolerance level.

H1b: The higher the use of social media platforms, the higher the religious intolerance level.

## **CHAPTER NO 3**

### **3.0 METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN**

The research methodology employed in this PhD dissertation aimed to investigate intolerance among Facebook and Twitter users within the area of Islamabad, utilizing a survey method and employing a quantitative approach. The research methodology was developed based on an extensive review of existing literature and with guidance from the supervisor. The study utilized a survey method due to its suitability for collecting large-scale data from a diverse population. The target population consisted of Facebook and Twitter users in Islamabad, with the researcher employing a convenience sampling technique. The sampling technique was chosen to ensure representation and inclusivity within the sample.

Based on the conceptualization and operationalization of relevant variables identified from the literature, the researcher developed a questionnaire to measure intolerance. The questionnaire was refined through a pilot testing phase to ensure validity and reliability. Data collection was carried out using face-to-face and online surveys, depending on the preferences and accessibility of the participants. Questionnaires were distributed and retrieved from willing participants. The collected data were subjected to data coding and cleaning procedures to ensure accuracy and consistency. For data analysis, quantitative techniques were employed using appropriate statistical tools, such as descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The selection of statistical tools was based on the research objectives and research questions, aiming to identify patterns, relationships, and significant differences related to intolerance among Facebook and Twitter users in Islamabad.

### **3.1 Research Design**

The research has mainly deployed social survey techniques to collect the data. Quantitative analysis has been employed to ascertain the level of political and religious intolerance, among the respondents i.e. Facebook and Twitter's Pakistani users. Hjerm et al. (2020) in their study, developed a detailed questionnaire on religious tolerance covering two sub-categories of tolerance; civil liberties and civil rights.

Therefore, in this study, individual effects have been gauged through a structured survey process. For this purpose, a questionnaire was developed with the help of the supervisor and other research experts and tested for validity and reliability. The study has hypothesized causal relationships between the two individual attributes (political and religious) of intolerance and social media usage. Social media usage has been taken as an independent variable, and two forms political and religious intolerance have been considered as dependent variables.

However, it would be pertinent to mention that the researcher has evaluated the existing instruments available to measure the levels of political and religious intolerance for their efficacy and have been used for data collection. It is worth mentioning that the instrument and scale for the measurement of intolerance levels among social media users have been designed by molding many existing scales.

### **3.2 Identification of the Population and Sampling Method**

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2013), the population can be defined as a group or class of subjects, variables, concepts, or phenomena'. Therefore, the population for the survey for this study comprised all male and female residents of Islamabad who are users of Facebook and Twitter and have accounts on these two platforms/Apps.

Respondents from urban areas of Islamabad have been contacted for the survey. The rationale for the selection of urban areas is that according to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Pakistan has more than 93 million internet subscribers of different services and, arguably, the majority reside in the urban areas. 600 sample size has been targeted for this study whereas each respondent who participated in the survey has been taken as the unit of analysis for this study. The survey was conducted through a properly designed and pre-tested questionnaire. By using this questionnaire, the primary data directly from the respondents have been collected for the hypotheses testing.

### **3.3 Unit of Analysis**

The viewpoint, perception, or attitude of the Facebook and Twitter users of the urban area of Islamabad has been taken as the unit of analysis for this study. The researcher intended to analyze the level of tolerance or intolerance among Facebook and Twitter users.

### **3.4 Instrument Development**

After reviewing the literature, the researcher has found the theories being used in the relevant studies. Many studies measuring the level of political and religious tolerance, have used Social Cognitive Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Social Judgement Theory. The researcher evaluated these three theories and found them to serve the same fundamental goal. For this study, the researcher has taken these above mentioned theories as three stages of the theoretical foundations. The Social Cognitive Theory deals with the process of cognition and meaning-making. The Social Learning theory focuses on learning from the surrounding environment, while the Social Judgement Theory covers the area of dealing with social media content and making similar actions in real life.

These three stages provided solid theoretical ground for this study. These studies using these theories provided operational definitions of the concept of tolerance and the absence of tolerance has been assumed as intolerance. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights have been derived from these theories as sub-categories of tolerance. Each of these two has been further broken down into four indicators: Freedom of vote, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association are the indicators of Civil Liberties, while, protection right, demonstration right, persuasion right, and publishing right are the indicators of Civil Rights. For the development of instrument the researcher borrowed two categories civil liberties and civil rights as subcategories of tolerance from James Gibson (2013).

Further, against each indicator, one question statement has been designed containing the five-point scale, to measure the response of the social media user. After the development, the questionnaire was discussed with the supervisor and other research experts and then tested before its administration.

### **3.5 Conceptualization of Key Variables:**

**Social Media:** The term 'social media' refers to the range of websites, web pages, and applications used by the individual to connect with others using an internet connection. There are numerous definitions explaining what social media are, some calling them Social Networking Sites (SNS) and others calling them internet-based platforms. The wide range of definitions and exclusion and inclusion of sites and platforms bar any consensus on the term. However, popular sites and Apps such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are considered social media.

**Social Media Usage:** Usage of a particular medium type by individuals is usually defined in two main ways i.e. the purpose and the time spent on a particular medium. While

the purpose may have broad categories such as information, entertainment, and education, the time may range between minutes and hours or days and weeks. For this study usage of social media (Facebook and Twitter) is an intervening variable and the level of political and religious intolerance of Pakistani users shall be considered as two dependent variables. To explain and analyze the level of political and religious intolerance a set of indicators shall be developed which shall include language used in original posts, viewing, liking, sharing, and posting preferences of material which may include graphical representation and audio-visual content.

**Intolerance:** According to Bilgi (2015) tolerance is a context-based construct. It is deeply connected with the human behavior. Being a social-psychological attribute, intolerance which is the opposite of tolerance can have multiple definitions which have appropriately been covered in the literature review.

As defined by Dunn and Singh (2011; quoted in Hjerm et al., 2020)) intolerance is a negative general orientation towards groups outside of one's own. Thus, intolerance can be considered a negative response to diversity. Intolerance is seen as a political and religious construct for this study.

**Political and Religious Intolerance:** Hjerm and colleagues in their study about the new approach to the study of tolerance concluded that measuring tolerance is possible by differentiating it from prejudice and understanding of causes and consequences of tolerance is also possible. In their study, they used structural equation models to capture the context-based construct of tolerance (Hjerm et al, 2020). The three-dimensional concept included acceptance of, respect for, and appreciation of difference.

The study also relies on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO 1995) definition of tolerance which states that:

*“tolerance is respect, acceptance, and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human...Tolerance is harmony in difference.”*

For this study, the (in)tolerance shall be defined in terms of the model of Hjerm et al. (2020) i.e. if there is no acceptance of, respect for, and appreciation of differences in political and religious expression by individuals it will be termed as political and religious intolerance.

### **3.6 Indicators of Civil Liberties**

1. Freedom of speech: This is the right to express one's opinions without censorship or restraint, and could be operationalized by examining whether social media platforms are censoring certain viewpoints or allowing hate speech to proliferate.
2. Freedom of assembly: This is the right to gather and associate with others, and could be operationalized by examining how social media platforms are facilitating or hindering the organization of groups promoting intolerant beliefs.
3. Freedom of religion: This is the right to practice one's religion without interference or discrimination, and could be operationalized by examining how social media platforms are facilitating or hindering the expression of religious beliefs and the promotion of religious tolerance.
4. Equal protection: This is the principle that all people are entitled to equal protection under the law, and could be operationalized by examining whether social media platforms are enforcing their policies consistently and fairly, or if certain groups are being unfairly targeted or excluded.



5. Privacy: This is the right to control one's personal information, and could be operationalized by examining how social media platforms are handling user data and whether users are able to maintain their privacy and security online.
6. Due process: This is the principle that individuals have a right to fair and impartial legal proceedings, and could be operationalized by examining whether social media platforms are providing users with adequate opportunities to defend themselves against accusations of intolerance or hate speech.
7. Non-discrimination: This is the principle that individuals should not be treated unfairly or differently based on their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics, and could be operationalized by examining whether social media platforms are taking steps to combat online harassment and discrimination

### **3.7 List of Civil Rights**

1. Right to vote: This civil right ensures that all citizens have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process. Social media platforms have been used to suppress voting rights or to spread false information about candidates or issues.
2. Right to equal treatment under the law: This civil right ensures that all individuals are treated equally by the justice system, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. Social media can contribute to the perpetuation of discriminatory practices and beliefs.
3. Right to education: This civil right ensures that all individuals have access to education and the opportunity to learn and develop their skills. Social media can

provide access to educational resources but also can contribute to the spread of misinformation or extremist beliefs.

4. Right to work: This civil right ensures that all individuals have the opportunity to seek and obtain employment without discrimination. Social media can facilitate job opportunities but also can contribute to the spread of discriminatory attitudes and practices.
5. Right to freedom from discrimination: This civil right ensures that all individuals are protected from discrimination in all areas of public life, including employment, education, housing, and public accommodations. Social media can perpetuate or combat discrimination and intolerance.
6. Right to due process: This civil right requires that individuals are given a fair and impartial hearing before being deprived of life, liberty, or property. Social media can contribute to the spread of false or misleading information that can impact due process.
7. Right to privacy: This civil right allows individuals to control access to their personal information. Social media can infringe on privacy rights by collecting vast amounts of user data without consent.

Operationalizing these civil rights in research on the impact of social media on intolerance can help to identify the specific mechanisms by which social media may impact civil rights and contribute to intolerance. It can also help to identify strategies for mitigating the negative impacts of social media on civil rights and promoting a more tolerant and inclusive online environment.

### 3.8 Operationalization of Key Variables

**Social Media:** While there might be numerous social media sites and applications, we will consider only two main sites i.e. Facebook and Twitter for this study. So Social Media is delimited to “Facebook” and “Twitter”. The study deals with the independent variable i.e. Social Media which is further divided into two sub-categories i.e. Facebook and Twitter. User's interaction with the two social media platforms shall be looked into and analyzed in this study

**Social Media Usage:** For time spent on two social media sites of this study i.e. Facebook and Twitter, high and low social media users shall be defined in terms of the number of hours spent doing different activities such as posting, sharing, viewing, commenting, and liking of different content. Social Media Usage shall act as an intervening variable for this research. Social media usage shall be measured on two points i.e. time spent and activities performed which would help analyze the dependence of political and religious intolerance on the usage of social media.

**Intolerance:** Intolerance for this study has been divided into two sub-categories i.e. Political Intolerance and Religious Intolerance. Given the complexities in measuring abstract concepts like intolerance, both types of intolerance shall be measured based on different indicators. To explain and analyze the level of political and religious intolerance a set of indicators was developed which included language used in the original posts, viewing, liking, sharing, and posting preferences of material which may include writings, graphical representation, and audio-visual content.

### 3.9 Political Intolerance and Religious Intolerance

These two subcategories of intolerance have been measured following the Hjerm et al. (2020) approach i.e. if there is no acceptance of, respect for, and appreciation of differences in political and religious expression by individuals it will be termed as political and religious intolerance. Individual users shall be asked questions regarding their orientation on two social media platforms about political and religious intolerance using a multi-point Likert scale. A separate set of questions shall be included on both categories which shall also help in measuring the comparative level of intolerance.

### 3.10 Operationalization

Tolerance	Political Tolerance	Civil Liberties	Freedom of Vote	This civil right ensures that all citizens have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process. Social media platforms have been used to suppress voting rights or to spread false information about candidates or issues
			Freedom of Speech	This is the right to express one's opinions without censorship or restraint and could be operationalized by examining whether social media platforms are censoring certain viewpoints or allowing hate speech to proliferate.
			Freedom of Assembly	This is the right to gather and associate with others and could be operationalized by examining how social media platforms are facilitating or hindering the organization of groups promoting intolerant beliefs
			Freedom of Association	The right of political association encompasses a range of activities, including the formation and operation of political parties, the organization of political campaigns, the endorsement of candidates for public office, and

				the participation in public protests and demonstrations. It also includes the right to access information, hold meetings and rallies, and engage in peaceful political activism.
		Civil Rights	Protection right	This is the principle that all people are entitled to equal protection under the law, and could be operationalized by examining whether social media platforms are enforcing their policies consistently and fairly, or if certain groups are being unfairly targeted or excluded
			Demonstration right	This means that all individuals, regardless of their political beliefs, should be able to exercise their right to demonstrate without fear of victimization or harassment.
			Persuasion right	By employing written, verbal, or visual ways to transmit facts, sentiments, or reasoning, or a mix of these, persuasion aims to influence a person's (or group's) attitude or behavior towards some event, concept, item, or another person (or people). Additionally, persuasion is frequently employed to advance one's interests, as in trial advocacy, making a sales presentation, or running for office. The use of one's position or other resources to influence others is another way to define persuasion.
			Publishing right	The core idea behind the freedom to publish is that everyone should be allowed to freely communicate and express themselves through a variety of media, including printed and electronic products.
	Religious Tolerance	Civil Liberties	Right of Vote	This civil right ensures that all citizens have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process. Social media platforms have been used to suppress voting rights or to spread false information about candidates or issues
			Right of Speech	This is the right to express one's

				opinions without censorship or restraint and could be operationalized by examining whether social media platforms are censoring certain viewpoints or allowing hate speech to proliferate.
			Right of Assembly	This is the right to gather and associate with others and could be operationalized by examining how social media platforms are facilitating or hindering the organization of groups promoting intolerant beliefs.
			Right of Association	The right of political association encompasses a range of activities, including the formation and operation of political parties, the organization of political campaigns, the endorsement of candidates for public office, and the participation in public protests and demonstrations. It also includes the right to access information, hold meetings and rallies, and engage in peaceful political activism.
		Civil Rights	Protection	This is the principle that all people are entitled to equal protection under the law, and could be operationalized by examining whether social media platforms are enforcing their policies consistently and fairly, or if certain groups are being unfairly targeted or excluded
			Demonstration	This means that all individuals, regardless of their political beliefs, should be able to exercise their right to demonstrate without fear of victimization or harassment.
			Persuasion	By employing written, verbal, or visual ways to transmit facts, sentiments, or reasoning, or a mix of these, persuasion aims to influence a person's (or group's) attitude or behaviour towards some event, concept, item, or another person (or people). Additionally,

				persuasion is frequently employed to advance one's own interests, as in trial advocacy, making a sales presentation, or running for office. The use of one's position or other resources to influence others is another way to define persuasion.
			Publish	The core idea behind the freedom to publish is that everyone should be allowed to freely communicate and express themselves through a variety of media, including printed and electronic products.

**3.11 Analysis**

SPSS statistical tool has been used to analyze the data, collected through the survey of the Facebook and Twitter users. The data was collected by distributing a questionnaire through Google form and hard copies of the research questionnaire among the social media users. After collection, the data was entered into the SPSS data index.

Descriptive frequencies in the analysis were used to obtain the basic description of the data obtained as primary data from the respondents of this study. The description of data gives the researcher a first-level understanding of the reflection of the responses. As earlier mentioned, the instrument was developed by borrowing the measurement parameters from a few Western researchers. Then a set of questions was developed to enquire about each subtype of the tolerance. The researcher intended to gauge the level of political and religious intolerance, so the tolerance was divided into two categories political tolerance and religious tolerance among social media users. The political tolerance was further divided into two subcategories civil liberties and civil rights (see operationalization) and then each of these two categories were further broken down into four indicators, furthermore, a question was developed to address each indicator. So, a set of four questions

was developed to address simultaneously civil liberties and similarly, another set of four questions was developed to address civil rights, in the same way the researcher has dealt with religious intolerance.

By using Cronbach Alpha, a statistical test in SPSS to check the reliability of the set of questions was used to make sure, whether the set of questions developed by the researcher is reliable to answer the question or not. So, with the help of the Cronbach Alpha test, the sets of questions were found heavily reliable. After applying the test Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.772 is found, and Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized item value is 0.771, which shows there is very good reliability of the set of four questions addressing civil liberties has been found. It means the questions asked to measure civil liberties are reliable at a very good level.

Then the researcher moved forward to answer the research questions. In this study, it was difficult to answer the question by simply checking the reflection of responses because four questions were designed to address a subcategory. SPSS provides an option to compute a Variable to bring it to the required form. By using the Compute Variable in SPSS, the researcher converted the set of four questions by getting its median value in a single variable. Each set of four questions was converted to a single variable with a new name and then by using Correlation in SPSS the researcher was in a position to answer the research questions. This is how the researcher has answered the research questions systematically and scientifically.



# CHAPTER NO 4

## 4.0 Data Analysis

### 4.1 Data Description

In this section, the data has been presented and displayed after processing through SPSS for interpretation in line with the research objectives, questions, and hypotheses of the current research.

	<b>Age</b>	
	Frequency	Percent
20 to 25	125	20.8
25 to 30	112	18.7
30 to 35	202	33.7
35 and above	161	26.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Data regarding age groups has been presented in Table 01. The frequency column indicates the number of respondents in each age group. There are 125 respondents in the age group of 20 to 25, 112 individuals in the age group of 25 to 30, 202 individuals in the age group of 30 to 35, and 161 individuals in the age group of 35 and above. The total number of individuals in the sample is 600. The percent column represents the percentage of individuals in each age group relative to the total sample size. The age group of 20 to 25 accounts for 20.8% of the total sample, the age group of 25 to 30 represents 18.7%, the age group of 30 to 35 accounts for 33.7%, and the age group of 35 and above represents 26.8%. The table provides a breakdown of the age distribution within the sample, highlighting the number and proportion of individuals in different age groups.

	Frequency	Percent
Male	413	68.8
Female	187	31.2
Total	600	100.0

Table 02 represents the distribution of the respondents by gender within the sample of the study. The first column, "Frequency," indicates the number of individuals in each gender category. It shows that there are 413 individuals identified as male and 187 individuals identified as female within the sample. The second column, "Percent," represents the percentage of individuals in each gender category relative to the total sample size. According to the data, males account for 68.8% of the total sample, while females represent 31.2%. Showing the number and proportion of individuals identified as male or female, this table provides a breakdown of the gender distribution in the sample.

**Table 03** **Education Level**

	Frequency	Percent
Intermediate	27	4.5
Graduation	205	34.2
MS/MPhil	208	34.7
Ph.D.	160	26.7
Total	600	100.0

The table-03 presents a distribution based on the respondents' education level in the sample. The "Frequency" column shows the number of individuals in each education level category. In this table, there are 27 individuals classified as "Intermediate," 205 individuals as "Graduation," 208 individuals as "MS/MPhil," and 160 individuals as "Ph.D." The "Percent" column represents the percentage of individuals in each education level category relative to the total sample size. According to the data, individuals with an

intermediate education level represent 4.5% of the total sample, those with a graduation degree account for 34.2%, those with an MS/MPhil degree represent 34.7%, and individuals with a Ph.D. degree represent 26.7%. It presents the distribution of individuals across different education levels in the sample, showing the number and proportion of individuals in each category.

**Table 04      The Use of Facebook**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	528	88.0
No	72	12.0
Total	600	100.0

The table 04 represents the responses to the question "Do you use Facebook?" within the sample. The "Frequency" column indicates the number of individuals who responded to the question. In this table, 528 individuals responded "Yes" to using Facebook, and 72 individuals who responded "No." The "Percent" column represents the percentage of individuals in each response category relative to the total sample size. According to the data, individuals who use Facebook represent 88.0% of the total sample, while those who do not use Facebook account for 12.0%. Overall, this table provides information about the distribution of responses regarding the usage of Facebook within the sample, showing the number and proportion of individuals who responded "Yes" or "No" to the question.

**Table 05      The Usage of Twitter**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	453	75.5
No	147	24.5
Total	600	100.0

Table 05 presents data related to the usage of Twitter among individuals within the

sample. The "Frequency" column shows the number of individuals who responded to the question regarding Twitter usage. In this table, 453 individuals responded "Yes" to using Twitter, and 147 individuals who responded "No." The "Percent" column represents the percentage of individuals in each response category relative to the total sample size. According to the data, individuals who use Twitter represent 75.5% of the total sample, while those who do not use Twitter account for 24.5%. The table provides information about the distribution of responses regarding the usage of Twitter within the sample, showing the number and proportion of individuals who responded "Yes" or "No" to the question.

**Table 06 Affiliation with the Political Party**

	Frequency	Percent
PML-N	175	29.2
PTI	320	53.3
PPP	9	1.5
JUI-F	3	.5
TLP	14	2.3
Other	20	3.3
None	59	9.8
Total	600	100.0

Table 06 shows data related to the political party affiliations of a certain group of individuals. First column indicates the number of respondents who belong to each political party or category enlisted. Second and last column shows the percentage of respondents about the total number of participants (600 respondents in this case). It represents the proportion of individuals affiliated with each political party. This column represents the percentage of respondents, excluding any missing or invalid data. It considers only the valid responses and calculates the percentage based on that. This column shows the cumulative percentage of respondents up to a particular category. It indicates the proportion

of respondents accounted for by each political party, starting from the top of the table.

PML-N: There are 175 respondents (29.2% of the total) affiliated with the PML-N party making it the second highest on the list.

PTI: The PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) party has the highest number of respondents with 320 individuals (53.3% of the total) affiliating with it. This is the most popular party among the respondents.

PPP: Only 9 respondents (1.5% of the total) are affiliated with the PPP (Pakistan People's Party).

JUI-F: The JUI-F (Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl) party has 3 respondents, accounting for 0.5% of the total.

TLP: TLP (Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan) has 14 respondents, representing 2.3% of the total.

Other: There are 20 respondents (3.3% of the total) who belong to other political parties not specifically mentioned in the table.

None: 59 respondents (9.8% of the total) do not have an affiliation with any political party.

In summary, the table shows the distribution of political party affiliations among the respondents, with the PTI being the most popular party among them, followed by PML-N.

**Table 07      Participation in Political Discussions on Social Media**

	Frequency	Percent
Every day	316	52.7
Multiple times a week	140	23.3
Once a week	9	1.5
Rarely	87	14.5
Never	48	8.0
Total	600	100.0

Table 07 provides information on the frequency of individuals' participation in

political discussions on social media:

The majority of respondents, 316 individuals (52.7% of the total), indicated that they participate in political discussions on social media every day. This indicates a high level of regular engagement with political topics on these platforms. 140 respondents (23.3% of the total) participate in political discussions on social media multiple times a week. Although a smaller proportion compared to daily participants, they still engage in political conversations frequently. Only 9 respondents (1.5% of the total) participate in political discussions on social media once a week. This indicates a lower level of engagement compared to the previous categories. 87 respondents (14.5% of the total) rarely participate in political discussions on social media. This suggests infrequent involvement in political conversations on these platforms. 48 respondents (8.0% of the total) do not participate in political discussions on social media at all. This category represents individuals who do not engage in political conversations on these platforms.

**Table 08      Participation in Religious Discussions on Social Media**

	Frequency	Percent
Everyday	292	48.7
Once a Week	143	23.8
Multiple times a Week	55	9.2
Rarely	44	7.3
Never	66	11.0
Total	600	100.0

Table 08 provides information on the frequency of individuals' participation in religious discussions on social media:

292 respondents (48.7% of the total) indicated that they participate in religious discussions on social media every day. This indicates a significant number of individuals engaging in daily religious conversations on these platforms. 143 respondents (23.8% of

the total) participate in religious discussions on social media once a week. This category represents individuals who engage in religious conversations with regularity but at a lower frequency than everyday participants. 55 respondents (9.2% of the total) participate in religious discussions on social media multiple times a week. This indicates a moderate level of engagement with religious topics on these platforms. 44 respondents (7.3% of the total) rarely participate in religious discussions on social media. This suggests infrequent involvement in religious conversations on these platforms. 66 respondents (11.0% of the total) do not participate in religious discussions on social media at all. This category represents individuals who do not engage in religious conversations on these platforms.

**Table 09** **Freedom to Vote**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	193	32.2
Agree	211	35.2
Neither agree nor disagree	87	14.5
Disagree	44	7.3
Strongly Disagree	65	10.8
Total	600	100.0

Table- 09 presents responses to a statement about allowing family members, close friends, and relatives to vote for the political party of their choice, even if it is considered the worst party responsible for major problems in the country.

193 respondents (32.2% of the total) strongly agree with the statement, indicating that they firmly believe in granting freedom to their family members, close friends, and relatives to vote for any political party, even if it is considered the worst and responsible for major problems in the country. 211 respondents (35.2% of the total) agree with the statement, expressing their willingness to allow their loved ones to exercise their voting rights freely, irrespective of their choice of the worst political party. This response shows

a more moderate level of agreement compared to the "strongly agree" category. 87 respondents (14.5% of the total) neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This indicates a neutral stance or a lack of a firm position on whether family members, close friends, and relatives should have the freedom to vote for the worst political party. 44 respondents (7.3% of the total) disagree with the statement, suggesting that they believe restrictions should be imposed on their loved ones' choice of the worst political party. They may feel that it is not appropriate or beneficial for them to support such a party. 65 respondents (10.8% of the total) strongly disagree with the statement, indicating a strong opposition to allowing their family members, close friends, and relatives to vote for the worst political party. They may believe that supporting such a party is detrimental to the country and its problems.

**Table 10** **Freedom of Speech**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	116	19.3
Agree	181	30.2
Neither agree nor disagree	153	25.5
Disagree	104	17.3
Strongly Disagree	46	7.7
Total	600	100.0

Table 10 shows responses to a statement about politicians making a speech to grab voter's rights in front of the opponent's political party office.

181 respondents (30.2% of the total) agree with the statement, expressing their general agreement that politicians should refrain from making such speeches in front of their opponent's political party office. This response category represents a milder level of agreement compared to the "strongly agree" category. 153 respondents (25.5% of the total) neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This suggests a neutral stance or a lack of a



strong opinion on whether politicians should make speeches in front of the opponent's political party office to grab voters. 104 respondents (17.3% of the total) disagree with the statement, indicating that they believe politicians should be allowed to make speeches in front of the opponent's political party office to grab voters. They may consider this as a legitimate campaigning strategy or believe in the freedom of expression for politicians. 46 respondents (7.7% of the total) strongly disagree with the statement, expressing a strong opposition to the idea that politicians should not make speeches in front of the opponent's political party office. They may see this as a valid and effective tactic in political campaigns.

**Table 11**                      **Freedom of Protest**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	173	28.8
Agree	139	23.2
Neither agree nor disagree	119	19.8
Disagree	72	12.0
Strongly Disagree	97	16.2
Total	600	100.0

Table 11 displays responses to a statement about the freedom of political parties, disliked by the respondents, to make protests, gatherings, and processions regardless of their damaging motive for the country.

173 respondents (28.8% of the total) strongly agree with the statement, indicating that they strongly believe that political parties they dislike should have the freedom to conduct protests, gatherings, and processions regardless of their potentially damaging motives for the country. They likely value freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly. 139 respondents (23.2% of the total) agree with the statement, expressing their general agreement that disliked political parties should be allowed to engage in protests,

gatherings, and processions, even if their motives are seen as damaging. This response category represents a milder level of agreement compared to the "strongly agree" category. 119 respondents (19.8% of the total) neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This suggests a neutral stance or a lack of a strong opinion on whether disliked political parties should be granted the freedom to conduct such activities despite potential harm to the country. 72 respondents (12.0% of the total) disagree with the statement, indicating that they believe disliked political parties should not be allowed to engage in protests, gatherings, and processions if their motives are deemed damaging to the country. They may prioritize stability and security over the freedom to express unpopular views. 97 respondents (16.2% of the total) strongly disagree with the statement, expressing strong opposition to the idea that disliked political parties should have the freedom to conduct protests, gatherings, and processions regardless of their damaging motives. They may consider such activities as harmful to the country and believe they should be restricted.

**Table 12 Freedom of Association**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	193	32.2
Agree	197	32.8
Neither agree nor disagree	174	29.0
Disagree	18	3.0
Strongly Disagree	18	3.0
Total	600	100.0

Table 12 shows responses to a statement expressing the opinion that people should not associate themselves with political parties that have historically achieved victory with the help of the establishment or through rigging.

193 respondents (32.2% of the total) strongly agree with the statement, indicating that they strongly believe that people should not associate themselves with political parties

that have historically won through the help of the establishment or through rigging. They likely prioritize fair and transparent electoral processes and may perceive such associations as compromising democratic principles. 197 respondents (32.8% of the total) agree with the statement, expressing their general agreement that people should not associate with political parties that have a history of winning through establishment support or rigging. They share a similar perspective with the "strongly agree" category but may not hold the belief as strongly. 174 respondents (29.0% of the total) neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This indicates a neutral stance or a lack of a strong opinion on whether people should associate themselves with political parties that have relied on the establishment or rigging for their victories. 18 respondents (3.0% of the total) disagree with the statement, suggesting that they believe people should associate with political parties regardless of their historical methods of winning. They may prioritize other factors such as ideology, policies, or personal preferences over how a party has achieved success. 18 respondents (3.0% of the total) strongly disagree with the statement, expressing strong opposition to the idea that people should refrain from associating with political parties that have historically won through establishment support or rigging. They likely believe that such historical methods are not relevant or significant in determining party affiliation.

**Table 13** **Right to Vote**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	86	14.3
Agree	146	24.3
Neither agree nor Disagree	196	32.7
Disagree	60	10.0
Strongly Disagree	112	18.7
Total	600	100.0

Table 13 presents responses to a statement expressing the opinion that the ruling

political party should not protect individuals who openly voted against them in previous elections and hold different political opinions that are not aligned with the government.

86 respondents (14.3% of the total) strongly agree with the statement, indicating that they strongly believe that the ruling political party should not protect individuals who openly voted against them in previous elections and hold different political opinions. They likely prioritize party loyalty and may view such protection as contradictory to the principles of democracy or the interests of the ruling party. 146 respondents (24.3% of the total) agree with the statement, expressing their agreement that the ruling political party should not protect individuals who openly voted against them and hold different political opinions. They share a similar perspective with the "strongly agree" category but may not hold the belief as strongly. 196 respondents (32.7% of the total) neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This indicates a neutral stance or a lack of a strong opinion on whether the ruling political party should protect such individuals. They may consider other factors such as inclusivity, freedom of expression, or the importance of diverse opinions within a democratic system. 60 respondents (10.0% of the total) disagree with the statement, suggesting that they believe the ruling political party should protect individuals who openly voted against them and hold different political opinions. They may prioritize the principles of democracy, tolerance, or the importance of representing all citizens' interests, regardless of their voting history. 112 respondents (18.7% of the total) strongly disagree with the statement, expressing a strong opposition to the idea that the ruling political party should not protect individuals with different political opinions. They likely believe in the importance of protecting the rights and interests of all citizens, regardless of their voting history or political alignment.

**Table 14 Political protest against the government and establishment should not be allowed**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	150	25.0
Agree	159	26.5
Neither agree nor disagree	110	18.3
Disagree	46	7.7
Strongly Disagree	135	22.5
Total	600	100.0

The table 14 shows responses to a statement expressing the opinion that political protests against the government and establishment should not be allowed because they can reveal the weak points of the state to enemy countries.

150 respondents (25.0% of the total) strongly agree with the statement, indicating that they strongly believe that political protests against the government and establishment should not be allowed. They likely view such protests as potentially harmful to the state's security and believe that they can expose weak points to enemy countries. 159 respondents (26.5% of the total) agree with the statement, expressing their agreement that political protests should not be allowed due to the potential risks they pose. They share a similar perspective with the "strongly agree" category but may not hold the belief as strongly. 110 respondents (18.3% of the total) neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This indicates a neutral stance or a lack of a strong opinion on whether political protests should be allowed. They may consider other factors such as freedom of expression, democratic rights, or the importance of addressing grievances through peaceful means. 46 respondents (7.7% of the total) disagree with the statement, suggesting that they believe political protests against the government and establishment should be allowed, even if they may reveal weak points. They may prioritize the principles of democracy, freedom of expression, or the importance of holding the government accountable. 135 respondents

(22.5% of the total) strongly disagree with the statement, expressing a strong opposition to the idea that political protests should not be allowed. They likely believe in the importance of peaceful assembly, freedom of expression, and the role of protests in bringing about social and political change.

**Table 15      The political campaigns of all political parties on electronic and Social media should be strictly prohibited**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	225	37.5
Agree	128	21.3
Neither agree nor disagree	118	19.7
Disagree	65	10.8
Strongly Disagree	64	10.7
Total	600	100.0

Table 15 presents responses to a statement suggesting that political campaigns of all political parties on electronic and social media should be strictly prohibited because they primarily involve blaming each other for the country's problems without offering solutions.

225 respondents (37.5% of the total) strongly agree with the statement. They strongly believe that political campaigns on electronic and social media should be strictly prohibited due to the perception that they primarily involve blame rather than offering solutions to the country's problems. 128 respondents (21.3% of the total) agree with the statement, indicating their support for the idea of prohibiting political campaigns on electronic and social media. They also share the belief that such campaigns tend to focus on blaming rather than problem-solving. 118 respondents (19.7% of the total) neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This category reflects a neutral stance or a lack of a strong opinion on whether political campaigns should be strictly prohibited. These respondents may consider other factors or believe that certain regulations or improvements to campaign

strategies could address the issue. 65 respondents (10.8% of the total) disagree with the statement, suggesting that they believe political campaigns on electronic and social media should not be strictly prohibited. They may argue that campaigns serve as a means to highlight important issues, engage the public, and provide opportunities for parties to present their proposed solutions. 64 respondents (10.7% of the total) strongly disagree with the statement, expressing their strong opposition to the idea of prohibiting political campaigns on electronic and social media. They likely believe in the importance of free speech, public discourse, and the role of campaigns in democratic processes, even if they acknowledge certain shortcomings in the current approach.

**Table 16 Government should impose censorship on publishing party broadcast material**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	133	22.2
Agree	115	19.2
Neither agree nor disagree	175	29.2
Disagree	76	12.7
Strongly disagree	101	16.8
Total	600	100.0

Table 16 shows responses to a statement suggesting that the government should impose censorship on the publication of party broadcast material containing critiques of the government and establishment by opposing parties. The goal would be to protect the state's interests.

133 respondents (22.2% of the total) strongly agree with the statement, indicating their support for the government's imposition of censorship on party broadcast material that contains critiques of the government and establishment. They believe that such censorship is necessary to safeguard the state's interest. 115 respondents (19.2% of the total) agree with the statement, expressing their belief that the government should impose censorship

in this context. They see it as a means of protecting the state's interests and maintaining stability. 175 respondents (29.2% of the total) neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This category represents a neutral stance or a lack of a strong opinion on the issue. These respondents may have reservations about censorship but also understand the need to balance free speech with potential concerns for national security or stability. 76 respondents (12.7% of the total) disagree with the statement, indicating their opposition to the government's imposition of censorship on party broadcast material that includes critiques of the government and establishment. They value freedom of expression and believe that open critique and debate are essential for a healthy democracy. 101 respondents (16.8% of the total) strongly disagree with the statement, expressing strong opposition to government censorship in this context. They believe that freedom of expression and the ability to criticize the government and establishment without interference are fundamental rights in a democratic society.

**Table 17 Observing any efforts by Facebook or Twitter to address religious intolerance on their platforms**

	Frequency	Percent
Every Day	115	19.2
Multiple Times a Week	101	16.8
Once a week	45	7.5
Rarely	209	34.8
Never	130	21.7
Total	600	100.0

Table 17 reflects responses to a question about whether the respondents have observed any efforts by Facebook or Twitter to address religious intolerance on their platforms.

115 respondents (19.2% of the total) state that they observe efforts by Facebook or Twitter to address religious intolerance on their platforms every day. This suggests that



they perceive consistent and proactive actions taken by these platforms to combat religious intolerance. 101 respondents (16.8% of the total) indicate that they observe such efforts multiple times a week. This suggests that they notice frequent actions by Facebook or Twitter to address religious intolerance, although not daily. 45 respondents (7.5% of the total) state that they observe efforts once a week. This indicates that they perceive occasional actions by these platforms to tackle religious intolerance but at a less frequent rate compared to the previous categories. 209 respondents (34.8% of the total) state that they observe efforts to address religious intolerance on these platforms rarely. This suggests that they perceive infrequent or sporadic actions taken by Facebook or Twitter to combat religious intolerance. 130 respondents (21.7% of the total) indicate that they have never observed any efforts by Facebook or Twitter to address religious intolerance on their platforms. This implies that they perceive a lack of action or attention from these platforms in addressing this issue.

**Table 18 Most of the religious content (text, audio, video) you consume in a day comes from**

	Frequency	Percent
Social Media	448	74.7
Books	92	15.3
Masjid	33	5.5
School/College/University teacher	27	4.5
Total	600	100.0

Table 18 presents the responses to a question regarding the primary sources of religious content (text, audio, and video) that respondents consume in a day.

The majority of respondents, 448 individuals (74.7% of the total), indicate that most of the religious content they consume in a day comes from social media platforms. This suggests that social media plays a significant role in their access to religious content,

including text, audio, and video.

Books: 92 respondents (15.3% of the total) state that books are the primary source of religious content they consume in a day. This indicates that a considerable number of respondents rely on printed materials for religious content.

Masjid: 33 respondents (5.5% of the total) mention that religious content from the mosque (masjid) contributes significantly to their daily consumption. This suggests that these individuals primarily rely on religious teachings, sermons, or discussions that take place in their local mosques.

School/College/University teacher: 27 respondents (4.5% of the total) state that their primary source of religious content is their teachers in educational institutions. This indicates that these individuals rely on the guidance and teachings of their teachers in schools, colleges, or universities.

In summary, the responses in the table indicate that a significant portion of respondents primarily consume religious content from social media platforms. Books, masjids, and educational institutions also serve as notable sources of religious content for some individuals. This suggests that digital platforms, particularly social media, have become influential sources of religious content in the lives of many respondents, while traditional sources such as books, religious institutions like masjids, and educational settings continue to play a significant role as well.

**Table 19** Users who spend most of their time on social media, and consume religious content

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	156	26.0
Agree	172	28.7
Neither agree nor disagree	188	31.3
Disagree	78	13.0
Strongly Disagree	6	1.0
Total	600	100.0

Table 19 shows the responses to a statement regarding the relationship between users who spend most of their time on social media and consume religious content from different pages/groups on social media, and their likelihood to demonstrate intolerant behavior.

156 respondents (26.0% of the total) strongly agree that users who spend most of their time on social media and consume religious content from different pages/groups on social media are most likely to demonstrate intolerant behavior. This indicates a significant portion of respondents hold the belief that there is a correlation between excessive social media usage, consumption of religious content on social media, and increased intolerance. 172 respondents (28.7% of the total) agree with the statement. They also believe that individuals who spend a significant amount of time on social media and consume religious content from various pages/groups on social media are more likely to display intolerant behavior. 188 respondents (31.3% of the total) neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This group of respondents remains neutral and does not assert a direct association between social media usage, consumption of religious content, and intolerant behavior. 78 respondents (13.0% of the total) disagree with the statement, suggesting that they do not see a strong connection between spending time on social media, consuming religious content, and demonstrating intolerant behavior. Only 6 respondents (1.0% of the

total) strongly disagree with the statement, expressing a firm belief that there is no relationship between social media usage, consumption of religious content, and intolerant behavior.

**Table 20 Religious teachings are being misrepresented on social media**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	197	32.8
Agree	230	38.3
Neither agree nor disagree	149	24.8
Disagree	12	2.0
Strongly Disagree	12	2.0
Total	600	100.0

Table 20 reflects the responses to a statement regarding the misrepresentation of religious teachings on social media by extremist groups and its impact on promoting religious intolerance among social media users.

197 respondents (32.8% of the total) strongly agree that religious teachings are being misrepresented on social media by extremist groups, leading to the promotion of religious intolerance among social media users. This indicates a significant portion of respondents firmly believe that there is a connection between the misrepresentation of religious teachings and the rise of religious intolerance on social media platforms 230 respondents (38.3% of the total) agree with the statement. They also believe that extremist groups on social media are distorting religious teachings, which contributes to the propagation of religious intolerance among social media users. 149 respondents (24.8% of the total) neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This group of respondents remains neutral and does not assert a strong opinion on the misrepresentation of religious teachings and its impact on religious intolerance on social media. 12 respondents (2.0% of the total) disagree with the statement, indicating that they do not perceive a significant

misrepresentation of religious teachings on social media by extremist groups or its influence on promoting religious intolerance. 12 respondents (2.0% of the total) strongly disagree with the statement, expressing a strong belief that religious teachings are not being misrepresented on social media by extremist groups, and it does not contribute to religious intolerance among social media users.

**Table 21 Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have a responsibility to monitor and regulate hatred-related and intolerant posts.**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	304	50.7
Agree	166	27.7
Neither agree nor disagree	75	12.5
Disagree	23	3.8
Strongly Disagree	32	5.3
Total	600	100.0

Table 21 shows the responses to a statement regarding the responsibility of social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook to monitor and regulate posts related to hatred and intolerance.

304 respondents (50.7% of the total) strongly agree that social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have a responsibility to monitor and regulate posts related to hatred and intolerance. This indicates a significant majority of respondents firmly believe that social media platforms should actively take measures to address and mitigate such content.

166 respondents (27.7% of the total) agree with the statement. They also believe that social media platforms should have a responsibility to monitor and regulate posts containing hatred and intolerance, although their agreement may not be as strong as those in the "Strongly Agree" category. 75 respondents (12.5% of the total) neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This group of respondents remains neutral and does not assert

a strong opinion on the responsibility of social media platforms to regulate such content. 23 respondents (3.8% of the total) disagree with the statement, indicating that they do not believe social media platforms should be responsible for monitoring and regulating posts related to hatred and intolerance. They may advocate for a more hands-off approach or believe that the responsibility lies elsewhere. 32 respondents (5.3% of the total) strongly disagree with the statement, expressing a strong belief that social media platforms should not have any responsibility to monitor or regulate such content.

**Table 22      The use of social media increased political and religious intolerance in your community**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	222	37.0
Agree	213	35.5
Neither agree nor disagree	138	23.0
Disagree	18	3.0
Strongly Disagree	9	1.5
Total	600	100.0

In table 22, 222 respondents (37.0% of the total) strongly agree that the use of social media has increased political and religious intolerance in their community. This suggests a substantial portion of respondents firmly believe that social media has had a significant negative impact on tolerance levels in their community. 213 respondents (35.5% of the total) agree with the statement. They also acknowledge that social media has contributed to an increase in political and religious intolerance in their community, although their agreement may not be as strong as those in the "Strongly Agree" category. 138 respondents (23.0% of the total) neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This group of respondents remains neutral and does not assert a strong opinion on whether social media has had an impact on political and religious intolerance in their community. 18 respondents (3.0% of the total) disagree with the statement, indicating that they do not believe social

media has increased political and religious intolerance in their community. They may argue that other factors are more influential or that social media has had a positive impact on tolerance levels. 9 respondents (1.5% of the total) strongly disagree with the statement, expressing a strong belief that social media has not contributed to an increase in political and religious intolerance in their community.

**Table 23 Steps of Social media platforms to combat political and religious intolerance**

	Frequency	Percent
Partnering with independent fact-checking organizations	81	13.5
Providing educational resources and training to users	189	31.5
Use advanced technology and algorithms like AI and Machine learning to combat intolerance.	109	18.2
Block the users involved in intolerant activities.	221	36.8
Total	600	100.0

Table 23 reflects the responses to a question about the steps social media platforms should take to combat political and religious intolerance.

81 respondents (13.5% of the total) suggest that social media platforms should partner with independent fact-checking organizations. This step would involve collaborating with external entities specialized in verifying the accuracy of information shared on the platforms to combat political and religious intolerance. 189 respondents (31.5% of the total) believe that social media platforms should provide educational resources and training to users. This step aims to enhance users' understanding of political and religious issues, promote critical thinking, and encourage responsible behavior on social media. 109 respondents (18.2% of the total) suggest leveraging advanced technologies such as AI and machine learning to combat political and religious intolerance. These technologies can help identify and flag intolerant content, improve content

moderation efforts, and promote a more inclusive online environment. 221 respondents (36.8% of the total) believe that social media platforms should block users involved in intolerant activities. This step would involve implementing stricter policies and measures to prevent the spread of intolerant content and taking appropriate actions against users who engage in such behavior.

**Table 24      The appropriate use of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter to promote tolerance and understanding**

	Frequency	Percent
People should use social media sensibly.	147	24.5
Government regulatory bodies should control it.	90	15.0
People need to be educated by institutions.	103	17.2
Schools, Colleges, and Universities should teach the use of social media at the student level.	260	43.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 24 shows responses to a question about how social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter can be utilized more effectively to promote tolerance and understanding.

147 respondents (24.5% of the total) believe that promoting tolerance and understanding on social media relies on individuals using these platforms sensibly. This suggests that responsible and mindful usage of social media, such as respectful interactions and thoughtful sharing of information, can contribute to a more tolerant online environment. 90 respondents (15% of the total) express the view that social media platforms should be controlled by government regulatory bodies to enhance tolerance and understanding. This implies a belief that external oversight and regulation can help enforce



policies that discourage hate speech, misinformation, and other forms of intolerance on these platforms. 103 respondents (17.2% of the total) emphasize the importance of educational institutions in promoting tolerance and understanding on social media. This indicates a belief that educating individuals about responsible social media usage, digital citizenship, critical thinking, and media literacy can foster a more inclusive and tolerant online culture. 260 respondents (43.3% of the total) suggest that incorporating social media education into the curriculum at educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities can effectively promote tolerance and understanding. This implies a belief that teaching students about responsible and ethical social media practices, online etiquette, and respectful engagement can help create a more positive online environment.

In summary, the responses in the table highlight various perspectives on how social media platforms can be better utilized to promote tolerance and understanding. These include suggestions for individuals to use social media responsibly, calls for government regulation, the importance of education by institutions, and the integration of social media education in formal education settings. The different viewpoints demonstrate the multifaceted nature of addressing intolerance on social media and the need for a comprehensive approach involving individuals, regulatory bodies, and educational institutions.

## **4.2 Reliability Statistical Test (Cronbach Alpha)**

### **Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistical Test of Political Tolerance Civil Liberties Indicators Questions:**

Two types of tolerance are being measured in this study: political tolerance and the second one is religious tolerance. Political tolerance has been divided into two sub-categories; civil liberties and civil rights. The civil rights category has further been divided

into four major indicators. In the questionnaire, each question addresses a unique indicator, and this is how the researcher has measured tolerance/intolerance. The reliability of a set of questions addressing a subcategory has been tested through the Cronbach statistical test in the SPSS.

**Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Statistical Test of Political Tolerance Civil Liberties Indicators Questions**

**Table 25**

<b>Cronbach Reliability Statistics for Civil Liberties LSA</b>		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.488	0.497	4

In table 25, there are the results of Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistics for a measure of civil liberties, specifically related to political tolerance. In this case, Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.488. This value indicates the internal consistency of the items in the scale. A value of 0.488 suggests a normal level of internal consistency among the indicators questioned in the research. Additionally, the table provides another measure called "Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items," which has a value of 0.497. The value of 0.497 is slightly higher than the original Cronbach's Alpha but still indicates a very normal level of internal consistency. Overall, based on the resulted values in the table, Cronbach's Alpha values suggest that the set of indicators in the questionnaire assessing political tolerance and civil liberties indicators have a normal level of internal consistency. This means that the items are interrelated and measure the same underlying construct with a moderate level of consistency.

**Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistical test of Political Tolerance Civil Rights Indicators Questions**

**Table 26**

<b>Cronbach Reliability Statistics for Civil Rights LSA</b>		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.822	0.819	4

The results of Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistics for a measure of civil rights, specifically related to political tolerance have been measured in Table 26. In this case, the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.822. This value indicates the internal consistency of the indicators in the scale. A value of 0.822 suggests a high level of internal consistency among the indicators. The table reflects the results of another measure called "Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items," which has a value of 0.819. This measure is calculated by standardizing the indicators in the scale. It aims to eliminate any influence of scale range or variability on the reliability estimate. The value of 0.819 is slightly lower than the original Cronbach's Alpha but it still indicates a high level of internal consistency. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.822 indicates that the scale is reliable in measuring political tolerance and civil rights indicators.

**Cronbach's Alpha Statistical Reliability test of Religious Tolerance Indicators Questions**

**Table 27**

<b>Cronbach Reliability Statistics for Religious Tolerance LSA</b>		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.544	0.568	4

There are the results of Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistics for a measure of religious tolerance in table 27. In the above test, the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.544. This value indicates the internal consistency of the indicators. Hence, a value of 0.544 means a

moderate level of internal consistency among the addressed indicators in the research. Another measure is provided in the table called "Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items," which has a value of 0.568. This value of 0.568 is slightly higher than the original Cronbach's Alpha, it also indicates a very good level of internal consistency. Based on the results of the test, Cronbach's Alpha values suggest that the set of items in the questionnaire assessing religious tolerance indicators have a very good level of internal consistency. This means that the items are somewhat interrelated and measure the same underlying construct with a great level of consistency.

### 4.3 Answers to the Research Questions

**RQ1: What is the relationship, if any, between the usage of Facebook and political intolerance?**

**Table 28** **Descriptive Statistics**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
Facebook Users	1.12	.225	600
Time Spent on Facebook	3.80	1.030	600
Participation in Political Discussions on Facebook	1.82	1.358	600
Political Tolerance	4.3750	1.45874	600

The table 28 presents the statistical description of the data utilized in the correlation analysis. A total of four variables were examined for correlation, with a sample size of N = 600 respondents in the study. The mean value for the variable "Facebook Users" is 1.12, with a standard deviation of 0.225, indicating respondents who answered affirmatively to being Facebook users. The mean value for "Time Spent on Facebook" is 3.80, with a standard deviation of 1.030, suggesting individuals spend approximately more than 4 hours daily on the platform.

Regarding the third variable, "Participation in Political Discussions on Facebook," the mean value is 1.82, and the standard deviation is 1.358, indicating individuals who engage in political discussions on Facebook daily. Lastly, the mean value for the variable "Political Tolerance" is 4.3750, with a standard deviation of 1.45874. On the scale provided, where 1 represents "Strongly Agree" and 5 represents "Strongly Disagree," a lower mean value suggests lower tolerance levels. Thus, individuals with a mean score of 4.3750 are characterized as less tolerant according to the responses provided in the questionnaire.

**Table 29****Correlations**

		<b>Facebook Users</b>	<b>Time Spent on Facebook</b>	<b>Participation in Political Discussions on Facebook</b>	<b>Political Tolerance</b>
Facebook Users	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	600			
Time Spent on Facebook	Pearson Correlation	.638**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001			
	N	600	600		
Participation in Political Discussions on Facebook	Pearson Correlation	.543**	.363**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.003		
	N	600	600	600	
Political Tolerance	Pearson Correlation	-.349**	-.376**	-.452**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.003	
	N	600	600	600	600

The current table 29 attempts to assess the correlation among four distinct variables. Specifically, it examines the relationship between Facebook usage and tolerance levels. The measurement scale employed in this study gauges tolerance, with values ranging from 1 denoting "Strongly Agree" to 5 indicating "Strongly Disagree," where 1 signifies high tolerance and 5 signifies low tolerance, implying that a lack of tolerance denotes intolerance.

Through the results ( $r = .543$ ,  $p = .006$ ) the correlation analysis reveals that there exists a significant positive correlation between Facebook usage and participation in political discussions on the Facebook platform. This suggests that increased Facebook usage corresponds to heightened engagement in political discourse. Similarly, the results ( $r = .363$ ,  $p = .003$ ) indicate a positive correlation between the time spent on Facebook and engagement in political discussions.

Furthermore, the correlation results ( $r = -.452$ ,  $p = .003$ ) between participation in political discussions and political tolerance show a moderate negative correlation. The negative correlation

implies that as participation in political discussions increases, tolerance among Facebook users decreases. The statistically significant p-value ( $< .005$ ) underscores the significance of this relationship. In essence, heightened participation in political discussions on Facebook appears to be associated with a decrease in tolerance levels, which indicates a rise in intolerance. Consequently, it can be inferred that Facebook users who actively engage in political discussions on the Facebook platform may exhibit intolerant behavior. Thus, this addresses my initial and first inquiry.

**RQ2: What is the relationship, if any, between the usage of Facebook and religious intolerance?**

**Table 30** **Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Facebook Users	1.12	.325	600
Participation in Religious Discussions on Facebook	1.38	1.363	600
Most religious content (text, audio, video) is consumed on Facebook	1.40	.288	600
Heavy users of Facebook, who consume religious content from Facebook pages/groups are most likely to demonstrate intolerant behavior.	1.34	1.033	600

The table 30 presents descriptive statistical findings regarding the correlation among four variables. For Facebook users, the mean is 1.12 with a standard deviation of 0.325, indicating that the majority of respondents in this study are active users of Facebook with minimal deviation from the mean. The mean score for participation in religious discussions on Facebook is 1.38, with a standard deviation of 1.363, suggesting that participants engage in religious discussions daily. Additionally, the mean and standard deviation for the consumption of religious content on social media are 1.40 and 0.288, respectively. These values indicate that most respondents consume religious content from social media platforms with little deviation from the mean. Finally, the mean and standard deviation for responses regarding heavy users of Facebook who consume

religious content from Facebook pages/groups demonstrating intolerant behavior is 1.34 and 1.033, respectively. This suggests that most respondents strongly agree with the statement, indicating that heavy consumers of religious content from Facebook may exhibit intolerant behavior.

**Table 31 Correlations**

		Facebook Users	Participation in Religious Discussions on Facebook?	Most religious content (text, audio, video) is consumed on Facebook.	Heavy users of Facebook, who consume religious content from Facebook pages/groups are most likely to demonstrate intolerant behavior.
Facebook Users	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	600			
Participation in Religious Discussions on Facebook?	Pearson Correlation	.637**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	600	600		
Most religious content (text, audio, video) is consumed from Facebook.	Pearson Correlation	.282**	.416**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.004		
	N	600	600	600	
Heavy users of Facebook, who consume religious content from Facebook pages/groups are most likely to demonstrate intolerant behaviour...	Pearson Correlation	.823**	.639**	.584**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.001	.000	
	N	600	600	600	600

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation results between Facebook users and content consumption from the Facebook



platform were,  $r = .282$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicating a significant positive relationship. This suggests that respondents who actively use Facebook tend to consume religious content significantly from the Facebook platform.

Furthermore, a moderate and significant positive correlation was observed between participation in religious discussions on Facebook and content consumption from the platform ( $r = .416$ ,  $p < .004$ ). This implies that Facebook users who actively engage in religious discussions are more likely to consume religious content from the platform.

Additionally, a strong and significant positive correlation was found between religious content consumption from Facebook and heavy users of the Facebook platform consuming content from pages/groups demonstrating intolerant behavior ( $r = .584$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This suggests that as the quantity of religious content consumption increases, so does the level of intolerance among heavy users of Facebook.

These results answer the research question, indicating a strong relationship between Facebook usage and intolerance, particularly in the context of religious content consumption and engagement in religious discussions on the platform. The more they spend their time on Facebook, the more they are intolerant.

**RQ3: What is the relationship, if any, between the usage of Twitter and political intolerance?**

**Table 32** **Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Twitter Users	1.25	.230	600
Time Spent on Twitter	2.80	1.030	600
Participation in Political Discussions on Twitter	1.32	1.358	600
Political Tolerance	4.5750	1.45874	600

The table 32 presents descriptive statistical findings concerning Twitter users. All inquiries related to Twitter were addressed individually in the questionnaire provided to the respondents. The mean

value for Twitter users is 1.25, with a standard deviation of 0.230. This indicates that individuals who reported being active users of Twitter are clustered around this mean with minimal deviation. Regarding time spent on Twitter, the mean is 2.80 with a standard deviation of 1.030. This suggests that respondents spend approximately 2 to 4 hours daily on Twitter, with a slight but not significant deviation from the mean.

The mean value for participation in political discussions on Twitter is 1.32, with a standard deviation of 1.358. This signifies that these individuals engage in political discourse on Twitter on a daily basis, establishing themselves as regular participants. The standard deviation of 1.358 indicates a slight deviation but is not substantial.

In terms of political tolerance, the mean is 4.5750, with a standard deviation of 1.45874. In this scale, where 1 represents a high level of tolerance and 5 indicates a low level, the mean value suggests that the majority exhibits a low tolerant attitude.

**Table 33 Correlations**

		Twitter Users	Time Spent on Twitter	Participation in Political Discussions on Twitter	Political Tolerance
Twitter Users	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	600			
Time Spent on Twitter	Pearson Correlation	.293**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003			
	N	600	600		
Participation in Political Discussions on Twitter	Pearson Correlation	.498**	.363**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.000		
	N	600	600	600	
Political Tolerance	Pearson Correlation	-.301**	-.464**	-.388**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.008	.002	
	N	600	600	600	600

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In table 33, correlations among four variables were examined. The results ( $r = .498$ ,  $p = .006$ ) revealed a statistically significant correlation between Twitter usage and engagement in political discourse on the platform, indicating a strong positive relationship. This finding suggests that as individuals' activity on Twitter increases, so does their involvement in political discussions. Specifically, respondents who reported higher levels of Twitter usage also exhibited a significant propensity for participating in political discourse on the platform.

Furthermore, in the results ( $r = .363$ ,  $p = .000$ ) a positive and moderately significant correlation was observed between the amount of time spent on Twitter and engagement in political discussions. This indicates that individuals who invest more time on Twitter are more likely to engage in political discourse on the platform.

In the results ( $r = -.388$ ,  $p = .002$ ) a negative and moderately significant correlation was found between engagement in political discussions on Twitter and political tolerance. This suggests that as individuals' involvement in political discourse on Twitter increases, their level of political tolerance tends to decrease. Notably, in this study, political intolerance was operationalized as the absence of tolerance means intolerance. Thus, the results indicate that active participation in political discussions on Twitter is associated with intolerant attitudes.

Overall, these findings provide support for the notion that there exists a significant relationship between Twitter usage and intolerance, with individuals who actively participate in political discussions on the platform displaying higher levels of intolerance.

**RQ4: What is the relationship, if any, between the usage of Twitter and religious intolerance?**

**Table 34** **Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Twitter Users	1.25	.430	600
Participation in Religious Discussions on Twitter	1.82	1.363	600
Most religious content (text, audio, video) is consumed from Twitter.	1.30	.788	600
Heavy users of Twitter, who consume religious content from Twitter pages/groups are most likely to demonstrate intolerant behavior...	1.34	1.033	600

Table 34 provides descriptive statistical findings concerning the correlation among four variables. Among Twitter users, the mean is 1.25, with a standard deviation of 0.430, indicating that the majority of respondents in this study are active users of Twitter with minimal deviation from the mean. For participation in religious discussions on Twitter, the mean score is 1.82, with a standard deviation of 1.363, suggesting that participants engage in religious discussions daily. Furthermore, the mean and standard deviation for the consumption of religious content on social media are 1.30 and 0.788, respectively. These values indicate that most respondents consume religious content from social media platforms with little deviation from the mean. Finally, the mean and standard deviation for responses concerning heavy users of Twitter who consume religious content from Twitter pages/groups demonstrating intolerant behavior are 1.34 and 1.033, respectively. This suggests that most respondents strongly agree with the statement, indicating that heavy consumers of religious content from Twitter may exhibit intolerant behavior.

**Table 35**

**Correlations**

		<b>Twitter Users</b>	<b>Participation in Religious Discussions on Twitter</b>	<b>Most of the religious content (text, audio, video) you consume in a day comes from Twitter</b>	<b>Heavy users of Twitter, who consume religious content from Twitter pages/groups are most likely to demonstrate intolerant behaviour.</b>
Twitter Users	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	600			
Participation in Religious Discussions on Twitter	Pearson Correlation	.640	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	600	600		
Most of the religious content (text, audio, video) you consume in a day comes from Twitter	Pearson Correlation	.301**	.416**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.002		
	N	600	600	600	
Heavy users of Twitter, who consume religious content from Twitter pages/groups are most likely to demonstrate intolerant behaviour...	Pearson Correlation	.711**	.501**	.884**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.001	.000	
	N	600	600	600	600

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table 35 presents the correlation results for four variables obtained through the use of SPSS. The analysis aimed to investigate the relationship between Twitter usage and religious content consumption on the platform.

The findings ( $r = .300$ ,  $p = .004$ ) reveal significant correlations between Twitter usage and religious

content consumption, as well as between participation in religious discussions and content consumption. There is a moderate positive correlation between being a Twitter user and consuming religious content on the platform. This suggests that individuals who are active Twitter users and engage in religious discussions on the platform tend to consume a substantial portion of their religious content from Twitter.

Similarly, a moderate and significant positive correlation ( $r = .416$ ,  $p = .002$ ) exists between participation in religious discussions on Twitter and the consumption of religious content from the platform. This indicates that as engagement in religious debates on Twitter increases, so does the consumption of religious content from the platform. Individuals who actively participate in these discussions are more inclined to consume religious content from Twitter.

The results ( $r = .884$ ,  $p = .000$ ) show that a very strong and highly significant positive correlation is observed between consuming a large amount of religious content from Twitter and consuming content from pages or groups exhibiting intolerant behavior. This suggests that as consumption of religious content and engagement with Twitter increases, so does the likelihood of encountering and consuming intolerant content. Individuals who actively engage in religious discussions on Twitter and consume a significant amount of religious content from the platform are more prone to exhibiting intolerant behavior.

So finally, these findings answer the research question that there is a strong relationship between Twitter usage and intolerance among individuals.

**RQ5: What are the levels of individual attitudes reflecting political and religious intolerance among users of Facebook and Twitter?**

The SPSS statistical tool was utilized to address this research question. The researcher first created a new variable and manually input data based on responses obtained from the respondents through the research questionnaire. Each sub-category of tolerance consisted of four indicators. If a respondent strongly disagreed with one indicator, it was categorized as a low level of intolerance. Selecting one option from tolerance and one from intolerance indicated a moderate level of intolerance. Three indicators showing intolerance signaled a high level, while all four indicated a very high level of intolerance. Subsequently, the researcher conducted cross-tabulation as the data was nominal. Correlation analysis was employed for the four questions, as the survey data was ordinal.

**Table 36 Facebook Users? \* Twitter Users \* Level of Political Intolerance Crosstabulation**

			Level of Political Intolerance				Total
			Low Level of Pol. Intolerance	Moderate Level of Pol. Intolerance	High Level of Pol. Intolerance	Very High Level of Pol. Intolerance	
<b>Facebook Users</b>	<b>Yes</b>	Count % within Do you use Facebook?	78 (14.8%)	80(15.2%)	141(26.7%)	229(43.4%)	528(100.0%)
	<b>No</b>	Count % within Do you use Facebook?	13(18.1%)	3(4.2%)	23(31.9%)	33(45.8%)	72(100.0%)
<b>Twitter Users</b>	<b>Yes</b>	Count % within Do you use Twitter?	77(17.0%)	54(11.9%)	124(27.4%)	198(43.7%)	453(100.0%)
	<b>No</b>	Count % within Do you use Twitter?	14(9.5%)	29(19.7%)	40(27.2%)	64(43.5%)	147(100.0%)

This table 36 presents the cross-tabulation results among Facebook and Twitter users and the level of political tolerance. Cross-tabulation analysis was employed to measure the level of political intolerance among Facebook and Twitter users. Respondents were asked to indicate their status on using Facebook, to which they responded with either "yes" or "no". Respondents who answered "yes" were categorized as active Facebook users. The Facebook users variable was cross-tabulated with the level of political intolerance.

Regarding the level of political intolerance, there were four levels identified. A total of 229 Facebook users, constituting 43.4% of Facebook users, a very high level of political intolerance was observed. 141 Facebook users (26.7% of Facebook users) exhibited high levels of political intolerance, while 80 users (15.2%) showed a moderate level of political intolerance. Furthermore, 78 Facebook users (14.8%) demonstrated a low level of political intolerance. In summary, the majority of active Facebook users who engage in political discussions on the platform exhibit intolerant political attitudes.

To measure the level of political intolerance among Twitter users, the same method was applied. After cross-tabulating Twitter users with the level of political intolerance, the results indicate that 198 Twitter users (43.75%) exhibited a very high level of political intolerance. 124 Twitter users (27.4%) displayed a high level of political intolerance, while 54 users (11.9%) showed a moderate level of political intolerance. And 77 Twitter users (17%) demonstrated a low level of political intolerance. These findings suggest that a majority of Twitter users who engage in political discourse tend to exhibit intolerant behavior.

Upon comparing the level of political intolerance between Facebook users and Twitter users, it has been identified that Facebook users demonstrate higher levels of intolerance compared to Twitter users.



**Table 37**

**Correlations**

		<b>Facebook Users</b>	<b>Twitter Users</b>	<b>Users who spend most of their time on social media, and consume religious content from different pages/groups on social media, are most likely to demonstrate intolerant behavior.</b>
Facebook Users	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	600		
Twitter Users	Pearson Correlation	.095	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	600	600	
Users who spend most of their time on social media, and consume religious content from different pages/groups on social media, are most likely to demonstrate intolerant behavior.	Pearson Correlation	.823**	.711**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.003	
	N	600	600	600

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To measure the religious intolerance among Facebook and Twitter users, a correlation analysis was employed. The data were surveyed, and the ordinal nature necessitates correlation analysis. For Facebook users, correlation analysis was conducted with the statement: "Users who spend most of their time on social media and consume religious content from different pages/groups on

social media are most likely to demonstrate intolerant behavior." The results indicated a significant and very strong positive correlation ( $r = .823$ ,  $p = .002$ ), suggesting that increased Facebook usage is associated with higher levels of religious intolerance. Specifically, active engagement in religious discussions and consumption of religious content on Facebook was linked to intolerant behavior.

Similarly, the level of religious intolerance among Twitter users was assessed by examining their engagement with religious content. The correlation analysis revealed a significant and very strong positive correlation ( $r = .711$ ,  $p = .003$ ), indicating that heightened Twitter usage corresponds to increased intolerance among heavy consumers of religious content.

Comparing the correlation scores of both variables, it is evident that Facebook users demonstrate higher levels of religious intolerance compared to Twitter users.

In conclusion, these findings underscore the concerning correlation between social media engagement, particularly with religious content, and the manifestation of intolerance. Understanding these dynamics is essential for addressing online behaviors that perpetuate religious intolerance.

## **CHAPTER NO 5**

### **5.0 Discussion on Results, Conclusion, and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Discussion**

This research explored the complex relationship between social media usage and intolerance. This chapter aims to analyze and compare the effects of Twitter and Facebook on intolerance. The chapter delineates the potential ramifications of social media engagement in fostering intolerance, offering insights collected from recent research findings. Through a comprehensive examination, it seeks to expose the comparative impact of Twitter and Facebook on nurturing religious and political intolerance among the users in Pakistani society.

Basit (2023) underscores that the overindulgence in Facebook usage has engendered a decline in research interest among the youth, fostering a partiality for uninhibited information sharing without proper authentication. This trend has been linked to the exacerbation of political and religious intolerance. Consistent with these observations, findings from Table 41 reveal a correlation between active participation in political discussions on Facebook and the manifestation of intolerant behavior. Similarly, Table 45 demonstrates a comparable pattern among active Twitter users engaged in political discourse on the platform. The cultivation theory says the same and Hermann, Morgan, and Shanahan (2023) substantiate these findings as well, suggesting that prolonged social media exposure heightens cultivation, particularly among individuals involved in ongoing online debates, thereby fostering intolerance. Thus, this study aligns with existing literature in elucidating this phenomenon.

Palit (2023) emphasizes that extensive social media usage globally has been associated with the proliferation of intolerance. However, empirical evidence from studies conducted in the South Asian region, inherently more receptive to media effects, sheds light on the pronounced rise of intolerance in this region. Conducted within Pakistan, this study furnishes empirical substantiation regarding the prevalence of intolerant behavior among the majority of social media users. Significantly, it not only identifies social media users as intolerant but also quantifies the degree of intolerance. The findings reveal that a substantial proportion of Facebook and Twitter users exhibit intolerant tendencies across both religious and political spectrums. Moreover, other research underscores Facebook's role in disseminating intolerance through the rapid dissemination of misinformation and the amplification of hate speech. The platform's extensive reach and connectivity afford a conducive environment for the propagation of divisive ideologies by online communities and extremist groups (Brown & Kuss, 2020).

Bouvier and Machin (2021) discovered that Twitter usage serves as an indicator of intolerance within society. The dynamics of Twitter usage have been observed to empower individuals to express and propagate prejudiced viewpoints without immediate repercussions. Moreover, in addressing research question 3, a negative moderate correlation between Twitter use and political tolerance has been identified. As Twitter usage escalates, tolerance levels tend to diminish. This research corroborates these findings, highlighting a significant correlation between Twitter usage and intolerance. Smith and Colton (2022) further assert that Twitter's structure, characterized by its limited character count and emphasis on brevity, contributes to over simplification and polarization of complex issues, thereby exacerbating intolerance. Consistent with these observations,

this study demonstrates that active engagement in political discourse on Twitter fuels intolerance among users.

A comprehensive review of the literature, including that of Pradanna & Abdulkarim (2023), reveals that this study aligns with existing research. Nearly all hypotheses are supported, suggesting a direct link between social media use and intolerance levels among Pakistani users. Notably, intolerance, particularly in political and religious spheres, is influenced by social media usage, with Facebook and Twitter emerging as prominent platforms. While both platforms exhibit consistently high levels of intolerance among users, a comparison of Pearson correlation values reveals that Facebook users tend to display greater intolerance than Twitter users.

This PhD thesis represents a seminal contribution to social media research, particularly in elucidating the intricate relationship between excessive Facebook and Twitter usage and user intolerance. The study begins with well-defined hypotheses and ambitiously explores the underlying dynamics governing social media consumption and its impact on intolerance levels. The findings not only confirm the initial hypotheses but also introduce a reliable and innovative instrument for measuring intolerance on social media platforms, enhancing the scholarly discourse in this field.

A notable strength of this study lies in its rigorous approach to data collection and analysis. Employing a quantitative methodology, the researcher administered a structured questionnaire to a diverse sample of Facebook and Twitter users in Pakistan. This methodological rigor allows for a comprehensive assessment of intolerance phenomena, facilitating a nuanced understanding of its various dimensions among social media users. The results unequivocally establish a significant relationship between excessive Facebook

and Twitter use and heightened intolerance levels among users, underscoring the role of these platforms as conduits for intolerant behavior across political and religious domains.

This study's implications transcend its primary research question, offering invaluable insights into the role of social media in cultivating echo chambers and fostering like-minded communities. By engaging in selective exposure to content that aligns with their preexisting beliefs, users perpetuate an environment where intolerance thrives and spreads within these insular spaces. This observation poses a pressing challenge for policymakers and social media platforms, underscoring the urgency for measures to counteract the detrimental effects of such echo chambers on societal cohesion.

The emphasis on the Pakistani context in this study makes a crucial contribution to the scant research available on this topic in the region. By illuminating the specific dynamics of social media usage in Pakistan, the research contextualizes its findings within the socio-cultural framework of the country. This localized perspective is instrumental in devising targeted interventions and policy recommendations aimed at effectively addressing the issue of escalating intolerance on these platforms.

It's essential to acknowledge that social media platforms encompass diverse user bases, and not all users exhibit intolerance, as demonstrated by the varied responses in both scales utilized in this study. However, some users may engage in discourses that involve making broad generalizations about individuals or groups based on their political or religious beliefs, rooted in preconceived notions or prejudices. During the theoretical construction of this study, it was observed that users entrenched in their intolerant beliefs consume content that aligns with their preexisting patterns of intolerance. Such users might resort to name-calling, personal attacks, or harassment against those with differing political

or religious views, thereby fostering a hostile online environment and stifling open dialogue.

Additionally, certain users and groups/pages on social media platforms disseminate false or misleading information about political or religious groups, intentionally or unintentionally. Features such as sharing, retweeting, and liking to amplify the spread of such content, contributing to polarization, reinforcing stereotypes, and exacerbating intolerance. Echo chambers created on social media platforms enable users to interact primarily with like-minded individuals, reinforcing their own beliefs and leading to confirmation bias, wherein users seek information that aligns solely with their existing views, thereby making them less receptive to alternative perspectives.

In extreme cases, social media users may resort to dehumanizing language or hate speech directed at individuals or groups based on their political or religious beliefs, aiming to strip away their dignity and humanity. Such behavior fuels hostility and conflicts, highlighting the need for vigilant moderation and enforcement of community standards on social media platforms. However, it's important to recognize that while instances of intolerance may occur on Facebook and Twitter, they do not represent all users or the platforms as a whole. Many individuals utilize these platforms to engage in healthy debates, share diverse perspectives, and promote understanding and tolerance.

While the current study offers valuable insights and establishes a solid foundation for comprehending the relationship between social media use and intolerance, it also paves the way for future research endeavors. The development of a novel instrument, grounded in existing theoretical research and analysis, presents an opportunity for broader cross-cultural studies, facilitating comparative analyses of intolerance across different societies

and social media platforms. Additionally, exploring the long-term effects of social media use on user behavior and attitudes can yield a deeper understanding of the underlying dynamics.

This study conclusively demonstrates the significant relationship between excessive Facebook and Twitter use and intolerance among users. As a pioneering work in this domain, it catalyzes future research endeavors aimed at understanding and addressing the challenges posed by social media consumption and its impact on society. The findings of this study are also consistent with the theoretical framework established in the second chapter.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

This study explores the relationship between social media usage and intolerance, seeking to uncover its nuances. As anticipated from the outset, the findings undeniably support the hypothesis that prolonged engagement with social media platforms amplifies levels of intolerance among its users. Significantly, this research also introduces a novel and reliable instrument for gauging intolerance levels among social media users, representing a noteworthy contribution to the field.

The study effectively achieves its objectives. Primarily, it endeavors to analyze and compare the effects of two prominent social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter, on the political and religious intolerance within the Pakistani user base. As delineated in the results section, a substantial proportion of Facebook users across diverse demographic profiles exhibit heightened levels of intolerance when assessed for political and religious intolerance. Likewise, Twitter users mirror similar trends, displaying pronounced



intolerance both politically and religiously. So, the first objective is meticulously met, aligning closely with the initial hypotheses posited by the researcher and supported by the guidance of the supervisor. A compelling correlation between social media usage and political as well as religious intolerance emerges, underlining the significance of this study's findings.

The secondary aim of this study was to explore the intricate relationship between social media usage and the prevalence of political and religious intolerance among Pakistani social media users. Upon scrutinizing the data collected, a robust association between social media engagement and heightened levels of political and religious intolerance among Pakistani users emerged. Notably, a significant portion of participants utilizing platforms such as Facebook and Twitter exhibited behaviors indicative of intolerance.

The study aimed to investigate whether platforms like Facebook and Twitter exacerbate pre-existing perceptions of political and religious intolerance within Pakistani social media circles. Extensive research, as outlined in the literature review, suggests that social media engagement in Pakistan has reached addictive levels. Users frequently devote substantial amounts of time to these platforms, often consuming content extensively.

In response to inquiries regarding their social media habits, a majority of participants reported spending over four hours daily on these platforms. This high level of engagement exposes users to a deluge of content, much of which is imbued with intolerance. Notably, participants acknowledged that a significant portion of the political and religious content they encounter originates from social media channels.

Moreover, social media fosters the formation of echo chambers, where like-minded

individuals congregate, reinforcing existing beliefs and ideologies. Unfortunately, these communities often serve as breeding grounds for intolerant rhetoric, which proliferates unchecked. So, this propagation of intolerant content contributes to the escalation of animosity and prejudice within online spaces.

During the research inquiry into the proliferation of intolerance through social media, intriguing insights surfaced. When asked about potential solutions, 32% of respondents advocated for social media platforms, in collaboration with telecommunication regulatory authorities, to embark on educating users about responsible platform usage. Another 37% suggested a more proactive stance, advocating for telecommunication authorities to block sources propagating intolerant content. Additionally, 18% proposed leveraging Artificial Intelligence tools by telecommunication authorities to identify and mitigate the production of intolerant content.

In response to inquiries about enhancing social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to foster tolerance and understanding, diverse perspectives emerged. Approximately 43% of respondents highlighted the necessity for educational institutions to incorporate social media literacy into curricula at various academic levels, citing successful precedents in countries like Japan and New Zealand. Another 24% emphasized the importance of individual responsibility, stressing the need for users to exercise prudence and discernment in their online interactions. Meanwhile, 15% underscored the potential role of government regulatory bodies in overseeing social media activities.

This study serves as a significant addition to comprehending the intricate dynamics between social media usage and intolerance within the Pakistani context. Its analytical

rigor enhances the richness and scope of the findings, providing a robust framework for future investigations. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, tackling the surge of intolerance on social media necessitates concerted efforts and foresight. Let this research resonate as a rallying cry for policymakers, researchers, and users alike to collaborate in fostering a digital sphere characterized by tolerance, empathy, and inclusivity.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

- Given the strong relationship between social media use and political and religious intolerance, it is essential to create public awareness campaigns to educate users about the potential negative consequences of their online behavior. These campaigns should emphasize the importance of respectful dialogue, critical thinking, and fact-checking, aiming to reduce intolerance and promote a more inclusive online environment.
- Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook should implement robust policies and guidelines to address and prevent the spread of intolerance. These policies should clearly define and prohibit hate speech, discrimination, and harassment, while providing mechanisms for reporting and addressing such incidents. Regular monitoring and enforcement of these policies are crucial to maintaining a healthy online discourse.
- Social media platforms should prioritize algorithmic transparency to prevent the inadvertent amplification of intolerant content. Users should be made aware of how algorithms function and how they can influence their online experiences. Platforms should also invest in regular audits and external oversight to ensure that their algorithms are not inadvertently promoting intolerance or discriminatory content.
- To address the prevalence of intolerance among social media users, it is important to

invest in digital literacy and critical thinking education programs. These programs should be integrated into school curricula and target users of all ages. By equipping individuals with the skills to critically evaluate information, recognize biases, and engage in constructive conversations, they can be empowered to navigate social media responsibly.

- Platforms should consider decision-making regarding content policies and enforcement. Creating a more tolerant online environment requires active efforts to promote diversity and inclusivity. Social media platforms should encourage the formation of diverse online communities, facilitate exposure to diverse perspectives, and promote respectful interactions among users from different backgrounds. By fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance, platforms can counteract the spread of intolerance.
- Further research is needed to deepen our understanding of the relationship between social media use and intolerance. Funding agencies, academic institutions, and social media platforms should collaborate to support research projects that explore the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to the problem. This research involving users in the content moderation process by providing mechanisms for community flagging and reporting of potentially intolerant content. Additionally, platforms can establish advisory boards or consultative committees comprising diverse stakeholders to ensure fair and inclusive evidence-based interventions and guide future policies and practices.
- Social media platforms should prioritize ethical design and responsible innovation. This involves considering the potential societal impact of new features and functionalities before their implementation. By proactively addressing potential risks and vulnerabilities, platforms can mitigate the negative effects of social media use on

intolerance.

- Addressing the complex issue of social media and intolerance requires collaboration among multiple stakeholders. Governments, civil society organizations, researchers, educators, and social media platforms should engage in ongoing dialogue to share insights, best practices, and collaborate on initiatives aimed at reducing intolerance online. This collective effort is essential for creating lasting positive change.
- To fully understand the impact of interventions and changes implemented, it is important to conduct longitudinal studies and long-term evaluations. By tracking changes in social media behavior and intolerance over time, researchers can assess the effectiveness of various strategies and identify areas that require further improvement.

## **5.4 Limitations of the Study**

The findings of this study may be limited in terms of generalizability due to the specific focus on Twitter and Facebook. Different social media platforms may exhibit unique dynamics and user behaviors, so the results may not apply to other platforms.

The survey study design relies on voluntary participation, which introduces the possibility of self-selection bias. Individuals who choose to participate may have distinct characteristics or opinions that differ from those who opt not to participate, potentially affecting the representativeness of the sample.

The study's findings may not accurately reflect the entire population of social media users due to potential sampling bias. The sample may over-represent certain demographics or exclude individuals who have limited access to social media platforms, which could affect the generalizability of the results.

The study's cross-sectional nature limits the ability to establish causal relationships and determine the directionality of the relationship between social media use and intolerance. It is challenging to differentiate whether social media use leads to intolerance or if individuals with pre-existing intolerant attitudes are more likely to engage in intolerant behavior on social media.

Participants may feel social pressure to respond in a socially desirable manner, leading to the potential underreporting of intolerant attitudes or behaviors. This bias may affect the accuracy and reliability of the data collected through self-report surveys.

**Measurement Bias:** The measurement of variables, such as social media use and intolerance, heavily relies on self-report measures. This approach is subject to recall bias, response bias, and interpretation differences among participants, potentially influencing the accuracy of the data collected.

While the study focuses on the relationship between social media use and political and religious intolerance, other factors that may contribute to intolerance, such as personal experiences, offline interactions, or media consumption, are not extensively explored. Thus, the study's findings may not account for the full range of variables influencing intolerance.

Researching sensitive topics like intolerance requires ethical considerations. The study may encounter limitations related to participant willingness to disclose sensitive information or potential difficulties in obtaining informed consent due to the anonymous nature of social media platforms.

The study's findings may be influenced by the specific time and context in which the research was conducted. Social media behaviors and the prevalence of intolerance may

change over time, limiting the generalizability of the study's findings to different temporal and contextual settings.

As an academic survey study, the research may face limitations related to sample size, survey design, and statistical analyses. These methodological constraints may impact the validity and reliability of the study's results.

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## Appendix-01

### Coding Sheet

1	Age?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. 20 to 25 years</li><li>2. 25 to 30 years</li><li>3. 30 to 35 years</li><li>4. More than 35 years</li></ol>
2	Gender?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Male</li><li>2. Female</li></ol>
3	Education?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Below Matric</li><li>2. Matric</li><li>3. Intermediate</li><li>4. Graduation</li><li>5. M.Phil.</li><li>6. PhD</li></ol>
4	Do you use Facebook?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Yes</li><li>2. No</li></ol>
5	Do you use Twitter?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Yes</li><li>2. No</li></ol>
6	The political party you are affiliated with	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. PML-N</li><li>2. PTI</li><li>3. PPP</li><li>4. JUI-F</li><li>5. TLP</li><li>6. Other</li><li>7. None</li></ol>
7	How frequently do you use social media?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Multiple times a day</li><li>2. Once a day</li><li>3. 2-3 times a week</li><li>4. Rarely or never</li></ol>
8	How much time do you spend on social media on an average day?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Less than one hour</li><li>2. 1 to 2 hours</li><li>3. 2 to 4 hours</li></ol>

		4. More than 4 hours
9	Have you ever Participated in political/religious discussions on Facebook/Twitter?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Every day</li> <li>2. Multiple times a week</li> <li>3. Once a week</li> <li>4. Rarely</li> <li>5. Never</li> </ol>
10	My family members, close friends, and relatives have the freedom to vote for the political party of their choice, even the worst party that is responsible for the major problems the country is facing today. <b>(freedom of vote)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>
11	Politicians should not make a speech to grab voter's right in front of the opponent's political party office. <b>(freedom of speech)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>
12	The political parties I dislike most have the freedom to make protests, gatherings, and processions anytime, anywhere regardless of their damaging motive for the country. <b>(freedom of assembly)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>
13	People should not get associated with the political parties which historically made their victory with the help of the establishment or through the rigging, in my opinion. <b>(freedom of association)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>
14	The ruling political party should not protect the individuals who overtly voted against the current ruling party in previous elections and still have a different political opinion that is not aligned with the government. <b>(protection right)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>

15	Political protest against the government and establishment should not be allowed because it can reveal the weak point of the state to the enemy countries. <b>(demonstration right)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>
16	The political campaigns of all political parties on electronic and social media should be strictly prohibited because they just keep blaming each other for the problems the country is facing today, they do not go for the solution. <b>(persuasion right)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>
17	Government should impose censorship on publishing party broadcast material containing critiques on the government and establishment by the opponent parties because that can go against the state interest. <b>(publishing right)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>
18	Have you observed any efforts by Facebook or Twitter to address religious intolerance on their platforms? a.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Every day</li> <li>2. Multiple times a week</li> <li>3. Once a week</li> <li>4. Rarely</li> <li>5. Never</li> </ol>
19	Most of the religious content (text, audio, video) you consume in a day comes from	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social media</li> <li>2. Books</li> <li>3. Masjid</li> <li>4. School/College/University teachers</li> </ol>
20	Users who spend most of their time on social media, and consume religious content from different pages/groups on social media, are most likely to demonstrate intolerant behavior.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>

21	Religious teachings are being misrepresented on social media by extremist groups, which is promoting religious intolerance among social media users.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>
22	Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have a responsibility to monitor and regulate hatred and intolerance-related posts.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>
23	The use of social media increased political and religious intolerance in your community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly disagree</li> </ol>
24	In your opinion, what steps should social media platforms take to combat political and religious intolerance?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partnering with independent fact-checking organizations</li> <li>2. Providing educational resources and training to users.</li> <li>3. Use advanced technology and algorithms like AI and Machine learning to combat intolerance.</li> <li>4. Block the users involved in intolerant activities.</li> </ol>
25	How do you think social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, can be better used to promote tolerance and understanding?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People should use social media sensibly.</li> <li>2. Government regulatory bodies should control it.</li> <li>3. People need to be educated by institutions.</li> <li>4. Schools, Colleges, and Universities should</li> </ol>

		<p>teach the use of social media at the student level.</p> <p>5. People should avoid political and religious discussions on social media.</p>
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## **Research Questionnaire on the Exposure of Social Media and Intolerance**

### **Demographic control-related questions**

1. Age?
  - a. 20 to 25 years
  - b. 25 to 30 years
  - c. 30 to 35 years
  - d. More than 35 years
2. Gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
3. Education Level?
  - a. Below Matric
  - b. Matric
  - c. Intermediate
  - d. Graduation
  - e. M.Phil.
  - f. PhD
4. Do you use Facebook?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
5. Do you use Twitter?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
6. The political party you are affiliated with
  - a. PML-N
  - b. PTI
  - c. PPP
  - d. JUI-F
  - e. TLP
  - f. Other
  - g. None
7. How much time do you spend on social media on an average day?
  - a. Less than one hour
  - b. 1 to 2 hours
  - c. 2 to 4 hours
  - d. More than 4 hours
8. How often do you participate in political discussions on social media?
  - a. Every day
  - b. Multiple times a week

- c. Once a week
  - d. Rarely
  - e. Never
9. How often do you participate in religious discussions on social media?
- a. Every day
  - b. Multiple times a week
  - c. Once a week
  - d. Rarely
  - e. Never

## Likert Scale

10. My family members, close friends, and relatives have the freedom to vote for the political party of their choice, even the worst party that is responsible for the major problems the country is facing today. **(freedom of vote)**
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree

**Rubric: if strongly agree it is tolerance, if strongly disagree it is intolerance**

11. Politicians should not make a speech to grab voter's right in front of the opponent's political party office. **(freedom of speech)**
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree

**Rubric: if strongly agree it is intolerance, if strongly disagree it is tolerance**

12. The political parties I dislike most have the freedom to make protests, gatherings, and processions anytime, anywhere regardless of their damaging motive for the country. **(freedom of assembly)**
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree

**Rubric: if strongly agree it is tolerance, if strongly disagree it is intolerance**

13. People should not get associated with the political parties which historically made their victory with the help of the establishment or through the rigging, in my opinion. **(freedom of association)**
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree



- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

**Rubric: if strongly agree it is intolerance, if strongly disagree then tolerance**

14. The ruling political party should not protect the individuals who overtly voted against the current ruling party in previous elections and still have a different political opinion that is not aligned with the government. **(protection right)**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

**Rubric: if strongly agree it is intolerance, if strongly disagree it is tolerance**

15. Political protest against the government and establishment should not be allowed because it can reveal the weak point of the state to the enemy countries. **(demonstration right)**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

**Rubric: if strongly agree it is intolerance, if strongly disagree it is tolerance**

16. The political campaigns of all political parties on electronic and social media should be strictly prohibited because they just keep blaming each other for the problems the country is facing today, they do not go for the solution. **(persuasion right)**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

**Rubric: if strongly agree it is intolerance, if strongly disagree it is tolerance**

17. Government should impose censorship on publishing party broadcast material containing critiques on the government and establishment by the opponent parties because that can go against the state interest. **(publishing right)**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

**Rubric: if strongly agree it is intolerance, if strongly disagree it is tolerance**

18. Have you observed any efforts by Facebook or Twitter to address religious intolerance on their platforms?

- a. Every day
  - b. Multiple times a week
  - c. Once a week
  - d. Rarely
  - e. Never
19. Most of the religious content (text, audio, video) you consume in a day comes from
- a. Social media
  - b. Books
  - c. Masjid
  - d. School/College/University teachers
20. Users who spend most of their time on social media, and consume religious content from different pages/groups on social media, are most likely to demonstrate intolerant behavior.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
21. Religious teachings are being misrepresented on social media by extremist groups, which is promoting religious intolerance among social media users.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree

### **Solutions related questions**

22. Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have a responsibility to monitor and regulate hatred and intolerance-related posts.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
23. The use of social media increased political and religious intolerance in your community.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
24. In your opinion, what steps should social media platforms take to combat political and religious intolerance?
- a. Partnering with independent fact-checking organizations
  - b. Providing educational resources and training to users.

- c. Use advanced technology and algorithms like AI and Machine learning to combat intolerance.
  - d. Block the users involved in intolerant activities.
25. How do you think social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, can be better used to promote tolerance and understanding?
- a. People should use social media sensibly.
  - b. Government regulatory bodies should control it.
  - c. People need to be educated by institutions.
  - d. Schools, Colleges, and Universities should teach the use of social media at the student level.
  - e. People should avoid political and religious discussions on social media.

## **Appendix-03**

### **No Plagiarism Report**