



## The Spread of Terrorism Projected on Social Media: A Study of Youth's Extremist Digital Behaviour

### Saima Manzoor

Lecturer (Criminology), Department of Sociology and Criminology, University of Sargodha

[saima.manzoor@uos.edu.pk](mailto:saima.manzoor@uos.edu.pk)

### Akif Manzoor

Senior Patrol Officer, National Highways and Motorway Police, Government of Pakistan

[akifarain09@gmail.com](mailto:akifarain09@gmail.com)

### Tayyba Khan

BS Sociology (Scholar), Department of Sociology and Criminology, University of Sargodha

[tayybawaheed722@gmail.com](mailto:tayybawaheed722@gmail.com)

---

### ABSTRACT

The agenda for the kinetic domain, the second item on the updated National Action Plan 2021, is to combat terrorism disseminated by media (electronic, print and social) as well as the communications and cyber networks. Spread of terrorism projected on social media and extremist digital behavior is an emerging problem for Pakistani community, especially among adults and university-going students. Its use in YouTube, X (Twitter), TokTok, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp, has resulted in numerous challenges in the society including concept of over exposure in the society through social networking causing extremist digital practices that promote political acts of terrorism. The purpose of this study is to investigate the misuse of the internet and social media for terrorism-related acts, especially those motivated by political extremism. Hypotheses were created to ascertain an important relationship between political extremism, the search for abusive information related to terrorism, and the digital behavior of young. The literature review encompasses social media and public policy, the influence of social networking on the political socialization of young, the connection between young people and violent extremism in the social media, and the utilization of social networking for political engagement. Its theoretical perspective includes social media-integration-theory-

---

---

model, social learning theory and extremism as dogma within the worldview. A simple random sampling method was employed: The population consisted of students from the University of Sargodha, from whom a simple random sample of 392 was extracted. A questionnaire was developed for data gathering employing the survey research methodology. A descriptive analysis was performed using percentage distributions to evaluate perspectives on the dissemination of terrorism on social media. The hypothesis testing with the Chi-Square test yielded inconclusive findings. For  $H_1$ , which investigated the significant relationship between political extremism in youngster's digital behavior, the p-value of 0.764, signifying no statistically significant relationship. Conversely,  $H_2$ , which evaluated the significant relationship between the pursuit of abusive information and extremist digital behavior, gave an output of p-value 0.043, indicating a statistically significant relationship. The findings indicate that several aspects of internet participation exhibit a stronger relationship with extreme attitudes than others. The basic remedies suggested are addressing the needs for online social norms, increasing the accountability for data handlers.

**Key Words:** Revised National Action Plan, NACTA, Terrorism, Political extremism, Social media, Digital behavior and Youth.

---

## INTRODUCTION

The National Action Plan (NAP), a wide-ranging roadmap formulated to counter the terrorism and extremism in Pakistan, was developed in 2015 in the repercussion of the gruesome incident of Army Public School (APS) Peshawar. NAP 20-point was a notable step in the precise route as we came out of the state of rejection and espoused a clear direction to tread the pathway in unity to challenge terrorism with valour and vigour. All institutions of Pakistan welcomed it and public looked at it with high expectations and hopes. The main objective of NAP was to rheostat and eradicate the terrorism with efficacious counter insurgence operations.

The 14th agenda item of the National Action Plan addresses steps to combat the misuse of the internet and social media for terrorist activities. The implementation on NAP appeared to have taken off well but soon extensive communal dissatisfaction over its futile implementation underway came to light. The 14<sup>th</sup> point implementation status till 2017 was blank (Elahi, 2017).

In 2021, this national action plan was reorganized into two domains: the kinetic domain and the non-kinetic domain. The Revised National Action Plan 2021, Point 2 within the Kinetic Domain, emphasizes the imperative for measures to combat the proliferation of terrorism via electronic, print, and social media, in addition to cyber communication networks (NACTA, 2021).

The 2021 Revised National Action Plan mandated decisive operational and technological interventions. As part of its implementation, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) reported the blocking of over 1.3 million URLs linked to extremism, hate speech, and anti-state propaganda by the end of 2023, in coordination with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and NACTA (Gull, 2025).

Additionally, the government launched the SurfSafe app and web portal, empowering citizens to report extremist online content directly to NACTA, thereby promoting community-driven counter-radicalization efforts (Associated Press of Pakistan [APP], 2018). A major organizational enhancement was the establishment of the National Fusion Centre under NACTA, enabling real-time coordination between the PTA, FIA, provincial CTDs, and other law enforcement authorities to surveil and dismantle terrorist communication networks (The Express Tribune, 2024). These developments mark a significant progression from the inactivity observed under NAP 2014, as Pakistan has now adopted a more proactive and institutionalized approach to counter the digital dissemination of extremist ideologies. In March 2025, the inaugural meeting convened under the revised National Action Plan 2021, which evaluated counter-terrorism strategies, violent extremism, and administrative deficiencies. (Daily Independent, 2025).

Exposure of social media and digital behaviour is an emerging problem for Pakistani community, especially among adults and university-going students. Their utilization in Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, X (twitter) and WhatsApp has precipitated several societal challenges, particularly the overexposure of customers in social networking which creates extremist digital behaviour leading to support political terrorism.

While Pakistan's counter-extremism framework under the Revised National Action Plan 2021 has increasingly emphasized cyber surveillance and media regulation, the digital demographics of the country present both opportunities and limitations for implementation. As of early 2025, Pakistan had approximately 190 million cellular mobile connections, accounting for 75.2% of the total population. However, many of these connections are limited to voice and SMS services, and do not necessarily entail internet access (DataReportal, 2025). The number of actual internet users stood at 116 million, representing just 45.7% of the national population, while 66.9 million social media user identities were recorded—equivalent to 26.4% of the total population. These figures highlight a crucial policy implication: while online platforms serve as significant vectors for extremist propaganda and recruitment, a substantial portion of Pakistan's population remains disconnected or only partially connected. Consequently, digital counterterrorism efforts must not only focus on cyber surveillance and social media moderation, but also be calibrated to account for regional disparities in connectivity and potential offline radicalization channels.

The active participation of contemporary youth in digital media culture impacts numerous spheres of their life and leads to the fact that their information behavior is subjected to very serious changes in the socio-political constructivist view. As an example, they use all sorts of media sources to obtain information, get exposed to a wider range of information with different perspectives, have an active information production component, and they demonstrate to have interacting, collaborating and non-linear acts of information. Because of the different nature of political and religious information behavior, it is necessary to obtain information on

the information seeking behavior of youth when entering the digital age and the need to provide information resources to them according to their peculiar physiognomies and pattern.

### **Exposure of Social Media**

Social media platforms and applications are engineered to enable individuals to distribute material effectively, rapidly, and in real-time. Numerous individual characterize social media as applications on their smartphones or tablets; nonetheless, it is important to note that this communication tool originated with computers.

The social networking sites, like YouTube, TikTok, X (twitter), Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp have intensified numerous societal, religious and political issues through overexposure of consumers in these social networking sites.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined social networking sites as websites that facilitate individuals to (1) codify a collection of connections (2) with other users; (3) articulate a list of connections, and (4) view and navigate their connections and those of others within the system.

Many of the users of social networking sites are throwing their profile details as well as photographs and location information aimlessly without the thought of the consequences of their actions. According to them, social networking sites have adopted various technical capacities and structures, where prominent presentation of profiles is the essential element of its condition, which has the extensive list of friends who are users of the network as well. Numerous users of social networking sites have become victims of irresponsible individuals who exploit photographs for nefarious purposes, such as creating fraudulent accounts that replicate the name and profile picture to deceive others on these platforms. Numerous news reports have highlighted similar situations to enhance public awareness regarding overexposure on social networking platforms; nonetheless, many users continue to excessively share personal information despite understanding the associated risks (Lim, et al., 2012).

### **Digital Behavior**

Recent studies across multiple fields, including Education, Psychology, Law, Sociology, Criminology, Peace and Conflict studies, strategic studies, developmental studies, defense studies, Library and Information Studies, Communication, Media Studies, and Business Management, indicate that the younger generation processes information, learns, socializes, forms identity, and seeks knowledge differently in the digital information age characterized by Web 2.0 and experiential culture. Various names are essential to characterize members of this unique generation, who have been engaged in digital technology from its inception, including the Net Generation, Media Generation, 21st Century Learners/Students, Digital Communities, and digital age youth. These groupings mostly comprised persons born between 1978 (Furi; 2016).

### **Limitation of the Study**

This study is placed within a geographical context of the University of

Sargodha and it focuses specifically on the analysis of visible characteristics of extremist digital behavior in the youngsters. In particular, it looks at how the internet and social media sites (YouTube, X (twitter), TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp) are perceived in contributing to terrorism-related acts. The results may not be applicable beyond this institutional setting, and wider regional or national patterns in digital extremism may necessitate more investigation.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Following are the main objectives of this study:

1. To examine the rising difficulties linked to the misuse of the internet and social media for terrorism-related acts, especially those motivated by political extremism.
2. To investigate the manifestation and projection of extremist digital behaviors on social media (YouTube, X (twitter), TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp), concentrating on the identification of patterns, perceptions, and consequences related to youngsters participation and radicalization.

### **Hypothesis**

Following hypotheses were formulated to confirm or reject that:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between political extremism and the extremist digital behavior of youth.

**H<sub>0</sub> :** There is no significant relationship between political extremism in extremist digital behaviour of youth.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a significant relationship exists between the search for abusive content connected to terrorism on social media and the digital behavior of youth.

**H<sub>0 2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship exists between the search for abusive content connected to terrorism on social media and the digital behavior of youth.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Leavey's (2013) study "Social Media and Public Policy" underscored that governance and public service delivery occur in a transformed environment. A significant degree of social, economic, and political activity is currently occurring on the internet. As individuals purchase and sell goods, information searching, browsing the websites and sharing their day-to-day experiences with colleagues, family and friends through social networks, they yield huge amount of data. They use this data for developing perceptions. This new information environment also obliges government to progress new abilities to comprehend the information accessible and to compete for consideration and encouragement within it. The challenging in the digital age is the midst of rapid change, it's very problematic to recognize where to place your bets. They do not know exactly what access to huge bulks of social networking data would mean for society. It certainly would not present-day remedy for long-standing in social problems; but it can enhance alternative dimension to understand them.

Khan and Shahbaz (2015) have explained the role of social networking media

in the youth of Multan political socialization. In the era of the digital world, a number of political parties and politicians use social networking media to advertise their agendas, campaigns etc. and connect to the citizens. Conversely, the majority of social media managers are also using this approach for political purposes. This research utilized a survey approach to get data from the youth of Multan who engage with social networking medium. This study suggested that the social and political awareness of a member of social networking medium is greatly influenced by the social network medium.

Alava et al., (2017) studied that social media compels vulnerable persons to engage in violence. Many individuals believe it to be true. They responded with solutions for internet censorship, counter-speech, and monitoring. They acknowledge the Internet as a catalyst and the impact of these reactions. The findings indicate that global governments and Internet firms are making decisions based on anticipated causes and solutions to episodes of violence. They proposed that policy-making should be grounded on facts and data, rather than arising from premonitions or influenced by panic and fear-mongering.

Mahmud (2017) discussed the "Utilization of social networking media in political engagement." He focused on the role of social networking websites (SNWs) in the revival of offline political life of the recent past. This study aims at exploring dynamic interaction between the handlers of the social networking websites and their involvement in political activities. A cross section survey was conducted to base it on 110 University of Dhaka students. The research is aimed at assessing the relationship between use of social networking sites and off-line political participation in a number of fields. The utilization of social networking platforms is augmenting knowledge of political engagement and consciousness. This study examines the correlation between time spent on social networking websites and the degree of engagement in offline political activities.

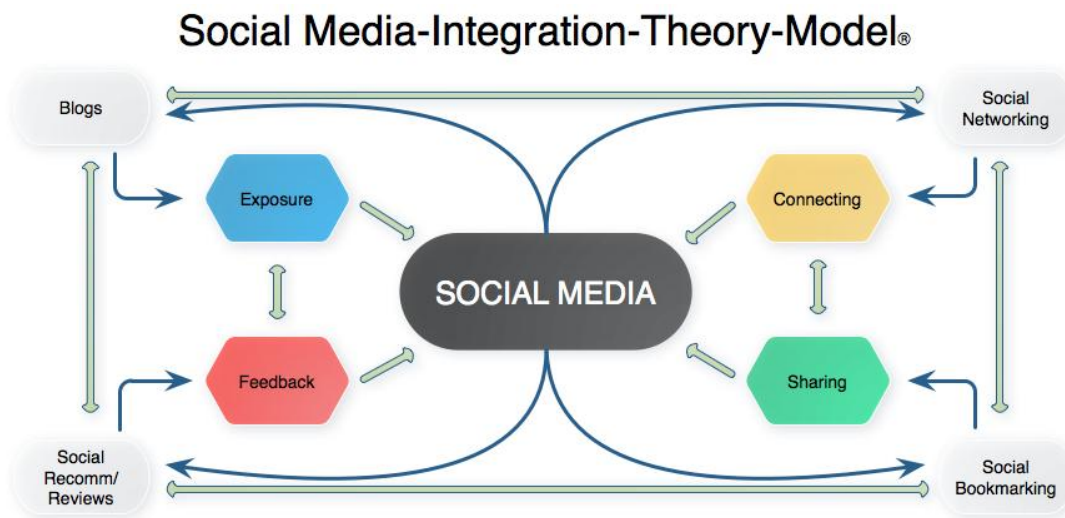
### **Theoretical Perspective**

#### **Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model**

This model influences the efficacy of social media platforms; hence, he took all crucial factors into account while formulating social media plans (Garcia, 2011).

Social media platforms facilitate visibility, interaction, connection, and trade. It produces significant changes for the obsolete communication paradigm. Information flow is no longer the well organized and well-orchestrated one way street where the recipients simply receive messages in the "I communicate - you receive" style. The social media integration is considered to be a process of communication, which allows exchanging information on the peer-level between the audience and the brand providing a long-term feedback mechanism of communication and offering the product a detailed strategy of engagement.

Diagram - 01



It parallels uses and gratifications theory, focusing on individual gratification, although it varies by emphasizing behavior over decision-making. Albert Bandura is regarded as the pioneer of this idea. Individuals will issue declarations based on anticipation. There exists a significant reliance on prior experience to discern what leads to satisfaction and what does not. This idea also highlighted that the experiences of others might be essential in the decision-making process.

### Extremism

When Schlesinger (2017) talks about political extremism it was in the state of the 20th century. The True Believer and The Passionate State of Mind were written by Hoffer and Eric (1951 & 2006) as books analyzing the psychology and sociology of the people participating in "fanatic" collective actions. Schlesinger (2017) wrote The Vital Center in support of a theoretical political center in which the speech of the mainstreams occurs and the necessity of the society to define strict borders on what should not be in the realm of the tolerability, and this necessity is not based on facts.

A list of 21 suspected aspects of a political extremist is given by Wilcox (1988) and includes such items as having a predisposition to character assassination, odious practices such as name-calling and labeling, wider aspects such as a tendency to view opponents as fundamentally flawed, a tendency towards ancillary intimidation when solving a conflict, and a groupthink tendency. Extremism refers to the conduct or disposition of an extremist. It may be categorized along a spectrum ranging from modest interest to "obsession," "fanaticism," and ultimately "extremism."

Wintrobe (2006) asserts that several extreme actions, albeit possessing fundamentally different ideologies, exhibit a same set of features.

### Orthodox Terrorism Theory

This theory explained the motive of terrorism as a dogma and strategy for

political deed and alteration. In this theory political objectives of terrorism focused on State and established authority as the main goal of terrorist act. Three aspects mainly intricate more about terrorism (Franks, 2006).

**Functional**

The aim of terrorism is to compel the authorities to respond against liberal policies. This form of terrorist activity provokes the state towards arbitrary authoritarianism, and as the government fails to satisfy their demands, it undermines its legitimacy and encourages the populace to pursue perilous alterations in the existing political landscape, including groups and institutions. Theory of provocation compels the state to enact operations and subjugate through severe prosecutions against liberal sentiments (Franks, 2009).

**Symbolic**

It elucidates the quintessential actions of terrorism, which are intended to terrify and instill fear. The objective of terrorism is to eliminate individuals and intimidate others. Terrorism constitutes a psychological warfare aimed at publicizing and internationalizing the political aims of the group (Franks, 2006).

**Tactical**

The strategic tactics of terrorism consist of two categories of tactical strategies. One is temporary, utilizing limited resources for immediate benefits. The second tactical approach pertains to long-term aims that need substantial resources, such as revolutionary groups advocating for self-determination, freedom, and insurgencies against governmental authority (Franks, 2006).

This theory is systematically helping to understand that symbolically it contributes in digital world to achieve aims of terrorism to engage youth in the discussion and mind making in favor of terrorism.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

Survey research method was designed for this study to gather information related to research objectives. Kerlinger (1979), well-thought-out survey research as social scientific research and emphasizes on people, the energetic facts of people, and their opinion, belief, attitude, motivation and behaviour. The flow plan adopted to outline the design which begins with the objectives, lists each step to be taken and ends with the final report.

The following conceptual framework illustrates the link between social media usage, political extremism, and the creation of extremist digital behaviors that may lead to terrorism-related actions among youth.

**Table No. 01: Conceptual Framework**

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
Terrorism Projections through Social Media	Extremist Digital Behavior
<b>Emerging Issues</b> a. Political extremism	

b. Body images of terrorism c. Participate in terrorist issues d. Sense of fulfillment for terrorism	
<b>Information for abuse of Internet</b> a. Searches b. Sharing exploitation material to build image.	

Source: (Researcher's Vision)

### Sampling Method

Simple random sampling procedure was used in the investigation. Simple random sample is an unbiased method of survey. The probabilistic sample is simple random sampling where the researcher randomly selects youngsters in the university.

### Universe of the Study

Total strength of the University of Sargodha students (19000) was selected as the universe of this study.

**N = 19000**

### Sample Size

Sample size purpose is the piece of selecting the number of observation or imitates to comprise in a statistical sample. Using the Taro Yamane formula (1967) for sample size determination, a total of 392 students were selected from the University of Sargodha, Main Campus. The selection was carried out through a simple random sampling technique to ensure equal representation and reduce selection bias.

**n=392**

### Tool of Data Collection

In this study structured questionnaire was used as data collection tool. Questionnaire consisted of questions for collecting information from respondents. Likert Scale was used in this survey that offers range of five possible answer options; from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" typically, they included neutral midpoint.

In this research, Pilot testing was conducted as dress rehearsals for full survey processes that was applied to determine whether the research problem exists. After that reliability of pretesting data was checked by the help of SPSS software.

**Table 02: Cronbach's Alpha.**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.8	10

The Cronbachs alpha value is 0.8 meaning that it has good level of internal consistency in our scale using complete questionnaire.

For analysis of data percentage distributions were utilized in the descriptive analysis to describe respondents' perceptions on the spread of terrorism as projected in social media. Inferential analysis is the Chi-Square test that was used to assess the study hypotheses.

## RESULTS

Following below tables are showing percentages distribution of the respondents regarding the statements.

**Table No. 03: Perceptions on the Spread of Terrorism Projected in Social Media (n = 392)**

S. No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Protect political parties on social media	24.0%	28.0%	18.7%	18.0%	11.3%
2	Extremist debates countered by paid ideas on social media	12.0%	32.0%	28.0%	16.7%	11.3%
3	Ability to defend political view on social media	12.0%	48.7%	26.0%	10.7%	2.7%
4	Feel intimidated when criticized on political views	18.7%	30.7%	22.7%	17.3%	10.7%
5	Terrorist videos remembered for long time	21.3%	31.3%	26.0%	16.0%	4.7%
6	Terrorist attacks influence political support via social media	23.3%	46.7%	23.3%	4.7%	2.0%
7	Avoid commenting on terrorist posts	1.3%	6.6%	20.7%	44.7%	26.7%
8	Upload status about terrorism as major social issue	28.7%	34.7%	21.3%	10.7%	4.7%
9	Comfortable sharing feelings about terrorism on social media	24.7%	30.7%	18.7%	17.3%	8.7%
10	Social media provides open discussion forum for revolutionary political emerging issues	27.3%	34.7%	25.3%	9.3%	3.3%

The data presented in the table reveals respondent perceptions on how terrorism and political discourse are experienced and projected through social media platforms in Pakistan.

1. Protecting political parties on social media: Majority of respondents (52.0%) agreed or strongly agreed (24.0%; 28.0%) that political parties should be protected on social media, while 18.0% disagreed and 11.3% strongly disagreed, showing a relatively high perceived need for political safeguarding online.
2. Extremist debates countered by paid ideas: Majority of respondents (44.0%), agreed (32.0%) or strongly agreed (12.0%) that extremist debates on social media are tackled by paid counter-ideas, whereas 16.7% disagreed and 11.3% strongly disagreed, indicating a moderate belief in narrative counter-strategies.
3. Ability to defend political views online: A strong respondents (60.7%) felt confident defending their views, with 12.0% strongly agreeing and 48.7% agreeing. Only 10.7% disagreed and 2.7% strongly disagreed, revealing a high level of self-assurance in digital political discussions.
4. Feeling intimidated when criticized politically: 49.4% participants admitted feeling intimidated (8.7%; 30.7%), while 17.3% disagreed and 10.7% strongly disagreed. This highlights a substantial emotional impact of online political criticism.
5. Terrorist videos remembered for a long time: A combined 52.6% respondents agreed or strongly agreed (21.3%; 31.3%) that terrorist content leaves lasting impressions, while 16.0% disagreed and 4.7% strongly disagreed.
6. Terrorist attacks influence political support via social media: An overwhelming 70.0% respondents agreed (46.7%) or strongly agreed (23.3%), whereas only 4.7% disagreed and 2.0% strongly disagreed, suggesting a powerful link between terrorist incidents and political sympathies shaped by social media.
7. Avoid commenting on terrorist posts: The majority 71.4% respondents disagreed (44.7%) or strongly disagreed (26.7%) with avoiding such comments, while only 8.0% agreed or strongly agreed, indicating active participation in online discourse regarding terrorism.
8. Uploading status about terrorism as a major issue: 63.4% respondents confirmed sharing content about terrorism (28.7%; 34.7%), with 21.3% neutral and only 15.4% in disagreement.
9. Comfortable sharing feelings about terrorism on social media: A total of 55.4% respondents reported comfort in sharing such views (24.7%; 46, 30.7%), with 18.7% neutral and 26.0% (Disagree or strongly disagree) indicating discomfort.
10. Social media as an open forum for revolutionary political emerging issues: The majority again agreed with the statement — 62.0% respondents (27.3%; 34.7%), while only 12.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Therefore, high agreement with statements related to political expression (60.7%), uploading anti-terrorist content (63.4%), and social media as an open forum (62%) reflects active and aware digital users.

Furthermore, a significant 70% acknowledged that terrorist attacks influence political sentiments via social platforms, supporting concerns addressed in Revised National Action Plan 2021.

However, emotional vulnerabilities remain—nearly half (49.4%) feel intimidated by online political criticism, showing the need for digital civility campaigns.

Hence, the rejection of passive behavior (71.4% disagreed with avoiding terrorist content) suggests civic willingness to participate in digital counter-narratives.

### Testing of Hypothesis

The Chi-Square test was utilized to quantitatively assess the relationship between variables and to evaluate the null ( $H_0$  and  $H_{0_2}$ ) and alternative ( $H_1$  and  $H_2$ ) hypotheses established in this investigation.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between political extremism and the extremist digital behavior of youth.

**H<sub>0</sub> :** There is no significant relationship between political extremism in extremist digital behaviour of youth.

**Table No. 04: Political Extremism and the Extremist Digital Behavior of Youth**

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.702 <sup>a</sup>	16	0.764
Likelihood Ratio	13.790	16	0.614
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.152	1	0.283
N of Valid Cases	392		

The Chi-Square test was also applied to test the relationship which exists between political extremism and the extremist online behaviour of the youth. The Chi-Square value between Pearson is 11.702 that is obtained on 16 degrees of freedom having a p-value of 0.764. As the p-value is much larger than the generally accepted alpha (= 0.05), the finding could not be called statistically significant. This implies that political extremism does not have significant relationship with the extremist digital behavior among the youth. Thus, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) which implies that there is no relationship is accepted, and the alternative one ( $H_1$ ) is rejected.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a significant relationship exists between the search for abusive content connected to terrorism on social media and the digital behavior of youth.

**H<sub>0\_2</sub> :** There is no significant relationship exists between the search for abusive content connected to terrorism on social media and the digital behavior of youth.

**Table No. 05: The Search for Abusive Content Connected to Terrorism on Social Media and the Digital Behavior of Youth**

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.907 <sup>a</sup>	16	0.043
Likelihood Ratio	30.269	16	0.017
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.967	1	0.161
N of Valid Cases	392		

To establish that there is a significant association between the investigation of abusive content connected to terrorism on the social sites and digital behavior amongst the youth, a Chi-Square test was conducted. Pearson Chi-Square value 26.907 with 16 degrees of freedom and the p-value 0.043 which is less than 0.05. The outcome here shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

Hence, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) which states that there is no significant relationship is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_2$ ) is accepted. This implies that young people who seek abusive material associated with terrorism in the social media have a probability of having defined patterns of extremist digital behavior.

## DISCUSSION

The proliferation of the Internet and technological advancements have engendered several new communication modalities (Manzoor, 2023), with social networking sites being the most contemporary. The prevalence of social media and digital behavior poses a burgeoning issue for the Pakistani community, particularly among youth and university students. This study acknowledges that contemporary youth's primary engagement with digital media culture (i.e. YouTube, TikTok, X-Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp) affects several facets of their life and leads to significant alterations in their information behavior concerning political extremism and terrorism (Haque, 2022).

The results show that the exposure to social media platforms, especially YouTube, TikTok, X-Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, play a major role in the rise of political extremism and spreading of terrorist and extremist behaviors on the internet among the youth. Findings of this survey show that most of the respondents agree that exposure to social media on the expanding area of political extremism, internet misuse, and terrorism is affecting digital behavior of young.

Digital technology may be on the threshold of confiscating the nitty-gritty, time-wasting, reductionist noodling from the human chronicle (Arain, et. al, 2014), leaving youngsters at liberty to coddle in what their connective brains are greatest at: using the social media webs to run connective scenarios grounded on what possibilities for modification present their selves at any given time (Haque, 2022), they are deciding what route they want to go in and leaving it to the reductionist

programs in which phenomena are reducible to logic or set theory on the bases of mental phenomena like consciousness.

## **CONCLUSION**

The exposure of emerging issues on social media creating digital behavior as a modern trend of change raising question that what has it all fetched and is still bringing? Falsehood or Hypocrisy! Falsehood is the life and hypocrisy have become the religion, human fundamental values have been preserved for long (and are seen nowhere) in the authorities of the religious-craft under its totem of words, and today youngsters are shudder between the mitts of authoritarians on the shredders of extremist political and terrorism accepting behavior. The most crucial youngsters' problems are the crops of severe ethical and honest degeneration throughout the world. This degeneration is responsible for these lethal Youngsters' crises: political extremism, religious extremism, tolerance, terrorism, abuses, violence human rights violation, etc. Because of these glitches, youngsters' life all over the world is becoming quite insecure.

In digital arena, we can't terminate the flow of change.

### **Recommendations**

Pakistan needs to create awareness regarding the energetic and effectual usage of social media and digital behaviour. Digital behaviour realizes the wider horizon of the social media site. Youngsters using it for time pass and connectivity whereas the true essence and power is over looked. We need to draw effective models for youth to create constructive skills, knowledge, confidence and resilience to connect with world by using creatively productive peaceful images, videos and learning management systems to making our opinions an easy track in stream for change fraught with the teaching of the Qur'an and think of every change is not an enhancement, but every enhancement in line with the Qur'an is by change. So, make the policies as point out in Revised National Action Plan 2021 agenda to combat the proliferation of terrorism via electronic, print, and social media, in addition to cyber communication networks

### **Long Term Recommendations**

Make the social media a harmless place where every person is free from online violence and harassment. We forget the basic norms and values of behaviour online so that users feel self-confident in using the social media sites. Government must take greater accountability to tackle the problems of violence, extremism, terrorism and hate online as it is the agenda of Reational National Action Plan.

NACTA and Law enforcement agencies engagements in social media is the way to develop norms and values in building digital behaviour. All civil and military agencies in society essentially accepted the responsibility to ensure that the social media is not used as a tool to spread hate, political extremism and terrorism.

### **Short Term Recommendation**

Gumminess of every time with social media sites encourages the digital behaviour of youth, to challenge it we need to make aware of our youth that don't

choice the off beam social media services by all mean.

Empower youth to manage their own data. All users must have the ability to manage the retrieval, composition, use, sharing, and storage of their data. Internet application and service providers must exhibit transparency on the methods and rationale behind the collection of users' personal data. They advocate for data reduction procedures and emphasize meticulous data collecting, limited to the necessary duration.

Create an accountability administration, including liability requirements to guarantee that those entities that accumulate, compile and manipulate data are accountable for its abuse and its safekeeping, not the users.

Through schemes of Revised National Action Plans create awareness among the youngsters that be personable with your posts so that followers ponder they're understanding the thoughts and comments of an actual live human being. Government should support civil community and its serious role in defending and promoting human rights online. Government should make policies to discourage cross-posting to promote extremism and terrorism.

## REFERENCES

- Alava et al., (2017). Youth and Violent Extremism on Social Media: Mapping the Research. UNESCO (IFAP): France.
- AlphaPro (2018). Pakistan Social Media Status. PNCA: Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Arain et al., (2014). Police in Pakistan (A Research Book of Readings), (2nd Ed.). Raleigh; US: Lulu.com.
- Associated Press of Pakistan, (2018, May 8). Cyber Security Wing Set Up To Curb Emerging Terrorism Threats: NACTA. <https://www.app.com.pk/national/cyber-security-wing-set-curb-emerging-terrorism-threats-nacta/>
- Boyd, Ellison., Danah M. & Nicole (2007). Social Networking Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship, Journal of Computer – Mediated Communication 13(1), p.p 210-230. Oxford Academia; Oxford University Press: USA. DOI: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x.
- Daily Independent. (2025). Under The Directives Of The Prime Minister, The Committee Constituted Under The Revised National Action Plan—Tasked With Reviewing Counter-Terrorism Measures, Violent Extremism, And Addressing Legislative Gaps newspaper (March 27). Islamabad: Pakistan. Retrieved on 15 July 2025, <https://www.dailyindependent.com.pk/2025/03/27/under-the-directives-of-the-prime-minister-the-committee-constituted-under-the-revised-national-action-plan-tasked-with-reviewing-counter-terrorism-measures-violent-extremism-and-addressing/>
- DataReportal. (2025, January). Digital 2025: Pakistan – Global Digital Insights. Retrieved on 14.07.2025, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-pakistan>

- Elahi, Naveed (2017). Background Paper: Implementation and Monitoring of the National Action Plan. PILDAT: Pakistan.
- Franks, J. (2006). *Rethinking Roots of Terrorism*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York.
- Franks, J. (2006). Summary of Conclusions: Rethinking Terrorism. In: *Rethinking the Roots of Terrorism*. *Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230502420\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230502420_7)
- Franks, J. (2006). The Root Causes of Terrorism: Orthodox Terrorism Theory. In: *Rethinking the Roots of Terrorism*. *Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230502420\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230502420_2)
- Franks, J. (2009). Rethinking the Roots of Terrorism: Beyond Orthodox Terrorism Theory—A Critical Research Agenda. *Global Society*, 23(2), 153–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600820902766219>.
- Furi, Balog (2016). *Information Seeking Behaviour in the Digital Environment*. The European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL): UK.
- Garcia, Isra (2011). *Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model*. SocialMediaToday: Washington, DC.
- Gull, M Abdullah Hamid (2025). National Action Plan and Terrorism, Pakistan Observer (February). Islamabad: Pakistan. <https://pakobserver.net/national-action-plan-and-terrorism/>
- Haque, Manzoor-ul (2022). *Assorted Thoughts: Crisp and Hot* (2nd ed.). Raleigh; US: Lulu.com. ISBN: 978-1-7165-3880-3, EBook 978-1-6671-8284-1.
- Haque, Manzoor-ul (2022). *Assorted Thoughts: Everyday Struggle* (2nd ed.). Raleigh; US: Lulu.com. ISBN: 978-1-6671-3973-9, EBook 978-1-6671-1250-3.
- Hoffer, Eric (1951). *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movement*. Harper & Brothers: USA.
- Hoffer, Eric (2006). *The Passionate State of Mind: And Other Aphorisms*. Hopewell Publications: NJ.
- Kerlinger, Fred Nichols (1979). *Behavioral Research: A Conceptual Approach*. Holt, Rinhart and Winston: NY, USA.
- Khan, Shahbaz., Ashraf & Yasir (2015). Role of Social Networking Media in Political Socialization of Youth of Multan Pakistan, *Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 437-449. BZU: Multan.
- Leavey, Jason (2013), *Social media and public policy: What is the Evidence?* Nesta (E.S.R.C): UK.
- Lim, W. M et al., (2012) Overexposure in social networking sites. *Journal of Research for Consumers*, Issue (22). Jcr: Online, [http://www.jrconsumers.com/consumer\\_articles/issue\\_22/](http://www.jrconsumers.com/consumer_articles/issue_22/).
- Mahmud, Amin., Ashek & Ruhul (2017). Use of Social Networking Media in Political Participation: A Study on Dhaka University Students, *Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 5(6): pp. 481-488. Horizon Research Publishing: US. Doi: 10.13189/sa.2017.050607.
- Manzoor, Saima (2023). Methods and Techniques of Criminal Investigation Used by Women Police in Pakistan. *Southern Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 1 (2),

- p.31-36. Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan, Pakistan.
- National Counter Terrorism Authority [NACTA], (2021). Revised National Action Plan – 2021. Retrieved July 17, 2025, from <https://www.nacta.gov.pk/revised-national-action-plan-2021/>
- Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur M. (2017). *The Vital Center: Politics of Freedom* (e-book). Taylor & Francis: London, UK.
- Straubhaar, LaRose, Lucinda., Joseph, Robert & Lucinda (ed. 6<sup>th</sup>) (2009). *Media Now: Understanding Media, Culture, and Technology*. Cengage Learning: USA.
- The Express Tribune, (2024). Govt targets social media activities of terrorists, Newspaper The Express Tribute (4<sup>th</sup> December). Islamabad: Pakistan. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2513655/govt-targets-social-media-activities-of-terrorists>
- Wilcox, Laird M. (1988). *What Is Political Extremism?* NY: USA.
- Wintrobe, Ronald (2006). *Rational Extremism: The Political Economy of Radicalism*. Cambridge University Press: United Kingdom.
- Yamane, Y. (1967). *Mathematical Formulae for Sample Size Determination* (2nd ed.).Harper and Row.