

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA DURING GENERAL ELECTIONS 2024 IN PAKISTAN: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE FACEBOOK PAGES OF PTI, PML-N, PPP, JUI, AND JI

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Abstract

General Election 2024 (GE 24) in Pakistan is considered as another controversial election due to several reasons ranging from rigging, security issues, internet outages to procedural irregularities. Despite the efficient and effective management of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the elections are considered a critical turning point in the country's botched democratic history. This research paper is an attempt to explore and analyze that how did Pakistani political parties used Facebook as a tool of their political canvassing before the start of election. Researchers intended to explore and analyze that how did the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (HUI-F), and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) used their Facebook pages for creating awareness among their voters, for voting instructions, and for their political canvassing. The researchers developed a thoughtful coding sheet, conducted a qualitative content analysis and found that all major political parties in Pakistan used Facebook as an active and reliable platform to disseminate their political manifestos and mobilized their political vote base before GE 24. Overall, the material circulated by these political parties emulates a complex approach to voting engagement, including up-to-date information, enrolment struggles and emotional appeals, with varying degrees of divisiveness and ideological positioning. While PTI focused more on voter awareness and political victimisation, PML-N focused on its development projects, PPP highlighted its liberal and people-oriented policies, JUI-F emphasized its mass gatherings, and JUI emphasized the elimination of corrupt systems from Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

General elections are the process to elect the members of elected bodies through voting. The

history of general elections in Pakistan is devious due to a number of non-democratic elements impacting

the voting process. Pakistan has a parliamentary kind of democracy where residents of the country above age 18 and registered as voters are eligible to cast their vote (Shah, 2019). The general elections in 2024 were conducted on 265 seats of the National Assembly and 590 Provincial Assembly seats in all four provinces of Pakistan. The constitutional electoral body in the country, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was responsible for all the electoral processes where police, rangers and army were performing their security duties as per their mandate. According to ECP, there are over 131 million registered voters country wide with more than 70 million male voters and over 60 million female voters making a percentage of 53.77 % and 46.23 % respectively. Punjab has the maximum number of voters with around 75 million voters preceded by Sindh which has around 27.5 million registered voters. KPK has over 22 million voters where the largest province of the country Balochistan has around 5.5 million voters while the capital Islamabad has over one million registered voters (ECP, 2024a). The total expenditure of the general elections exceeded Rs 47 billion with an additional expense of security to the polling stations declared highly sensitive by the ECP, which were monitored through CCTV. A total of 90,675 polling stations were established country wide with 25,320 stations assigned to males and 23,952 stations for females while 41,403 polling stations were established where both can vote. These stations included a total of 2,76,398 polling booths having 1,47,552 male and 1,28,846 female polling booths. A total of 5,121 candidates contested for National Assembly seats while 12,695 candidates for the provincial seats in all four provinces of Pakistan. More than 1.1 million government servants and election officials performed their duties on the day of polling. The ECP had set up a helpline (8300) for voters to obtain information about their provincial and national constituencies (ECP, 2024b).

The federal and provincial governments in the country were replaced by the caretaker setup formed with consensus of government and opposition political parties some six months before the polls. The administrative and financial challenges faced by the ECP were an addition to the security challenges faced by the country, especially in the northern

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Balochistan provinces bordering Afghanistan. A rise in terrorism just before the polls especially after the Afghan war created a space of doubt for peaceful conduct of the general elections on the same day. Pakistan army was called in for the security during general elections and civil defense forces were deployed to beef up the security across the country during the polls (Yousaf, 2023).

The prominent political contenders included Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) where many small political parties were also contesting the elections. A few months before the general elections conducted on February 8th, 2024; the famous electoral symbol of a major political party PTI was revoked by the ECP. PTI cried foul but the Supreme Court of Pakistan upheld the decision by ECP, making it difficult for the party to contest the elections without an electoral symbol. The PTI chairman Imran Khan was sent to jail on number of cases but PTI or any other party did not boycott the general elections. PTI filed its party candidates as independents having different electoral symbols, creating confusion among their voters to find the independent candidate supported by the PTI. The party threw several accusations on the ECP leading to pre poll rigging but the Chief Election Commissioner, Sikandar Raja rejected all the charges and vowed for free and fair elections in the country (Dawn, 2024a).

The polling began at 8 in the morning on February 8th and continued till 5 in the evening with no major incident of violence or militant attack reported country wide. The ECP set up a monitoring and control centre to manage the complaints and help centre related to the polling process. There were no cellular services countrywide and political workers faced hurdles to contact and campaign in favor of their political parties (The Commonwealth, 2024). Around 60.8 million voters cast their votes compared to 54.8 million voters in the 2018 elections meaning 47.8 % of the total voters cast their votes while 52.2 voters kept themselves away from the polling process. Punjab has the highest turnout of 51 % while Balochistan has the lowest with 41 % voters exercising their right to vote. The female voters turnout was low compared to 2018

where only 41.3 % female voters showed up to vote but the male turnout increased by 2.6 % making it 58.7 % in 2024. If we look into election results party wise, PTI backed independent candidates got maximum votes with 31 % votes followed by PML-N who secured 24 % votes. The youth, below the age of 30 years, accounted for over 35 % votes while 17 % of total votes were casted by 50 years above voters (ECP, 2024a; 2024b; The Commonwealth, 2024).

International observers and journalists of many countries including the 25-member delegation of the Commonwealth Observers Group (COG) chaired by former President of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan visited and observed the general elections. The COG in its preliminary report called on all those with grievances to address their issues through proper contention mechanisms. The group commended the election commission for the logistic arrangements and forming separate polling stations for females to encourage and facilitate them for voting. The group mentioned some delays in the polling process but acknowledged an increase of 22 million in the number of registered voters from the last elections in 2018 (The Commonwealth, 2024).

However, they expressed their concerns over shutting down internet and cellular services on the polling day which limited the freedom of speech. Referring to the decision to revoke the electoral symbol from PTI, the group expressed concerns that the members of the elected members PTI will not get reserved seats based on their electoral representation. Pakistan's largest election observer with over 5,000 observers across the country, Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) termed the voting day "free of controversy". However, it expressed concerns over delay in results, suspension of cellular services and not displaying form 45 (the electoral count of the polling station) in one third of the total constituencies. In 25 National Assembly constituencies, the number of rejected ballots exceeded the margin of victory with over 10 to 15 thousand votes being rejected in over 21 constituencies (FAFEN, 2024). It also highlighted the non-issuance of Form 45 as one of the major issues in compiling the results and urged ECP to resolve the issue. The observer group termed the voting day as highly peaceful then expected with few minor incidents of violence. It also commended the

fact that no constituency witnessed less than 10 % female voters in the country.

The largest winning of independent candidates backed by PTI in the history of the country raises questions over the ECP and court order depriving the party of their electoral symbol. PTI backed candidates won the largest number of National Assembly seats by securing 93 seats while PML-N emerged as the second largest party with 75 seats where PPP managed to bag 54 seats. The election process had its flaws but the peaceful conduct of the general elections after 2 years of political turmoil in the country was important to witness smooth transition of political powers. The extended term of interim government was casting doubts over the political future of the country but the peaceful elections removed those to see a light of hope. The political parties in the lower house could now open debates for exploring betterment in the electoral and political system and should develop consensus to shut any loopholes present in the current system (FAFEN, 2024).

Considering all these dynamics of the general elections held in Pakistan in 2024, it is pertinent to explore how did Pakistani political parties used Facebook as a tool of their political canvassing before the start of election. Keeping in view this broader research objective, the researchers have devised the following research questions;

- RQ.1 Which political party posted more content regarding GE 24 on their FB pages during the time period under study?
- RQ.2 What is the nature of content regarding GE 24 shared by the selected political parties during the time period under study?
- RQ.3 What are the predominant narratives produced by the selected political parties regarding GE 24 in the FB post during the time period under study?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Coverage of election proceedings have been an interesting area and topic for researchers around the globe. Following literature reviewed is particularly related to the research study at hand.

Analyzing Nigerian 2019 presidential election social media campaigns Gana and Agu (2023) note that the campaigns portrayed the opposite candidates

negatively and created a harsh discourse against them to improve their image. They analyzed the social media campaign launched on five social media platforms including (Facebook, Twitter (now X), WhatsApp) and two other (punch.com and nairaland.com). The researcher while doing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the election campaigns used socio cognitive model of Van Dijk. The researcher concluded with a solid remark that they voters shouldn't believe the election campaigns blindly, they suggested that they electorates should analyse the campaign messages in depth, otherwise they couldn't choose the right voting choice.

During the election seasons every voter has to make a choice to cast a vote in favor of good governance, they well aware people has no problem while choosing an appropriate candidate and the rest of the less educated people are vulnerable to the bombardment of the discourse disseminated through various types of media. Brader (2005) during a study has concluded that the politicians actually hit the emotions of the voters and confuse their rational to judge the best among the better. He also emphasized the role of political discourse in the pre and post elections arenas, though he pointed out that on the ground most of the election days discourses are based on false and misinformation. In their work Renwick and Palese (2017) highlighted that achieving a strengthen democracy without a quality political discourse is almost impossible. Though advertising is a broader term, under its umbrella political advertisement is more specialized one and used in the political campaigns, it is defined by Public Discourse Commission (2019) any advertising content carrying by any mainstream (print and broadcast) or new media that influence the voter voting behavior and choices. In their research study of Nigerian 2019 presidential election Gana and Agu (2023) used Van Dijk's (2000) Socio Cognitive Model of CDA. They used the model how different language schemes and ideologies were used for making a supportive opinion among the people.

This study falls in the theoretical ground of the Van Dijk (1995) work of cognitive function and ideology principles. Van Dijk is a renowned scholar in discourse studies, this study has utilized his CDA Cognitive Model for analysis. This was a qualitative study where Gana and Agu (2023) has collected the

political advertisement data in purposive manner from five social applications and two websites. The study used the campaigns launched by two Nigerian presidential candidates Atiku Abubakar having political affiliation with PDP and Muhammad Buhari associated with APC in 2019 elections.

Gana and Agu (2023) while interpreting their data concluded that the lexico-syntactic patterns of the campaigns of the different candidates has significant difference. It was found the text used for the political publicity was created carefully to garner the public support. It was observed that the candidates were portrayed as an appropriate candidate while his opposing counterparts were constructed badly (such as a corrupt leader). However, the text of the political advertisement was convincing and has the potential to persuade the electorate to support the relevant candidate. The study also revealed that all the texts have implicit ideologies of self-support and opposing the opponents.

In his research article "Evaluating the Role of Media during Elections: The Case of Local Elections of 31st March 2019 in Turkey", Sen (2022) explored the role of media in covering general elections in Turkey in 2019. The researcher intended to explore whether the Turkish media under study presented a pluralistic public sphere by encouraging diverse political discussions or it prioritised a market driven logic that caused sensationalism. This study examines how the media framed the electoral campaigns, highlighting the dynamics between media logic and political logic. Media logic often emphasizes candidate strategies, polemics, and polling data, sometimes at the expense of in-depth policy analysis and public discourse. By investigating the framing of these campaigns, the study seeks to determine whether the media's coverage aligned with democratic ideals of fostering informed decision-making, promoting political pluralism, and offering fair representation of competing policy ideas.

The researcher argues that media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and the democratic process during elections. The analysis of Turkey's 2019 local elections reveals that media coverage often prioritizes candidates' images and campaign strategies over substantial policy debates. This trend raises concerns about the media's ability to foster an informed electorate and promote political pluralism.

To strengthen democratic engagement, it is essential for media outlets to focus more on meaningful discussions about policies and the future of society. This research highlights the growing concern over the alignment of media practices with democratic principles. It calls for greater attention to the role of the media in promoting political pluralism and ensuring that voters are equipped with comprehensive information about the policies of candidates. Furthermore, the study suggests that alternative media outlets could play a crucial role in addressing these shortcomings, offering a platform for more diverse political voices and engaging the public in meaningful policy debates. The findings advocate for a re-evaluation of mainstream media practices to better serve the needs of democratic societies (Sen, 2022).

Abid et al. (2023) provide a systematic literature review of sixty-six journal articles which published between 2011 and 2020 that analyzing the development of political social media marketing. The review covers six databases, offering a comprehensive snapshot of the field's growth and trajectory. The authors categorize various studied variables and integrate them into a cohesive framework, identifying key themes and trends. The review by Abid et al. (2023) identifies a marked increase in scholarly interest in political social media marketing, with social media emerging as a dominant theme in the political marketing literature. Bibliometric analyses indicated that research activity has been surged in recent years, driven by the most growing significance of the social media in political campaigns. For the instance and spending on the digital marketing making by political candidates and the Political Action Committees in the 2020 United States general election cycle which reached \$1.6 billions, compared to just \$22 million in the 2008. This exponential increase underscores the practical importance of understanding political social media marketing.

The systematic review conducted by Abid et al. (2023) provides a detailed overview of the burgeoning field of the political social media marketing. The study highlights that the increasing global interest in political social media marketing, particularly among in the marketing scholars, and demonstrates of how contemporary marketing

concepts are the gradually being integrated into this domain. The convergence between the political social media marketing and the broader social media marketing literature inducts a maturing field with the significant practical and the theoretical implications.

The reviewed literature suggests that it is an important aspect to explore how did Pakistani political parties used Facebook as a tool of their political canvassing before the start of election.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK; FRAMING THEORY

Framing theory is an important concept in media studies and communication research. It suggests that the way media present issues, or the "frames" they use, has a significant impact on how people understand those issues. This theory focuses on how specific frames are built and their influence on audience interpretation. It helps us understand how media has the power to shape public opinion, attitudes, and behavior (Entman, 1993).

The roots of framing theory go back to *Erving Goffman* (1974), who, in his book *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, discussed how people organize their daily lives with mental frameworks. Goffman's idea of "frames" became the foundation for understanding how media interpret and organize stories. *Robert Entman* (1993) further developed this theory, applying it to media studies. He explained that media frames issues by emphasizing certain aspects of them, influencing how people view and emotionally react to events.

Framing theory grew in importance during the 1990s, especially in political communication. Researchers began to explore how framing shapes public views on politics, such as elections, candidates, and policies. Over time, scholars realized that media do not just reflect reality—they actively construct it by highlighting some details and ignoring others (Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1991).

Framing theory focuses on the selective presentation of information. Media outlets choose which parts of a story to emphasize and which to downplay or leave out. According to *Entman* (1993), framing involves the "selection and salience" of particular aspects of an issue, making them more noticeable to the audience and influencing how they understand it.

For example, a news report on a protest can frame it as either a "peaceful demonstration" or a "violent riot," depending on how the story is told. Each of these frames creates different emotional reactions and affects how the public perceives the event. The framing of political issues, like elections or policies, can influence public opinion by highlighting aspects such as a candidate's character or their proposed policies (Iyengar, 1991).

Keeping in view the relevance and suitability, we have employed framing theory as theoretical underpinning for this study.

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

Keeping in view the research objective, we have selected the official Facebook pages of the leading political parties in Pakistan including; Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal ur Rehman (JUI-F) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). The election was held on February 08, 2024 therefore we have selected the Facebook posts appearing on the selected Facebook pages two weeks prior to the election day i.e. Jan 24th to Feb 7th 2024. During the time period under study the PTI posted 39 posts, PML-N posted 35, PPP posted 31, JUI F posted 15, and JI posted 19 times. These posts included textual and pictorial contents. To select an

Within text; political rhetoric, hash tag.

#ووٹ ڈالو خان نکالو ("Vote to Free Khan")

Poster; Political Rhetoric, Political Canvassing. equal and manageable size of sample for the study we employed lottery method and selected two posts from each Facebook page. Hence, we have 10 Facebook posts as sample of this study.

For the sake of analysis, we have employed content analysis. We have devised content categories on the basis of pilot study. The content categories have been operationalized and a code book has been developed. Following are the content categories along with their operationalization under study;

- **General Information/Awareness (GI);** Information aimed at encouraging voters regarding GE 2024. Posts carrying information that provides updates, factual content, and edified the voters regarding events related election.
- **Voting Instructions (VI);** Offering indirect guidance and inspiring participation in the electoral process.
- **Political Polarization (PP);** Post that highlights or fosters division between political faction, group or ideology.
- **Political Canvassing (PC);** Involve activity or content aimed at mobilizing voter support for a specific leader, agenda and party.

Code	Content category	Definitions	Indicators (coding units)
I	GI Information/ Awareness	Information aimed at encouraging voters regarding GE 2024	Mention of party founder Imran Khan's and Shah, M. Qureshi presence, providing genuine updates.
I	Voting Instructions,	Offering indirect guidance and inspiring participation in the electoral process	The Hashtag# "Vote to Free Khan" indirectly inspire voters to act but does not deliver procedural details
P	Pol Polarisation,	Post that highlights or fosters division between political faction, group or ideology	The phrase "Vote to free khan" frames Imran Khan as Victim, fostering division and segregate opponents while focused political divide and inducing emotion through the high profile of leaders,
C	political canvassing	Involve activity or content aimed at mobilizing voter support for a specific leader, agenda and party.	Associate key Information such as Imran Khan, Shah, M. Qureshi to generate are part of huge strategy to assemble support their political party

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

Following pages contain the content analysis of the posts appearing on the Facebook page of PTI;
Post 01.

Interpretation:

The content of the above table indicates about important political happenings regarding GE 2024, like کپتان عمران خان کی اڈیالہ جیل سے تصویر جاری، نائب کپتان عمران خان (Captain Imran Khan from Adiala Jail, Deputy Captain Shah Mehmood's photo is also in progress), reflect it relevant the GE 2024 Awareness/Information. While the post does not replicate detailed voting procedure the Hashtag #ووٹ ڈالو خان نکالو ("Vote to Free Khan") inspire the voter involvement, appropriate under voting instruction. The narrative surrounding Khan's released replicate him as victim, which promote polarization of politics by generating a divide between his followers and antagonist. The data also

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=982332536581955&set=pb.100044156543245.-2207520000&type=3>

Post- type of data; Picture and text.

deals as political convincing through using the Hashtag and the reputation of importance figures to rally support for Imran Khan cause. By the component, the post represents how a single message cans division, educates, develop, guide action and assemble political sustenance.

Post 2.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=980346446780564&set=pb.100044156543245.-2207520000&type=3>

Post- type of data; Poster and text.

within text; political rhetoric, hash tag.

#ReleasePoliticalPrisoners

Poster; Political Rhetoric, mobilizing voters

Code	Content category	Definitions	Indicators (coding units)
GI	GI Information/Awareness,	Information that provides updates, factual content, and edified the voters regarding events related election.	Replicate the CJ of Pakistan Qazi Faiz Isa's promised to inhibit kidnappings by state agencies
VI	Voting Instructions,	Offering indirectly guidance on inspiration participating in the electoral sphere	Unspoken inspiration to vote as feedback to injustice.
PP	Pol Polarisation,	Framing the candidates of PTI as victims of the system. And replicate the us vs them narrative	Denunciation of nation agency for weakening to act on inducing political polarization and promises.
PC	Ppolitical Ccanvassing	Pointing kidnaping as core subject to rally maintenance for the party	Presenting Hashtag (Release Political Prisoners) drum-up emotional/humble support for PTI

Interpretation:

The above table shows the importance categories regarding political communication, the first category GE Information aware the people about problems such as; democratic and kidnaping fairness. The second category Voting Instruction slightly inspire the public perception, Presenting Hashtag (#Release Political Prisoners) induce promotion of party. The

third category regarding Political Polarization is marked framing political splitting particularly about PTI and critiques of state agencies. The last category Political Canvassing is reflecting a struggle assemble backup for PTI. Highlighting the kidnaping problem, overall the education blends polarization, awareness, mobilization, encouragement, for stimulating political engagement.

The post consists of the following text;

چیف جسٹس قاضی فائز عیسیٰ نے لائیو سماعت میں پچھلے کیسز اور شکایتیں چھوڑ کر اٹارنی جنرل سے وعدہ لیا تھا کہ آج کے بعد ریاستی ادارے کسی کو اغوا نہیں کریں گے اس دن کے بعد تحریک انصاف کے درجنوں سیاسی کارکنان اور امیدوار اغوا ہو چکے ہیں۔ کیا چیف جسٹس صاحب اب یہ کیسز بھی نہیں دیکھیں گے؟

("In a live hearing, Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa had left the previous cases and complaints and took a promise from the Attorney General that the state agencies will not abduct anyone after today. Dozens of political activists and candidates of Tehreek-e-Insaf have been kidnapped since that day. Will the Chief Justice not see these cases now?").

Following pages contain the content analysis of the posts appearing on the Facebook page of PML-N;

Post 3.

<https://www.facebook.com/pml.n.official/posts/pfbid022rVbYruDBugH3hhfL2r5QDrDaZfXY7E3kZK41Shz6YXFFN3Q5qCS6ghmfwTrxsUUU>

Post- type of data; Poster and text.

within text; political rhetoric, hashtag, (No any hashtag)

Poster; Political Rhetoric, Political Canvassing.

Code	Content category	Definitions	Indicators (coding units)
GI	GI Information/ Awareness,	Information aimed at encourage voters regarding GE 2024	"Next is Burewala! Quaid Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz Sharif will address a humongous jalsa tomorrow!!" Announcement about an election-related event.
VI	Voting Instructions,	Messages guiding voters on how to cast their vote or whom to vote for.	پاکستان کیلئے شیر کو ووٹ "Vote to Lion for Pakistan") Explicit instruction to vote for PML-N's symbol (the lion).
PP	Pol Polarisation,	Content emphasizing political divisions, rivalries, or contrasting ideologies.	Not related to the present content
PC	political canvassing	Campaigning to garner support for a specific party, candidate, or ideology.	"پاکستان کو نواز دو" ("Give Nawaz to Pakistan"). Emotional appeal portraying Nawaz Sharif as essential for Pakistan's future.

Interpretation:

The coding sheet suggests a wide-ranging analysis of the political communication strategies replicated in the provided narratives. The GE Information/Awareness category pointed out logistical and event-related messaging, such as the statement of an upcoming rally in Burewala, which aims to assemble supporters and inspire public membership in the democratic method. Voting Directions are illustrated by the slogan "پاکستان کیلئے شیر کو ووٹ دو" ("Vote to Lion for Pakistan"), which

straight lead voters to support the PML-N, linking their choice to nationwide progress. In contrast, the Pol Polarisation category remains un-coded, as none of the narratives highlight divisive language or adversarial messaging, signifying a focus on positive assignation rather than emphasizing opposition. Finally, Political Canvassing is captured by the emotionally stimulating slogan "پاکستان کو نواز دو" ("Give Nawaz to Pakistan"), which reflect Nawaz Sharif as indispensable for the country's future, using sentiment to link with the election process.

Together, these categories reveal a deliberate mix of logistical content, clear voting instruction, and sentiment appeals, forming a cohesive strategy to educate, persuade, and assemble voters.

The poster consists of the following text;

Next is Burewala! Quaid Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz Sharif will address a humongous jalsa tomorrow!!

پاکستان کو نواز دو "Give Nawaz to Pakistan" and شیر کو ووٹ دو "Vote to Lion for

Pakistan"

Post 4.

<https://www.facebook.com/pml.n.official/posts/pfbid02EixJkUkTdans9479U85iiyakJZCTqd1tMBga9cZijN8v27zT3WwbY1MbEcGCWzGsl>

Post-type of data; Poster and text.

within text; political rhetoric, hash tag. (No any hashtag)

Poster; Political Rhetoric, Political Canvassing.

ode	Content Category	Definitions	Indicators (coding units)
I	GI Information/Awareness,	Information that delivers updates, factual content, and edified the voters regarding events related election.	"Leader of Muslim League (N) Mian Nawaz Sharif and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz Sharif will address a grand public gathering at Nankana Sahib today!!" Announcement about an election-related event.
I	Voting Instructions,	Messages guiding voters on how to cast their vote or whom to vote for.	"شیر کو ووٹ دو" ("Vote to lion for Pakistan") Explicit instruction to vote for PML-N's symbol (the lion).
P	Pol Polarisation,	Content emphasizing political divisions, rivalries, or contrasting ideologies.	Not related to the present content
C	political canvassing	Campaigning to garner support for a specific party, candidate, or ideology.	"پاکستان کو نواز دو" ("Give Nawaz to Pakistan") Emotional appeal portraying Nawaz Sharif as essential for Pakistan's future.

Interpretation:

The coding sheet illustrates the planned messaging employed in the current narratives to attain particular political purposes. The GE Information/Awareness category detentions the logistical and event-focused statement illustrated by the publication, "Leader of Muslim League (N) Mian Nawaz Sharif and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz Sharif will address a grand public gathering at Nankana Sahib today!!" This memorandum aims to assemble public involvement and reinforce the leaders' visibility in the political sphere

The Voting Instructions category is evident in the phrase, "شیر کو ووٹ دو" ("Vote to lion for Pakistan"), which directly educate voters to support the party symbolized by the Lion (PML-N), emphasizing the standing of their choice for the

country's future. The Political Canvassing category is reflected by the slogan, "پاکستان کو نواز دو" ("Give Nawaz to Pakistan"), which employs emotional request to position Nawaz Sharif as indispensable for national progress, fostering a personal link between the electret and leader. Notably, the Pol Polarisation category remains un-coded, as the narratives insufficient divisive or adversarial communication, focusing instead on positive engagement and unity. Generally, the messages replicate a balanced method, combining logistical details, persuasive directives, and emotional approach to educate, influence, and assemble the electorate impressively.

The content includes the following text:

قائد مسلم لیگ(ن) میاں نواز شریف اور چیف آرگنائزر مریم نواز شریف آج ننکانہ صاحب میں عظیم الشان عوامی اجتماع سے خطاب کریں گے

“Leader of Muslim League (N) Mian Nawaz Sharif and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz Sharif will address a grand public gathering at Nankana Sahib today”, and شیر کو ووٹ دو “Vote to Lion”

https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=964909584999481&set=pb.100044413447081_-2207520000&type=3

Post- type of data; Poster and text.

within text; political rhetoric, hash tag.

چنو نئی سوچ کو ("Choose new think").

Poster; Political Rhetoric, Political Canvassing.

Following pages contain the content analysis of the posts appearing on the Facebook page of PPP; Post 5.

Code	Content category	Definitions	Indicators (coding units)
GI	GI Information/ Awareness,	Information in the poster focusing on the voter regarding GE	"Chairman Pakistan People's Party will address the election rally at Gama Stadium in Mirpur Khas city after some time." Announcement about an election-related event with location and timing details.
VI	Voting Instructions,	Messages guiding voters on how to cast their vote or whom to vote for.	"چنو نئی سوچ کو" ("Choose new think") Encouragement to select a new vision or ideology during voting.
PP	Pol Polarisation,	Content emphasizing political divisions, rivalries, or contrasting ideologies.	Not related to the present content
PC	political canvassing	Campaigning to garner support for a specific party, candidate, or ideology.	"چنو نئی سوچ کو" ("Choose new think") Appeal to align with the Pakistan People's Party's ideology by promoting innovation and change.

Interpretation:

The coding sheet imitates a multifaceted methodology to political communication targeted at attract voters and helping the party's message. The **GE Information/Awareness** category is signified by the announcement that the “Chairman of Pakistan People's Party will address an election rally at Gama Stadium in Mirpur Khas”. This logistical detail educates the people about the event's time and position, safeguarding that people are attentive of the opportunity to contribute and engage with the movement.

The **Voting Instructions** category is subtly carried through the hashtag "چنو نئی سوچ کو" ("Choose new think"), which assists as an inspiration for voters to choose a "new vision" or "new believed." This proposes that the party is standing itself as an agent

of change and innovation, pleasing to voters who are looking for replacements to the status quo.

The **Political Canvassing** component is also apparent in the same hashtag. By encouraging a "new thought," the campaign is trying to bring into line the electorate with the Pakistan People's Party's ideology of development and reform. This helps as both a rallying cry and an ideological demand, seeking to encourage voters that backup the party is a step toward a well future.

Stimulatingly, the **Pol Polarisation** category is not reflected in the current narrative. There is no sign of divisive rhetoric or confrontational messaging expected at generating political divisions. The message remains absorbed on unity, variation, and positive appointment.

Generally, the whole messaging replicates a strategy focused on notifying the electorate, leading

them to make a specific choice, and attractive emotionally and ideologically to their wish for change, without resorting to polarization or negative demonstration.

The poster consists of the following text;

چیرمین پاکستان پیپلز پارٹی اب سے کچھ دیر بعد
میرپور خاص شہر کے گاما اسٹیڈیم میں انتخابی جلسہ عام سے
خطاب کریں گے

“Chairman Pakistan People's Party will address the election rally at Gama Stadium in

Mirpur Khas city after some time”. They used the hashtag چنو نئی سوچ کو ("Choose new Think")

Post 6.

<https://www.facebook.com/Bilawalhouse/posts/pfbid0Lfd4MKbLzwMeFT8NgeMhcz5PeP344fvNfSwWcnVe2CDpno9toUdN8AuLu9AWsQwal>

Post- type of data; Poster and text.

within text; political rhetoric, hash tag.

چنو نئی سوچ کو “Choose new think”

Poster; Political Rhetoric, Political

Canvassing.

Code	Content category	Definitions	Indicators (coding units)
GI	GI Information/ Awareness,	Information that provides updates, factual content, and edified the voters regarding events related election.	"Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari's participation in the Sadiqabad rally, welcomed by the people with enthusiastic slogans." Announcement of the leader's participation and public reception at the event.
VI	Voting Instructions,	Messages guiding voters on how to cast their vote or whom to vote for.	"چنو نئی سوچ کو" ("Choose new think") Encouragement to choose a new vision or ideology during voting.
PP	Pol Polarisation,	Content emphasizing political divisions, rivalries, or contrasting ideologies.	Not related to the present content
PC	Political Canvassing	Institute Campaigning on & Resear to garner support for a specific party, candidate, or ideology.	"چنو نئی سوچ کو" ("Choose new think") Appeal to adopt the ideology of change and progress associated with the campaign.

Interpretation:

The storyline replicates a political communication plan that focuses on educating the voters leading them towards a exact choice, and development support for a tolerant vision. The message of Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari's involvement in the Sadiqabad rally and her warm reception by the people serves to raise alertness and engage electorates by showcasing the leader's active participation with the publics. The use of the hashtag چنو نئی سوچ کو ("Choose new think") subtly directs electorates towards accepting a new dream or ideology, positioning the movement as a force for change and growth. This hashtag also roles as a form of political canvassing, appealing emotionally electorates who seek revolution and innovation in headship. Notably, the

communication escapes political polarization, concentrating instead on a unified call for change deprived of divisive or adversarial rhetoric, targeting to inspire and unite electorates around a common goalmouth.

The poster consists of the following text

بی بی آصفہ بھٹو زرداری کی صادق آباد جلسے میں
شرکت، عوام کی جانب سے پر جوش نعروں میں استقبال

“Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari's participation in the Sadiqabad rally, welcomed by the people with enthusiastic slogans” they used the hashtag چنو نئی سوچ کو “Choose new Think”

Following pages contain the content analysis of the posts appearing on the Facebook page of JUL F;

Post 7.

<https://www.facebook.com/juipakofficial/posts/pfbid02YYQm6o5xUSMraTnLt9WZHRyRZx3v1nPU21axtyx6k5enu3FJMrVkTyXy3NZAqiqDI>

Post- type of data; Poster and text.

within text; political rhetoric, hash tag. (No any hashtag)

Poster; Political Rhetoric, encouraging the voters

Code	Content category	Definitions	Indicators (coding units)
GI	GI Information/Awareness,	Information about the GE process, which consisting locations, events and schedules.	"Maulana Fazlur Rehman will address public meetings in different areas in link with the election campaign." "Maulana Fazlur Rehman will address a public meeting in Tank on February 2." Announcement of election rallies with specific dates and locations.
VI	Voting Instructions,	Messages guiding voters on how to cast their vote or whom to vote for.	Not related to the present content
PP	Pol Polarisation,	Content emphasizing political divisions, rivalries, or contrasting ideologies.	Not related to the present content
PC	political canvassing	Campaigning to garner support for a specific party, candidate, or ideology.	"Maulana Fazlur Rehman will address election rallies in various locations." Mobilizing support by showcasing the leader's active participation in election rallies.

Interpretation:

The narrative mainly deals to notify the voters about the programmed election rallies of Maulana Fazlur Rehman in several areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), providing important details about the times and locations of his public gatherings. This drops under the **GE Information/Awareness** category, as it aims to raise alertness and inspire involvement in the campaign. While there are no straight polling directions or polarizing rhetoric present, the several rally statements serve as a form of **Political Canvassing**, showcasing the leader's active participation in the election progression and boosting support. The lack of divisive semantic means the narrative escapes **Pol Polarisation**, concentrating instead on organizing support through event announcements without highlighting political rivalry or separation.

The poster consists of the following text;

جے یو آئی سربراہ مولانا فضل الرحمان کا صوبہ خیبر پختونواہ میں انتخابی جلسوں کا شیڈول جاری مولانا فضل الرحمان انتخابی مہم کے سلسلے میں مختلف علاقوں میں جلسہ عام سے خطاب کریں گے۔ مولانا فضل الرحمان 2 فروری کو ٹانک میں جلسہ عام سے خطاب کریں گے۔ تین فروری کو لکی مروت، چار فروری کو بنوں اور کرک میں خطاب کریں گے۔ مولانا فضل الرحمان چھ فروری کو ڈی آئی خان میں انتخابی جلسے خطاب کریں گے۔

The "JUI chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman's schedule of election rallies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province continues

Maulana Fazlur Rahman will address public meetings in different areas in link with the election campaign.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman will address a public meeting in Tank on February 2.

Lucky Marwat will speak on February 3, Bannu and Karak on February 4.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman will address the election rally in DI Khan on February 6”

Post 8.

<https://www.facebook.com/juipakofficial/posts/pfbid0f5hT3tBQ8dPAaAY6xsYN4m5hkWhpsacejhpPyv8rTq8pCcAqAHhG7CLt36oPpepEl>

Post- type of data; Picture and text.

within text; political rhetoric, hash tag. #MaulanaInMuzaffargarh

Poster; Political Rhetoric, provide logistical details about the event, counting the establishing party and location

Code	Content category	Definitions	Indicators (coding units)
GI	GI Information/ Awareness,	Information that provides updates, factual content, and educated the voters regarding events related election.	"Election rally in District Muzaffargarh organized by JUI" جے یو آئی ضلع مظفر گڑھ کے زیر "انہماک انتخاباتی جلسہ" Announcement of an election rally with details of the organizing party and location.
VI	Voting Instructions,	Messages guiding voters on how to cast their vote or whom to vote for.	Not related to the present content
PP	Pol Polarisation,	Content emphasizing political divisions, rivalries, or contrasting ideologies.	Not related to the present content
PC	political canvassing	Campaigning to garner support for a specific party, candidate, or ideology.	"Hashtag#MaulanaInMuzaffargarh" Campaigning to increase visibility and promote the party's leader through social media engagement.

Interpretation:

The narrative and associated picture of a people crowd gather round in front of a stage reflects the JUI election rally in District Muzaffargarh. IT conveys a well-organized struggle to assemble people support and generate a visible manifestation for the party. The declaration of the rally drops under **GE Information/Awareness**, as it delivers logistical details about the event, counting the establishing party and locality, aiming to educate and attract the electorate.

The picture of the crowd supports the success of the rally in sketch public contribution,

symbolizing solid grassroots backing. Although the narrative absences direct **Voting Instructions**, the hashtag #MaulanaInMuzaffargarh assists as a tool for **Political Canvassing**, increasing the event's reach on social media and connecting the gathering with Maulana Fazlur Rehman's headship. The lack of divisive or confrontational rhetoric certifies that **Pol Polarisation** is not existing, keeping the emphasis on unity and people engagement by positive campaigning. Together, the writing message and image focus the rally as a moment of important

political enlistment and community communication for JUI in the area.

There was no any text or something eles on the picture rather than the following post text

جے یو آئی ضلع مظفر گڑھ کے زیر اہتمام انتخابی جلسہ

“Election rally in District Muzaffargarh organized by JUI” with the hashtag of #MaulanaInMuzaffargarh

Following pages contain the content analysis of the posts appearing on the Facebook page of JI;

Post 9.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=942063750822777&set=pb.100050574815596.-2207520000&type=3>

Post- type of data; Poster and text. within text; political rhetoric, hash tag. (No any hashtag)

Poster; Political Rhetoric, seeking to assemble support by connecting the party with solid leadership and responsibility.

Code	Content category	Definitions	Indicators (coding units)
GI	GI Information/ Awareness,	Information purposes at encourage voters regarding 2024 General Election	Not related to the present content
VI	Voting Instructions,	Messages guiding voters on how to cast their vote or whom to vote for.	"Jamaat-e-Islami will come to power and introduce such a strict system of accountability." Encouragement to vote for Jamaat-e-Islami as a solution to corruption and mismanagement.
PP	Pol Polarisation,	Content emphasizing political divisions, rivalries, or contrasting ideologies.	"The problem is corruption and incompetent rulers." Cruel landlords and corrupt capitalists will tell future generations not to do corruption." Highlighting systemic corruption and blaming specific groups.
PC	political canvassing	Campaigning to garner support for a specific party, candidate, or ideology.	"Jamaat-e-Islami will come to power and introduce such a strict system of accountability." Positioning the party as a force for accountability and reform to attract voter support.

Interpretation:

The narrative from the poster replicates a dedicated political communication aimed at stressing systemic problems and giving Jamaat-e-Islami as a solution. The content highlights the country's potential, testifying that abundant resources are wasted due to corruption and unskilled rulers. This created a narrative of letdown by present leadership, polarizing the voters by classifying "corrupt entrepreneurs" and "cruel property-owners" as adversaries. The promise of a strict responsibility system under Jamaat-e-Islami's supremacy positions the party as the champion of improvement and justice, appealing to electorates irritated by corruption and

unprofessional conduct. Whereas the message does not deliver direct event or program details, it purposes as a form of **Political Canvassing**, seeking to assemble support by connecting the party with solid leadership and responsibility. Additionally, the deficiency of visual or hashtag components in the poster certifies the focus remains exclusively on the textual communication, which works to separate opinions while inspiring polling support for Jamaat-e-Islami's planned vision for supremacy.

The post consists of the following text

ملک میں وسائل کی بہتات ہے، مسئلہ کرپشن اور نااہل حکمران ہیں۔ ملک میں سالانہ 5 ہزار ارب کی کرپشن ہوتی

ہے۔ جماعت اسلامی اقتدار میں آکر احتساب کا ایسا کڑا نظام متعارف کروائے گی کہ ظالم جاگیردار اور کرپٹ سرمایہ دار ائندہ نسلوں کو بتا کر جائیں گے کہ کرپشن نہیں کرنی۔

"The country has plenty of resources, the problem is corruption and incompetent rulers. There is corruption of 5 thousand billion in the country every year. Jamaat-e-Islami will come to power and introduce such a strict system of accountability that cruel landlords and corrupt capitalists will tell future generations not to do corruption".

Post 10.

<https://www.facebook.com/JIPOfficial1/posts/pfbid02xMhYp8ySVYub74MZbAmwc1nYbz6fNr1hC6Mba5mjSF5LtatfhGThyL1885kXfRNxl>

Post- type of data; Poster and text.

within text; political rhetoric, hash tag. (No any hashtag)

Poster; Political Rhetoric, efforts to improve elector outreach and support

Code	Content category	Definitions	Indicators (coding units)
GI	GI Information/ Awareness,	Information that provides updates, factual content, and edified the voters about events related election.	"In the meetings of the Central Election Cell under the chairmanship of Vice Presidents of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Liaquat Baloch and Dr. Farid Ahmed Paracha, the country's political situation and election campaign were reviewed." Information about internal discussions on the political situation and election campaign.
VI	Voting Instructions,	Messages guiding voters on how to cast their vote or whom to vote for.	Not related to the present content
PP	Pol Polarisation,	Content emphasizing political divisions, rivalries, or contrasting ideologies.	Not related to the present content
PC	political canvassing	Campaigning to garner support for a specific party, candidate, or ideology.	"Review of the election campaign" Internal strategizing and planning to strengthen the election campaign and assemble support for the party.

Interpretation:

The narrative associated the picture highpoints Jamaat-e-Islami's inside organizational struggles to support its election campaign. The gathering of the Central Election Cell, led by Vice Presidents Liaquat Baloch and Dr. Farid Ahmed Paracha, replicates the party's upbeat approach to judging the nation's political condition and purifying its election strategies. This content comes under **GE**

Information/Awareness, as it delivers information about the party's interior review processes expected at supporting its election campaign with current political subtleties. Despite the fact there is no direct

Voting Instructions or splitting rhetoric, the focus on manipulating and campaign review proposes

Political Canvassing efforts to improve elector outreach and support. The nonappearance of a hashtag, extra text, or divisive components keeps the message concentrated on organizational scheduling and inclination, portraying Jamaat-e-Islami as an organized and willing political entity. The image complements the narrative by visually highlighting the leadership's engagement in the procedure of election developing a sense of diligence and promise.

The picture includes the following text;

لاہور۔ نائب امراء جماعت اسلامی پاکستان لیاقت بلوچ اور ڈاکٹر فرید احمد پراچہ کی زیر صدارت مرکزی الیکشن سیل کے اجلاسوں میں ملکی سیاسی صورتحال اور الیکشن کمپین کا جائزہ لیا گیا۔

“LAHORE- In the meetings of the Central Election Cell under the chairmanship of Vice Presidents of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Liaquat Baloch and Dr. Farid Ahmed Paracha, the country's political situation and election campaign were reviewed”.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The study at hand is an attempt to explore how did Pakistani political parties use Facebook as a tool of their political canvassing before the start of election. The data displays how these political parties use messages to engage electorates in elections. General Election Information contains updates like rally statements, for instance, Nawaz Sharif or Fazlur Rehman holding people gatherings, which target to inspire public to join and show maintenance. Voting directions lead public on whom to vote for, using different slogans such as پاکستان کیلئے شیر کو ووٹ دو "Vote to Lion for Pakistan" for PML-N or hashtags like #ReleasePoliticalPrisoners and #ووٹ_ڈالو_خان_نکالو to encourage the voters.

Political Canvassing appeals to feelings and ideas, such as mottoes such as, پاکستان کو نواز دو "Give Nawaz to Pakistan" or چنو نئی سوچ کو "Choose New think," inspiring public to backups the dreams and the leaders for their supremacy. Some missives point out by the Jamaat-e-Islami about the huge problem as like corruption, which promises strict responsibility. Whereas some missive escapes generating separation and effort on union, others show issues with present leader to increase support. In the circulation of these messages the social media (special tweeter and Facebook) plays key role, by the picture, poster and text with the motos, slogans, hashtag to reach more public. Overall, these tactics mix missives like, emotional appeals, and calls for action to affect electorates in various methods.

The data delivers a detailed discussion about political parties' Facebook activity throughout the study. In reaction to RQ1, it is apparent that various political parties actively displayed election-related content, but Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and PML-N stood out with repeated updates, concentrating on rally announcements, slogans, and enlistment struggles.

The PTI used hashtags like #Release Political Prisoners) and ووٹ ڈالو خان نکالو ("Vote To Free Khan") to generate engagement, while PML-N stressed faithfulness and countrywide progress through motos such as "Vote to Lion for Pakistan." Regarding RQ2, the generalized content mixed by type, containing logistical information about rallies, the social media campaigns and emotionally indicted slogans. The PTI underlined political polarization, enclosing problems such as kidnappings as essential to their campaign, while PML-N accepted a more unifying tone, escaping divisive rhetoric and concentrating on leadership sincerity.

The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Jamaat-e-Islami also contributed, with PPP encouraging innovation by the slogans such as چنو نئی سوچ کو "Choose new Think" and Jamaat-e-Islami highlighting culpability and anti-corruption narratives. For RQ3, the major narratives mixed across parties. PTI propped on polarization and enlistment through their slogans. PML-N shaped narratives around constancy and headship, portraying Nawaz Sharif as important for progress. PPP placed itself as a liberal choice, while Jamaat-e-Islami directed systemic reform. Overall, the content of the current analysis discloses a strategic mix of enlistment, unity, and directed messaging through all parties to contour elector opinions and engagement.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the researchers have found out that all the major political parties in Pakistan used Facebook as an active and relied platform to spread their political manifestoes and to activate their political vote base before the GE 24. The analysis of the Facebook posts related to the 2024 general election reveals distinct patterns of political rhetorical tactics used by major political parties. The PTI has been most active in posting content through hashtags such as #ReleasePoliticalPrisoners and #Vote_Dalo_Khan_Nikalo to focus on issues such as abductions and democratic neutrality, while also increasing the number of followers and promoting political polarization.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) added a mix of tactical updates, emotional charisma and direct voting directives, including "Vote Pakistan" and "Pakistan Ko Nawaz Do" focusing on

development and corruption. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) implemented a liberal and provocative narrative with hashtags such as "Chanu_nai_soch_ko" (Choose a New Thought), highlighting revolution and change without rhetoric. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) focused its messaging on mass rallies, using hashtags such as #MaulanaMuzaffargarh to spread visibility and empowerment, and Jamiat-e-Islami (JI) has highlighted the entire system of corruption and changes in their accountability, which have created problems. Overall, the material circulated by these political parties emulates a complex approach to voting engagement, including up-to-date information, enrolment struggles and emotional appeals, with varying degrees of divisiveness and ideological position. All parties personalized their policies to re-engage with their vote base, pointing to education, motivation and support as homework for the 2024 general elections.

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