

Exploring the Role of Political Memes in Shaping Youngsters’ Perception
in Twin Cities of Pakistan

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Article Information		Abstract
Received:	Jan 10, 2025	The purpose of this study was to analyse the role of political memes in shaping perception of youngsters in twin cities of Pakistan. The research paper deeply focused on impact of political memes on thoughts and beliefs of individuals, the way these memes changed youngsters’ behaviour and social perception. To achieve the objectives, researchers followed quantitative methodology and conducted survey in twin cities of Pakistan. For the data collection, self-designed questionnaire was used consisted of three main segments including respondents’ information, social media use and political memes. Purposive sampling technique was adopted, and data was collected from (n=240) youngsters living in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Results revealed that a youngsters’ perception is highly influenced by political memes. Their cognitions, behaviour and social norms are highly affected after consuming political memes on social media. The study concluded that political memes had great role in shaping youngster’s certain attitudes and this leads the individuals to take part in politics actively and enhance their political participation.
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<i>Political Memes</i>		
<i>Youngsters</i>		
<i>Cognitive perception</i>		
<i>Behavioural perception</i>		
<i>Social Perception</i>		

1. Introduction

Internet had been developed from simple network of computers to a worldwide trend, which connect itself to the structure of modern life and had changed the way of communication. Just as political memes has been emerged as the new global trend and become a penetrating force for influencing political debates and changing public opinion in this digital age (Pasha, 2022; Saleem et al., 2022).

Richard Dawkins in his book “The Selfish Gene” first time introduced Memes in 1975. According to him memes are counterculture which are spread from one person to another by imitating each other and this imitation became the reason to propagate memes in a culture (Dawkins, 2006; Javed and Javed, 2023; Sharif et al., 2024). Political memes have become the source to increase political attention and awareness among public in this digital world. These political memes help to know about the current and former political issues and create interest of politics in public (Kasirye, 2019). The political memes are made by common people and is the mixer of user generated content with humour as the major element. Viewers are highly influenced by the political memes (Pearce & Hajizada, 2013). Nowadays social media platforms are filled with political events and happenings. It is common to come across with humorous political post or tweet by the political figure while scrolling (Kasirye, 2019). Memes are considered an integral form of political participation (Ross and Rivers, 2017). Political memes are used as to counter dishonesty of politicians and making comments on their mistakes (Moody-Ramirez & Church, 2019).

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Political participation and discussions are encouraged among youth, and it increases online political participation (Intyaswati & Fairuzza, 2023). In Pakistan social media has become the new trend for providing latest information and updates within a very short span of time to a large number of people. And now people do not depend on traditional outlets such as print and electronic media for information. Usages of memes in Pakistan have become common and strong. There are user generated memes on different social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (Fatima, 2020). The research on Role of Political Memes shaping youngster's perception in twin cities of Pakistan was conducted to fill the study gap in several areas of political memes research. There is a little understanding of how political memes are changing the cognitive, behavioural and social perceptions of youngsters. There was methodological limitation as well most research on political memes were based on qualitative methods but this study had use quantitative approach and provide better insights after taking feedback from target individuals. Moreover, there was no data providing the response of youth from Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

1.1 Problem Statement

In this digital era political activities are taking place on social media platforms. Political parties mainly target young generation and influence them through the messages and online content. In the same way some youngsters engage with politics by liking and sharing the content of their favourite political party, while others add humour and satire to the political content. They engage with others by sharing political memes.

This research is particularly concerned with the impact of political memes on perceptions of youngsters in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. How these memes change the attitudes about politics, political actors and impacting their cognitions, behaviour and social perception.

1.2 Significance of Study

This study is significant for investigating the impact of political memes on the perceptions of youngsters in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. It is also important for guiding people about political memes and to explore different complexities of political discourse. It provides strategies for political activists to use memes effectively to engage their target audience. This research also gives directions to inform people about politics through memes.

1.3 Study Objectives

1.3.1 Main Objective

The main aim of this research was to investigate how political memes changes youngster's perception.

1.3.2 Sub-objectives

To understand if thoughts and beliefs effect and bring change in individual's perceptions.

To analyse the way in which behaviour influence youngster's perceptions.

To identify the effect of social construct impacting adolescent perceptions.

1.4 Hypotheses

How do political memes impact youngster's perception?

How do political memes effect thoughts and beliefs and bring change in individual's perceptions?

How behavioural intentions of youth are influence by political memes?

How political memes impact social perception?

1.5 Study Gap

Political memes have emerged as a powerful and popular mode for political communication among youth around the globe, there was limited quantitative research which specifically focused on the influence of political memes within the social and political context of Pakistan, particularly in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Moreover, the international research from Uganda, Malaysia, Singapore etc. had addressed meme culture in different contexts, localized research focusing on digitally literate youth in Pakistan's twin cities was lacking. The cities where politically engaged youth and high social media usage provide a distinctive environment for meme consumption and political discourse but still remain unexplored. This research had examined the versatile impact of memes on individual's perceptions. Also, there was the need for an integrated analysis on cognitive perception, behavioural perception and social perception to fully analyse the influence of political memes on youth.

2. Literature Review

Kumar (2023) research focused to explore the meme's impact on the inter-cultural communication. The study was assumed that memes play huge role in cross cultural communication. Exploratory qualitative study was conducted to examine the data from websites and to investigate how memes effect the idea of intercultural communication among public. The outcome was that memes were available in every category and according to cultural narrative people had formed virtual community and their surroundings had been globalized.

Kovtun et al. (2020) the central inquiry of this study was how internet memes make modern digital culture. Researcher had explored the causes of meme's popularity. The analysis of the content was done by using semiotic and hermeneutic qualitative methods. The result of the study was that memes are the new information source that grabbed audience attention. They removed the stress from individual's life.

Johann (2022) research endeavour on co-relation between internet memes and politics. On social media people expressed their political point of view through new format. Quantitative methodology was used; online survey was conducted for the research. Data was collected from fringe web communities and social media platforms. Findings showed that memes posting were dependent on the political affiliations and the amount of social media content consumption. These memes contain such power of expression that can change individual's political participation online and offline.

Ashfaq et al. (2022) research analysed the parallels and distinctions in the portrayal of politicians on Facebook memes. Study also aimed the examination of memes framing politicians. Content analysis was performed using quantitative methodology. Five prominent politicians were selected, and data was collected from ten most followed meme pages. Outcome was that visual composition was used for the political leaders. The important part in making memes on political actors was framing. Every politician was portrayed differently in memes. Thus, it was concluded that framing was important in construction of memes.

Ahmed et al. (2022) research revealed that memes are taken as soft entertainment. Memes are the innovation for the political propaganda as they are easily created and spread. Purpose to conduct this research was to examine the memes on three prominent political leaders i.e. Imran Khan, Donald Trump and Narendra Modi. Qualitative research methodology was used to analyse the memes. The data from 2017 to 2020 was collected from different Facebook meme pages. Purposive sampling was

used; text and pictures were analysed for the study. The research revealed that beside humour, satire and taunts were used to criticize the politicians in memes. Memes had become the new style for political communication especially on social media.

Javed et al. (2022) investigative aim of this research was that to look over the language of memes and how it changes the emotions of individuals in Pakistani society. Qualitative methodology was used in this investigative study. Content was critically analysed through Multimodal Critical Discourse analysis. Data was scrutinized in a way that hidden messages and meanings behind the memes were recognized. Prominent outcomes were memes just not spread humour but the source of generating new and useful ideas. Moreover, sometimes memes became the reason for misinformation and misleading. Based on the findings it was said that memes are ironical that tell public about human behaviour and trends.

Tang (2024) the study was centred on memes which are mostly used by teenagers, they put together the content and make memes. They developed the memes from idioms and practices from daily life thus provide themselves entertainment and peace of mind. Literature reviews and case analysis were used to find the impact of memes. Result insights were that memes are the source of comfort and satisfy their social needs. Memes strengthen individual's relationship with others and helped in generating new ideas. The meme trend helped in making groups online and developed the feeling of nearness in society.

Atta et al. (2023) research objective was to inquire how youngsters in Pakistan make political decisions and participate in politics after the use of social media. Quantitative research method was used in this study. Questionnaire was distributed among 500 individuals. Notable outcomes were that use of social media companionship increased political participation of young adults. As social media is used to keep oneself well informed, youth access information from different sites and sources. These actions enhance their political participation. However, if social media is used for entertainment purpose, then it will not affect individual's role in political participation. This research focused on multiple roles of social media in shaping decision making in politics.

Kulkarni (2017) this research seeks that internet invention gave rise to the new medium for communication i.e. memes. Memes communicate information in humorous way. This study analysed the memes communicating political satire. Quantitative methodology was used. Questionnaire was distributed to analyse the perspective of individuals. 50 media users were selected to fill the questionnaire. Research revealed that memes are used as the source of political discourse but still they do not have major role in impacting the minds of audience. Theoretical work for the study was based on Agenda setting theory and Likelihood model.

Sreekumar and Vadrevu (2013) the study examined the process of uploading memes and how the residents of Singapore transfer their messages to political leaders and ruling class by commenting on the political posts on social media. For the research interview was conducted from natives of Singapore aged 18-24, so that analysis could be made whether the memes effect political engagement among them. Also, semiotic analysis of some memes was performed. Findings showed that memes had become integral part for expressing political point of view in Singapore and as traditional media is conservative and controlled so youth mobilize through social media for political engagement.

Sultana and Khalid (2023) conducted the research to investigate the role of political memes as cultural agents. The study was done to explore the beliefs of different communities and how their political perspectives changed due to the political memes. Survey method was used to carry out this research. Questionnaire was distributed among students and faculty of universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The outcome from the survey was that the memes which were quite unique and trendy engaged the audience, while the internet memes which satisfied the already existing beliefs of people about politics occupied their interest. Survey also revealed that memes had the power to bring people under the single platform or if some group of peers had diverse thinking they can disagree with them.

Leiser (2022) explored “Psychological Perspectives on Participatory Culture: Core Motives for the use of Political Internet Memes”. The main objective of the study was to understand political role of memes and the substitute for the conventional political participation. The research was centred on analysing the point of view of users and focusing on primary incentive of why to use memes. A qualitative analysis was done to check the non-speaking part and influence of societal shift due to internet political memes. The result showed that individuals used memes are easy, unforced and natural content for the entertainment purposes, expressiveness and sociable personality. The positive and negative points regarding political memes were also discussed in this research.

Halversem and Weeks (2023) exposed the “Meming Politics and Understanding Political Meme Creators Audiences and Consequences on Social Media”. With the more use of social media, the way of sharing political point of view and humorous content regarding politics had changed, now with the memes all these functions are performed. The aim of the study was to explore about the creators of the political memes and to know the link of memes with behaviour, emotions and attitudes. To fulfil the aim of the research data was taken from two wave survey held during the U.S. presidential elections in 2020. Sample of (N=1800) was taken to analyse the composed memes and reason to share them. Outcomes showed that people interested in politics and political actors shared memes as their political expression.

Nizah et al (2024) investigated “the influence of political memes on political marketing strategy in Malaysia”. The new developed media not only effect the behaviour of people but also change the marketing strategy. It is also beneficial in politics. In Malaysian politics the use of memes had changed the way of agenda setting of several peer group. The objective of this research was to analyse the effect of these political memes especially on teenagers residing in Malaysia and how it changed the voting decision. Researchers also made an effort to discover the marketing tool that effect politics. Quantitative methodology was used. 400 people aged 18-25 years were selected for the survey. Findings showed that political memes are highly effective as they are humorous information and the way to criticize others. Memes had become tool for communication and for political marketing.

Putra et al. (2022) the main aim of this research was to show memes as the sign for political communication. Memes had changed the composition of communication in a way that people’s point of views on politics are getting even more strong and evolve the conventional form of political communication. Qualitative critical analysis was done to conduct this research. The discourse analysis of book “Communicating with Memes Consequences in Post-truth Civilization” by Grant Kien was done. In the post-truth era the examination of purpose of memes, re-building of political communication was examined. The writer in his book had written that social media memes are the source of political propaganda and even sometimes play the role to sideline traditional media and society. The research concluded that initially memes were the source of information but now their role had diverted and became the tool for political propaganda.

Kasirye (2019) conducted the research on “the effectiveness of Political Memes as a form of political participation amongst Millennial in Uganda”. The objective of this study was to analyse the outcome of use of political memes on the level of political participation. Persuasion theory of Elaboration Likelihood Model was applied in this research. Questionnaire was distributed among 225 residents of Uganda. The findings came out where political participation was affected by the exposure of memes. The researcher’s result also showed that the content of memes was sensitized badly therefore recommendation had been made to regulate and check the content of memes and the channels through which it spread.

Sultana et al. (2023) this research focused on the impact of political memes on teenagers in Pakistan. The main objective of the study was to find the particular feature of political meme that impact the general public. Political memes had the direct relation with politics and people. Memes are used in different ways first of all they are the source of humorous information; secondly, they can be used as a tool for misinformation and misleading to erode the opposing parties. Survey was conducted to find the result of this research. 200 participants from Narowal had submitted their response. Results

revealed that political memes affect youngsters of Pakistan. These memes acted as strong factor in changing the decisions.

Mahmood and Rehman (2021) investigated “Internet Memes as Political Communication Tool”. In this digital world memes are the source of participation on internet. Memes play important part in informing citizens and make them active politically. Research explored the impact of memes on increasing awareness and political participation. Survey methodology was opted to find the results. Randomly 176 participants were selected to fill this questionnaire. Outcomes were that memes helped public in the political awareness and kept them updated on ongoing happening in the politics. Through memes people engage politically and take part in ongoing online debates. But memes had little influence on the decision making on politics.

Galipeau (2023) conducted the research on “the Impact of Political Memes and a longitudinal Field Experiment”. This study analysed how social media political memes changed the way of politics. Now the politicians had their social media pages through which they peruse the minds of public. Political memes changed opinions and formed the common identity. Qualitative content analysis was done. Memes were selected and analysed through the data collected from experimental participants. The result exposed that memes can had varied effects.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The research relate with Uses and Gratification Theory given by Katz and Blumer (1974), which stated that people consume media according to their needs and got satisfied when those needs are gratified. It is audience centric theory in which individual decides what media content he/she wants to consume. The research was about how youngster’s perceptions were shaped by political memes. Uses and Gratification theory relates with the research in a way the teenagers consume political memes to gratify their certain needs. Youngsters engage with political memes to gain knowledge and information about the current happenings in politics. They also consume humorous political content to entertain their selves. Through political memes people can easily express their opinions about politics so they can satisfy their needs of self-expression. Its human necessity to have social connection individuals create the sense of belonging and share memes about politics.

2.2 Research Model:

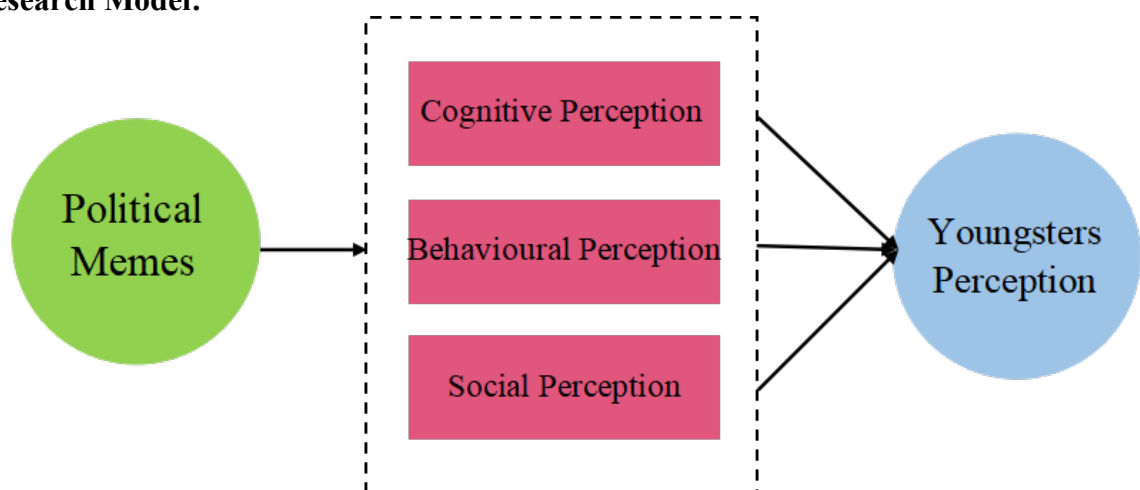


Fig 1: Research Model Illustrating the Influence of Political Memes on Youngsters’ Perception

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The researchers followed quantitative research methodology. According to Meissel and Brown, (2023), Quantitative research is a type of research that uses mathematical theories to gather and scrutinize the data.

Survey was designed to examine the relationship between exposure to political memes and youngsters' perception in the twin cities of Pakistan. Questionnaire having close-ended questions was designed, investigating how political memes change the perceptions of youngsters in Pakistan.

3.2 Population

The population for this study consisted of youngsters of Pakistan living in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The target population included people aged 18-35 who were using social media actively and had been discovering political memes. As youngsters are more likely to be influenced by content on social media, political content and especially take part in online political discussions so this age group had been chosen for the research study.

3.3 Sample Frame

The sample frame for the research study comprised of youngsters from 18-35 years living in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Students from public and private universities, colleges, universities as well as individuals such as young professional and entrepreneurs were included in the sample frame of this research. The study ensured the equal representation from different socio-economic backgrounds, educational institutions and locations from both cities i.e., Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

3.4 Sample size and Technique

The sample size for this research was 240 youngsters from twin cities of Pakistan. It was considered enough to provide true and popularize results.

The non-probability purposive sampling technique was selected to for this study to target the youngsters of twin cities of Pakistan, who were familiar with political memes, selected individuals of different social and economic backgrounds to ensure the participation of individuals from different educational institutions, using different social media platforms. This was also done to reduce the factor of biasness.

3.5 Data Collection

For the data collection of the research study self-contented questionnaire was designed. The questions were based on Likert scale. It was distributed among the selected sample frame, which was 260 individuals to collect data about demographics, use of social media, perceptions about political memes and change of cognitive, behavioural and social perception due to political memes. In return 240 youngsters filled the questionnaire and the response rate calculated was 92.30%. Before the participation, all respondents were clearly informed about the purpose, nature, and scope of the research. Informed consent was obtained from the participants, ensuring that their participation was entirely voluntary and their responses would remain confidential.

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for data analysis of the research. Descriptive statistics which include percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviations were used to evaluate the collected data.

4. Results

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

Sr.	Respondent Information	Description of Characteristics	F	%
1	City	Rawalpindi	127	52.9
		Islamabad	113	47.1
2	Gender	Male	82	34.2
		Female	158	65.8
		Matric or below	1	0.4
		Intermediate	20	8.3
3	Education level	BS	103	42.9
		MS/MPhil	102	42.5
		PhD	14	5.8
		Facebook	65	27.1
4	Social media platform used	Instagram	129	53.8
		YouTube	46	19.2
5	Time spent on social media	1-2 hours	39	16.3
		3-4 hours	141	58.8
		More than 4 hours	60	25

Table: 1 represents the characteristics of respondents. The information included the city they belong to, respondents' gender, their education level, social media platform they used more and total time these respondents spent on social media.

The results showed that more youngsters had filled the questionnaire from Rawalpindi. There were more 31% more females than males that participated in the survey. The major education levels of individuals were bachelors and masters. The respondents use Instagram more than any social media platform and they nearly spent 3-4 hours daily on social media.

Table 2: Independent variable (Political Memes)

Sr.	Questions	Options	F	%	S.D	M
1	How often do you come across political memes?	Daily	122	50.8	1.189	1.97
		Weekly	50	20.8		
		Monthly	27	11.3		
		Rarely	36	15.0		
		Never	5	2.1		
2	To what extent do you think political memes influence your opinions on political issues?	Not at all	27	11.3	1.107	3.03
		A little	55	22.9		
		Moderately	49	20.4		
		A lot	102	42.5		
		Extremely	7	2.9		
3	To what extent do you think political memes use satire and humour effectively to convey messages?	Not at all	9	3.8	1.019	3.26
		A little	57	23.8		
		Moderately	54	22.5		
		A lot	103	42.9		
		Extremely	17	7.1		
4	To what extent do you think political memes are credible sources of information?	Not at all	23	9.6	2.860	3.26
		A little	54	22.5		
		Moderately	51	21.3		
		A lot	100	41.7		
		Extremely	11	4.6		
5	How likely are you to engage with political memes (e.g., liking, sharing, and commenting)?	Very unlikely	13	5.4	0.927	3.31
		Unlikely	31	12.9		
		Neutral	71	29.6		
		Likely	118	49.2		
		Very likely	7	2.9		
6	How likely are you to share political memes with others and discuss them?	Very unlikely	20	8.3	0.989	3.29
		Unlikely	28	11.7		
		Neutral	58	24.4		
		Likely	130	54.2		
		Very likely	4	1.7		
7	How often do you use political memes as a source of information about current events?	Rarely	43	17.9	1.222	3.00
		Occasionally	36	15.0		
		Frequently	54	22.5		
		Almost always	93	38.8		
		Always	14	5.8		

8	Do political memes evoke emotions in you (e.g., anger, amusement, inspiration)?	Strongly disagree	11	4.6	0.867	3.47
		Disagree	22	9.2		
		Neutral	55	22.9		
		Agree	147	61.3		
		Strongly agree	5	2.1		
9	Do political memes shape your perception of politics and current events?	Strongly disagree	8	3.3	0.838	3.46
		Disagree	24	10.0		
		Neutral	63	26.3		
		Agree	139	57.9		
		Strongly agree	6	2.5		

Table: 2 consisted of questions of independent variable i.e., political memes. This table analysed respondents came across political memes daily, political memes changed a lot of point of views on political issues, political memes used a lot of humour to convey messages, respondents think political memes are the most credible source of information, individuals mostly engage with political memes they came across on social media, individuals likely discuss political memes with their friends and family members, respondents agreed that political memes evoke the emotions of anger or amusements among individuals and also agreed to that political memes capable of changing point of view regarding current political events.

Table 3: Sub variable I (Cognitive Perception)

Sr	Questions	Options	F	%	S.D	M
1	Do political memes evoke your emotions and influence attitude towards a particular issues or politician?	Strongly disagree	8	3.3	0.808	3.41
		Disagree	21	8.8		
		Neutral	80	33.3		
		Agree	127	52.9		
		Strongly agree	4	1.7		
2	Do political memes support your existing ideas and make more resistant to opposing views?	Strongly disagree	4	1.7	0.764	3.46
		Disagree	25	10.4		
		Neutral	70	29.2		
		Agree	138	57.5		
		Strongly agree	3	1.3		
3	Do political memes simplify complex political issues for your understanding?	Strongly disagree	7	2.9	0.792	3.47
		Disagree	22	9.2		
		Neutral	64	26.7		
		Agree	145	60.4		
		Strongly agree	2	0.8		

4	Do the repetitive exposure to political memes effect your attitudes and beliefs?	Strongly disagree	9	3.8	0.869	3.42
		Disagree	29	12.1		
		Neutral	60	25.0		
		Agree	137	57.1		
		Strongly agree	5	2.1		

Table: 3 represents the questions on first sub-variable i.e. cognitive perception. It had analysed how political memes effect the cognitive perception of youngsters. Respondents mainly agreed that these memes changed their attitude towards any politician or political issue, political memes helped to support the existing political idea, or they make individuals more specific to their already existing beliefs, it helped to simplify the complex political issue and the repetition of these memes effected the attitudes of individuals.

Table 4: Sub variable II (Behavioural Perception)

Sr	Questions	Options	F	%	S.D	M
1	Do political memes create seriousness around particular political issue?	Strongly disagree	11	4.6	0.850	3.43
		Disagree	21	8.8		
		Neutral	66	27.5		
		Agree	139	57.9		
		Strongly agree	3	1.3		
2	Do political memes maintain stereotypes leading to biased behaviour?	Strongly disagree	7	2.9	0.786	3.54
		Disagree	16	6.7		
		Neutral	64	26.7		
		Agree	146	60.8		
		Strongly agree	7	2.9		
3	Do political memes form your expectations that affect your behaviour and attitude?	Strongly disagree	9	3.8	0.843	3.50
		Disagree	24	10.0		
		Neutral	49	20.4		
		Agree	154	64.2		
		Strongly agree	4	1.7		
4	Do political memes change your voting behaviour?	Strongly disagree	13	5.4	0.955	3.41
		Disagree	34	14.2		
		Neutral	42	17.5		
		Agree	144	60.0		

Strongly agree 7 2.9

Table: 4 shows the effect of behavioural perception of individuals due to political memes. The results showed that political memes create seriousness for a particular issue. According to individual's response memes-maintained stereotypes, they also create expectations and change voting behaviour of individuals.

Table 5: Sub variable III (Social Perception)

Sr	Questions	Options	F	%	S.D	M
1	Do political memes create sense of social validation?	Strongly disagree	2	0.8	0.702	3.48
		Disagree	20	8.3		
		Neutral	81	33.8		
		Agree	134	55.8		
		Strongly agree	3	1.3		
2	Do political memes influence social norms shaping your perception of acceptable behaviour?	Strongly disagree	3	1.3	0.776	3.47
		Disagree	28	11.7		
		Neutral	67	27.9		
		Agree	137	57.1		
		Strongly agree	5	2.1		
3	Do political memes effect your social identity and sense of belonging?	Strongly disagree	9	3.8	0.904	3.45
		Disagree	32	13.3		
		Neutral	49	20.4		
		Agree	141	58.8		
		Strongly agree	9	3.8		
4	Do political memes intensify extremist voices and contribute to social partition?	Strongly disagree	4	1.7	0.725	3.63
		Disagree	16	6.7		
		Neutral	51	21.3		
		Agree	162	67.5		
		Strongly agree	7	2.9		

Table: 5 represents how political memes effects social perceptions of youngsters in twin cities of Pakistan. According to the results shown in the above table it had been analysed that youngsters agreed that political memes create sense of social approval, changed their social norms, influenced individual's sense of belonging and contribute to partition in society.

5. Discussion

The study explored the political memes are highly involved in shaping youngsters' perception in twin cities of Pakistan. The research investigated that how do youngster's perceptions were impacted by political memes. How political memes changed the already existing thoughts and beliefs of youngsters. What kind of behaviours were changed by consuming political memes as social media content and how political memes effect social perception of youngsters in Pakistani society. The results unfolded that youngsters daily came across political memes on social media. Youngsters in

twin cities of Pakistan mostly agreed that their cognitive, behavioural and social perception was affected after consumption of political memes.

The results of the present study aligned with the previous research on “memes as tool of communication”, this study found that there was immense relation between the individual’s political decisions/bias, political awareness and political participation of the users and exposure to political memes (Rahman & Mahmood, 2021).

In another research results found that youngsters access different political information from diverse sources. The political insights motivate them to actively participate in political activities and became the part of political organizations to increase their political awareness (Gilardi et al, 2022). This study somehow relates with the result of the current research that youngsters gain awareness on current political issue after encountering political issue. Youngsters got motivated and their voting and other behaviours also changed due to political memes. The findings of research regarding value of political memes in political participation on millennial of Uganda also equals with result of this study. The political memes play an integral part in impacting the participation of public in politics and this participation is somehow important to them. The findings of the study inform that exposure to political memes is an important factor that influences participation of citizens in politics as well as significant to them (Kasirye, 2019). The research on youth of Narowal, Pakistan also revealed the same results. The political memes on internet strongly influence the Pakistani youth. These memes on politics act as great influencers for youth in making decisions regarding politics (Sultana et al, 2023).

The findings on research on youth of Rawalpindi and Islamabad also revealed that after consuming political memes through social media, the perceptions of individuals changed. Political memes influenced youngsters’ attitudes and beliefs, support their already existing ideas, create sternness on any political issue, changed the voting behaviour, effect individual social identity and sense of belonging.

6. Conclusion

Political memes had become the global trend. The study had focused on the part of political memes that changed the youngster’s perception in twin cities of Pakistan. To inform individuals about current political scenario these internet memes made on political matters and politicians play a great role. The independent variable for the research was political memes and dependent variable was youngster’s perception with sub-variables cognitive perception, behavioural perception and social perception. Study had explored the effect of political memes on cognitive, behavioural and social perceptions of youngsters living in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Questionnaire based on likert scale was designed and filled by 240 individuals. Data was collected and several statistical tests were applied on data to generate the results. The study analysed individuals commonly came across political memes, they share, like and comment on political memes therefore it affect their thinking, attitudes and beliefs. Through political memes youngsters understand complex political issues and actively participate in politics.

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