

**EFFECTS OF POLITICAL PARTISANSHIP ON MEDIA EXPOSURE, ATTENTION
AND RETENTION**

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Dedicated To

I dedicate this to all those who are curious about the interplay between political partisanship and its impact on youth media exposure. In today's media-driven world, understanding how partisan identities affect how people are participating, interpreting, and remembering political information is important. This work represents a humble input to the broader academic and public discussion of media dynamics and political behavior. I hope that this research will contribute to further research, inspire critical thinking, and function as a reference for policymakers, educators, and media professionals who create media to help promote balanced and well-thought-out media practices in a current polarized world.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of political partisanship on youths' exposure, attention, and retention of politically aligned media and their cognitive engagement. Research was conducted to determine the influence of partisan beliefs on media usage and storage of information and to examine the effect of selective exposure theory and cognitive dissonance. A convenience sampling technique was used to collect data from readily accessible university students in Islamabad. For data collection, 300 university students in Islamabad were approached using a quantitative survey design. The findings confirm that partisan affiliation strongly influences selective media engagement, where individuals prefer content with their ideology. This behavior allows groups to only hear ideas that are similar to theirs, making political, social or economic issues become even more separated.

Politically congruent content was attended to more, while information that contradicted partisan beliefs was less likely to be retained. The study also pointed that using digital systems may lead people to seek out information in line with their own opinions and stick with people who think the same way. The research added to knowledge of the dynamics of partisan media consumption in Pakistan's rich political context. The study highlighted the importance of media literacy in addressing political polarization and encouraging critical engagement with diverse perspectives. The importance of democratic balancing in practices and media interventions that encourage critical engagement with multiple perspectives and embrace informed political participation is shown in the study.

Keywords: Selective Exposure, Partisan Preferences, Partisanship, Media Attention, Media Retention, PTI, AOPP

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CHAPTER #01

1. INTRODUCTION

The bridging of political partisanship and media consumption as a focus of study in the field of political communication has received considerable attention in recent years (Perloff, 2021). In general, individuals tend to view media consumption to the extent that political partisanship shapes their lives in many ways, such as what they watch, read, listen to, and how they experience and recall information (Hershey, 2017). In Pakistan, the media landscape includes an array of traditional and digital platforms that make the dynamics a unique context to examine (Mahmood, 2019). Because media shapes public opinion and political discourse, understanding how political partisanship affects media exposure, attention, and retention is important for policymakers and media practitioners (Feezell, 2018).

It is an extremely complex media environment in Pakistan in which media outlets have developed a vibrant but combative relationship with political entities (Moon, 2013). In particular, the country's media has grown surprisingly quickly from state-controlled broadcasting to a more liberalized and competitive market that has numerous private television channels, newspapers, and online platforms. The problems of biased or censored media or the spreading of political agendas are at the top of the list (Riaz & Pasha, 2021). The consumption patterns of Pakistani audiences, many of whom are often aligned with a particular political party in expressing themselves, have started to be shaped by their political affiliation. Selective exposure is the result of this alignment, and hence, individuals tend to prefer sources that reflect and complement already existing notions and partisan loyalties (Ahmad & Ullah, 2022).

The media-political nexus in Pakistan becomes even more complex because of political partisanship on media attention and retention. Partisan biases strongly affect how selective attention, the cognitive process of focusing on some information and disregarding other

information, operates. More political content is more likely to get paid attention to and engage with, causing a skewed perception of reality (Khan & Rafi, 2020). Like in political partisanship, retention is the ability to recall and retain information over time, which is also biased. Saeed (2021) showed that partisan individuals tend to remember more information that agrees with their political views and not remember or forget the contradictory information. This baseline retention of selective viewpoints can only perpetuate polarization and hinder healthy political discourse.

Moreover, Pakistan's heightened trends from the increased proliferation of digital media and social networking sites have exacerbated these situations. Now, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are considered important sources of news and political information to users who can curate their media consumption according to their taste (Yusuf, 2013). The ways people are presented information by digital tools means they often experience content matching their interests and end up interacting mostly with others with the same political opinions (Yousaf & Malik, 2021). These implications are great, not only in terms of shaping individual political attitudes and behavior but also in giving us a picture of the broader democratic process in Pakistan.

Given the above, the objective of this research review is to systematically look into the consequences of political partisanship on media exposure, interest, and retention in the case of Pakistan. The review synthesizes previous work and draws on applicable theories to produce a comprehensive account of how partisan biases shape media interactions and public opinion. This analysis is important for developing strategies that can help promote media literacy and enable informed, more balanced public discourses in Pakistan.

1.1.1. Definition and Scope of Political Partisanship

Political partisanship is well understood as a deep commitment, which is sometimes absolute to a specific party. This loyalty is not only voted for by the party and its candidates but also

by considering people who share the ideologies, values, and identity of the party (Coya, 2024). In 2023, Dyck and Merkowitz described the types of Partisanship that touch on voting behavior, political campaign participation, and consumption of news and information. Studies show that the political partisanship as a concept is very much grounded in the socio-political structure of any country, and this is specifically particular to the case study of Pakistan and is modified by social history and culture, as well as socioeconomic factors outlined by Ahmed et al. (2024).

In 2024, Naheed discussed that in the case of Pakistan, there is a fairly high level of political partisanship, and, in this respect, major entities of political rivalry are PML-N, PPP, and PTI. This polarization frequently leads to keen struggle and confrontation not only between political leaders or political parties but also between their followers. Self-identification with the political parties is generally accompanied by ethnic, regional, and sectarian loyalties, thus adding layers to the political process (Shah, 2021).

Today, political partisanship goes beyond party identification to encompass the political party in different spheres of social and personal life (Hershey, 2017). It defines how people think, how they act, and even how they communicate with the rest of society and engage in politics. For example, partisan people tend to be selective in which information they attend to, informed by their side, rather than attending to information that goes against their preferred side (Ali & Jan, 2020). They strengthen people's opinions, make them discuss with those who have similar beliefs and separate society into different sides (Yousaf & Malik, 2021).

Additionally, the political partisanship of Pakistan impacts media consumption and communication, too (Nasim, 2023). Due to powerful partisan prejudices within their audiences, media outlets choose to accommodate these partisan preferences through biased reporting and a polarized media environment. Such alignment of media and political entities is seen in editorial policies, news coverage, and commentary offered by different media

organizations. Thus, a narrow perspective of a political issue is often presented to media consumers, thereby impeding their grasp of a broader political spectrum of issues, along with deepening a divided public discourse (Riaz & Pasha, 2021).

In social media discourse, political partisanship generates algorithmic processes that propagandize partisan messages and produce filter bubbles (Shehata & Stromback, 2020). Recommendation systems on social media platforms favor sharing those things that have been in the past and are likely to be shared in the future, locking in partisan views and depriving users of exposure to diverse viewpoints. However, this phenomenon challenges democratic deliberation and consensus-building (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2019).

1.1.2. An Overview of the Media Landscape in Pakistan

Because of the complex and dynamic media landscape in Pakistan, different types of media are present in the country. Being print media, broadcast media, and modern digital or social media. (Yousaf, 2023). The last few decades have been marked by a series of major changes to this landscape: a transition from state-controlled broadcasting to a more liberalized and competitive environment (Rasul, 2013). The rest of Pakistan's media plays a critical role today in forming the public perspective, the arena for political discussion, and the narration of social narratives (Salahuddin, 2024).

Media and Digital Landscape of Pakistan: A Focus on News Consumption

Pakistan's media landscape is multifaceted, encompassing traditional news outlets such as television channels, FM radio stations, and newspapers, alongside a burgeoning digital sphere comprising social media platforms and internet-based news consumption (Nissen et al., 2013). The following analysis provides an overview of these media, emphasizing their role in news dissemination, supported by relevant sources.

1. Television News Channels

Television remains a dominant medium for news consumption in Pakistan. As of early 2025, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has licensed 114 television channels, of which 31 are dedicated to news and current affairs. These channels offer a range of perspectives and in-depth coverage of national and international events (Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), 2024).

2. FM Radio Stations

FM radio serves as an accessible platform for news, especially in regions with limited television or internet connectivity. Pakistan hosts 258 FM radio stations, with 196 being commercial and 62 non-commercial. However, it is noteworthy that these stations are restricted from broadcasting their news content (Rural Media Network Pakistan, 2024).

3. Newspapers

The print media sector in Pakistan is extensive, reflecting the country's rich journalistic heritage. As of 2019, there are 707 registered newspapers, encompassing daily, weekly, and monthly publications in various languages, including Urdu, English, and regional dialects. Prominent newspapers such as *Daily Jang*, *Dawn*, and *The News* play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and providing in-depth news analysis (Shabi et al., 2015).

4. Social Media Platforms for News

With the advent of digital technology, social media platforms have become significant channels for news dissemination and consumption. As of January 2024, user statistics for major platforms are as follows (Zaheer Ali Khan, 2024):

YouTube: 71.7 million users, with 72% male and 28% female users.

Facebook: 60.4 million users, with 77% male and 24% female users.

TikTok: 54.4 million users, with 78% male and 22% female users.

Instagram: 17.3 million users, with 64% male and 36% female users.

These platforms are increasingly utilized for news updates, discussions, and citizen journalism, reflecting a shift towards digital news consumption.

5. Internet Users Engaging with News Content

The internet has become a pivotal medium for accessing news, with a significant portion of the population engaging in online news consumption. As of early 2024, Pakistan had 111 million internet users, representing approximately 45.7% of the population. This digital engagement facilitates access to a wide array of news sources, including online editions of traditional newspapers, news websites, and digital news platforms (DataReportal, 2024).

1.1.3. Historical Evolution

Pakistan's media has traditionally been tightly controlled by the state, and there has been little freedom of expression. News and information during the 1980s and 1990s were largely generated by the state-owned Pakistan Television (PTV) and Radio Pakistan (Yousaf, M. 2023). In the early 2000s, however, under General Pervez Musharraf's regime, the media landscape began to liberalize when private television channels and radio stations were introduced. A significant shift precipitated a flood in media outlets and competition (Khan & Joseph, 2018).

1.1.4. Traditional and Digital Media

Even though print media, like newspapers, magazines, are still very important to Pakistan (Abbasi, 2020). Broadcast Media: The Pakistani media landscape would be incomplete

without Television and Radio. There are many private television channels in the country, mainly news, entertainment, and educational content. (Nawaz, 2019).

With the advent of digital media, the way that Pakistanis consume media has changed. The development of the era has increased the use of online news portals, social media platforms, and live streams. It gives real-time news updates, better interactivity, and better user engagement. (Siddiqui, 2021).

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1.1.5. Media Regulations and Challenges

In Pakistan, the media are regulated under a regulatory framework of bodies such as the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) and the Press Council of Pakistan (Salman, 2023). They are the bodies that are responsible for authorizing licenses, monitoring content, and ensuring compliance with ethical standards. While the existence of this framework ensures media freedom in a country like Pakistan, it is regularly challenged by censorship, intimidation of journalists, and political and corporate pressures (Amnesty, 2020).

1.1.6. Media and Political Partisanship

Media content and consumption in Pakistan are greatly dependent on political partisanship. Partisan bias in reporting often includes party-partisan alignments by Media outlets and stances in qualitative editorial agenda (Prior, 2013). It also shapes how viewers and readers relate to the media. They prefer media that aligns with their political beliefs and increases audience trust and engagement. Political polarization in the country is wider due to the polarized media environment, which affects the democratic procedures and the public discourse (Shehata and Stromback, 2020).

1.1.7. Media Exposure

1.1.7.1. Patterns of Media Consumption in Pakistan

Pakistan's media consumption patterns comprise a diverse range of media consumption, including television, print, and digital media (Nissen et al., 2013). Analysis of the impact of political partisanship on media exposure requires an understanding of these patterns.

The most commonly consumed medium in Pakistan remains television, used by the majority of the population to get news, entertainment, and information (Yusuf et al., 2013). The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2020) reveals that about 70% of Pakistan's households have the facility of a TV. News dissemination and analysis is a long-established pillar of the print media, or newspapers and magazines, the world over, including in Pakistan. Digital media has risen to ascendancy, but print media is still an extremely powerful force (Nissen, 2013).

Over the past decade, Pakistan has gone through a digital revolution marked by a massive increase in internet penetration and smartphone usage, with 35% of the population now online (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Always adapting, the media landscape has undergone a transformation that has radically changed the way news and information can be consumed through the ascendance of digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube as the primary sources of that news and information.

Media preferences are strongly influenced by political partisanship and selective exposure, and polarized consumption habits are heightened (Stroud, 2010). Not only does the trend affect what subjects dominate editorial boards, but it also influences to which the general public is exposed to a diversity of opinions. Additionally, the fact that information can spread fast on digital platforms, much more than before, highlights the importance of more media literacy and ethical journalism norms in a world that is more interlinked and awash in information (Peristeras et al., 2023).

1.1.7.2. Impact of Political Partisanship on Media Exposure

Media consumption in Pakistan is characterized by a form of selective exposure in which people tend to seek out news sources that reinforce their existing political beliefs and preferences (Sarwar et al., 2020). Perceptions of media bias are reflected in how viewership is perceived. Instead of listening to varied views, many audiences are validated by the media they consume, and thus, they align with specific political ideologies or parties. Political divisions are created in part by the things people decide to watch or read, causing groups to stick together and limiting interactions between those who have different opinions (Spohr, 2017). Because social media amplifies these dynamics, the rise of social media has pushed these dynamics to an extreme through a process of algorithmic content curation, prioritizing personalized feeds based on user interaction reinforcing partisan viewpoints, and walling off information silos.

The challenges related to selective exposure require democratic media systems to be based on media literacy among the public, media plurality to diversify information sources, and robust regulatory frameworks supporting journalistic quality and freedom of expression (Bajkiewicz et al., 2011). Khan & Rahman in 2023 said that by promoting critical media engagement, supporting independent journalism, and nurturing a culture of civic engagement, Pakistan could shield itself from the detriments of selective exposure and develop the kind of media environment that promotes transparency, accountability, and civic discourse within its democratic process.

1.1.7.3. Selective Exposure to Partisan Media

The concept of selective exposure arises as a highly significant phenomenon concerning political partisanship whereby individuals engage in the act of seeking, reading, and nudging information that supports their present political beliefs while uncaring about or avoiding information that stands against or contradicts their present beliefs (Garrett, R.K.K. 2009). It

is a behavior that comes to countries like Pakistan, where media outlets are thought of as having their kind of political and biased affiliations.

For instance, Bibi and Yousaf (2020) state that media readers or viewers who tend towards the liberal or progressive perspective might be inclined to Dawn or The News. Those supporting conservative parties such as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) support channels like ARY News, which are usually linked with pro-establishment and right-leaning channels.

This selective use of media is not only beneficial in maintaining the validity of self-esteem beliefs but also aggravates the false polarization of society's media responses since audiences are confined in self-reinforcing echo chambers. Social networking sites have adjusted content feeds to the particular preferences of a user, and, as a result, selective exposure has been escalated and transformed into an echo chamber, leading to a lack of confrontation with various opinions (Bobok, 2016). For these dynamics, Pakistan needs to develop media literacy, encourage practical thinking for consuming media habits, and provide a media environment based on balanced reporting and diverse opinions to fight against polarization and produce civic engagement in Pakistan with an informed perspective.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Political partisanship and the contemporary media landscape have increasingly emerged as a battleground for competing narratives, ideologies, and public opinion formation. With the rise of digital platforms, individuals are now exposed to an overwhelming volume of political content, which is often chosen based on what they already believe. The merging of political identity and media habits has given rise to a distinct form of information that some scholars refer to as a circumstance where people are exposed only to similar viewpoints. Such environments expose individuals almost exclusively to information that confirms their existing beliefs, while differing viewpoints are actively avoided or ignored.

This phenomenon raises critical questions about the implications of political partisanship way beyond the choice of consumption, to the forms of attention and what they retain from political information. Attention and memory are not passive cognitive operations anymore, but rather, they are increasingly governed by alignment with ideology, emotional commitment, and selective engagement. Attention and long-term retention may be greater for politically congruent messages than for incongruent messages. Incongruent content, on the other hand, is more likely to be neglected or forgotten.

Hence, the main issue centers on the impact of political partisanship on media consumption, specifically concerning selective media attention and retention. Considering behavioral and cognitive patterns in Pakistan, where the media is politically polarized, it is particularly important, given the sharp partisan divide in public discourse, to study the impact of political partisanship on media consumption.

This research aims to fill the gap by analyzing the impact of partisan identities on the way individuals engage with political media content and how this engagement affects

its consumption, processing, and recall ‘partitions’ of memory. This might add to the broader understanding of the impact of media within a politically polarized context.

1.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To investigate how political partisanship influences individuals’ media consumption patterns.
2. To examine the effects of political partisanship on attention of media content.
3. To examine the effects of political partisanship on retention of media content.

1.4. HYPOTHESIS

H1: Individuals' partisanship significantly influences their selective media exposure across diverse media platforms.

H2: People pay attention to political issues that match their political beliefs.

H3: People remember political issues better which supports their political views.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study is useful in analyzing the phenomenon of digital information consumption and its impact on society, especially in politically polarized countries such as Pakistan. Given that user preferences, algorithms, and even political affiliations impact the governed media to this extent, it is important to understand how people choose to immerse themselves in political information, as well as how such choices impact their cognitive retention and attention.

This research helps to understand how individuals engage with political content that either aligns with or contradicts their belief systems through the lens of political partisanship and media behavior, which includes selective exposure, attention, and

retention. The study sheds light on the psychological and emotional processes underlying media consumption and offers greater insight into the impact of partisan identities on information processing in the context of the digital age.

The findings fully contribute to media literacy because they stress the need to teach audiences about different media biases and the value of interacting with opposing viewpoints. Furthermore, it underscores the impact of selective media use in forming a democratic discourse concentrating on how similar minded closed communities can limit public discussions.

Finally, the research also contributes to the existing knowledge on political partisanship by integrating it within the media framework of Pakistan. It helps to further develop the understanding of how partisan affiliation impacts not only media preferences but also cognitive engagement, attention, retention, and sharing behaviors. These insights are relevant for researchers, educationalists, decision makers, and even journalists who want to encourage responsible civic engagement and deepen democracy.

CHAPTER #02

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the contemporary media environment, political partisanship is becoming a major feature of how people consume, understand, and interact with news and information (Perloff, 2021). Since the advent of internet platforms and social media in the past few decades, the divide between political views has become more pronounced (Bright, 2018). When the availability of media increases to reflect more subtle political orientation, people are more likely to see content that confirms what they already believe. This phenomenon, often called selective exposure, has huge implications for how the public understands political events, trusts the media, and the overall quality of democratic discourse (Kim J and Kim E, 2021).

In recent years, a lot of emphasis has been placed on how engagement with media has been affected by political polarization (Kubin and Sikorski, 2021). As political affiliations become polarizing and media production proliferates, how they shape media consumption patterns and cognitive processes is a critical understanding (Wilson et al., 2020). This review analyzes the causal linkages between political partisanship and various media consumption behaviors, including exposure, attention, interpretation, and retention.

Media exposure depends on an individual's political affiliation. News consumption occurs when people consume sources of information that generally correspond to their political beliefs, resulting in information echo chambers (Volfovsky et al., 2018). Media exposure, the gateway to information flow, turns out to be highly influenced by political party partisanship. For example, (Stroud, 2011) has shown that people who tend to agree with politics but are exposed to news content that supports political opinions already have the order to go into analyzing such that instead of being exposed to a lot of ideas or different perspectives, people are more likely to be in an echo chamber where they are only being exposed to a handful of perspectives.

A study demonstrates that people who feel more attached to a particular political party are more likely to consume news that matches their party's ideology. Through this media segmentation process, partisan views are reinforced, and echo chambers are formed (Kitchens & Johnson, 2020). Selectively exposed to material that supports their beliefs, individuals are more likely to entrench their existing beliefs and, if anything, stoke the divide in society across many areas (Dvir-Gvirsman, 2019).

Attention to political partisanship in media is important because it influences the most fundamental ways our societies organize themselves to create consensus about what matters, how we communicate about our differences, and how we make political decisions (Leung Chan, 2018). The media in democratic societies is a critical source of information that educates citizens, holds governments accountable, and helps and initiates political dialogue (Garimella et al., 2018). However, when the media landscape is overwhelmingly political, news organizations become unable to function as neutral providers of information. It is common practice for media outlets with partisan affiliations to deliver otherwise partial or biased reporting of a given story that reinforces particular ideological stances, exacerbates political divides, and also restricts the view of a wide spectrum of beliefs (Slater et al., 2019).

Partisanship not only constrains who individuals choose to listen to in the first place but also how they focus on political information (Ward & Tavits, 2019). Selective attention (Westerwick et al., 2015) means that partisans tend to pay more attention to news that confirms their belief and pay less attention to that which invalidates them. In the digital age, personal algorithms by social media platforms and news websites are as important as human selective exposure in defining what we see. These algorithms base their content curation on users' previous behaviors and likes; in other words, these algorithms provide a personalized information environment to users. However, such customization often also deepens the partisan divide (Sunstein, 2017).

The way by which individuals pay attention to political information is heavily influenced by political partisanship (Ward and Tavits, 2019). Selective attention to partisan news occurs; partisans focus attention on news they agree with. It's confirmation bias at its core: looking for information that confirms what you already think versus disregarding anything that conflicts. Research by Knobloch-Westerwick, Johnson, and Westerwick in 2015 highlights research regarding the interplay between the desire for affirmation and seeking information to drive selective exposure. The fact is that partisans actively search for and are more likely to pay attention to information that matches their political ideology, increasing their level of partisanship (Peterson and Iyengar, 2021).

Studying political partisanship goes beyond academic interest; it also pertains to larger concerns over the loss of a shared public sphere, which permits broad discussion of different ideas (Dubois and Blank, 2018). When partisanship influences the media consumer patterns, people are less exposed to opposing views, and media fragments and 'echo chambers' emerge, where people are 'reinforced with previously held premises. They knocked out, so to speak, any possibility of informed, rational discourse, and thus, further polarize society (Shehata and Stromback, 2020).

More broadly, there is much research on cognitive biases, including confirmation bias and motivated reasoning, which are closely linked to political partisanship (Robbins et al., 2020). These psychological processes lead people to accept and avoid information that does not fit their beliefs and reject the content of their worldview (Zmigrod, 2020). Understanding the public's processing, interpretation, and retention of information requires that we study political partisanship in media consumption. What is now widely seen as a means to disseminate knowledge, the media is often implicated in spreading further societal divisions (Lee et al., 2018).

Political polarization, however, is not news, but its influence in modern media is taking new forms at accelerating steps (Tucker et al., 2018). It is a result, traditionally, of media organizations wishing to serve broad audiences by providing more or less impartial news. But by the end of the 20th century, and increasingly in the last decade, cable news and digital platforms have changed how media is made and consumed (Perloff, 2021). Today, more and more modern media outlets cater their message to target market segments based on specific political leanings, resulting in a stratified landscape where a single news event can be told in vastly different ways, predicated on an outlet's political skew (Mangold and Bachl, 2018).

The internet and social media power this divide. Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube all use extremely advanced algorithms to make content more applicable to users' interests, which usually include political beliefs (Yarchi et al., 2021). This personalization helps improve user experience by giving users more relevant content, but it also creates 'filter bubbles' by which people see only content reinforcing their point of view, heightening the political divide. The suggestion of a 'daily me' reflects how personal media consumption can dissolve collective public experiences and fragment public discourse (Sunstein, 2017).

Traditional media outlets also adopted more politicized rhetoric in an attempt to win back loyal audiences faced with the increased competition from digital rivals. Alongside this shift, a media environment has emerged where a politicized bias is not only something that sits in the background but, in fact, a centerpiece of news coverage (Soontjens et al., 2021). Active alignment within media networks like Fox News and MSNBC has been part of how these networks have thrived in creating partisan divides in a time when every news organization focuses on a side, championing or bashing politics (Hutchens et al., 2023).

The rise of political polarization seen in the media is a serious challenge to democratic societies (Wilson et al., 2020). When news outlets encode partisanship over neutrality, both citizens and journalists will be less likely to trust the media and more likely to doubt whether the facts

provided are credible (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017). The distrust that results has massive ramifications, affecting everything from election outcomes to the way they fight for public health initiatives, as we saw during the coronavirus pandemic, where partisan media entangled the narratives into any governing policy developments or scientific recommendations (Motta et al., 2020).

This literature review aims to explore how voters' political partisanship affects the aspects of how they consume media, including exposure, attention, interpretation, and retention. In today's politically divided and fragmented media environment, it is important to understand this relationship. Based on the existing research, this review attempts to understand how cognitive and social mechanisms shape media consumption in partisan contexts.

Media exposure encompasses how an individual interacts with the media in areas such as news, entertainment, and opinion (Steppat et al., 2022). This process is significantly determined by partisanship, and people tend to gravitate towards sources with which they align politically. Through this selective exposure, we create information environments that further uphold existing beliefs rather than rip them down (Kim J, and Kim E., 2021).

The next critical factor is the attention it would receive after exposure to the media. Confirmation bias induces selective attention, allowing people to focus on information that supports their beliefs and ignore content that contradicts them. Olsson et al, in 2022, explain that this cognitive bias affects how they perceive and understand political events.

How news is interpreted in the media also depends on the reader's political affiliation. Motivated reasoning arises from a diverging interpretation of the same news stories due to the tendency to process information in the direction of what one believes (Ahmad, 2020). When people on different sides of the political spectrum interpret the same event, they do so in different ways; this occurs because political partisanship causes people to understand the same event differently. Information is also retained based on partisanship (Dyck et al., 2023). Existing

research has shown that people tend to remember information that aligns with their political views while neglecting or distorting information that does not. By selectively retaining information, political divisions are strengthened, making correcting misinformation difficult (Pereira et al.,2023).

Media content interpretation, an important line of work, is significantly influenced by political partisanship. The same news story is interpreted differently by different partisans with different outputs over the same (Bolsen, Druckman, and Cook, 2014). A cognitive bias called motivated reasoning is the tendency for individuals to process information so that all further processing is consistent with their prior beliefs. Bolsen et al. (2014) explain how this bias affects public opinion. There is consensus on information that bodes well for political partisans; information that reduces their political partisanship is more difficult to define politically. And emotional framing is also important. It maintains that political news is filtered through emotions such as anger or fear.

There are several key theories about political partisanship and media consumption. Selective Exposure theory states that individuals prefer to seek information that is congruent with their beliefs and avoid conflicting beliefs (Tejero et al., 2021). This theory is related to the Confirmation Bias, where people are looking for evidence to support their respective views. Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957) explains that individuals experience discomfort when confronted with conflicting information. To reduce this discomfort, they either change their beliefs or reject conflicting information, a process crucial to how partisans interpret and retain political content (Williams II, 2020). Motivated Reasoning Theory posits that partisans process information in biased ways to protect their political identities, which explains why individuals with strong partisan identities interpret the same facts differently based on their political affiliations (Bolsen and Palm, 2019).

2.1. Understanding Political Partisanship in Media

Political partisanship is the fervent endorsement of a particular political party, ideology, or organization, often resulting in fragmented perspectives that influence how people interpret and engage with information (Stroud, 2011). In the realm of media, partisanship manifests as a mechanism by which individuals and media organizations perceive and analyze political events, policies, and public figures. The partisan perspective typically aligns with specific political objectives and beliefs, prompting media consumers to reinforce their pre-existing opinions instead of critically or impartially assessing information (White and Ypi, 2016).

Partisanship encompasses more than just personal political opinions; it also defines how individuals engage with and consume media (Levendusky, 2013). Those with partisan affiliations often actively seek information that aligns with their political views and deliberately avoid content that contradicts them (Prior, 2013). This phenomenon, known as selective exposure, is a key outcome of political partisanship in contemporary media consumption. Party biases, however, are not confined to media sources, and party biases in the interpretation, retention, and dissemination of information help keep the parties divided (Duenas & Tejero, 2021). The public sphere becomes increasingly fragmented, as individuals are exposed to mostly like-minded media, sometimes in 'echo chambers' which exaggerate shared views and harden party affiliations (Yan, 2023).

Across the history of media organizations, political partisanship and media have traditionally had a great deal of influence on public opinions and the enhancement of political beliefs (Wilson et al., 2020). At the end of the 19th and the start of the 20th century, newspapers in most countries were openly employed by political parties. Taking into consideration the fact that these publications have often been used as platforms to propagate ideological standpoints of the parties to the degree that they raise public perceptions of political events and elections, these writings have proven to be immensely important (Yan, 2023).

In the 19th century, in much of the United States, partisan newspapers like the New York World and the New York Tribune openly supported the Democratic or Republican parties. Not only did media organizations rely heavily on political parties for financing and distribution at the time, but the concentration of financial resources and the severity of gender division in the secular sphere meant that journalistic representations of politics further reinforced the ideology of partisan journalism within the social and political space (Benkler and Roberts, 2018).

The advent of broadcast media in the 20th century, particularly radio and television, transformed the way media addressed political partisanship (Jensen, 2020). Networks like CBS, NBC, and ABC sought to attract broad national audiences, promoting a more neutral and balanced approach to news coverage (Fitzgerald, 2018). Despite lingering partisan biases, the commercial structure of these networks required them to appeal to a wide demographic, resulting in more moderate and impartial political content. This era of journalistic neutrality is often referred to as the "golden age" of journalism, characterized by a strong emphasis on objective reporting (Carson, 2019).

However, the impartiality that defined broadcast media began to erode in the latter part of the 20th century with the rise of cable news networks and, later, digital platforms (Sunstein, 2017). The launch of Fox News in 1996 marked a significant shift towards openly partisan mass media. Fox News capitalized on the growing conservative audience, which felt alienated by the perceived liberal bias of mainstream media. The success of Fox News revealed the commercial potential of politically targeted journalism, prompting other networks like MSNBC to adopt similar strategies, appealing to left-leaning viewers (Trifiro et al., 2022).

The medium of the internet and social media heightened the fragmentation of the media landscape, which emerged in the early 21st century. In the age of digital platforms, from Facebook and Twitter down to YouTube, it has made it easier for individuals to curate their news intake according to their political preferences (Thorson et al., 2021). This shift has hit the

throttle of the cultural processes of selective exposure, as they present consumers with a simple, click means of wading through news sources that say what they want to hear and discount or ignore those that do not. Political bias is entrenched more than ever, just as traditional editorial gatekeeping is weakened by political bias and reinforced by algorithm-driven content distribution (Sunstein, 2017).

The relationship between media and political ideology has to be understood in order to understand how partisanship can come out in news reporting (Shehata and Stromback, 2020). Media ideology involves influences of the set of values, morals, and political leanings that influence media products. Often, these ideological stances come to structure how news is framed, with which stories are given coverage, and with which voices are given amplification, and which are marginalized (Brady et al., 2019). In this digital era, media organizations regularly adopt a particular political consciousness in order to attract and sustain a big audience. However, this alignment can result in biased reporting, i.e., where coverage is adapted to fit the demand of the expectation and reconciliation of a certain political group (Jungherr et al., 2020). In a concrete example from earlier this year, raising social justice or climate change concerns may not be important to conservative media outlets, which focus instead on such things as economic deregulation, just as left-leaning outlets can focus on income inequality or human rights stories that they report on, shoring up progressive readership (Westerwick et al., 2019).

2.2. Key Studies on Media Outlets and Political Leanings

Much research has been devoted to the relation of media organizations to their political orientation, illuminating how biased media affects public mindset and voting behavior (Eberl, 2019). A key study was developed in this area by studying the effects of Fox News. Using the regression discontinuity design, the study investigates the consequences of Fox News' entry into U.S. markets between 1996 and 2000 and finds that exposure to Fox News increased the Republican vote share in these areas. This research points out that the partisan media have great

leverage in shaping political outcomes, especially by exposing audiences to ideologically accepted news (Bauer et al., 2022).

Fox News, a highly viewed conservative media outlet, has been a frequent subject of research on partisan media. Its programming choices, narrative framing, and editorial bias consistently support conservative political figures and policies, thus shaping the political views and behaviors of its viewers (Broockman and Kalla, 2022). Fox News' dominance in the cable news industry has significantly influenced its audience's political perceptions and engagement, further entrenched conservative beliefs and deepened partisan divides (Mitchell et al., 2014).

On the other side of the spectrum, left-leaning media outlets like MSNBC have also been studied for their role in shaping liberal ideologies. Although MSNBC has not been as extensively researched as Fox News, its programming decisions and editorial policies have had a similar effect on reinforcing liberal viewpoints among its viewers. MSNBC's progressive framing of political issues has contributed to the polarization of its audience, further intensifying ideological divisions (Choi, 2022).

Partisan media has also risen on the strength of cable news, as well as online platforms such as The Huffington Post on the left side and Breitbart on the right. These outlets are more likely to provide sensationalist or biased content and are less restrained by traditional journalistic norms because they cater to very narrowly defined ideological audiences. Research has demonstrated that these extremely partisan media sources help spread misinformation, leading to the acceleration of the divide in political discourse (Tufekci et al., 2017).

Partisan media is not just confined to the United States. Across the globe, media organizations tend to reinforce political parties or movements, biasing public opinion and affecting political outcomes in a wide variety of countries (Gvirsman et al., 2018). Take, for example, how in the United Kingdom, journalists at conservative outlets such as the Daily Mail and liberal The Guardian have shaped public debates on Brexit, immigration, and debate on issues of economic

policy. Just like in countries such as India, media outlets often have a party affiliation that exacerbates the country's longstanding political and religious divides (Hameleers, 2019).

According to Allcott and Gentzkow (2017), partisan media play a complicated and wide-ranging function in shaping approaches to process, understand, and consume information. For example, partisanship has been a hallmark of media patterns throughout the history of partisan newspapers through the rise of digital platforms and algorithm-driven content. As media organizations increasingly become committed to partisan political agendas (Tucker et al., 2018), it becomes more important than ever to increase the promotion of balanced and informed public discourse. It is important to know the delicacies of political partisanship in media to come up with strategies that can weed out the effects of bias in reporting and have a more informed, engaged citizenry (Okechukwu, 2023).

2.3. Selective Exposure and Cognitive Bias in Media Consumption

However, in an age when people have never had more choice in media and always have more digital connectivity (Ohme, 2019), it is important to understand how people use media and form their political opinions. Why people usually gravitate toward media that strengthens their pre-existing views, political polarization, and intensifies polarization (Westerwick et al., 2020) is a result of selective exposure and cognitive biases (confirmation bias, motivated reasoning). This essay explores the theoretical foundations of selective exposure, cognitive biases, and their consequences in the real world (Pennycook & Rand, 2019).

The theory of selective exposure holds that people naturally gravitate toward information that supports what they already think. This theory is based on early research in effects and communication media. Research has also indicated that people are actively looking for media content that confirms their existing beliefs and shuns what challenges them (Gao, 2021). In their work together, Eveland and Shah (2003) claimed that we tend to follow the media sources that support our ideological leaning, which creates a polarized media space whereby the 'other

side' is marginalized. This tendency to favor information consistent with one's beliefs strengthens and solidifies opinions over time (Feldman and Karr, 2000).

Confirmation bias further explains why individuals actively seek, interpret, and even distort information in ways that validate their pre-existing ideas, often dismissing or ignoring contradictory evidence (Vedejova & Cavojova, 2022). These cognitive biases are deeply ingrained and shape not only what media people consume but also how they process the information they encounter.

Television is regarded as a powerful mass medium that influences the audience's social, cultural, and political stances, in addition to serving as a platform for news analysis and distribution (Arif, 2023). Private news channels have gained immense popularity among viewers due to the rise of Pakistan's TV industry in the early 21st century. However, viewers often assume that each TV station has a predetermined agenda and presents news stories with a political bias. As a result, young viewers are increasingly skeptical about the reliability of news channels (Khalid, 2023).

Since the majority of people learn about politics through the media, the news media plays a significant role in shaping voters' political beliefs and party preferences. The study found that television news bias has a considerable impact on individuals' voting patterns and election outcomes (Rahman, 2019). Media polarization contributes to the division of media consumers based on their political party affiliations, often extending to economic conditions and race. This polarization leads to political and social diversification and separation as a result of exposure to polarized news (Tewksbury and Riles, 2015). The relationship between the media atmosphere and political knowledge is closely intertwined. While the media can facilitate consumers in becoming informed and engaged citizens, over the past few decades, there has been a decrease in the supply of political awareness, declining news quality, less diverse news coverage

dominated by a few news channels, disparities and imbalances in political information, and high levels of media fragmentation and separation (Aelst et al., 2017).

A previous study highlighted the connection between political parties and media outlets by analyzing biases in both public and private news organizations. It also explores the effect of these biases on public opinion and political communication (Yousaf and Jalil, 2019). The “Critical Analysis of Press Freedom in Pakistan” study engaged in a foundational analysis of media biases in Pakistan and the role that press freedom plays in shaping partisan alignments and state-imposed restrictions (Jamil, 2021).

2.4. Digital Media, Algorithms, and Partisanship

The transformation from traditional media to digital platforms is an essential event in the utilization and interaction with information. During the 20th century, broadcast television, radio, and print newspapers were the chief ways in which people consumed media, with it dominated by a few major companies. CBS, NBC, and ABC practiced journalism in the traditional outlets of objectivity and broad appeal, but these outlets do not hold fast to journalistic standards. This "one-to-many" model made sure news was dispatched to diverse readerships in a balanced way (Sunstein, 2017). However, the landscape shifted with the rise of cable news networks, in particular Fox News, beginning in 1996, which pushed more ideologically driven programming geared to specific political audiences. In the early decade of the 21st century, digital platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, emerged en masse (Nielsen and Ganter, 2022). Unlike traditional media, this platform is run on a ‘many-to-many’ model, meaning users are both consumers and producers of content. Thus, this change enabled people to personalize their media consumption to align with personal preferences, reproduce their perspectives, and create ideological divides (Koiranen, I., Koivula et al., 2020).

One of the key features of digital platforms is the ability to use algorithms to curate content for users. To maximize engagement, social media algorithms are set to show people content that

will keep them on the site, and they are geared towards the users' political ideology (Maly, 2021). These algorithms, based on data on how users interact with content, likes, shares, and comments, create content streams designed differently for each user's taste.

The effects of algorithmic personalization of filter bubbles and echo chambers emphasize promoting, i.e., users are exposed to content that reinforces what they already believe in. In deep echo chambers, voices that dissent are kept away, deepening already entrenched political views and making those views harder to break apart from. He says that this narrowing of exposure risks shuts democratic discourse by limiting access to different viewpoints (Sunstein, 2017).

Not all algorithms are inherently biased, but those that do exist are designed to help users engage with a surfeit of emotions, be they anger or fear, as long as said emotions match their political bent. The cycle of content exposed to users reinforces things that they already believe in and, in turn, will be less likely to see other information. As a result, the process becomes more extreme over time, as users become more entrenched in their views and less willing to hear other perspectives (Sehdave, 2024).

An echo chamber is an environment where most individuals are bombarded with information that reaffirms what they already believe, and there is little to no exposure to other points of view. However, social media algorithms, such as those found on Twitter and Facebook, continue to promote content that reinforces echo chambers by sharing content that aligns with users' political views (Cinus et al., 2022). Groupthink is more likely to result if echo chambers mean less productive dialogue with those with whom you disagree.

According to Pariser (2011), his work shows how platforms such as Facebook and Google offer echo chambers for users by serving personalized content that strengthens users' beliefs, shielding them from other views. It has major consequences for political polarization. That is, it makes it more difficult to reduce the ideological divide. A study by Benkler and Faris (2018)

found that AI algorithms on platforms like Facebook and YouTube will usually send extreme political content for greater engagement. It raises fears about the role that AI plays in spinning political misinformation and furthering polarization.

The recommendation system has also come under scrutiny for YouTube. Research found that the platform's algorithm tends to encourage users to leave the more moderate political content for more radical, partisan videos (Tufekci, 2018). It shows the potential that AI has to reinforce ideological alignment consistently. With artificial intelligence, content gets personalized for the one we want and changes us profoundly. As these algorithms grow more entrenched, the concern over democratic processes and the development of misinformation among them, too, increases. The ethical questions, such as how technologies impact political thought and create more partisan divides, dog AI when used to improve information dissemination.

For example, in 2016, Facebook was criticized for amplifying political misinformation an example. The false news stories, many of them with sharp partisan spin, were particularly popular on the platform, and Facebook's algorithm featured these stories most because of their high amount of engagement, even though many were factually incorrect. Research, for example (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017), has discovered that misinformation spreads much more quickly on social media than factual news, partly because algorithms reward information that resonates with the preexisting understandings of users. That raised questions about Facebook's ability to sway voter behavior and how it also fuels ideologically polarized politics.

Twitter's algorithm has also been criticized for serving partisan content. An internal study Twitter conducted last year found that its algorithm prioritized right-leaning political content over left-leaning content, but not intentionally. The revelation sparked talk about the ethical duty social media businesses have to make sure their algorithms are not promoting one political point of view over all the others (Twitter Inc., 2021).

In addition, YouTube's involvement in radicalizing users was documented, and it found that YouTube's algorithm often pushed people to mainstream political content but then pushed them to far-right or far-left content with sensationalist or misleading information (Lewis, 2018). The pattern of 'algorithmic radicalization,' so to speak, has led YouTube to be criticized for spreading extremist political content.

2.5. Psychological Effects of Partisan Media: Attention and Interpretation

Selective attention is a cognitive process of people in which they focus on the information that is relevant to the information they already have. It matches confirmation bias, where people actively seek and interpret content that supports what they already believe, so that they expose themselves to ideologically consistent content (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2015). Selective attention is an important part of the way audiences engage with news within the partisan media. When we make them view information that agrees with what they already believe, they tend to devote more time to strengthening their party affiliation and become less open to different information. It also focuses on the kinds of information they consume and how they perceive the significance and credibility of the information they use (Ksiazek, T. B., 2016).

Emotionally charged content works much harder than negativity bias, which means people remember negative information more than positive content; this impact is boosted. Then, partisan media capitalize on this bias by making use of fear and anger to trap their audience. Benefits from such emotional manipulation have significant implications for the survival of the media industry in a fiercely competitive environment (Baumeister et al., 2001).

Motivated reasoning is why people interpret media content through political ideology. Bolsen et al. (2014) have thus defined this cognitive process as one of interpretation of information, such that, through bias, facts are evaluated within their interpretations by aligning them with preexisting beliefs. The goal for each partisan is often not to understand events objectively but to protect ideological belief, and they ignore or reject contradictory evidence.

Van Bavel, J. J., & Pereira, A. in 2018 demonstrate that Memory retention is also influenced by political partisanship. People tend to remember the data that relates to their political views and forget other data or play it down. There is a connection between this selective recall and cognitive dissonance, and the unpleasant feeling people get when they hold two conflicting views at the same time. To reduce this discomfort, people dismiss or rationalize conflicting information, reinforcing what they already believe.

Perhaps most famously, in (Nyhan and Reifler, 2010), we see the persistence of political misinformation even in the face of corrective facts. What they found is that once political beliefs are formed, they are extremely resistant to change, even when people are presented with factual corrections. This process involves the important use of cognitive dissonance, which stops the partisans from accepting the information if it paves the way for the change of their existing beliefs.

A study conducted before the 2016 U.S. presidential election (Perryman, 2019) looked at how 657 people perceived media coverage. Results showed that people's political affiliations explained how they read news about candidates, polling, and election issues. The hostile media perception (HMP) is a phenomenon in which partisans believe the media is biased against their political stance when it is not.

In another experiment for the 2018 US elections, Guess, Barberà, Munzert, and Yang (2021) randomly assigned 2,137 participants to read news from either left-leaning (HuffPost) or right-leaning (Fox News). Participants increased news consumption temporarily and increased their awareness of current events, but they had no long-term effects on their political opinions. However, trust in mainstream media was sustained in both groups for up to a year.

Out of all that media, selective attention ultimately brings people to consume media that agrees with their beliefs over dissimulation that runs counter to those ideas. Emotions such as fear and anger, often amplified by partisan media, intensify this selective focus, making sensational

content more appealing. At the same time, motivated reasoning and cognitive dissonance shape how individuals interpret information, either rejecting or rationalizing material that contradicts their political views. These cognitive mechanisms contribute to the formation of echo chambers, where individuals are exposed to a narrow range of information that reinforces their pre-existing beliefs (Leeper and Slothuus, 2014).

2.6. Cognitive Dissonance and Retention of Information

According to Leon Festinger's definition from 1957, cognitive dissonance is the psychological unease that results from holding opposing beliefs, attitudes, or values. This discomfort arises because humans have an inherent tendency to seek internal coherence in their ideas and behaviors. For example, if an individual believes in the importance of environmental preservation but frequently uses disposable plastics, they experience cognitive dissonance due to the contradiction between their actions and their environmental convictions (Harmon and Mills, 2019).

Selective memory is a one-way an individual copes with cognitive dissonance. For instance, a person with strong political affiliations might remember news items that align with their political stance more vividly while disregarding or misinterpreting information that contradicts their perspective. This process of selective memory helps maintain their current beliefs and reduces the discomfort of encountering contradictory facts (Marrar and Allevato, 2022).

An analysis of 323 articles from highly influential partisan websites revealed that writers tended to focus on and discuss polls that supported their desired election outcomes. Often, the headlines and introductory sections to these stories were noticeably imbalanced about partisanship. Bernstein and Tremayne in 2015 validated cognitive dissonance theory, showing that conservative writers were more likely to express disapproval of polls if President Obama had a significant lead. The implications of these findings are for public confidence in the government and in the media.

Festinger's theory suggests that individuals are uncomfortable with information that is different from what they already have. In order to ease this uncomfortable discomfort, they may choose to reject or minimize the conflicting information (Yahya and Sukmayadi, 2020). Jacks and Devine (2000) examined this phenomenon in relation to political information retention. For more media literacy and to bring about an informed public, it is important to understand how one's political partisanship influences the way we consume media.

To mitigate the divisive impact of political affiliation on media exposure, attention, interpretation, and retention, critical thinking and information assessment skills need to be promoted (Prior, 2013). Media literacy programs help equip individuals to evaluate information critically, see confirmation bias, and learn motivated thinking (Jones-Jang et al., 2021). These programs can help encourage selective exposure by encouraging different kinds of media consumption and exposure to different viewpoints in diverse kinds of media. This material can be engaging to read, but it is challenging from one perspective, and it can lead to more transparent and more aware public discussions. The importance of media literacy and critical evaluation, information is a frequently polarizing specialty these days, is highly compelling (Potter, 2010).

The "backfire effect," defined by Nyhan and Reifler (2010), is the notion that trying to correct misinformation can cause you to make a mistake worse. It is an effect because corrective information can be experienced as a personal threat, given that such information can question an individual's political or social identity. According to Jufikar, when faced with incorrect information, people are more likely to reinforce their initial beliefs than accept corrections.

For instance, despite overwhelming evidence that lacked WMDs in Iraq, supporters of the invasion still fantasized that they were there. The headlines and lead paragraphs of these stories were decidedly partisan. This study was also indicative of cognitive dissonance theory in that conservative writers disapproved of polls less when President Obama's lead was large

(Tremayne, 2015). The implications of these findings for restoring public confidence in government and the media are significant.

According to Festinger's theory, a person feels uncomfortable if confronted with information different from their pre-existing views. Sometimes, this discomfort is alleviated by their ignoring or downplaying contradictory information. Jacks and Devine (2000) investigated this phenomenon in terms of political information retention. The relationship between political party partisanship and media consumption needs to be understood to further media literacy and build an educated populace.

Art, S. in 2018, highlights that promoting critical thinking and information assessment skills is needed to combat the divisive impact of political affiliation on media exposure, attention, interpretation, and retention. Media literacy programs can help individuals detect confirmation bias, identify this motivated thinking, and make them better able to assess the information they consume. The programs exposed to a wide range of media and various opinions can be helpful in mitigating selective exposure. Exposure to material that differs from one's perspective leads to more transparent, more informed public discussion. In an information superabundant era and replete with categorical polarization, this is about media literacy and critical evaluation (Westerwick, 2014).

Most of these stories tended to have noticeable partisan imbalances in headlines and introductory sections. By showing that conservative writers expressed more disapproval of polls with a greater lead by President Obama, this study validated cognitive dissonance theory (Tremayne, 2015). These findings have implications for public confidence in government and the media.

Festinger's theory is that people do not have what we call cognitive dissonance when they receive information that relates to information that they already have. It is done so that they can alleviate the discomfort of the contradictory information. Jacks and Devine (2000) examined

the area of political information retention. For progression in media literacy and an educated populace, we need to know the bond between political partisanship and media utilization.

Making critical thinking and information assessment skills promoted to mitigate the divisive effect of political affiliation on what is exposed, how one attends to media exposure, how one interprets what it means, and what is retained is essential. By educating individuals, media literacy programs give them techniques to evaluate the information critically, identify confirmation bias, and motivate thinking. These programs can encourage a certain amount of diversity in media consumption and exposure to other viewpoints, which will lead to reduced selective exposure. Bringing material that provokes ways of thinking can be inviting to more transparent and more balanced discussions amongst the general public. They are important in an age rife with information abundance and even more often polarized.

This persistence seems to be due to cognitive dissonance and the backfire effect: acknowledging that the WMDs lack never precluded previous support for the war (Lewandowsky, Ecker, and Cook, 2017). Just as evidence indicates that misinformation about climate change feeds further doubt more than it erodes it, misinformation about vaccines persists in the face of prevailing scientific consensus, and efforts to refute misinformation have yielded doubts rather than changed beliefs (Pennycook and Rand, 2018).

Regarding vaccine misinformation, we have evidence that correcting misinformation is rarely effective in fighting vaccine hesitancy. Instead, it may catalyze resistance in already skeptical vaccine audiences. When you try to correct misinformation, but people still retain their initial doubts, that's the backfire effect (Tappin and McKay, 2019).

2.7. Partisanship and Public Opinion

The formation of public opinion is greatly influenced by partisan media, which forces people to perceive a candidate, a policy, or a national issue in a specific way (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus, 2013). Partisan news organizations tend to frame information in alignment with

certain ideological positions and to do so in a way that reinforces what they find, or find they want, in their viewers. It is not rare for this biased presentation to detract from clear and peaceful image-building processes. First, partisan media biases perception and judgment formation around political events by consistently emphasizing certain aspects of political topics or candidates and downplaying others (Messing and Westwood, 2014).

In recent decades, the phenomenon of elite polarization in U.S. politics has dramatically reshaped the process by which voters have constructed their policy views. Second, it raises the weight of party endorsements, makes objective information less important, and now, ironically, increases trust in less informed views. With such a shift, public opinion and democratic competition are affected (Pearson-Merkowitz, Filindra, and Dyck, 2016). In shaping opinions or voting behavior, partisan media influence is not limited to. It is bad news for those who need their media to confirm their own opinions because consuming media that reflects personal beliefs only increases their confirmation, making them more closed-minded to different perspectives. This reinforcement raises your party's loyalty over time and creates more divided political landscapes.

A study conducted by Hildebrandt et al. (2013) conducted a study examining the domestic effects of Congress partisanship, ideology, and public opinion on Congressional support for U.S. humanitarian interventions. "When they look at Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, their analysis showed that public support can help Congressional backing, but partisanship and ideological differences can undermine a humanitarian concern and often lead to missions that avoid Congress." Their research found that selective framing in partisan news not only reinforces existing opinions but also causes people to change their attitudes and voting decisions.

The research examined how partisan selective media exposure occurs; that is, gender, race, and civic engagement affect which side of the political spectrum people will prefer to consume

media on. For instance, conservatives prefer Fox News, and liberals like PBS and Facebook. The results of this research highlight the role of selecting media to influence political knowledge (Wicks and Morimoto, 2014).

Partisan media defined how each side talked about the candidates during the 2020 election. Other outlets regularly painted President Donald Trump in a tough light, his successes labeled, and criticisms eroded as the product of 'fake news' media. In comparison, liberal media outlets had hyped Trump's controversial comments and deeds and portrayed him as a divisive person. Voters' perceptions that the candidates were qualified to hold office were influenced by these contrasting framings (Barber and Pope, 2021).

The media, also on the partisan side, played in perceptions of policy, especially with regard to the debates over the COVID-19 pandemic. Conservative media tended to downplay the seriousness of the pandemic and criticized any restrictions on freedom, while left-leaning media tended to put a greater emphasis on the public health risks and the necessity of stringent regulation. Public opinion on pandemic policies and the government's response was polarized indeed with this polarized coverage (Leiner and Burd, 2020).

There is evidence of partisan media's influence on public opinion and perception of political candidates, policies, and national issues. Firsthand, the elections of 2020 showed how partisan media affects public opinion and voting behavior and how media can help influence political views and election outcomes. Enns and McAvoy (2012) studied the influence of political affiliation on public opinion about the economy with monthly opinion data. Their evidence was strong for partisan bias in economic evaluations, which fluctuated over time and delayed reactions of the general public to objective economic data. These findings resolve inconsistencies between the opinions of individuals and groups. Additionally, Wang and Klar (2022) explored the relationship between party affiliation and public opinion on significant policy issues, revealing only minor partisan differences despite the widespread belief in

political polarization. Their study examines how and when key political issues align with party beliefs, offering a deeper understanding of political polarization.

The main goal of partisan media is to rally support for specific causes while alienating moderates. Prior (2007) argues that partisan media significantly mobilize individuals with strong political beliefs. These outlets energize such groups by presenting material that reinforces their existing convictions, which in turn increases their political engagement and participation. By promoting preexisting opinions, partisan media inspires already politically active individuals to act, leading to heightened civic engagement. However, extreme partisanship can have several negative effects on democratic processes, such as increasing political polarization, eroding democratic norms, and reducing public trust.

In a 2013 study, Lendusky looked at how partisan media shapes people's perceptions of opposing political parties. The findings of frequent exposure to biased news increase suspicion and hostility towards the opposition. The research shows, using social identity theory and empirical data, that partisan media heighten political polarization and reduce support for bipartisanship. Additionally, Druckman (2019) discovered that incivility in partisan media has a unique effect on political sentiments. More specifically, depolarizing partisans is impolite behavior from (from within) party sources (e.g., MSNBC for Democrats; Fox News for Republicans), whereas impolite behavior from (outside) party sources increases polarization. The study also reveals that incivility has dampening effects, tempered by people's aversion to conflict, and that both rudeness and partisan bias need to be considered when analyzing media effects.

Druckman's study also investigates two forms of media selectivity: interest-based (prioritizing entertainment over politics) and partisan (picking news that reflects one's beliefs). Using a massive survey experiment, I find that a stronger predictor of media bias involves issue-specific engagement, not general knowledge about politics or the general interest in politics. This

finding implies that who an individual is engaged with, i.e., specific issues, matters more in determining how they consume media (Feldman et al., 2018).

There is a lack of public participation in the democratization process, as seen by the work of Ibrahim and Mussarat (2014), which advocates for the need for well-informed civic engagement to be part of the democratization process to influence political decisions. Instead, they argue that while swift mobilization can corrode democratic institutions, more deliberative approaches to participation are necessary to sustain democracy. This study analyses the role of social mobilization and political culture in the advancement of democratic governance.

In today's world, in which information and images are literally on the internet at the click of a finger, media literacy—the understanding of how information and images are used, manipulated, and conveyed by media to shape opinion and perception—is critical. According to Potter (2013), media literacy helps individuals question the intentions of the content they consume. To counteract the negative impact of biased information, such as confirmation bias, people seek out data to reinforce their mental realities.

According to Jones-Jang and Liu (2021), the skill that media literacy provides enables people to make more informed purchases and be more discerning as consumers of news. Media literacy allows us to develop a healthy skepticism toward the news content and distinguish which possible settings may affect how social media narratives are written. A media-informed person is aware of what news organizations are exaggerating a story for the sake of gaining more traffic or advancement of their particular political agenda in the name of money or ideology.

Finland's 2014 program for national media education provides an exemplary model for how critical thinking is promoted through digital literacy. It educates students on how to determine the credibility of online sources, how to perceive disinformation, and how social media works. Finland has been able to curb disinformation and social polarization by combining media

literacy education with parents and schools early in life (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014).

Similar media literacy programs for middle and high school students are offered in the United States by the News Literacy Project (NLP). They teach students to evaluate the credibility of news reports, how to tell when they are being misled, and how important journalism is to get it right in democratic societies. In the NLP initiative, we seek to diminish the influence of partisan media by encouraging young people to become active, informed citizens who can discern which news they ingest and consume exactly (Whitehurst, 2024).

New challenges for researching political partisanship are emerging technologies and media dynamics. Artificial intelligence (AI) and deep fake technologies are among the most critical (Fleming & Karadjov, 2020).

AI-powered algorithms play a big role in curating media content based on user taste. However, these algorithms make predictions about what content users are most likely to engage with and frequently reinforce their pre-existing beliefs. The more AI technologies advance, the more we risk perpetuating political partisanship by rubbing users' noses in content adapted to their views at every turn. By adding noise to the news, our body creates an 'echo chamber' effect, where people become increasingly entrenched in their beliefs and less likely to hear any competing views (Sunstein, 2017).

The research challenge here is not only understanding how AI's role shapes the content but also how we develop AI solutions so that users are exposed to more viewpoints and diversity, and are still involved. Equally, we need to additionally consider the ethical implications of AI's impact on political ideologies. Should AI be more in control of the information people get? When AI can impact political beliefs and behaviors, it becomes this specific question all the more. What could researchers study with AI regarding its influence on voter behavior and

democratic participation, particularly with elections, when AI-driven recommendations could amplify party messages or further suppress alternative viewpoints? (Diakopoulos, 2019).

Another new problem is deep fakes. With these tricks, these AI-generated, highly realistic fake videos or images can sow disinformation and strengthen mistrust of genuine news organizations. And if images of political figures are deeply faked, they can cause widespread confusion and distrust. These technologies are becoming more sophisticated and harder to detect, and as that happens, our political divisions might grow worse because it becomes harder for people to tell what is true and what is not (Chesney and Citron, 2019). In the future, researchers will have to pay attention to how to detect and reduce the impact of deep fakes on political discourse.

Another big area of concern is personalized content on social media platforms. The algorithms for platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are used to show people what they might like in their news feeds by using users' past interactions, likes, and political preferences. Though personalization increases user experience, it also encourages selective exposure, where people select what they do not want to learn. Thus, the process of selective exposure only reinforces confirmation bias, cements political beliefs, and causes individuals to remain within their intellectual bubble, avoiding exposure to all manner of diverse perspectives (Pariser, 2011). Naturally, future research should study the social consequences of hyper-personalized media consumption and the role it plays in social polarization. Increased political radicalization can come from the fragmentation of society into echo chambers where different groups will consume radically different sets of information. Understanding media's influence on modern politics requires that we investigate how algorithms determine what the most sensational or emotionally involved news content is and how that shapes extreme political views.

Overall, media studies of political partisanship are confronted by new challenges posed by AI, deepfakes, and personalized content that may only deepen political divisions (Fleming and

Karadjov, 2020). New methodologies and new ethical frameworks will need to be developed by researchers who want to address these evolving issues.

Under authoritarian regimes, governments tend to wield complete control over the media, allowing for very few viewpoints contrary to the government. State-controlled media is usually a means of propaganda, and the legitimacy of the ruling elite is reinforced. For example, in some instances, prominent regimes could label opposition groups as a threat to national security (and provide this as justification for limitations on political freedom (Gunitsky, 2015).

The research also considers how authoritarian governments leverage media to muzzle dissent, foster public opinion, and otherwise maintain power. For example, it specifically allowed scholars to examine how digital technologies like AI are used to trace opposition and shape online discussions (Freedom House, 2020). At the same time, such developments pose ethical questions about how much such information should be under the control of machines.

Further, by studying how content recommendations recommended by AI influence political engagement and voting behavior in these environments, researchers might also investigate how and to what extent they might change the political system. For example, AI would help pro-government narratives to be amplified, and critical voices stomped down, which in turn would help in elections and general discourse (O'Neil, 2016). The study of how AI contributes to authoritarian media systems can serve to help explain how these regimes sustain their power.

Future research is critical in developing democracies. In such settings as these, with democratic institutions and free media yet to fully develop, partisan media can matter a great deal in creating political identity and determining voter behavior (Norris, 2017). There remains much future research to study how partisan reporting intensifies ethnic or regional cleavages and affects election outcomes. Additionally, in some of these countries, political communication is also influenced by international media (often supported by corresponding foreign governments), which may introduce geopolitical biases into it.

The rapid growth of political misinformation is also explored based on the rise of digital platforms, amplified by the lack of media regulations in countries in particular (Norris and Inglehart, 2019). The combination could also help research how global platforms like Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook operate in developing democracies and authoritarian states and how they impact the polarization of politics.

Studies that compare how media systems work in different political regimes would offer valuable insight. For instance, how do the consequences of partisan media vary depending on the degree of freedom of the media and their degree of censorship? It could also make researchers better understand how independent media outlets might neutralize the effect of propaganda and stimulate civic engagement.

Finally, they conclude by arguing that the challenges of partisan media across different political systems are best addressed using an interdisciplinary approach. The ethical development of future AI, the influence of media literacy in curbing bias, and the emerging media consumption scripts are areas of future research. Knowledge of these dynamics allows scholars to speak to the ways that media environment's structure democratic discourse and political participation in different political systems.

2.8. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study, “Effects of Political Partisan on Media Exposure, Attention, and Retention,” uses Selective media exposure theory as a theoretical framework and draws on the concepts of selective exposure, attention, and retention.

2.8.1. Selective Exposure Theory

Selective exposure is the tendency of individuals to consume media that endorses already existing beliefs, and they avoid exposing themselves to information that does not support what they believe (Westerwick, 2014). According to Feiler, Goeree, and Yariv's research, people tend to read political news in line with the politicians they prefer (Dahlgren, 2021). Previous studies of selective exposure have shown that people do not look for attitudinal information that confounds their beliefs because of their social environment and knowledge about such information. People who believe strongly will be more motivated and conscious about battling with their opinions and are more likely to face a challenge to their beliefs. However, there is also an argument that the media encourages diversity in views and promotes differentiation (Atteveldt et al., 2020).

Audiences, however, are becoming more selective and have become an active choice of media in the phenomenon. People would adopt selective messages, but hopefully not completely deny conflicting views. Both selective exposure and divergent exposure are necessary for a healthy democracy (Dahlgren, 2021).

Niven says that people can perceive things in different ways; they are vulnerable to influence from all the different aspects of who they are: their background, their partisanship, their religion, whatever. Spindle et al. (2023) also found that voters' opinions and predispositions are much affected by the way voters consume news, especially the types of news they read. Many studies have shown that the more politically knowledgeable individuals are, the more powerful the results on political behavior and predispositions. It suggests that if people are well informed,

bringing their political knowledge up tends to make their attitudes and choices to their beliefs more rational (Cramer, 2016).

Political selective exposure is defined as politically motivated individuals choosing to be exposed only to media or media content reinforced by their beliefs (Barnidge et al., 2020). During the recent broadening of media choices in such a choice environment, individuals are more able to selectively expose themselves, which brings concern about what happens when many supporters of the same ideology affect how democracy functions (Terren and Borge, 2021).

Alongside Festinger's early theoretical prospect that people are more inclined to avoid information not consistent with their beliefs (Yahya and Sukmayadi, 2020). Studies show that selective exposure is influenced by the focus of wanting to confirm previous beliefs or seeking useful information (Arendt et al., 2019). Observing motivations is challenging, and previous work has explored other underlying factors for influencing motivations, e.g., emotional states, informational utility, and social identity (Stroud, 2011). According to the study, political preferences are factors that drive political motivations, and selective exposure is particularly common among strong partisans (Dejean and Peltier, 2022).

Partisan selective exposure is when people choose media that does not necessarily promote their partisan predispositions (Kim, 2021). The theory of cognitive dissonance posits that people strive to make their cognition consistent by seeking information sources that do not support their beliefs and attitudes and avoid sources of information that argue with them to reduce cognitive dissonance (Jones and Mills, 2019). There is evidence that audiences seek out and find partisan media and messages that suit their political leanings (Morimoto et al., 2013). People show a confirmation bias, favoring sources that support their beliefs (Carnahan, Garrett, and Lynch, 2023)

A difference in demand for news based on where the news organization is positioned politically relative to the consumer's political views is reflected in partisan media consumption (Nyhan, 2018). According to a growing body of research, consumers are increasingly selective when choosing what they read about (Westerwick, 2022). Media usage is only for blacks and whites during election seasons, as political affiliations greatly dictate who and what media outlets people use. A study of self-reported media exposure in the 2000 and 2004 US Presidential Elections provided compelling evidence of differential media usage between Republicans and Democrats in the United States (Zhuravskaya et al. 2020). Empirical evidence from the US Presidential Election of 2012 suggests that conservatives were more likely than liberals to rely on conservative talk radio and Fox News, and that liberals were more likely than conservatives to use PBS and Facebook once political or religious affiliations were considered. Selective exposure has been found to result in people becoming exposed to like-minded content before and during elections (Trevino et al., 2016).

2.8.2. Attention

Selectively focusing on parts of the environment while excluding others is called attention, the cognitive process (Wickens, 2021). It is a function of various stimuli saliency, personal relevance, and individual goals. Selective exposure and attention are driven by our pre-existing beliefs so that we attend to information that further reinforces these beliefs. (Fisher, 2019).

2.8.3. Retention

Retention is described as the ability of people to remember or to keep information in memory that is by their existing beliefs and to forget or ignore information that contradicts those beliefs (Korteling et al., 2021). The theory of selective exposure, attention, and retention provides an overall framework for understanding how individuals bring pre-existing beliefs, attentional biases, and interpretations of information to the attention of their information-seeking. (Larsen, 2018).

It means that people are not passive receivers of information; they are signal seekers, meaning that people try to seek, pay attention to, and interpret information as best they can based on their own biases and goals. This understanding enables them to explain how individuals come to form and maintain their beliefs and attitudes and, more importantly, how they may be influenced by changing them (Perrochon et al., 2020).

Media behavior and individual choices are connected to cognitive dissonance, including how people deal with how uncomfortable they are when provided information that contradicts them (Yahya and Sukmayadi, 2020).

According to Festinger's hypothesis, individuals become psychologically uncomfortable if they know of knowledge that contradicts the ideas they hold. They could choose to disregard data, fit it to their beliefs, or seek to find data that supports their beliefs (Dilakshini, 2020). If, for example, a person has strong environmental beliefs and then reads how a politician opposes environmental rules, the person can experience dissonance because they like the politician. People might try to reduce it by rejecting the article as biased, supporting the politician's position, or trying to find some other evidence that corroborates people's positive view of the politician on other issues (Pantazi and Klein, 2021).

Further studies show that cognitive dissonance also had a pretty big impact and has been further developed in high-stakes cases where identity and beliefs are strongly associated, such as politics and religion (Jones and Mills, 2019). Taber and Lodge in 2006 found that individuals exhibit "motivated reasoning," favoring arguments that conform to their beliefs while disregarding opposing viewpoints when faced with contradicting facts (Dosch, 2019). Individuals seek information that decreases cognitive dissonance and strengthens their preexisting opinions, demonstrating the impact of cognitive dissonance on selective media consumption (Zillich and Guenther, 2021).

2.8.4. The selected theories, Selective Exposure Theory, and the concepts of Attention and Retention are directly and cohesively aligned with this study.

Theoretical Linkage with Research Objectives and Hypothesis

The theoretical framework of this study provides a comprehensive lens through which the dynamics of political partisanship and media behavior among Pakistani audiences can be understood. The Theory of Selective Exposure helps to explain the phenomenon where individuals prefer content that resonates with their existing political beliefs. This theory informs all six hypotheses, especially the first five, which explore the participatory media habits of partisan viewers and their interactions with media personalities such as TV anchors, columnists, YouTubers, and social media influencers. It also meets objectives 1 by analyzing how content is systematically filtered across multiple platforms.

The cognitive functions of Attention and Retention support objectives and hypothesis , which focus on the methods used by individuals to attend and retain politically relevant information. These concepts rationalize why something is more easily recalled as aligned partisan content; it is due to its congruence with existing belief systems and feelings, reinforcing the partisan identity. So, these theories clarify the cognitive and behavioral dynamics of partisan media usage, justifying the examination of selective attention, affective feedback, and memory recall in a politically polarized environment.

CHAPTER #3

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

A quantitative design using a cross-sectional survey was applied to this study. It used a set of questions to obtain information and investigated whether political orientation influences the kind of media preferred by university students.

Kraemer in 1991 highlighted three fundamental components of survey research. Initially, survey research statistically evaluates particular characteristics of a group. These components often entail analyzing the interrelationships between various aspects. Individuals provide the subjective data required for survey research. Survey research uses a sample from the population, allowing for the generalization of conclusions to the entire population (Kraemer, 2024).

Survey research was conducted to explore inquiries, address identified problems, assess needs and objectives, determine the attainment of specific goals, establish future comparative standards, analyze time-based trends, and provide a thorough overview of current conditions, their scope, and context (Perloff, 2021).

In 1993, Pinsonneault and Kraemer characterized a survey as a method of gathering data on the characteristics, behaviors, or opinions of a significant population. They used surveys to determine requirements, assess consumer demand, and gauge impact (Nardi, 2018). They use the term 'survey instrument' to distinguish this tool from the wider field of survey research it serves. On the other hand, survey research includes the entire research process (Story and Tait, 2019).

3.2. Population and Sampling

The research concentrates on students in Islamabad, Pakistan. The study included a sample of 300 students selected to represent a typical range of political affiliations and media consumption patterns among young adults.

3.3. Sampling Technique

Surveys may gather data from large population samples. Additionally, they are ideal for collecting demographic data, which defines the structure of the sample (Rahman, 2023).

This study used a non-probability sampling method, convenience sampling. The approach involves choosing participants based on availability, proximity to the facilitator, and the desire to participate in this research process (Dato et al., 2023). Convenience sampling, in particular, is widely known for its simplicity, given time constraints, resource limitations, or obstacles to obtaining a full sampling frame. Unlike probability-based methods, stratification or random selection is not needed, and it is easier and faster to implement. Researchers also admit that this method would bring some kind of bias since the sample might not be the entire sample of the target population (Creswell, 2014). It is suitably limited in its effectiveness for exploratory studies or research aiming to uncover unique perspectives from among a total population.

For participation in this study, convenience sampling was employed to include participants with a variety of political affiliations and educational backgrounds from the target population of the students. The study has selected individuals who were easily available and willing to participate in capturing the range of perceptions of political parties, such as those supporting PTI and AOPP. Furthermore, this study made efforts to diversify the additional demographic characteristics such as age and gender. Even though the sample is not perfectly representative of the total population, having so many different voices give you a good indication of what political partisanship among students looks like. The research was able to go forward as it did efficiently by taking a pragmatic approach to addressing the study's main goals.

3.4. Sampling Frame

The sample frame was drawn from universities in Islamabad, where university databases and student groups were used. Then, randomly selected within each stratum to get our sample size of 300 persons.

3.5. Instrument for Data Collection

A data collection tool is any method or instrument that researchers use to collect data or information from the sources of the respondents (Pandey, 2021). These procedures differ substantially depending on the study's aims and design, so that researchers systematically collect either quantitative or qualitative data. The approaches to data collection have been surveys, interviews, questionnaires, checklists, and observations (Young, 2015).

Data collection technologies deeply influence the accuracy of the study result, so it is important to have them acquire correct and dependable data. A well-designed instrument improves the validity and credibility of the study; in this case, data quality, biases, and the research approach are aligned (Punch, 2014).

A structured questionnaire was designed to capture participants' media usage and political alignment. To help participants with convenience and increase the response rate, the study administered the survey in both paper and digital versions using Google Forms.

3.6. Design of the Questionnaire

The systematic creation of questions to obtain particular information from participants is known as questionnaire design (Tourangeau et al., 2020). The quality of responses and the ability of respondents to complete the questionnaire depends not only on the content of the question but also on the questionnaire itself. It was necessary to identify objectives, put questions in, choose response styles, and structure the questionnaire layout (Brace, 2018). Data collection technologies greatly affect the accuracy of study results and, therefore, are essential for obtaining accurate and reliable data. A properly designed instrument improves study rigor and credibility by raising data quality, reducing biases, and making the study relate to research goals (Punch, 2014).

This questionnaire has four fundamental components, each intended to capture distinct variables:

Section A: Demographics and Political Affiliation

1. There are questions on gender, age, and academic qualification.
2. Political affiliation questions query the respondent about who the preferred party is and how political the respondent is.

Section B: Media Exposure

1. The questions aim to focus on selective exposure to various media channels, including newspapers, TV channels, websites, news anchors, and columnists.
2. This section explores preferred media sources and media figures based on political alignment.

Section C: Selective Attention

1. Participants attentively follow open-ended questions on political issues across various media platforms.
2. This section gauges attention to politically charged issues and opinion-based content.

Section D: Selective Retention

1. Open-ended questions focus on memorable political issues that participants retain and discuss.
2. This instrument is specifically designed to assess the long-term retention of political information associated with partisan interests.

3.7. Key Variables

1. The independent variable is political partisanship, which includes party affiliation and partisan identity.
2. Dependent variables include media exposure, attention, and retention.
3. Control Variables: Demographic factors such as age, gender, and academic background.

3.8. Validity and Reliability

Validation and reliability are essential in the research for the quality and predictability of measurement instruments (Mellinger & Hanson, 2020).

3.8.1. Validity

The questionnaire was evaluated for content validity by academic experts in media studies and political communication to ensure that perceived constructs of political partisanship, media exposure, attention, and memory were accurately represented with each item.

3.8.2. Reliability

To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, the study used Cronbach's Alpha derived from the results of the pilot testing. Results showed strong internal consistency for the scales measuring party identification and media exposure, with alpha coefficients yielding coefficients well above the acceptable threshold (0.70) for these scales.

3.9. Pilot Testing

Pilot testing is an initial research phase during which the data collection instruments (surveys or questionnaires) are tested on a small sample initially representative of the main sample in the study.

Before the primary study, this research conducted a pilot test with 30 students. This testing phase reinforced the clarity and reliability of survey questions, answered doubts, and ensured a survey completion time as expected. Based on feedback from pilot participants, I modified the wording of questions and response options.

3.10. Data Collection Procedure

This study collaborated with university departments and student groups, performed the survey using a straightforward sample technique, and distributed it online via Google Forms. The purpose of the survey was explained to the participants, confidentiality was assured, and instructions were given regarding the filling of the questionnaire.

3.11. Data Analysis

The survey data was examined using statistical methods. Descriptive statistics summarize demographic characteristics and media consumption patterns. This study examined the relationships between political partisanship and media exposure, attention, and retention. The Chi-square test was used to examine the relationship between political affiliation and media preferences.

3.12. Ethical Considerations

The participants were informed of the study's goal and were assured that their responses would remain confidential. Participation was voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any time. I obtained approval from the university's research ethics committee.

CHAPTER #04

4. Data Analysis

This study involved samples of 300 respondents from the different universities of Islamabad. The research is on how political polarization affects media exposure, attention, and retention. Respondents were divided into different groups according to their political affiliation, like Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters and All Other Political Parties (AOPP) supporters. Several hypotheses have been studied, including selective Pakistani media preferences for TV news channels, anchor persons, columnists, YouTubers, and Twitter users. The results show that the majority of the respondents, 206 out of 300, preferred PTI as their political identity, whereas 92 respondents opted for All Other Parties (AOPP).

The results of the study reveal significant relationships between political partisanship and media preferences, demonstrating a strong polarization in media exposure, attention, and retention. PTI supporters overwhelmingly preferred ARY News (95.4%), while AOPP supporters favored Geo News (63.4%), with other channels like Dawn News and Duniya News showing varied but limited support. The Chi-square test ($\chi^2=91.248$, $p<0.001$) and effect size (Cramér's $V=0.553$) indicate a strong association between political affiliation and news channel preference, confirming the hypothesis that partisan beliefs influence TV news channel selection.

Similarly, PTI supporters exhibited a pronounced preference for anchors aligned with their ideology, such as Imran Riaz Khan (94.8%), whereas AOPP supporters displayed more diverse choices, including Mansoor Ali Khan and Saleem Safi. The Chi-square test ($\chi^2=74.937$, $p<0.001$) and strong effect size (Cramér's $V=0.501$) reinforce the relationship between political beliefs and anchor preferences. A similar trend was observed in columnist preferences, with PTI supporters gravitating toward voices like Hamid Mir, Orya Maqbool Jan, and Hassan

Nisar, while AOPP supporters had mixed preferences. The association between columnist preference and political affiliation was significant ($\chi^2=30.156$, $p<0.001$, $\chi^2 = 30.156$, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2=30.156$, $p<0.001$) with a moderate effect size (Cramér's $V=0.319$, Cramér's $V = 0.319$, Cramér's $V=0.319$).

YouTube preferences further highlight polarization, with PTI supporters predominantly following Imran Riaz Khan (93.3%), while AOPP supporters exhibited a broader distribution of preferences, including Mansoor Ali Khan (23.9%). The Chi-square test ($\chi^2=136.561$, $p<0.001$, $\chi^2 = 136.561$, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2=136.561$, $p<0.001$) and a very strong effect size (Cramér's $V=0.683$, Cramér's $V = 0.683$, Cramér's $V=0.683$) underline the strong influence of partisanship. Similar patterns emerged in Twitter/X influencer preferences, where PTI supporters overwhelmingly favored Imran Riaz Khan (94.4%), and AOPP supporters leaned toward figures like Hamid Mir, Kamran Khan, and Asma Shirazi. The significant Chi-square test ($\chi^2=95.482$, $p<0.001$, $\chi^2 = 95.482$, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2=95.482$, $p<0.001$) and large effect size (Cramér's $V=0.565$, Cramér's $V = 0.565$, Cramér's $V=0.565$) further confirmed this partisan alignment.

Retention of political issues also varied significantly by political affiliation. PTI supporters showed greater attention and retention for topics aligned with their beliefs, such as the 9 May events, Corruption and Governance, and PTI cases. In contrast, AOPP supporters focused more on broader governance topics like Economy and Inflation (84.2%). The Chi-square test ($\chi^2=48.916$, $p<0.001$, $\chi^2 = 48.916$, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2=48.916$, $p<0.001$) and a moderate effect size (Cramér's $V=0.402$, Cramér's $V = 0.402$, Cramér's $V=0.402$) indicate that partisan beliefs significantly influenced issue retention.

Overall, the findings strongly suggest that political partisanship drives selective exposure to media, preferences for anchors, columnists, and social media influencers, as well as attention and retention of political issues. The consistent statistical significance across all hypotheses and

robust effect sizes reinforces the deep polarization in media consumption and the role of ideological alignment in shaping media preferences.

H1: Individuals' partisanship significantly influences their selective media exposure across diverse media platforms.

Across all platforms, clear and statistically significant patterns emerged, demonstrating that individuals tend to engage with media personalities and content that reinforce their political identity. These results robustly support Hypothesis 1 and highlight the extent of media polarization influenced by partisanship in Pakistan’s media ecosystem. In order to unpack these dynamics in greater detail, the subsequent sections present a platform-wise analysis of selective media exposure—covering TV news channels, anchorpersons, columnists, YouTubers, and Twitter/X influencers—based on the respondents' political affiliations.

Table1

Cross-tabulations of Selective Exposure of TV News Channels’ Preference according to Party Affiliation

			Party Affiliation 2		
			PTI	AOPP	Total
SE_TV1	Dawn News	Count	14	15	29
		Expected Count	20.0	9.0	29.0
		% within SE_TV1	48.3%	51.7%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	6.8%	16.3%	9.7%
		% of Total	4.7%	5.0%	9.7%
	Geo News	Count	26	45	71
		Expected Count	49.1	21.9	71.0

24 News	% within SE_TV1	36.6%	63.4%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	12.6%	48.9%	23.8%
	% of Total	8.7%	15.1%	23.8%
	Count	1	1	2
	Expected Count	1.4	.6	2.0
Duniya News	% within SE_TV1	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	0.5%	1.1%	0.7%
	% of Total	0.3%	0.3%	0.7%
	Count	9	1	10
	Expected Count	6.9	3.1	10.0
Samaa News	% within SE_TV1	90.0%	10.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	4.4%	1.1%	3.4%
	% of Total	3.0%	0.3%	3.4%
	Count	6	3	9
	Expected Count	6.2	2.8	9.0
ARY news	% within SE_TV1	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	2.9%	3.3%	3.0%
	% of Total	2.0%	1.0%	3.0%
	Count	124	6	130
	Expected Count	89.9	40.1	130.0
Express News	% within SE_TV1	95.4%	4.6%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	60.2%	6.5%	43.6%
	% of Total	41.6%	2.0%	43.6%
	Count	4	3	7
	Expected Count	4.8	2.2	7.0

Total	PTV news	% within SE_TV1	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	1.9%	3.3%	2.3%
		% of Total	1.3%	1.0%	2.3%
		Count	2	4	6
		Expected Count	4.1	1.9	6.0
	Hum News	% within SE_TV1	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	1.0%	4.3%	2.0%
		% of Total	0.7%	1.3%	2.0%
		Count	4	3	7
		Expected Count	4.8	2.2	7.0
	None	% within SE_TV1	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	1.9%	3.3%	2.3%
		% of Total	1.3%	1.0%	2.3%
		Count	16	11	27
		Expected Count	18.7	8.3	27.0
		% within SE_TV1	59.3%	40.7%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	7.8%	12.0%	9.1%
		% of Total	5.4%	3.7%	9.1%
		Count	206	92	300
		Expected Count	206.0	92.0	300.0
		% within SE_TV1	69.1%	30.9%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	69.1%	30.9%	100.0%

Chi-square test for partisanship and selective Media exposure (News Channels Preference) (n = 300)

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	91.248 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	102.308	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	22.680	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	300		

a. 10 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .62.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.553	.000
	Cramer's V	.553	.000
N of Valid Cases		300	

The analysis of TV news channel preferences underscores the significant role of political partisanship in shaping media consumption patterns. PTI supporters exhibited a clear preference for ARY News, with an overwhelming 95.4% aligning with the channel known for its favorable coverage of PTI and its policies. This preference demonstrates how political ideology drives the audience loyalty to media outlets that reinforce their viewpoints. Conversely, AOPP supporters gravitated toward Geo News, with 63.4% favoring the channel, which is often perceived as critical of PTI. Other channels, such as Dawn News and Duniya News, attracted moderate support from both groups, suggesting that some audiences value diverse viewpoints. Channels like 24 News, Hum News, and PTV News recorded minimal viewership, indicating a lack of

partisan alignment or general appeal. The Chi-square test ($\chi^2=91.248$, $p<0.001$, $\chi^2 = 91.248$, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2=91.248$, $p<0.001$) confirmed a statistically significant association between political affiliation and news channel preference, with a strong effect size (Cramér's $V=0.553$, Cramér's $V = 0.553$, Cramér's $V=0.553$). These findings validate the hypothesis that partisan beliefs strongly influence selective media exposure, demonstrating the entrenched polarization in media consumption patterns across political affiliations.

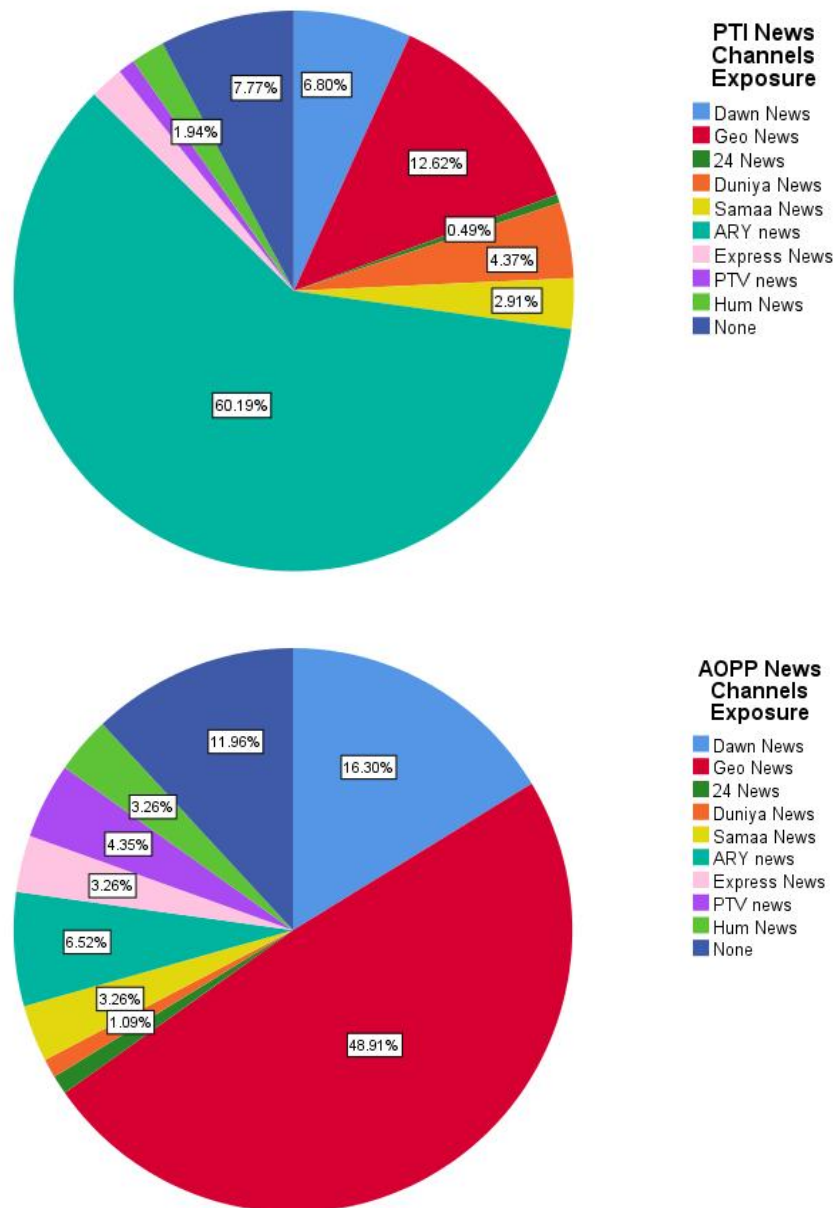


Table 2

Cross-tabulations of Selective Exposure of Anchor's preference according to the Party**Affiliation**

			Party Affiliation 2		
			PTI	AOPP	Total
SE_Anch1	Hamid Mir	Count	40	40	80
		Expected Count	55.3	24.7	80.0
		% within SE_Anch1	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	19.4%	43.5%	26.8%
		% of Total	13.4%	13.4%	26.8%
	Imran Riaz Khan	Count	109	6	115
		Expected Count	79.5	35.5	115.0
		% within SE_Anch1	94.8%	5.2%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	52.9%	6.5%	38.6%
		% of Total	36.6%	2.0%	38.6%
	Shahzeb Khanzada	Count	13	9	22
		Expected Count	15.2	6.8	22.0
		% within SE_Anch1	59.1%	40.9%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	6.3%	9.8%	7.4%
		% of Total	4.4%	3.0%	7.4%
	Mansoor Ali Khan	Count	11	7	18
		Expected Count	12.4	5.6	18.0
		% within SE_Anch1	61.1%	38.9%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	5.3%	7.6%	6.0%
		% of Total	3.7%	2.3%	6.0%

Dr Moeed Pirzada	Count	14	2	16
	Expected Count	11.1	4.9	16.0
	% within SE_Anch1	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	6.8%	2.2%	5.4%
	% of Total	4.7%	0.7%	5.4%
Javed Chaudhry	Count	2	3	5
	Expected Count	3.5	1.5	5.0
	% within SE_Anch1	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	1.0%	3.3%	1.7%
	% of Total	0.7%	1.0%	1.7%
Najam Sethi	Count	3	3	6
	Expected Count	4.1	1.9	6.0
	% within SE_Anch1	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	1.5%	3.3%	2.0%
	% of Total	1.0%	1.0%	2.0%
Saleem Safi	Count	4	2	6
	Expected Count	4.1	1.9	6.0
	% within SE_Anch1	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	1.9%	2.2%	2.0%
	% of Total	1.3%	0.7%	2.0%
Talat Hussain	Count	2	2	4
	Expected Count	2.8	1.2	4.0
	% within SE_Anch1	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	1.0%	2.2%	1.3%
	% of Total	0.7%	0.7%	1.3%

Total	None	Count	8	18	26
		Expected Count	18.0	8.0	26.0
		% within SE_Anch1	30.8%	69.2%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	3.9%	19.6%	8.7%
		% of Total	2.7%	6.0%	8.7%
		Count	206	92	300
		Expected Count	206.0	92.0	300.0
		% within SE_Anch1	69.1%	30.9%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	69.1%	30.9%	100.0%

Chi-square test for partisanship and selective Media exposure (Anchorperson Preference) (n = 300)

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	74.937 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	84.142	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.998	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	300		

a. 9 cells (45.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.23.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance

Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.501	.000
	Cramer's V	.501	.000
N of Valid Cases		300	

Preferences for anchorpersons also displayed a strikingly partisan divide. PTI supporters strongly favored Imran Riaz Khan, with 94.8% choosing the anchor, reflecting their preference for individuals who vocalize pro-PTI stances and narratives. This alignment indicates the audience's desire for affirmation of their political beliefs. On the other hand, AOPP supporters showed a more distributed preference pattern, with anchors like Mansoor Ali Khan, Saleem Safi, and Shahzeb Khanzada receiving notable support. Interestingly, Hamid Mir, known for his independent and critical approach, was equally popular among both groups, reflecting a rare instance of cross-partisan appeal. Anchors like Dr. Moeed Pirzada and Najam Sethi received limited but loyal support, highlighting niche preferences. The Chi-square test ($\chi^2=74.937$, $p<0.001$) confirmed the statistical significance of the relationship between political affiliation and anchorperson preference, with a strong effect size (Cramer's $V=0.501$). These findings reinforce the hypothesis that partisan alignment is a critical factor in determining audience preferences for anchors, reflecting the broader polarization in media engagement.

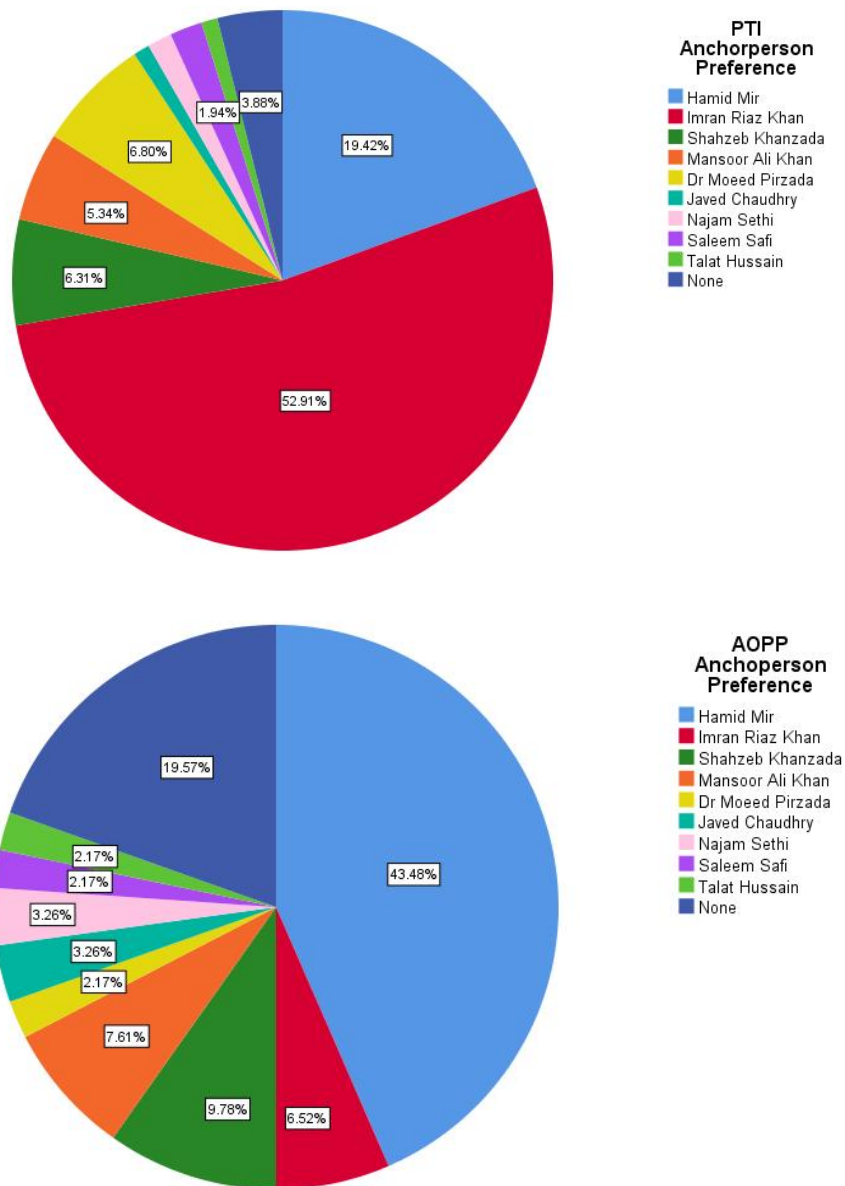


Table 3

SE_COLUMN Party Affiliation 2 Crosstabulation

			Party Affiliation 2		Total
			PTI	AOPP	
SE_column	Hamid Mir	Count	67	27	94
1		Expected Count	64.8	29.2	94.0

		% within SE_column1	71.3%	28.7%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	32.8%	29.3%	31.8%
		% of Total	22.6%	9.1%	31.8%
Saleem Safi	Count	9	8	17	
	Expected Count	11.7	5.3	17.0	
	% within SE_column1	52.9%	47.1%	100.0%	
	% within Party Affiliation 2	4.4%	8.7%	5.7%	
	% of Total	3.0%	2.7%	5.7%	
Javed Chaudhry	Count	17	14	31	
	Expected Count	21.4	9.6	31.0	
	% within SE_column1	54.8%	45.2%	100.0%	
	% within Party Affiliation 2	8.3%	15.2%	10.5%	
	% of Total	5.7%	4.7%	10.5%	
Mazhar Abbas	Count	8	1	9	
	Expected Count	6.2	2.8	9.0	
	% within SE_column1	88.9%	11.1%	100.0%	
	% within Party Affiliation 2	3.9%	1.1%	3.0%	
	% of Total	2.7%	0.3%	3.0%	
Orya Maqbool Jan	Count	32	5	37	
	Expected Count	25.5	11.5	37.0	
	% within SE_column1	86.5%	13.5%	100.0%	
	% within Party Affiliation 2	15.7%	5.4%	12.5%	
	% of Total	10.8%	1.7%	12.5%	
Mujeeb ur	Count	8	1	9	

Rehman Shami	Expected Count	6.2	2.8	9.0
	% within SE_column1	88.9%	11.1%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	3.9%	1.1%	3.0%
	% of Total	2.7%	0.3%	3.0%
Hassan Nisar	Count	24	3	27
	Expected Count	18.6	8.4	27.0
	% within SE_column1	88.9%	11.1%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	11.8%	3.3%	9.1%
	% of Total	8.1%	1.0%	9.1%
Ayaz Amir	Count	10	9	19
	Expected Count	13.1	5.9	19.0
	% within SE_column1	52.6%	47.4%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	4.9%	9.8%	6.4%
	% of Total	3.4%	3.0%	6.4%
Rauf Kalasra	Count	10	3	13
	Expected Count	9.0	4.0	13.0
	% within SE_column1	76.9%	23.1%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	4.9%	3.3%	4.4%
	% of Total	3.4%	1.0%	4.4%
None	Count	19	21	40
	Expected Count	27.6	12.4	40.0
	% within SE_column1	47.5%	52.5%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	9.3%	22.8%	13.5%
	% of Total	6.4%	7.1%	13.5%

Total	Count	204	92	296
	Expected Count	204.0	92.0	296.0
	% within SE_column1	68.9%	31.1%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	68.9%	31.1%	100.0%

Chi-square test for partisanship and selective Media exposure (Columnist Preference) (n = 300)

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.156 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	31.578	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.224	1	.269
N of Valid Cases	296		

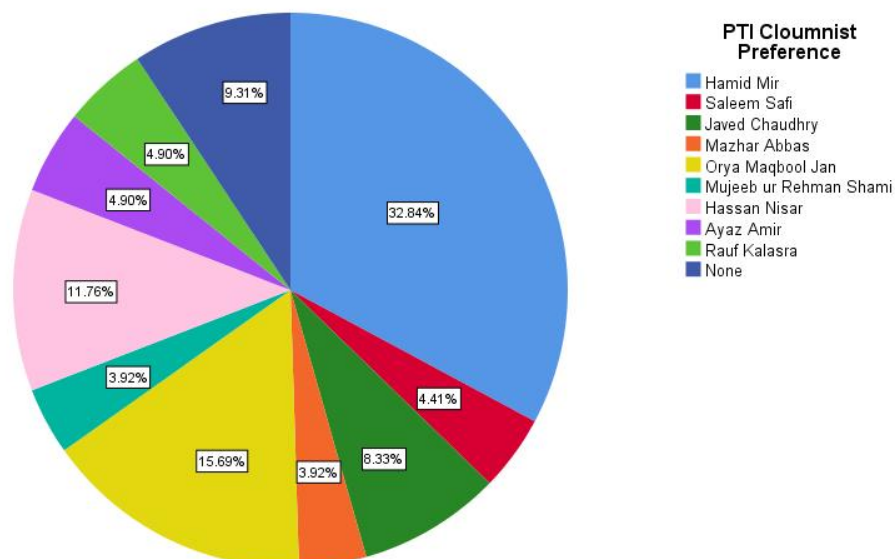
a. 3 cells (15.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.80.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal Phi	.319	.000
Cramer's V	.319	.000
N of Valid Cases	296	

The preferences for columnists reveal a similar pattern of partisanship influencing media consumption. PTI supporters predominantly preferred columnists like Hamid Mir, Orya Maqbool Jan, and Hassan Nisar, who were perceived as advocates or sympathizers of their ideology.

The choices show how audiences want columnists whose opinion resonates with how they think, reinforcing their political ideologies. On the other hand, AOPP supporters showed a wider variety of columnists like Javed Chaudhry, Saleem Safi, and Ayaz Amir, indicating more interest in assuming different outlooks. Significantly, some participants replied “none,” showing a disinterest (or skepticism) in columnists. The Chi-square test ($\chi^2=30.156$, $p<0.001$, $\chi^2=30.156$, $p<0.001$) confirmed significant differences, with a moderate effect size (Cramér's $V=0.319$). Finally, these results highlight how partisan beliefs matter very much in determining columnist preferences, with PTI supporters being more likely to be ideologically aligned with them than AOPP customers.



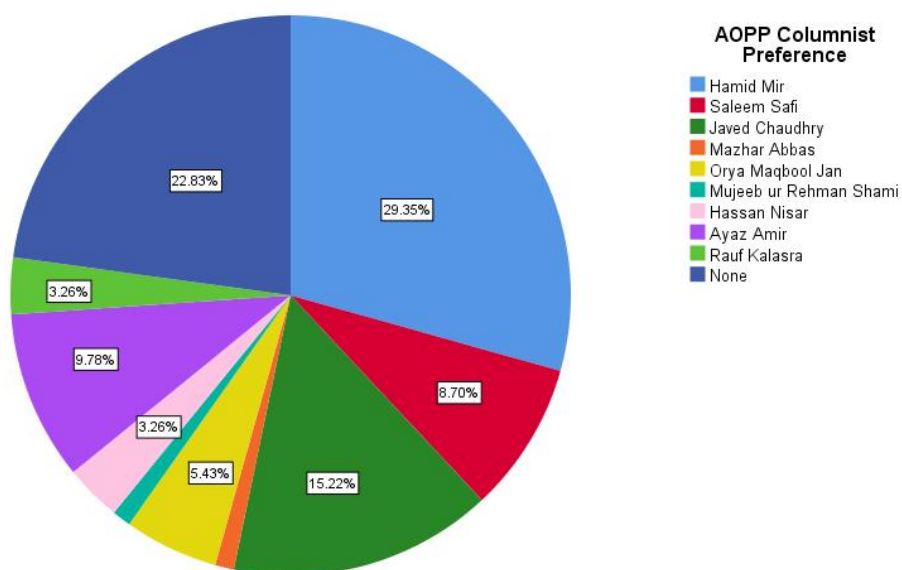


Table 4

SE_YOUTUBE Party Affiliation 2 Crosstabulation

			Party Affiliation 2		
			PTI	AOPP	Total
SE_ Youtube	Imran Riaz Khan	Count	139	10	149
		Expected Count	103.0	46.0	149.0
		% within SE_Youtube1	93.3%	6.7%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	67.5%	10.9%	50.0%
		% of Total	46.6%	3.4%	50.0%
	Mubasher	Count	3	2	5
		Expected Count	3.5	1.5	5.0
	Lucman	% within SE_Youtube1	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	1.5%	2.2%	1.7%
		% of Total	1.0%	0.7%	1.7%
	Mansoor Ali Khan	Count	22	22	44

	Expected Count	30.4	13.6	44.0
	% within SE_Youtube1	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	10.7%	23.9%	14.8%
	% of Total	7.4%	7.4%	14.8%
	Count	8	3	11
Dr Moeed Pirzada	Expected Count	7.6	3.4	11.0
	% within SE_Youtube1	72.7%	27.3%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	3.9%	3.3%	3.7%
	% of Total	2.7%	1.0%	3.7%
	Count	2	4	6
Najam Sethi	Expected Count	4.1	1.9	6.0
	% within SE_Youtube1	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	1.0%	4.3%	2.0%
	% of Total	0.7%	1.3%	2.0%
	Count	3	6	9
Matiullah Jan	Expected Count	6.2	2.8	9.0
	% within SE_Youtube1	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	1.5%	6.5%	3.0%
	% of Total	1.0%	2.0%	3.0%
	Count	3	4	7
Talat Hussain	Expected Count	4.8	2.2	7.0
	% within SE_Youtube1	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	1.5%	4.3%	2.3%
	% of Total	1.0%	1.3%	2.3%
	Count	13	16	29
Hamid Mir	Expected Count	30.4	13.6	44.0
	% within SE_Youtube1	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	10.7%	23.9%	14.8%
	% of Total	7.4%	7.4%	14.8%
	Count	8	3	11

	Expected Count	20.0	9.0	29.0
	% within SE_Youtube1	44.8%	55.2%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	6.3%	17.4%	9.7%
	% of Total	4.4%	5.4%	9.7%
	Count	4	6	10
Saleem Safi	Expected Count	6.9	3.1	10.0
	% within SE_Youtube1	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	1.9%	6.5%	3.4%
	% of Total	1.3%	2.0%	3.4%
	Count	9	19	28
Other	Expected Count	19.4	8.6	28.0
	% within SE_Youtube1	32.1%	67.9%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	4.4%	20.7%	9.4%
	% of Total	3.0%	6.4%	9.4%
	Count	206	92	300
Total	Expected Count	206.0	92.0	300.0
	% within SE_Youtube1	69.1%	30.9%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	69.1%	30.9%	100.0%
	Count	206	92	300

Chi-square test for partisanship and selective Media exposure (Youtuber Preference) (n = 300)

The YouTuber preferences provide further evidence of ideological polarization in media consumption. PTI supporters overwhelmingly preferred Imran Riaz Khan (93.3%), reflecting their strong alignment with content creators who reinforce their political narratives. This overwhelming majority highlights how social media influencers have become central figures in shaping partisan discourse. In contrast, AOPP supporters demonstrated a more distributed

preference, with Mansoor Ali Khan leading their choices at 23.9%. This diversity indicates that AOPP supporters are less cohesive in their media preferences, potentially seeking varied viewpoints. Other YouTubers, such as Dr. Moeed Pirzada and Matiullah Jan, attracted limited support, showing their niche appeal. The Chi-square test ($\chi^2=136.561$, $p<0.001$) confirmed a highly significant association, with a very strong effect size (Cramér's $V=0.683$). These findings illustrate the role of YouTubers in reinforcing political ideologies, particularly among PTI supporters, while highlighting the growing influence of digital platforms in shaping political discourse.

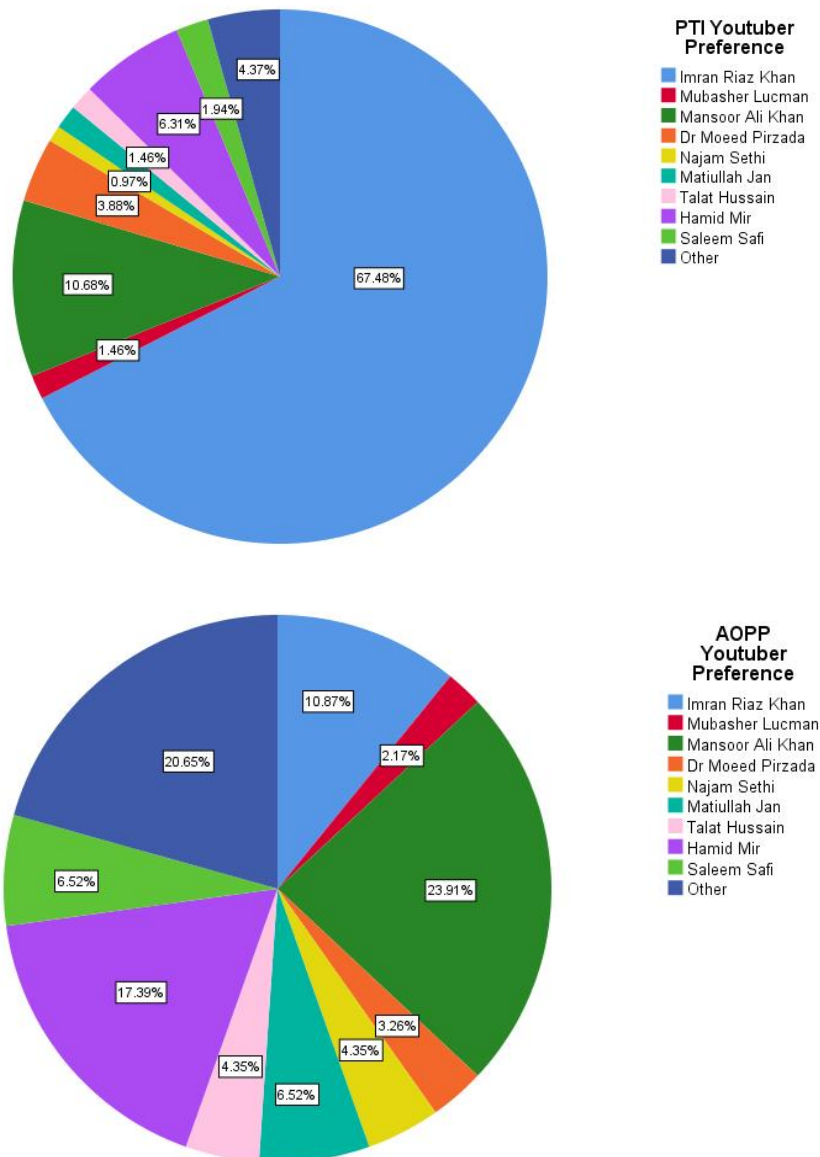


Table 5
SE_Tweet1 Party Affiliation 2 Crosstabulation

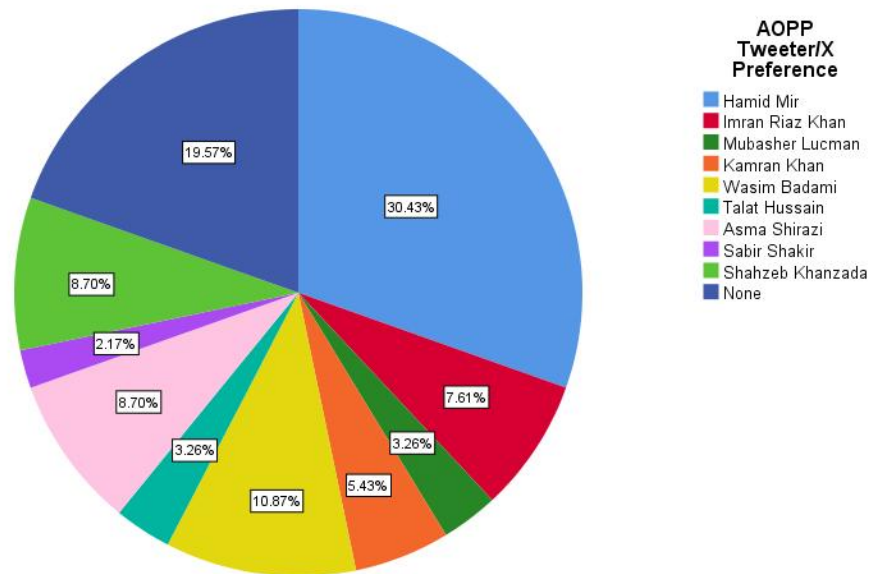
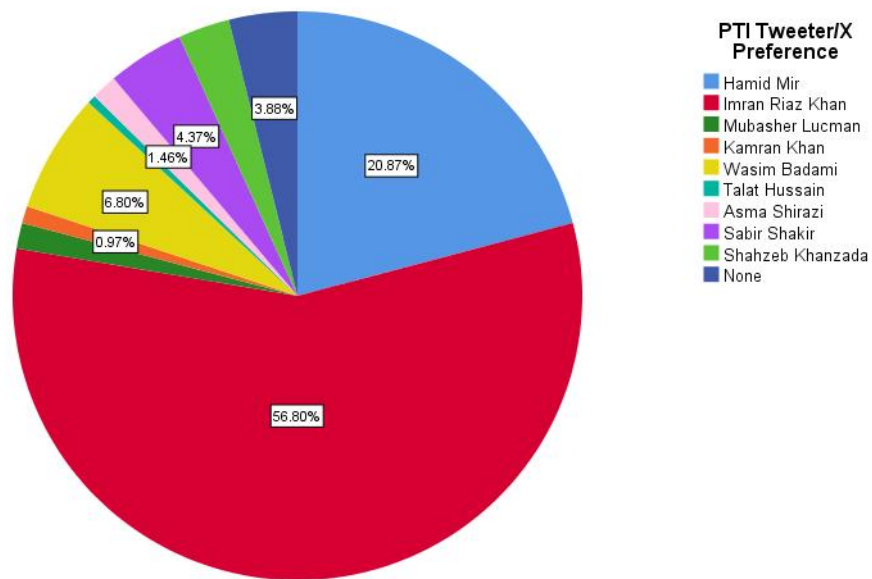
			Party Affiliation 2		
			PTI	AOPP	Total
SE_ Tweet1	Hamid Mir	Count	43	28	71
		Expected Count	49.1	21.9	71.0
		% within SE_Tweet1	60.6%	39.4%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	20.9%	30.4%	23.8%
		% of Total	14.4%	9.4%	23.8%
	Imran Riaz Khan	Count	117	7	124
		Expected Count	85.7	38.3	124.0
		% within SE_Tweet1	94.4%	5.6%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	56.8%	7.6%	41.6%
		% of Total	39.3%	2.3%	41.6%
	Mubasher	Count	3	3	6
	Lucman	Expected Count	4.1	1.9	6.0
		% within SE_Tweet1	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	1.5%	3.3%	2.0%
		% of Total	1.0%	1.0%	2.0%
	Kamran Khan	Count	2	5	7
		Expected Count	4.8	2.2	7.0
		% within SE_Tweet1	28.6%	71.4%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	1.0%	5.4%	2.3%
		% of Total	0.7%	1.7%	2.3%
	Wasim Badami	Count	14	10	24

	Expected Count	16.6	7.4	24.0
	% within SE_Tweet1	58.3%	41.7%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	6.8%	10.9%	8.1%
	% of Total	4.7%	3.4%	8.1%
	Count	1	3	4
Talat Hussain	Expected Count	2.8	1.2	4.0
	% within SE_Tweet1	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	0.5%	3.3%	1.3%
	% of Total	0.3%	1.0%	1.3%
	Count	3	8	11
Asma Shirazi	Expected Count	7.6	3.4	11.0
	% within SE_Tweet1	27.3%	72.7%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	1.5%	8.7%	3.7%
	% of Total	1.0%	2.7%	3.7%
	Count	9	2	11
Sabir Shakir	Expected Count	7.6	3.4	11.0
	% within SE_Tweet1	81.8%	18.2%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	4.4%	2.2%	3.7%
	% of Total	3.0%	0.7%	3.7%
	Count	6	8	14
Shahzeb	Count	6	8	14
Khanzada	Expected Count	9.7	4.3	14.0
	% within SE_Tweet1	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	2.9%	8.7%	4.7%
	% of Total	2.0%	2.7%	4.7%
None	Count	8	18	26

Total	Expected Count	18.0	8.0	26.0
	% within SE_Tweet1	30.8%	69.2%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	3.9%	19.6%	8.7%
	% of Total	2.7%	6.0%	8.7%
	Count	206	92	300
	Expected Count	206.0	92.0	300.0
	% within SE_Tweet1	69.1%	30.9%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	69.1%	30.9%	100.0%

Chi-square test for partisanship and selective Media exposure (Tweets/X Preference) (n = 300)

The preferences for Twitter/X influencers reflect deep-seated partisanship in social media engagement. PTI supporters predominantly followed Imran Riaz Khan (94.4%), reinforcing their reliance on influencers who amplify their political narratives. This overwhelming preference highlights the central role of social media in bolstering ideological echo chambers. AOPP supporters, in contrast, displayed a more diverse array of preferences, favoring influencers like Hamid Mir, Kamran Khan, and Asma Shirazi. Influencers such as Shahzeb Khanzada and Saleem Safi also garnered notable support, indicating varied interests among AOPP supporters. The preference for some influencers by both groups, albeit to different extents, reflects the nuanced role of Twitter/X as both a partisan and a cross-partisan platform. The Chi-square test ($\chi^2=95.482$, $p<0.001$ $\chi^2 = 95.482$, $p < 0.001$ $\chi^2=95.482$, $p<0.001$) confirmed the statistical significance of these differences, with a large effect size (Cramér's $V=0.565$ Cramér's $V = 0.565$ Cramér's $V=0.565$). These findings emphasize the influence of political partisanship on social media preferences, underscoring the polarization in digital media consumption.



H2: People pay attention to political issues that match their political beliefs.

And

H3: People remember political issues better which supports their political views.

Table 6

SA1a Party Affiliation 2 Crosstabulation

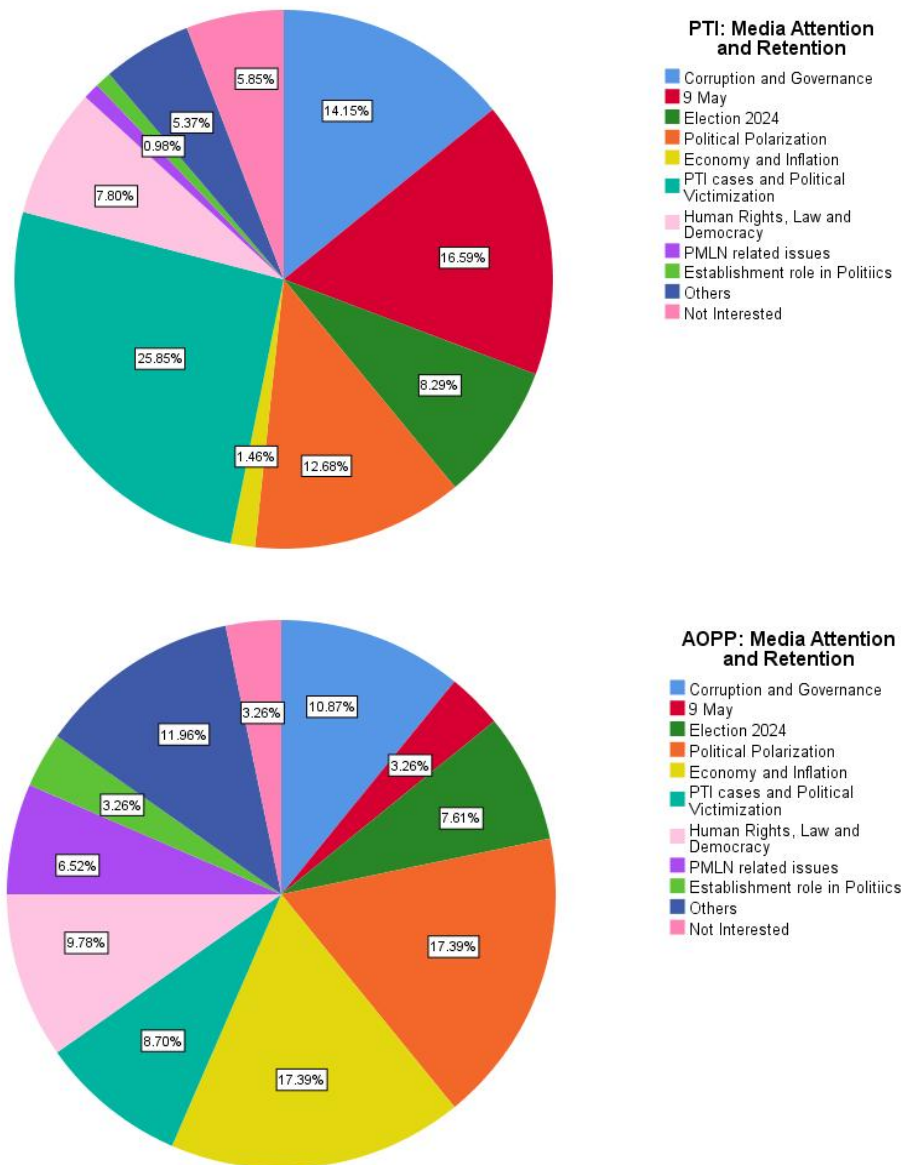
			Party Affiliation 2		
			PTI	AOPP	Total
SA1a	Corruption	and Count	29	10	39
	Governance	Expected Count	26.9	12.1	39.0
		% within SA1a	74.4%	25.6%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	14.1%	10.9%	13.1%
		% of Total	9.8%	3.4%	13.1%
	9 May	Count	34	3	37
		Expected Count	25.5	11.5	37.0
		% within SA1a	91.9%	8.1%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	16.6%	3.3%	12.5%
		% of Total	11.4%	1.0%	12.5%
	Election 2024	Count	17	7	24
		Expected Count	16.6	7.4	24.0
		% within SA1a	70.8%	29.2%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	8.3%	7.6%	8.1%
		% of Total	5.7%	2.4%	8.1%
	Political	Count	26	16	42
	Polarization	Expected Count	29.0	13.0	42.0
		% within SA1a	61.9%	38.1%	100.0%
		% within Party Affiliation 2	12.7%	17.4%	14.1%
		% of Total	8.8%	5.4%	14.1%
	Economy	and Count	3	16	19

Inflation	Expected Count	13.1	5.9	19.0
	% within SA1a	15.8%	84.2%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	1.5%	17.4%	6.4%
	% of Total	1.0%	5.4%	6.4%
PTI cases and	Count	53	8	61
Political	Expected Count	42.1	18.9	61.0
Victimization	% within SA1a	86.9%	13.1%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	25.9%	8.7%	20.5%
	% of Total	17.8%	2.7%	20.5%
Human Rights,	Count	16	9	25
Law and	Expected Count	17.3	7.7	25.0
Democracy	% within SA1a	64.0%	36.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	7.8%	9.8%	8.4%
	% of Total	5.4%	3.0%	8.4%
PMLN related	Count	2	6	8
issues	Expected Count	5.5	2.5	8.0
	% within SA1a	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	1.0%	6.5%	2.7%
	% of Total	0.7%	2.0%	2.7%
Establishment role	Count	2	3	5
in Politics	Expected Count	3.5	1.5	5.0
	% within SA1a	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	1.0%	3.3%	1.7%
	% of Total	0.7%	1.0%	1.7%
Others	Count	11	11	22

	Expected Count	15.2	6.8	22.0
	% within SA1a	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	5.4%	12.0%	7.4%
	% of Total	3.7%	3.7%	7.4%
	Count	12	3	15
Not Interested	Expected Count	10.4	4.6	15.0
	% within SA1a	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	5.9%	3.3%	5.1%
	% of Total	4.0%	1.0%	5.1%
	Count	205	92	297
Total	Expected Count	205.0	92.0	297.0
	% within SA1a	69.0%	31.0%	100.0%
	% within Party Affiliation 2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	69.0%	31.0%	100.0%
	Count	205	92	297

The analysis of retention of political issues reveals how partisan alignment influences not just exposure but also memory and engagement with political topics. PTI supporters retained more information on topics that aligned with their beliefs, such as Corruption and Governance, the 9 May events, and PTI cases, with retention rates significantly higher than other topics. These preferences suggest a bias toward issues that reinforce their political stance. AOPP supporters, on the other hand, focused on broader governance issues like Economy and Inflation (84.2%), highlighting their interest in national rather than partisan topics. Topics like human rights and democracy received moderate attention across both groups, suggesting some overlap in shared concerns. Issues like PML-N-related matters and the establishment's role in politics showed limited but partisan-specific engagement. The Chi-square test ($\chi^2=48.916$, $p<0.001$) confirmed significant differences, with a moderate effect

size (Cramér's $V = 0.402$). These results validate the hypothesis that partisan beliefs heavily influence which political issues are attended to and retained, reflecting selective engagement based on ideological alignment.



General Observations

Strong Partisanship:

Supporters of PTI showed strong preferences towards media personalities and the platforms that were aligned with their political ideology.

Significance and Effect Sizes:

1. Testing results from Chi-square tests were significant ($p < 0.001$) in all hypotheses, indicating robust relationships across all hypotheses.
2. These effect sizes (Cramér's V) were about moderate to very strong in their impact on the level of political partisanship.

Polarization:

This finding highlights the polarizing nature of media in Pakistan, in which audiences have gone overly polarized to ideologically consistent platforms.

CHAPTER #05

5.1. DISCUSSION

Based on hypotheses relating to partisan beliefs and patterns of media consumption, the study investigates the impact of political partisanship on media exposure, attention, and retention. The literature on selective exposure and cognitive dissonance is very well supported in the survey results, which contribute to the understanding of how political partisanship influences the relationship people have with the media.

H1: Individuals' partisanship significantly influences their selective media exposure across diverse media platforms.

The findings suggest that the hypothesis is highly significant, as further demonstrated through the analysis of various media types in the subsequent sections.

TV News Channels:

The results of this study show that people select TV news channels purely based on their political beliefs. PTI supporters overwhelmingly prefer (95.4%) ARY News, while AOPP supporters prefer Geo News (63.4%). This type of selective media exposure confirms the theory of selective exposure, which proposes that individuals will be more likely to engage in media that support their political beliefs. Consistent with Stroud's (2010) selective exposure research, these results indicate that people avoid media that confront their political ideologies and seek out media that support their beliefs. The difference in substantial media preferences between PTI and AOPP supporters is another evidence of how political affiliation determines media usage.

This selective engagement with politically aligned TV channels is also observed in the work of Della Vigna and Kaplan (2007), which also shows evidence for a similar pattern of media consumption among U.S. viewers. They found that partisan viewers were more likely to consume media from sources that agreed with their party ideologically. This relationship is

statistically significant according to the Chi-square test ($\chi^2=91.248$, $p<0.001$), which supports the claim that political partisanship has a strong effect on media consumption.

The findings from these results are consistent with those of Khan and Rafi (2020), who write about the polarization of media in Pakistan, where different political parties find themselves associated with different channels. The more fragmentation in this media, the more it reinforces the polarization of the electorate, reducing exposure to a diversity of views that lead to further polarization and ideological divisions.

Additionally, Prior (2013) suggests that selective media consumption is not just a reflection of and reinforces ideological polarization; this study also confirms this phenomenon. For instance, as PTI supporters keep consuming ARY News and AOPP supporters get their media from Geo News, the exposure to media that challenges their perspectives is both further entrenched in their political beliefs and much reduced.

Anchor Persons:

The results of this study demonstrate that political partisanship has a strong influence on people's preference for political anchoring. PTI supporters prefer anchors like Imran Riaz Khan, and similarly, AOPP supporters like anchors of their political views. This behavior is consistent with Levendusky (2013), who discovered that partisans are more likely to trust and engage with media figures that align with their political beliefs. The correlation of this relationship is verified through the Chi-square test ($\chi^2= 74.937$, $p<0.001$), which states that individuals with strong partisan identities are more likely to align themselves towards the anchors that support their ideological perspectives.

Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance explains that people prefer politically aligned anchors because they are looking for information that helps solve psychological distress. Partisans remain uncomfortable if confronted with information that contradicts their beliefs and tend to avoid that information. Avoidance is reflected in the survey findings, which show that

PTI and AOPP supporters are more likely to interact with media personalities who represent their political ideologies.

This pattern aligns with Iyengar and Hahn (2009), who observed that those who see partisan news channels are more likely to increase their political preferences and their trust in media personalities who share their political views in accord with this pattern. These findings also support Stroud's (2011) observation that individuals search for media personalities that confirm their beliefs and then create a partisan cycle of media consumption and further amplify ideological polarization.

Columnists:

Preferences for reading political columns are also shown to be driven heavily by partisan beliefs. Both PTI and AOPP supporters read different types of columnists; PTI supporters prefer columnists such as Hamid Mir and Orya Maqbool, while AOPP supporters read a broader range of columnists. This pattern of selective preference for columnists is consistent with Stroud's (2010) notion of selective exposure, in which people engage with media content that reflects their pre-existing political beliefs. The results confirm a significant relationship between partisan beliefs and the choice of political columnists using the Chi-square test ($\chi^2=30.156$; $p < 0.001$).

This finding aligns with the work of Knobloch-Westerwick, Johnson, & Westerwick (2015), who found that people are more likely to read material that backs up their views but reads away from those challenges' ideological stance. Furthermore, Sears (2020) mentioned that partisanship equally affects not only media consumption but also media figures' engagement and interpretation. In the case of columnists, whenever PTI supporters agree to read the columnists, they tend to follow the people with whom they share political views, which strengthens their political beliefs. This is consistent with Zaller's (1992) theory of 'elite cue,'

whereby people accept information from political elites that is congruent with their views, adding to the extent to which individuals identify as partisans.

The broader preferences of AOPP supporters for more diverse columnists suggest that this group may not be as ideologically entrenched as PTI supporters. This diversity in media consumption could indicate that AOPP supporters engage with a wider range of perspectives, although they still prefer columnists who align with their core beliefs. Gershuny (2014) notes that the findings there are consistent with the idea that the level of ideological entrenchment already determines the extent to which people engage with different views.

YouTubers:

It is consistent with the expansion of digital platforms to reinforce political belief: the primary preference of PTI supporters is for YouTubers like Imran Riaz Khan. According to Pennycook and Rand (2018), people choose to watch content on YouTube that supports their existing beliefs, leading them to an environment of ideological reinforcement. The Chi-square test results ($\chi^2=136.561$, $p<0.001$) confirm consistency with what Sunstein (2017) discovered about "filter bubbles" in digital space, showing that partisan individuals selectively engage with YouTubers who reflect their political views. The system recommends content that fits the interests of users, and this leads to people seeing only a few opinions that agree with their own. This result aligns with what Graham et al. (2020) claim that digital platforms like YouTube play a role in political polarization by serving up partisan content. The more people interact with content that fits with their political views, the more they become stuck in their ideological perspective, and the less they see other, different views. The evidence assembled in this study confirms that YouTube and other platforms serve as powerful tools for ideological reinforcement, creating an increasingly closed space of ideologically reinforcing interactions that limit the opportunity for cross-ideological discourse. Leung and Chan (2018) said that these platforms also function as tools for reinforcing partisan identities. Hughes (2021) argued that

platforms such as YouTube, which curate content through an algorithm, often reinforce partisanship by suggesting more and more content that matches users' earlier behavior.

Tweeters/Xers:

PTI supporters tend to follow political influencers such as Imran Riaz Khan on Twitter, and AOPP supporters have a variety of preferences. That selective engagement with social media influences aligns with what Boulianne (2019) talks about, that social media platforms play a big role in the reinforcement of political beliefs. Similar to this, Matz (2019) also found that people follow figures who share their political ideologies, which only reinforce their political views. This study's corresponding findings concerning partisan Twitter/X preferences are consistent with findings made by Kaufhold et al. (2018), who posited that Twitter has become a platform where partisans selectively curate their news and opinions based on partisan preferences.

The results from the Chi-square test ($\chi^2=95,482,.001$) provide statistical support for this selective behavior because partisanship has a very strong effect in shaping social media preference. As Tufekci (2017) pointed out, on platforms like Twitter's layout helps to highlight content that suits people's beliefs, giving more power to their political views and keeping them around those who agree with them. In particular, social media is used as a means to further political divides by following politically aligned influences on Twitter/X.

H2: People pay attention to political issues that match their political beliefs.

&

H3: People remember political issues better which supports their political views.

This study describes that supporters of PTI are more likely to retain information related to PTI's political agenda, including the 9th May incident and arrest of PTI leader Imran Khan, whereas AOPP supporters are more concerned with wider issues such as the economy. The selective attention and retention by partisans in this pattern are consistent with Taber and Lodge (2006), who reported that partisans are more likely to attend to and retain political information that

reinforces their partisan beliefs. It is confirmed by the Chi-square test results ($\chi^2=48.916$, $p<0.001$) that partisanship does indeed affect both how much and how long politically aligned issues are given and retained attention by the public.

This selective retention of information is consistent with what Westerwick et al. (2015) observed, and they said that people remembered information that agreed with their party views and ignored or did not talk about information against those views. Taber and Lodge (2006) indeed showed that partisans pay more attention to and have stronger retention of content that supports their view. As Pennycook & Rand (2018) also describe, the process of confirmation bias plays a key role in this phenomenon which people selectively attend to and remember information that reinforces their partisan views.

The findings of this study reflect the broader trends in political communication, where people of a partisan party are more likely to engage with and remember content that reinforces their ideological stance and enables political polarization. Results are consistent with theoretical frameworks of selective exposure and cognitive dissonance, providing the implications of how partisanship affects people, how they select media, and how this applies to media use and political polarization, ultimately affecting public discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive examination of the relationship between political partisanship and media behaviors among Pakistani youth, specifically focusing on selective exposure, attention, and retention. The findings confirm that partisan identity significantly shapes individuals' preferences for media outlets, political anchors, columnists, and digital influencers, aligning their consumption patterns with ideological beliefs. The results validate the theoretical framework of selective exposure and cognitive dissonance, illustrating how individuals gravitate toward congruent information while dismissing conflicting narratives. Attention and memory are not neutral cognitive processes; rather, they are actively influenced by partisan alignment, leading to the retention of ideologically agreeable content and neglect of dissonant material. Because of such behavior, it becomes easier for groups of similar views to unite, making digital media more divided politically. The study highlights how algorithmic amplification on social platforms further entrenches partisan divisions by curating content that aligns with users' prior engagements. In this context, media literacy emerges as a critical intervention, enabling audiences to recognize bias, diversify their information sources, and engage in informed democratic discourse. These outcomes call for policy reforms and educational strategies that promote critical media consumption, aiming to bridge ideological divides and support a more balanced and inclusive media landscape in Pakistan.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS

5.2.1. Empirical implications

The findings confirm the selective exposure, and study validates that individuals actively seek media information that supports their existing ideas.

The data collected from 300 university students in Islamabad have revealed that having strong political views leads youth to favor media outlets, personalities and social media influencers they associate with their beliefs. This supports the empirical observations made by Stroud and Garrett (2019), who suggest that people's media habits are closely linked to their political views.

These results also found that content that aligns with what you believe is easier to focus on and remember, while differing or contradictory opinions are usually dismissed or soon forgotten. This reflects earlier research by Knobloch-Westerwick et al. (2015) indicating that partisans notice and recall information that matches their views. The findings of this study demonstrate that, in Pakistan, political identity can influence the choices people make when processing information.

This study adds to the limited empirical data about Pakistani youth and their behavior with media, who are both engaged in politics and modern technology. It illustrates that how university students can be easily exposed to content that supports their own ideas when using personalized online sites, as found by Yousaf and Malik (2021). It enhances the worldwide knowledge of how the internet leads to divided opinions among young people.

Since a lot of existing research on political partisanship and media exposure is from the West, especially the U.S, the study here targets Pakistan, a developing nation with strong political and media polarization. It proves that selective exposure and partisanship are found in cultures outside the West as well, but their impacts may be intensified in places troubled by politics, culture and media regulation.

5.2.2. Theoretical Implications

Beyond its empirical implications, this study has significant theoretical implications, both in extending and complementing existing frameworks in media and communication research and providing an elaborate comprehension of the relationship between political partisanship and media consumption patterns. These findings validate and extend existing theories, such as Selective Exposure Theory, Cognitive Dissonance Theory, and Motivated Reasoning Theory, in the new socio-political and media context of Pakistan. The research also provides a basis for the integration of localized insights into global theoretical discourses to provide an understanding of media behavior in polarized societies.

5.2.2.1. Validation of Selective Exposure Theory

According to Selective Exposure Theory, people seek information that matches their ‘pre-existing’ beliefs and avoids information that contradicts their ideological positions. This theory is reaffirmed in this study as it shows how political partisanship on the part of Pakistani audiences leads them to consume the partisan-aligned media, creating echo chambers. It shows that selective exposure is not just a case of choosing but a deliberate cognitive tool to maintain ideological consistency.

5.2.2.2. Localization of Global Theories

Theories such as Selective Exposure, Cognitive Dissonance, and Motivated Reasoning have been widely studied in Western democracies, but this research provides a localized lens through which they can be applied to Pakistan's media and political environment. In Pakistan, media outlets often demonstrate a pronounced bias towards political parties, hence reinforcing partisan identities. It contrasts with the subtler media biases observable in many Western contexts.

5.3. Practical Implications

It also includes practical guidelines for media professionals, educators, those who make policies and civil society groups.

The research makes it clear that youth should be given opportunities to learn how to recognize bias, examine their sources and be aware of media algorithms. Potter (2010) and Jones-Jang et al. (2021) agree that media literacy helps people resist the negative effects of selective exposure, false information and divided political ideas. Media literacy should be added to educational programs in Pakistan to encourage people to take an active and informed part in society.

Current media practices should be examined again in light of this research. News outlets should try to avoid favoring only one political view and work towards neutrality. Since partisan media tends to unite those with similar opinions and reduce real debates (Slater et al., 2019), journalists and media owners should commit to truthful reporting and ensure they include many perspectives for young audiences.

Authorities like PEMRA and the Press Council of Pakistan should understand that both politically aligned content and personalized recommendations bring risks. In order to reduce polarization, they need to improve monitoring of what issues news reports, embrace diversity and emphasize unbiased publications. Promoting policies that support a range of opinions in the media, both traditional and electronic, is important.

Politicians and civic actors should use what the study shows to promote respectful and inclusive political discussions. Political campaigns should avoid inflammatory statements that make people divide. Civic education campaigns should encourage youth to look at ideas from different perspectives which help teach tolerance and respect as important values for a society.

The study findings encourage media organizations and technology developers to make their content more transparent and to avoid making content extreme or divisive. The role of recommendation systems highlights that AI developers need to ensure that their work promotes diversity instead of making people less engaged with each other.

5.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study offers an important understanding of the link between media consumption and political partisanship. The first limitation of the research is that it is state-confined and is focused on the university students of Islamabad. While this sample may not represent the full range of political orientation, cultural exposures, or media consumption habits across Pakistan's provinces, including in its less urbanized or rural areas where the media is less accessible, political dynamics can differ significantly. Secondly, the study is cross-sectional, which limits its ability to track changes in media behavior over time. Thus, longitudinal studies are required to investigate how political events, technological innovations, and societal changes affect selective exposure, attention, and retention patterns. This research can allow us to understand the interaction between partisanship and media consumption in a more dynamic way. Moreover, the findings of the study are context-specific and derived from the specific nature of the media political environment in Pakistan. Markets for media are highly differentiated between nations concerning press freedom levels, audience behaviors, and technological penetration. It also means that the conclusions of the study may not directly apply to countries with different types of political systems and media configurations.

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Annex-I
Questionnaire

Effects of Political Partisanship on Media Exposure, Attention, and Retention

As part of a research project on the **Effects of Political Partisan On Media Exposure, Attention And Retention**, I would like to ask for your help with the following questions. In order to guarantee complete anonymity, please note that none of the information that is recorded could be used to identify you.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Indicates required question

1. Email

2. **Gender** (Kindly consider 1=Male, 2=Female, 3= Prefer not to say)

Mark only one oval.

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

3. **Age**

4. **Academic Qualification** (Kindly consider 1=BS, 2=MS/MPhil, 3=PhD) *

Mark only one oval.

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

Partisan Identity

5. Which leading political party of Pakistan is close to your political ideology?

Mark only one oval.

☐ PTI

☐ PML (N)

☐ PPPP

☐ Other_____.

Part B. Selective Exposure

Choose anyone of the following options for each question.

6. 1.1. Which of the following TV news channels would you prefer to watch?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1. Dawn News
- ☐ 2. Geo News
- ☐ 3. 24 News
- ☐ 4. Duniya News
- ☐ 5. Samaa News
- ☐ 6. ARY News
- ☐ 7. Express News
- ☐ 8. PTV News
- ☐ 9. Hum New
- ☐ 10. Other (please specify): _____

7. 1.2. Which of the following anchor-persons would you prefer to attend?

Mark only one oval.

☐

- ☐ 1. Hamid Mir
☐ 2. Imran Riaz Khan
☐ 3. Shahzeb Khanzada
☐ 4. Mansoor Ali Khan
☐ 5. Dr Moeed Pirzada
☐ 6. Javed Chaudhry
☐ 7. Najam Sethi
☐ 8. Saleem Safi
☐ 9. Talat Hussain
☐ 10. Other (please specify): _____

8. 1.3. Which of the following columnists do you prefer to read?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1. Hamid Mir
☐ 2. Saleem Safi
☐ 3. Javed Chaudhry
☐ 4. Mazhar Abbas
☐ 5. Orya Maqbool Jan
☐ 6. Mujeeb ur Rehman Shami
☐ 7. Hassan Nisar
☐ 8. Ayaz Amir
☐ 9. Rauf Klasra
☐ 10. Other (please specify): _____

9. 1.4. Which of the following YouTubers do you prefer to watch?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1. Imran Riaz Khan
☐ 2. Mubasher Lucman
☐ 3. Mansoor Ali Khan
☐ 4. Dr Moeed Pirzada
☐ 5. Najam Sethi
☐ 6. Matiullah Jan
☐ 7. Talat Hussain
☐ 8. Hamid Mir
☐ 9. Saleem Safi
☐ 10. Other (please specify): _____

10. 1.5. Which of the following tweeter/Xers you prefer to follow?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1. Hamid Mir
- ☐ 2. Imran Riaz Khan
- ☐ 3. Mubasher Lucman
- ☐ 4. Kamran Khan
- ☐ 5. Wasim Badami
- ☐ 6. Talat Hussain
- ☐ 7. Asma Shirazi
- ☐ 8. Sabir Shakir
- ☐ 9. Shahzeb Khanzada
- ☐ 10. Other (please specify): _____

11. **PART C. Selective Attention & Retention**

Which political issues do you pay the most attention to across media platforms, seek in-depth analysis for, and continue to remember and discuss?

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