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**SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY: AN  
EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF FACEBOOK  
AND TWITTER IN PUNJAB PAKISTAN**



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**Universiti Utara Malaysia**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
UNIVERSITY UTARA MALAYSIA  
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**SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY: AN  
EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF FACEBOOK  
AND TWITTER IN PUNJAB PAKISTAN**



**A thesis submitted to the Ghazali Shafie Graduate School of Government in  
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Kolej Undang-Undang, Kerajaan dan Pengajian Antarabangsa  
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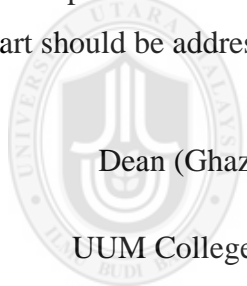


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## ABSTRAK

Kajian menyeluruh mengenai kesusasteraan yang berkembang pada kesan peranan media sosial dalam Pemerintahan dan politik, menunjukkan ketiadaan serius kesepakatan mengenai kebolehampuannya dalam meningkatkan dan mempromosikan akauntabiliti dalam pemerintahan. Tahap ketidakkonsistenan dalam penemuan serta dinamisme yang pesat yang sedia ada dalam subjek itu selalu menjadikannya kawasan penyelidikan yang baru terutama dalam konteks Pakistan di mana penyelidikan sifat ini masih di tahap awal. Oleh itu, adalah mustahak untuk meneroka potensi media sosial dalam mempromosikan akauntabiliti dalam konteks Pakistan. Lebih-lebih lagi, kerana tidak ada kajian didorong secara empirikal menggunakan teori penggerak sumber dan teori ruang awam yang selesa penggerak sumber dan penyediaan maklumat murah untuk mencari akauntabiliti politik dan mewujudkan ruang maya, dalam perbincangan politik setiap hari di media sosial khususnya di Facebook dan Twitter. Kajian ini menambah nilai kepada kesusasteraan semasa dengan menerangkan kesan peranan media sosial dalam mempromosikan akauntabiliti politik dalam konteks Pakistan. Dengan melakukan kajian ini, penyelidikan meneroka respons institusi politik untuk mempercayai akauntabiliti politik yang disiarkan semula kepada mereka, selanjutnya meneroka keadaan kebebasan bersuara semasa yang berkhidmat sebagai pengukur untuk pemahaman yang lebih baik mengenai kesan media sosial dalam mempromosikan kebertanggungjawaban politik di Pakistan dan arahan pembaharuan yang dapat meningkatkan peranan media sosial ke arah akauntabiliti politik di Pakistan. Kajian itu mendapati bahawa media sosial menyumbang dengan mendalam dalam usaha mencari akauntabiliti, walaupun ketidakpercayaan politik dan mekanisme undang-undang yang tidak menyokong membentuk beberapa bebanan struktur terhadap kebolehkeraan media sosial dalam mengejar dan memastikan akauntabiliti politik di Pakistan. Oleh itu, pembaharuan politik dan undang-undang adalah penting untuk mempromosikan akauntabiliti politik di negara ini. Kajian ini dijalankan di Punjab yang merupakan wilayah paling banyak penduduk di antara empat wilayah di Pakistan, lebih separuh daripada jumlah penduduk tinggal di Punjab. Kajian ini memperlihatkan strategi etnografis dimana data dikumpulkan dengan wawancara setengah teratur yang mendalam, analisis kandungan kualitatif aplikasi media sosial dan pemerhatian peribadi. Dua puluh informan telah mengambil bahagian dalam wawancara separuh berstruktur yang melancarkan ahli politik, wartawan, ahli akademik, blogger media sosial dan peguam. Data dianalisis secara tematik dengan melihat kerangka literatur dan kerangka teoritis terdahulu di mana akauntabiliti politik, penyertaan, penyebaran maklumat, kebebasan bersuara dikenal pasti dalam sistem demokrasi dan dibincangkan.

**Kata Kunci:** Demokrasi, Akauntabiliti Politik, Media Sosial, Amanah Politik, Kebebasan Berekspresi, Pembaharuan Politik, Pakistan.

## ABSTRACT

An extensive review of the burgeoning literature on the impact of social media in Governance and politics, revealed a serious absence of consensus over its workability in enhancing and promoting accountability in governance. The level of inconsistency in findings as well as the rapidly existing dynamism within the subject invariably makes it a novel research area especially within the context of Pakistan where researches of this nature are still at the infancy level. It is therefore imperative to explore the potency of social media in promoting accountability within the Pakistani context. More so, as there is an absence of empirically-driven study using resource mobilization theory and public sphere theory that comply with the resource mobilization and provision of low-cost information for pursuit of political accountability and create virtual sphere, for everyday political discussion in the social media particularly on Facebook and Twitter. This study added value to current literature by explaining the impact of social media in promoting political accountability in Pakistani context. In doing so the study explored the responsiveness of the political institution to trust of the political accountability reposted on them, it further explored the current state of freedom of expression which served as a yardstick for better understanding of the impact of social media in promoting political accountability in Pakistan and directions of reforms that can enhance the impact of social media towards political accountability in Pakistan. The study finds out that social media is significantly contributing in pursuit of accountability, though political distrust and non-supporting legal mechanism constitute some of the structural encumbrances against the workability of social media in pursuing and ensuring political accountability in Pakistan. Therefore, political and legal reforms are indispensable to promote political accountability in the country. The study was conducted in Punjab that is most populated province among total of four provinces of Pakistan, more than half of total population resided in Punjab. The study espouses an ethnographic strategy in which data were collected by in depth semi structured interviews, qualitative content analysis of social media applications and personal observation. Twenty informants participated in semi structured interviews rolled out the politicians, journalists, academics, social media bloggers and legal practitioners. The data was thematically analyzed by keeping in view previous literature and theoretical framework in which political accountability, participation, information dissemination, freedom of expression were identified in democratic system and discussed.

**Keywords:** Democracy, Political Accountability, Social Media, Political Trust, Freedom of Expression, Political Reforms, Pakistan.



## DECLARATION

Some of the works presented in this thesis have been published or submitted as listed below.

- Sadiq, S., Zain, Z.M., & Ajis, N. (2018) “The role of social media towards political accountability in Pakistan: a literature review,” *Global Journal of Political Science and Administration*, 6(5), 39-47.
- Sadiq, S., Zain, Z.M., & Ajis, N. (2018) “The role of institutional trust and political accountability in Pakistan: an empirical study,” *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6(11), 8-17.



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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is nicely dedicated to my father Subh-e- Sadiq, my mother Perveen Akhtar, may Allah bless them with good health and long life!

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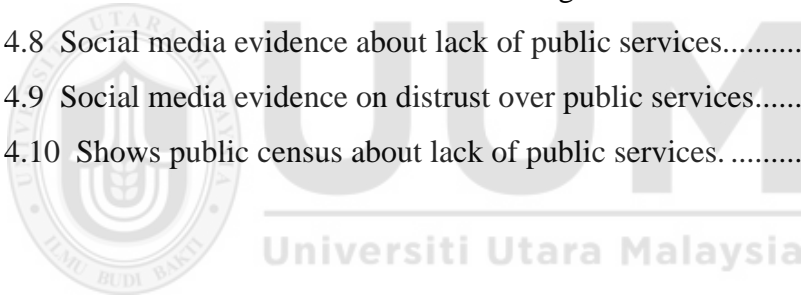
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ADB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>AFP</b>	Agency French Press
<b>B4A</b>	Basic 4 Android
<b>BBC</b>	British Broad Casting
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>ECHR</b>	European Court of Human Rights
<b>FCR</b>	Federal Crime Report
<b>FIA</b>	Federal Investigation Agency
<b>FIR</b>	First Investigation Report
<b>GSM</b>	Global System for Mobile Communication
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>IDEA</b>	Institute for Democratic Electoral Accountability
<b>IGF</b>	Internet Governance Forum
<b>IMCES</b>	International Ministerial committee for evaluation of websites
<b>INEC</b>	Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission
<b>ISP</b>	Internet Service Provider
<b>MIT</b>	Ministry of Information Technology
<b>NA</b>	National Assembly
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>ONI</b>	Open Net Initiative
<b>P@SHA</b>	Pakistan Software House Association
<b>PECB</b>	Prevention of Electronic Crime Bill
<b>PEMRA</b>	Electronic Media Regulatory Authority
<b>PML-N</b>	Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz
<b>PPO</b>	Press and Publications Ordinance
<b>PPP</b>	Pakistan People's Party
<b>PTA</b>	Pakistan telecommunication Authority
<b>PTI</b>	Pakistan Tehreek -e- Insaaf
<b>SIMs</b>	Subscriber Identification Module
<b>SNS</b>	Social Networking Sites
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Political accountability depicts one of the most intricate and slippery concepts that lacks a universal census among scholars in terms of understanding and application (Devas & Grant, 2003). In general terms political accountability presages to empowering citizens to castoff their corrupt politicians and capable to choose better representatives (Eckardt, 2008). This may be achieved by direct (elections) or indirect (media watch dogs) approaches (Mainwaring, 2003). This phenomenon is labeled by scholars with different names such as answerability (Uglade, 2002), responsibility (Bovens, 1998), and effectiveness (Metcalf, 1998).

Political accountability is an essential characteristic of democratic government, in the sense that its denote an instrument capable of making government accountable to general public. It is an integral aspect of good governance, which essentially checkmate the manner in which public power is utilized in the quest for ensuring greatest happiness for the greatest number (Gerven, 2005). When applied to democratic governments, the concept means elected officials are accountable to the citizenry of a particular country by adhering to the dictums of constitution, serving the interest of the generality and delivering public services in equitable and efficient manner. It is imperative to note that a fully functional parliamentary and free and fair

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## APPENDICES

### A: Informants: List of Interview

1. Javid Ashiq shah, Lawyer at bar civil court Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.
2. Malik Zafar, Senior Lawyer at civil court Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.
3. Naveed Rao, Lawyer at civil court Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan.
4. Subh Sadiq, Senior lawyer general secretary bar association Multan, Punjab, Pakistan
5. Shahzada khurram, Assistant professor, The Islamia University Bahawalpur, Punjab Pakistan.
6. Fareeha Razaq, Teacher at Government school Bahawalpur, Punjab Pakistan.
7. Saba Khan, Lecturer Sadiq Women University Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan.
8. Rana Sajid, Assistant professor, Government College University Faisalabad, Punjab Pakistan.
9. Tariq Gori, Ex District Nazim Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.
10. Farukh Habib, Member National Assembly, Faisalabad, Punjab Pakistan.
11. J. Tareen, Senior politician ex Member National Assembly, Multan, Pakistan
12. Rafiuddin Shah, Senior Politician, Multan, Punjab Pakistan.
13. Dr. Liqueate, Social Media blogger, Lahore, Punjab Pakistan.
14. Anwar Lodi, Social media blogger active on Twitter and Facebook, Lahore, Punjab Pakistan.
15. Dr. Mansoor, Social media blogger Active on Twitter, Lahore, Punjab Pakistan.
16. Fayez Ahmad, Social media blogger, Active on Twitter and Facebook, Lahore, Pakistan.
17. Mr. Mateen, Senior Journalist, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.
18. Mr Naeem, Anchor Person at TV channel, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.
19. Shahid Zamani, Ex Program Director at Radio Pakistan, Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan.
20. Ammad Peerzada, Anchor Person at News Channel, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.