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Risk Perceptions when participating in public debates on digital platforms

Masteroppgave i Applied computer science
Veileder: Gaute Wangen
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Abstract

Social media is a source that spreads many different emotions and elements which can lead to positive or negative impacts on society. A study of elements like fake news and misinformation further excels in discussing the possible risks of joining social media. People falling prey to the spread of fake news is real. Panic and rush in an individual's mind and among the society are some of the common outcomes of this spread of misleading information. The defined elements can help an individual make effective decisions towards using social media as a source of information. One will also get aware of necessary precautionary measures to protect personal information on social networking sites. Plus using social media to give your views about certain topics and debating with others has become a part of our life. But every thing has it positives and negatives. This paper discusses common risks and their potential solutions associated with social media and people debating on social media. It also discusses how individuals perceive news on social media.

Sammendrag

Sosiale medier er en kilde som sprer mange forskjellige følelser og elementer som kan føre til positive eller negative påvirkninger på samfunnet. En studie av elementer som falske nyheter og feilinformasjon utmerker seg ytterligere i å diskutere mulige risikoer ved å bli med på sosiale medier. Folk som blir bytte for spredning av falske nyheter er ekte. Panikk og rush i tankene til et individ og blant samfunnet er noen av de vanligste resultatene av denne spredningen av villedende informasjon. De definerte elementene kan hjelpe en person til å ta effektive beslutninger om å bruke sosiale medier som en kilde til informasjon. Man vil også bli oppmerksom på nødvendige forholdsregler for å beskytte personlig informasjon på sosiale nettverkssider. Pluss å bruke sosiale medier for å gi deg synspunkter om visse emner og diskutere med andre har blitt en del av livet vårt. Men alle ting har det positive og negative. Denne artikkelen diskuterer vanlige risikoer og deres potensielle løsninger knyttet til sosiale medier og mennesker som debatterer på sosiale medier. Den diskuterer også hvordan enkeltpersoner oppfatter nyheter på sosiale medier.

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Topic covered

If you allow people to debate freely, they end up misusing the opportunity to their own benefit. This is how social media is being misused to win debates for personal satisfaction. Social media debates are an example of an unmonitored conversation between random sources quoting fake reports to support their argument.

Another case is when social media accounts are used to spread fake news to get more attention to your page. Creating havoc brings more activity to your posts. For example, a fake, controversial quote from a celebrity will bring an audience to your post, commenting and showing concern. Moreover, people read this news and share it further without verifying it from multiple sources. This spread of fake news and misuse of freedom in social media debates is covered in this paper.

Social media is a wide-open platform where registering yourself has some risks associated with it. Individuals usually join social media at an age when they are too young to understand these risks. An individual must be 13 years old by regulations from social media platforms to get registered. However, many underage children use social media by giving in false information[12].

This paper tends to cover whether the thought process or approach behind sharing an opinion on social media changes for people based on their location's rules or their purpose. If one country has strict social media regulations compared to another, do the residents behave accordingly. The focus of the paper relies on how people perceive the idea of public debating on social media. Do they consider the risks involved? Do they know what can be the consequences of spreading fake or unverified news? If there are consequences for misusing social media for an individual, what are they, and how are they implemented?

1.2 keywords

Social Media, Fake News, public debates, laws, risks , Pakistan , Norway

1.3 Problem description

A "wrong" opinion or supposition expressed on social media often leads to false news headlines and, in other cases, brings about the fierceness of the internet warriors. Generally, a group or like-minded people indulge in some discussions only to achieve their hidden agendas or gain attention. Some people with anger issues overlook the consequences and utter words without thinking. These words can cause a lot of harm, like psychological damage, harassment, fear, emotional distress, suicide, political disturbance, etc. Sometimes, just to win a debate, certain people present wrong facts and irrational arguments, which are quickly spread by individuals. In this time of age, it is very hard to stop these lies and false assumptions once they are spread. They can ruin a person's reputation and hard work in seconds. Even those people who circulate these fabrications can face major consequences, like a defamation lawsuit or worse. People can start to target them as a person who spreads lies. Likewise, other individuals can begin to target the deceivers as well. In many cases, expressing feelings or inner views has prompted long-term stalking and harassment. For instance, if somebody criticizes a personality as influential as Roger Federer, his fans may not acknowledge it, and they may begin to abuse that individual on the web. This is a serious issue created by people when they just voice wrong opinions on social media and try to win petty debates. In some countries, the punishment for spreading fake news is much more than others, this can be another factor that affects the way a debater thinks during debates on social media. Consequently, putting themselves in danger and hurling their criticizers in harm's way. This thesis aims to examine all the risk perceptions when participating in public debate on digital platforms.

1.4 Justification, motivation, and benefits

The importance of the issue raised in this thesis can be identified by the damage it has already caused. So many defamation cases and lawsuits have risen due to false accusations made through social means. This is just one example of how social media is involved in the spread of fake allegations. Another example is when pages share fake news to increase engagement on their post and it is further shared by individuals after getting alarmed by it. It only takes a few minutes for fake news to spread all over social media.

Different countries have laid different foundations for the regulations and censorship of social media content. Countries like China and North Korea are known for inflexible and rigid ordinance when it comes to social media.

Other parts of the world like the UK, and the US intend to strike a balance between freedom of speech, and implementation of social media laws to minimize hate speech and harassment. These differences led to the general public having very different perceptions about social media limitations from their respective countries[55].

This paper addresses the issues pertaining to spread of misinformation through social media means in detail. It addresses the risks involved for an individual joining social media. Any individual will learn about what goes wrong on social media and how they can avoid being part of the bandwagon. If individuals learn the risks addressed in this project and start taking necessary precautions needed before accessing social media, they could reduce the damage done through spread of fake news.

Risk awareness is one of the benefits of this paper and if considered can protect many from suffering any damages through social media. This project specifically targets social media debates. It addresses what these debates are usually like and how they become a source of spreading misinformation. Why people debate and why voicing fake opinions has become a common practice. If individuals understand this, they can avoid getting deceived by the fake opinions they see in public debates. Also does laws of different countries protect people and are people aware of them. Hence stopping the spread of misleading information and preventing havoc from being caused in the public.

1.5 Research questions

What are the typical consequences of voicing a fake opinion on social media during debates?

Are there common risks a person must accept if he/she wishes to enter the public debate on social media?

When people see an opinion during public debates do they simply accept it?Do they check the credibility of the news before spreading it?

Do people think that laws of different countries affect the way a person thinks during public debates?

1.6 Planned contributions

This project intends to give a better understanding of the risks surrounding social media platforms as a source of information. It aims to educate individuals on how they can be unknowingly involved in the spread of misleading

information. It aims to inform the readers about the dangers of sharing personal information on public platforms. Using the knowledge from this paper individuals can make better decisions and take appropriate precautions before joining social media or before letting an underage individual join it. This will also be a guide for parents or guardians to assist their children with the right safety measures for using social media. Plus it will aware people that their opinion matters so when they participate public debates they should be careful as their are risks to it.

2 Background

2.1 Digital platforms

2.1.1 What is Social Media

One way to define social media is as an internet based form of communication. Social media allows its users to exchange messages, share information and web content. There are multiple types of social media platforms designed for different means of communication. These types include blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo-sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and more[14].

"Social media is the term often used to refer to new forms of media that involve interactive participation"[24]. Social media is usually an app or a website that allows users to connect and share content with each other[16]. These platforms allow users to share their content with maximum audiences in real-time very efficiently. Initially social media was limited to websites and was accessed through computers or laptops, however, since the emergence of smartphones, social media applications on Android and iOS have become more common.

Although internet chatting started in 1988, and became widespread during the early 90's, the first ever social media site was created in 1997 called Six Degrees. The platform allowed its users to create their profiles and add new friends. When in 1999 blogging websites came into existence social media started becoming a trend[13].

Before social media the most used methods of mass communication were radio, television, or newspapers. However, these means followed strict restrictions to ensure what and what shall not be published. Comparatively, social media have little or no check against what someone is sharing with masses. So unauthentic, violent, and fake sources have got themselves a platform to misreport any news they want.

Twitter is a platform that is known for short messages and links, Instagram is famous for sharing photos, TikTok and YouTube are two widely used platforms for video sharing. Facebook is the most used social media platform that has 2603 million users, as of July 2020, and is a source for all sorts of links, posts, pictures, videos, etc.

2.1.2   How Social Media Works

Since there are many different social media platforms, the specifics may differ for each one, but a user starts with signing-up on social media usually using an email address and providing a name [16]. Once they log-in they have access to their own profile which they can shape as they wish. You make connections on your social media profile with other people on the platform. This aspect has no limit to it so you can relate to as many people as you wish to, of course based on mutual consent. Different ways of making connections on social media include following, adding as a friend, and liking or subscribing to a page.

When you create and share content on your social media profile it is visible to all your connections, for example, if you upload a picture on Instagram all your followers can view it, react to it and comment on it. A social media feed is a series of posts that a user views when they open their app. Social media algorithms organize this content on a user's feed based on their device's data. This feed includes content from the people that the user follows and, in some cases, paid content too that someone intends to promote.

2.2   Public Debates

2.2.1   What are Public Debates on social media

Public debate refers to any debate that takes place in public where people put forward opposing perspectives to take part in an argument. When social media came into existence it was thought that it would now be easier to find people together reaching a common ground, but time has shown that is not the case at all. In fact, social media is known for integrating polarization, harassment, and other similar acts.

Social media is a platform to openly share thoughts, opinions, and personal media files. So, it comes down to people how and for what they use it. Since social media has people from all sorts of backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities, everyone can be affected in a different way. For people that are literate and have higher socioeconomic status, social media works as a source of information whereas less educated people might find it a distraction and get misguided.

When people of two different opinions come across each other on social media, they tend to get into a debate. You'll find people arguing over a topic as shallow as a comparison between two singers with thousands of

replies against each other. In this argument people use (not always) all sort of misleading and fake information to support their argument. Knowing that the debate is public, and anyone can see it and get misled by the misinformation shared. This reduces the quality of the debate and leaves no value for authenticity.

These social media public debates usually start with a post and continue with thousands of comments underneath it. On some occasions you'll find people targeting posts at each other for an argument. This may take place in a Facebook group. On twitter people give their opinion in the form of tweet. Then people start to respond to them. So the debate begins. These are just a few example of public debates on social media.

2.2.2 Which platforms are mostly used for public debates

Facebook

Facebook is a platform that allows users to connect with each other, share thoughts and photographs with each other, comment to share their views about something. They can also view and share videos[29]. Facebook is a very open platform with several public pages which have hundreds of thousands of followers. A page can be specific to any topic for example sports, politics, Hollywood, etc. Let's assume a sports page posts a picture to compare to known athletes which have huge fan following. Fans can be very enthusiastic, and they comment with stats and opinions to show why the person they support is better than the other. This triggers fans into heated debates which sometimes leads to people getting personal and making comments they should avoid. They even post fake stats to support their arguments. Other people who are merely spectators in this debate may or may not believe these stats and share them elsewhere. This leads to false information spreading throughout the internet.

Pages deliberately post content to trigger such arguments to bring more and more activity on their profile. More activity means more viewers which eventually leads to more followers. This is how pages on social media manipulate people to increase their following.

Twitter

Twitter is a platform where most celebrities directly comment their opinions about on- going things in the world."Twitter user tweet about any

topic within the 140-280-character limit and follow others to receive their tweets"[20]. With over 100 million daily active users and 500 million tweets sent daily Twitter is one of the most widely used social platforms. It is known for having high profile celebrities who directly share their thoughts and opinions here[10]. It is also very active for news updates. However, some people create fake accounts of celebrities and pretend to be official. They continue to share controversial opinions under the name of a celebrity to increase hatred against them. Of course, it can be verified whether a tweet came from a celebrity's official account or not, but most people don't get into that. This is just one example of how twitter is used to spread misleading information.

2.2.3 What types of news are found in public debates?

Fake news

Any false information presented as news is fake news. Fake news can consist of fake quotes or fake stats.Fake news can usually be of two types, the first is an entirely made up news which never happened, whereas second is where the news consists of half-truth to represent the wrong meaning, or in some cases over-exaggerated[27]. It can also mean a rumor started by any social media page that was started to bring attention to their account. Fake news on social media has led masses into polarization over political topics. Fake news can reduce the impact of real news by competing with it; a Buzzfeed analysis found that the top fake news stories about the 2016 U.S. presidential election received more engagement on Facebook than top stories from major media outlets[42].

Real news

Anything that interests many people is news. Real news covers incidents that happened and weren't made up by an individual for personal gain. The use of real news in public debates leads to healthy arguments where people learn from each other and improve their knowledge.

Credibility news

A news' credibility depends on its source. If a source has a history of sharing fake news, any new news coming from it will not be considered trustworthy.

However, if a source is known for updating people with real, accurate news then any upcoming news from it will be deemed credible. The reliability of the source behind the news determines its credibility. The reliability of the source behind the news determines its credibility. According to journalists, code of ethics and professional integrity are the two core pillars of credibility when it comes to reliability of any news[47].

News that affects others

News can affect a society in many ways. whether it is authentic or not, real, or not, it does have an impact on someone in some way. All the exposure we get to the negative information of the state of the world is likely to affect our mood or our state of mind. The impact of severe news events like terrorist attacks shows that people had increased stress levels and anxiety. Other negative news updates like inflation also leads to similar results.

No research is done on whether other daily news updates affect the public or not. But negative news is a stressor, and when someone is exposed to a stressor it is appraised. The cognitive appraisal theory is a theory in psychology which states that emotions are extracted when we evaluate an event. This theory justifies why people have specific reactions to different news events. If someone supports a sports team, the news of the team's loss will extract a very different emotion from the supporter than from someone who doesn't even watch the sport.

Coming down to a broader perspective, at political level negative rumors are started by one political party to defame another. This leads to a havoc for the victim party when they become questionable and must face the media and the party supporters, and eventually end up losing votes. Any big hit to the stock market would see investors getting disturbed. Market manipulation is done to interfere with free and fair operation of any service, product, commodity, or currency

2.3   Laws and Regulations

Every department or every field is advised to operate within the limitations defined by the superior authorities. These laws and regulations are there to maintain order and to avoid any unethical actions from taking place. Similarly, there are some laws and regulations defined to keep in control the spread of fake news through social media and other means. It is understandable that there are different laws in different parts of the world. While some

countries follow them very strongly, others have kept it very lenient. Law is something that governs what we can and cannot do[31].

2.3.1 Defamation

Defamation is any statement that damages the reputation of another individual or party[52]. Defamation is one example to explain how laws can be against false news. Defamation refers to any wrongful act or publication or circulation of a false statement or representation made orally or in written or visual form which damages the reputation of a person, tends to lower him in the estimation of others or tends to reduce him to ridicule, unjust criticism, dislike, contempt or hatred shall be actionable as defamation. Although freedom of speech is supported, there are strict laws around the world against defamation.

2.3.2 Laws for spreading wrong news

Different countries have passed laws to consider any spread of misinformation through any social media means. Journalists, photographers, and other people who spread false information to cause discomfort or harm to someone have been arrested in different parts of the world. Some countries have even launched separate departments to investigate the matter of false news.

2.3.3 Risk perception

Risk perception refers to subjective judgment of individuals that they make about the severity and the characteristics of any risk[44]. Risks perceptions can vary because of their dependence on multiple factors for example, an Individual's mood, emotions, feelings, etc. Social media websites and applications have some risks associated with them and perceptions vary.

The psychological approach of risk perception states that positive emotions lead to an optimistic perception of risks whereas negative emotions can lead on to build a negative perception[21]. This theory highly believed by psychologists is called the Valence theory of risk perception. Positive emotions are categorized as optimism and happiness whereas negative emotions can be classified as fear or anger.

The major risks associated with social media include depression, anxiety, loneliness, self-harm, and even suicidal thoughts. Other perceptions about risks triggered by the use of social media include some negative experiences

like an inadequate feeling about your life, social media harassment, constant unwanted connection requests, cyberbullying, FOMO, etc[35].

Social media is used by people to share the best moments of their lives, or the best version of themselves. This is often done with manipulated pictures but it still leads to a feeling of inadequacy for the viewer despite knowing the picture might be edited. For example, viewing your friends fitness pictures, or another friend's trip to a beautiful island, leads to a feeling of envy and dissatisfaction. Such feelings can get everlasting and may damage an individual's mental health[35]. The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has existed since forever, but it is the frequent use of social media that has triggered it among the recent generation. Constantly looking at what others are experiencing only gives you the feeling that people are living a better life than you. However, that's not true, no one posts the low points of their lives. The increased use of social media also leads to triggered loneliness. To stay mentally healthy face to face contact with people that care about is essential. Interacting with social media sites for extended hours reduces that contact and sets off feelings of loneliness and anxiety[35].

A research was conducted to study the impact of social media in forming risk perception of the users. It is reported that risk perception also varies due to the emotional state of the perceiver[9].

3   Related work

The related work discussed in this thesis will be subject to each research question. Work done by different authors related to the topic will be discussed under each research question. The result will showcase the methods and approaches previously used for similar research questions in the past.

3.1   Consequences of voicing a fake opinion on social media during debates

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The term fake news has become a constant part of our life. We cannot keep fake news from falling on our ears, or from passing through our eyes. The concept of fake news has been there since forever and just like everything else, it also gets an advantage to spread faster with social media. It has spiked since the 2016 elections in the US, but fabrication and fake claims against someone is nothing new in politics. It has been used by political parties to manipulate the opinion of the public for personal gains[51].

The real-world consequences of fake news are yet to be properly defined, but the concern around it is constantly growing. A survey resulted in showing a strong tendency for third person perception. The third-person perception hypothesis predicts that individuals will perceive media messages to have greater effects on other people than on themselves[18].

Fake news has different definitions from different sources. Oxford dictionary defines fake news as "false reports of events, written Refuting fake news on social media," whereas other sources have defined it as ""fabricated information that mimics news media content," or as "news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers" [51].

Social media offers a lot of benefits to businesses, etc. for marketing because of how easy it is to share or spread your word to the target audience. Twitter and Facebook are two platforms very commonly used by businesses to share their content. However, when it comes to sharing misleading information, these platforms never lack in that area too. The emergence of fake news has become very common, in some cases it is so obvious that business owners do not even bother responding to it or put any effort into clarifying it. They understand that it's just a rumor and it will fade away with time. But that is just one consequence of fake news, there are other outcomes too.

In some cases, the consequences can be different. An organization could lose all its reputation over a single rumor, that was placed by someone, randomly debating, or arguing on social media. For example, a bad restaurant review using a fake profile by a competitor could tarnish years of effort if it reaches out to maximum people. To tackle these situations some practices are promoted, and businesses now usually consider them because the threat of losing your business over a single rumor is real. Different brands and different crises lead to different situations and a single strategy cannot solve all such problems. So, all organizations are encouraged to hypothesize their future needs and come up with a suitable strategy. Firstly, refutation strategies are used to win back the stakeholders' trust in the organization. It is suggested that constant communication with stakeholders is maintained to keep any fake news from escalating and solving the matter swiftly.

An experiment was conducted to see what happens when a post is made on Facebook of a known organization to falsely accuse it of a poor security system. The post was made against the American Red Cross and along with it, an article was shared which confirmed the source of the news was fake. The post reached 86 likes showing a broad reach in less time. This shows most people do not verify any news or claims against any organization they see on social media and start believing it.Further, the response was posted by the American Red Cross on their official Facebook page completely denying the accusation against them. The organization did not attack the accuser in its response in any way[51].

Another experiment conducted to find out what people think about fake news influencing them, and they were also asked if they think fake news will have any effect on their choice of candidate for elections. The results clearly predicted that third-person perception exists, and people usually think that fake news will affect others but not them. In this case, Democratic voters believed that the news would affect republican voters more than them whereas the republican voters thought otherwise. This tells us that American voters are very likely to believe that they are too smart to get influenced by fake news[32].

Another real example of fake news causing havoc is Roselyn Bachelor, French minister of health and sport accusing the world-famous tennis star, Rafael Nadal, of Doping in 2016 on live television[8]. She claimed that the 16-time grand slam winner had used illegal substances for his recovery from an injury that the athlete suffered in 2012. The news suddenly broke the internet and tennis fans argued all over social media platforms[38].

She claimed that the 16-time grand slam winner had used illegal substances for his recovery from an injury that the athlete suffered in 2012. The news suddenly broke the internet and tennis fans argued all over social media platforms [4]. Rival fans called him a cheat while favoring fans were out of words to defend their idol. Rafael Nadal's image was tarnished in front of the world in a matter of days without any proof. As a result, Nadal filed a defamation case against the accuser in Paris. He came out victorious and proved his innocence to the world. The accuser had to pay 10,000 euros as punishment which was later given away in charity by the tennis legend. "When I filed the lawsuit against Mrs. Bachelor, I intended not only to defend my integrity and my image as an athlete but also the values I have defended all my career," Nadal said in a statement " [38]. A perfect example of what consequences a piece of fake news can have and once accused what measures you can take to defend yourself.

3.2 Common risks a person must accept if he/she wishes to enter the public debate on social media.

Cyberbullying, harassments, stocking, other things that might happen to a person that enters public debates on social media. Social media is now used all over the world by billions of people. We are surrounded by devices like laptops and smartphones which offer constant access to social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Children are now growing up around these platforms and it is becoming a vital part of their life. It is now a social norm to share everything on social media. People use it to market their startups and businesses. Social media is feeding society positively as well as negatively. While the connectivity and business growth are very important, negative impacts like cyberbullying should be taken more into consideration. People continue to join and become a part of the social media family without any awareness of the risks it carries[36].

There are multiple risks that social media brings to businesses, education, healthcare, and society in general. Businesses risk being, widespread negative customer reviews, a mistake made on social media could go a long way, etc. It minimizes research capabilities in students, makes them uncomfortable for face to face communications, and leaves them with no motivation which adds to educational risks. People tend to get medical health on social media, but it carries a risk of the wrong perception, leading to incorrect diagnosis and treatment which is a huge risk[36].

The risks that social media brings to society can be very tragic. According to a report a great number of youngsters have been victims of digital bullying in the recent past. Anyone anywhere can send endangering or threatening messages without being tracked. Terrorizing messages are often sent to cause inconvenience. Another risk comes with a common internet crime, hacking. You set up your profile with your details and a hacker hacks it and shares it with the world. This has negatively influenced many lives in the past. Fraudulent activities are very common and there are several cases of people being scammed. Finally, the biggest risk comes with putting your reputation at stake. A false story about someone can bring damage to their image in a matter of minutes because everything can be shared very swiftly[36].

Online social networking gives people a chance to contact strangers. Teenagers who use social media are at risk of not knowing how to deal with online strangers. A stranger can message you or add you as a friend to initiate a conversation, with you having no idea of their intentions. 51.5 percent of

people accept friend requests from random people[56]. This exposes a huge number of people leaving their information for strangers to access. Therefore, there should be guidelines about what to do when a stranger approach you through social media. There is no relation between how much time is spent on social media by an individual and how often they are contacted by an unwanted stranger. Cyberbullying is the use of information and communication technology to harass and harm in a deliberate, repetitive, and hostile manner[4]. Cyberbullying ranges from online harassment to online stalking and identity theft but its effect on an individual can vary. While one may feel no harm from it, it might leave others full of stress[56].

A study surveyed 10,008 people including teenagers. The audience sample was aged 13–22 years old. It was found that 37 percent of teenagers experienced cyberbullying on a frequent basis. From 75 percent of the sample that used Facebook, 54 percent had experienced cyberbullying. Survey participants originated from the UK, USA, Australia, and other countries. Another study surveyed 802 teenagers aged 12–17 years old. It was discovered that, 95 percent had access to the Internet, 78 percent had a mobile phone, 47 percent owned a smartphone and 23 percent had a tablet computer. This statistic is enough to show how exposed teenagers are to be cyberbullied. Different types of cyber bullying include harassment, sexting, cyberstalking, impersonation, flaming and trickery[56]. 1282 students aged 12 to 15 participated in a survey in England to determine the most common form of cyberbullying. Abusive emails turned out to be the most popular form of cyberbullying. Other common forms of cyberbullying reported were prank calls and sharing of private information without consent. Abusive texts hate websites and happy slapping where people attack a victim for the purpose of recording the attack were the next in line in known forms of cyberbullying[56].

According to the US department of Justice 12 of women have been a victim of cyberbullying or cyber harassment at some point. A survey of 293 adult women was conducted to identify their cyberbullying experiences. 20 of the women responded by saying they did experience unwanted cyber harassment. Complaints made in the survey included receiving unsolicited sexually obscene messages on the Internet from someone they did not know, receiving a sexual solicitation on the Internet from someone, and threatened online. These actions came from both, known and unknown people. It also confirmed that these events lead to certain psychological symptoms. The three most common symptoms were shock and disbelief (38.1), anxiety (34.9), and fear for personal safety (24.6)[6].

Stats show that everyone on social media is exposed to the threat of cyberbullying. However, teenagers are not aware of that to the extent they should be. 1594 high school students were surveyed to agree or disagree with three statements: 1. An internet predator can contact me based on what I have posted online. 2. An internet predator can contact me based on what my friends have posted about me. 3. With the contact information I put on Facebook or Myspace, it would be easy for an Internet predator to find me. For these three statements, 73 percent of high school students disagreed with statement 1, 81 percent disagreed with statement 2 and 74 percent with statement 3. This shows that most teenagers on social media have no awareness of the risks they might be facing. Social media risks should be taught to teenagers before they find about them the hard way[4].

Systematic review about the influence of social media on mental health shows drastic risks. Results show how social media has become an addiction for many and the threats it poses to mental health. Spanned over a period of 29 years, from 1991 to 2020, the studies show that the effects of social media have increased with time. These effects include both, positive and negative outcomes. The increase in the number of platforms also shows that mental health effects are far reaching[41].

A study conducted to analyze the effects of healthcare updates on social media. The research considered opinions of both healthcare professionals and people not related to healthcare. Out of the 1622 participants, 68 percent belonged to the healthcare industry. Healthcare professionals showed a conservative response as they believe medicine should only be taken with doctor's prescription. On the other hand, non healthcare people preferred that there should be more news. This represents that people take medicine considering the knowledge they gain from social media. This leads to a massive health risk as people can take medicine without knowing any side effects, etc[17].

Another systematic review of 70 studies conducted between 2005 and 2016 talks about social networking sites and effects on human health. It is described that positive interaction and exchange of healthy messages on social media lightens up the mood and decreases the chances of depression and anxiety. However, negative posts and interaction can activate feelings of depression and anxiety. The positive or negative effects of social media are highly dependent on how an individual uses the platforms. People can choose what types of posts and people to engage with and what to steer clear off[39].

This is not the extent of the risks that social media possesses. Social media also increases the chances of one committing suicide. It is the severity of actions like cyberbullying, cyberstalking, cyber harassment, and threatening messages that has shown that people are more prone to committing suicide. Review of survey studies from 2004 to 2010 shows an increase in cyber victimization from 20.8 percent to 40.6 percent. A response to survey distributed among 2000 middle school children shows that cybercrime victims are twice as likely to commit suicide compared to those who are not. This is not it, social media is full of groups and sources guiding different methods of committing suicide. Social media may have support groups, but there are groups convincing people to harm themselves as well[23].

3.3   When people see an opinion during public debates do, they simply accept it.

Over recent years traditional media, generally called professional media, has lost several its users to social media. Social media has changed the way people look up for news. Social media has now become a part of professional media as a common source of news or information. On social media, people have the choice to control the news they wish to see on their news feed. They can follow sources of specific domains which they are interested in and would like to keep themselves updated with[53].

There are no methods or practices on social media platforms that ensure the authenticity and reliability of any news shared. For traditional media, the job was to review content and spread it to the public. However, social media users may or may nor review content, as most of them are content creators. Most of the information people come across in today's world is through social media. Social media since its emergence has taken over traditional media as the most common source of information but not as the reliable one. Sharing and spreading information on social media is very easy, whereas to check its credibility you must find reliable sources which there is no assistance for[22].

Research has been done to show how you can judge the credibility of information on social media, however there is still no check and balance from the social media platforms to filter out false news updates and keep them from uploading. A research was conducted to observe the dynamics of Facebook pages during the 2014 umbrella movement in Hong Kong. The results suggested that increased use of social media for information is due to the ease of availability and understanding. It also showed which factors influence the information on social media and which do not. Users also feel that social media information sources are not under any corporate control which allows the sharing of information without any boundaries[22].

Social media initially had limited access to it as people only used it with desktop or laptop computers. Now, with social media introduced on smartphones and other mobile devices people can access it remotely and it has become a part of their daily life. It provides a very smooth way to access information and share it further. 51 percent of people rely on social media for news updates, a study confirms. Another study confirmed that users do consider news organizations as more credible sources than social media platforms, however they only refer to them when the motivation is high [53].

A finding from a study in 2018 shows that participants share information on social media without being able to ascertain its credibility. It also showed that most people never stop to confirm a source's credibility before sharing it. Another study experimented on 'respondents' recall ability over perceptions of credibility'. The authors found that subjects discounted material from untrustworthy sources. In time, however, the subjects tended to dissociate the content from the source with the result that the original skepticism faded, and the untrustworthy material was accepted.' And it added that 'lies, in fact, seemed to be remembered better than truths.68 percent of participants of a study in Nigeria believed social media information was credible while only 29 percent thought it isn't [53].

A study of 350 participants was conducted to see how people of different age groups refer to social media as a news source. Although it showed that people of different age groups rely differently on social media, the older people also refer to other, traditional news sources compared to their younger counterparts. However, there is not much difference when it comes to believing in social media credibility based on age. All age groups that they do not check social media news for its credibility even if they hold a doubt against it., even though all age groups participate in sharing the news they find on social media. 30 percent of the participants also admitted that they use and share health advice they find on social media which can be very risky. Participants also agreed to sharing news that can cause security issues and lead to political instability. The issue of not checking the sources for certainty or credibility exists because of sheer lack of motivation[53].

Wrong health information can lead to additional diseases or death, misleading information can also cause chaos. Wrong information about economic circumstances can lead to bad buying or investment decisions. News on social media usually comes from undisclosed writers or sources and people usually discussing or sharing the news are not professional journalists [53].

Another study discussed how credible tweets are and how users determine their credibility. A software tweetcred was used in this study, an automatic credibility prediction tool. Tweetcred uses external data like meta-data, content-based simple lexical features, content-based linguistic features, author, external link URL's reputation, and author network to determine tweet credibility. The study compared the results of tweetcred and participant perception about the credibility of tweets. The study determined that people from different demographics tend to believe in tweets differently. The results

showed that readers are more trusting towards tweets compared to the results of an automated software. It is because the readers do not readily have access to any external data to check a tweet for its credibility[11]. These results suggest users to be more careful before trusting a tweet or before further sharing it. Readers usually focus on what they see on the surface and tend not to dig deeper. It also depends on a reader's demographic background and the topic of the tweet to determine how credible they think the tweet is[40].

3.4 laws of different countries affect the way a person thinks during public debates.

Social media and its laws are observed differently around the world. Different platforms face different limitations in different countries. The observance and implication of those laws, how strict it is and how regularly it is followed also varies from country to country. It is true that freedom of speech is a key aspect, but it is usually pushed to extremes. For example, racist or sexist comments are seen throughout different platforms and it is intolerable for some communities. Sometimes, a website is hosted in one country, operated in another while it gets views and comments from a third country. In this scenario, one country's laws go unnoticed by people in another and creates a tough situation for authorized personnel to handle[46].

Some of these platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram offer self-governance. According to Google 8.8 million videos were removed from YouTube between July and September 2019 where 93 percent of them were erased by machines before two-third of them even received a single view. In the same time frame Facebook removed 30.3 million pieces of content. Facebook has 35,000 employees around the world working on its safety and security[49].

Germany has a NetzDG law imposed since 2018 for platforms with more than 2 million users in the country. Laws are defined to remove illegal content within 24 hours and violation may lead to fine individuals for up to €5m (5.6m; £4.4m) and companies up to €50m. [15] The European Union on the other hand has strictly laws against terror videos where fines are imposed if the content is not removed within an hour. EU also keeps a check on how companies, including social media platforms, store and use people's data. Australia has strict punishment for social media companies. It gives possible jail sentences for tech executives for up to three years and fines worth up to 10 percent of a company's global turnover since it has passed the Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material Act in 2019. To monitor social media platforms and messages for political insensitivity China has hundreds of thousands of cyber police professionals. While Twitter, Google, and WhatsApp are blocked in China, they use Chinese alternatives like Weibo, WeChat, and Baidu[49].

According to a study, due to the constant increase of social media users and internet users, Indonesia has introduced laws to monitor the use of social media. Since violation of law has been recorded in the times of newspaper and television, this step seemed necessary[12]. Since there are people who

only use social media to conduct criminal acts and cyberbullying, Indonesia authorities have introduced the ITE act to regulate media content. The country believes that people in the virtual world need protection. It also keeps content from spreading around the world[5].

There are different laws being observed in various parts of the country. Many countries shape law based on their different criminal experiences, hence the preference in their laws differentiate. One country suffers from a different virtual crime than another, that leads to authorities taking different actions. Despite the complicated scenario, no work has been done to inspect how a user's behavior changes according to the laws they are surrounded by. A country giving massive fines and keeping a strong check will have its users thinking twice before making a post on social media, whereas in a country with poor implication of laws the users would easily comment hateful speech. Although freedom of speech is guaranteed, excessive freedom leads to unacceptable acts[11].

4 Method

4.1 Methodology background

This chapter covers information about methodology. The chapter describes theories about how to structure a research. It also explains what the philosophy of research is. Finally, it gives a foundation for the chapter of methodology where the approach for this thesis is described.

Different methods were considered to conduct the research to identify the most suitable option. To find the most suitable method discussion takes place to figure out the choice of philosophy of science, research design and characteristics of each design. Choosing the right method ensures we use the right way to gather data for further processes in the research. We engage the right audience to get the results as accurate as possible. Most of the methods are used by both quantitative/positivist and qualitative/constructivist researchers but to different extents[28].

A thesis can have multiple research questions and each one of them can require a different methodology. Choosing the methodology comes down to the question's requirement. In this thesis there are four research questions and multiple approaches were required. The method selected were qualitative methods. Survey and interview were choose to carry out this research. Also To achieve the desired target which are interested in social media debates these methods were best for them.

Since public debating on social media is a broad topic, it was more suitable to reach out to a larger audience for the research questions. To reach maximum audiences conducting in-depth surveys was chosen as the best option. Generally, surveys are a method of collecting data from a sample of audience which can be applied to a larger audience[33]. When there's a need for responses from a larger audience, you distribute surveys among a sample of the complete population. A survey is a defined set of questions which can include both, open-ended and closed-ended questions for the responder to answer. However, surveys are not monitored by the researcher and the user answers them in an environment of their choice, this can even result in misinterpretation of questions from the participant. Surveys have some benefits as you can use them when you need responses from a geographically wide location. Surveys allow participants to remain anonymous while they answer the questions which can result in more honest answers. Another drawback of a survey is that it offers a low return rate in

reference to its distribution. Many people avoid the survey or don't take out the time to answer it.

The research questions on this thesis requires collection of qualitative data. Interview is a data collection method that is commonly used for qualitative research design. An interview is designed to understand the personal experience from a participant's perspective. It consists of in-depth questions conducted with a small group of people. Interviews usually consist of open-ended questions which lead to follow-up questions which the interviewer asks depending on the participant's answers. This method is only suitable in case of a smaller population. In comparison to a survey, an interview helps retrieve reasons behind certain answers and perspectives, whereas a survey only gives the user a limited option to select an answer from (in most cases).

In most cases research varies between two primary types, qualitative and quantitative. For qualitative data in-depth knowledge is gathered as primary focus revolves around the quality of the data. Methods used to collect qualitative data includes interviews, observations, or questionnaires. Participants for qualitative design are usually selected by the researcher or they are enlisted, but never drawn at random. The data gathered is then analyzed and discussed upon to find results. However, for quantitative data the primary focus shifts to the number of participants. Data is collected from many audiences drawn at random. Data is gathered by using questions which are usually closed ended. The results of these questions are easy to measure, and statistics can be used on them. This is primarily the difference between qualitative and quantitative. Both quantitative and qualitative data play important roles in our understanding of populations and processes[15].

In some cases, research designs are used where there is a mix of qualitative and quantitative approach. In such cases qualitative methods are used to create hypotheses followed by quantitative methods to test the hypotheses. This project requires three different methodologies to be followed for four different research questions.

4.2 Research design

In research design, the main reason is to lay a foundation for how to collect data. How my research was conducted and how i did things in this research.

4.2.1 Data Gathering

To further continue the research data gathering methods were introduced and implemented. The methods used to collect data included questionnaires and interviews. Two different methods were used to gather data for the research questions. Questionnaires were prepared to aid the need of a quantitative approach whereas the purpose of conducting interviews was to collect qualitative data.

4.2.2 Questionnaires(Survey)

Online surveys are a great way to reach out to maximum audience through cheaper and faster means[45]. The purpose of the survey is to reach out to a sample big enough to represent a large population. A survey needs extensive planning, time and effort to be implemented correctly[19]. Nettskjema were used to make the survey. The survey consisted of multiple questions of different types. The two main types of questions are open ended questions and closed-ended questions. The survey only included a limited number of open ended questions since participants usually avoid detailed questions and not answer sufficiently. The closed-ended questions included multiple-choice, checkbox, ranking, and rating questions. The aim of the questions was to identify the behavior of individuals and their understanding of authenticity of news and information on social media. The survey is included in the Appendix in the end.

4.2.3 Survey Distribution

The demographic distribution of the survey required it to be distributed to social media users only. So, the right users were reached by distributing the survey through social media means.The purpose of using social media means to spread the questionnaire was to ensure the survey reaches a maximum number of users of social networking sites. By sharing it on the researcher's public profile and by posting it in relevant groups as well. The link to the survey was also shared on social media platforms through 'stories' for the ones that follow the concept. The link to the survey was spread through

the author's personal profiles on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Snapchat. Also the link of was posted on many Reddit forms.

The survey was distributed to achieve at least 180-250 responses. Which was then filtered to remove any ambiguous responses. The target of the distribution was to reach out to people of different age groups and genders to keep the audience diverse. But in this research i wanted to target the people of Norway and my home country Pakistan. So the survey was distributed to those countries platforms like groups on Facebook of people living in these two countries. If i got response from any other country i did not include them in the analysis part.

4.2.4   Interview

Interviews are a unique form of data collection method which require social interaction and training[26]. The interview is an important data gathering technique involving verbal communication between the researcher and the subject[25]. The purpose of interviews is to retrieve personal opinions from individuals and have a chance to get insights that you can't get from a survey. To select a candidate for the interview they were first given a survey to identify how often they use social media and similar questions. Finally, they were asked if they would be interested in a detailed interview about their experiences as a social media debates. The results of this survey helped us identify the right candidates for the interview. Due to the pandemic it wasn't possible to conduct the interviews physically hence a virtual approach was used. Interviews were conducted on audio calls which were recorded. The questions in the interview were about personal experiences of debating online on social media debates . Also experiences of individuals with the implementation of laws on social media debates. There were limited predefined questions but follow up questions during the interview were added. The time prescribed to each interview was fifteen minutes to thirty minutes. A total of 14 interviews were conducted. Seven people from Norway and Seven people from Pakistan.

4.2.5   Data analysis

Data analysis is done to find the results from the data collected. The data is processed to bring out the most important information from it. Data analysis organizes large data into small chunks and makes them readable[34]. Data received from questionnaires was arranged to quantify information out of it. A total of 226 were recorded in the survey. But i selected 186

for analysis part as they were people who some experience in debating on social media platforms or had some sort of interest in it. This was done by a question which was asked in the survey(see in the Appendix). All the data from the questionnaires was added to a data analysis tool, in this case, Microsoft Excel and SPSS. SPSS was used to arrange data and apply formulas on it such as averages, means or standard deviations. The data was also transformed to graphical form to make it more intuitive and readable. I also applied the one way Anova test and student t test to check if there is significance between the groups.

The interview is a source of qualitative data. It consists of in-depth responses from participants in written form. These responses from interview were then described by using the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as interview transcripts. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes and the describing those themes[7].

5 Results

This chapter takes the answers from the distributed questionnaires and analyses the answers from the questionnaire. The chapter also has the answers from the interviews that were taken for this research. This chapter will introduce the results of the data analysis. I will just explain the results in this chapter, however, most of the discussion about them will take place in next chapter.

A total of 226 were recorded in the survey. But i selected 186 for analysis part as they were people who had some experience in debating on social media platforms or had some sort of interest in it. Plus there was no significant difference between the groups in these results to report after checking through various tests(One way Anova test ans student t test).

5.1 General information

5.1.1 Gender Distribution
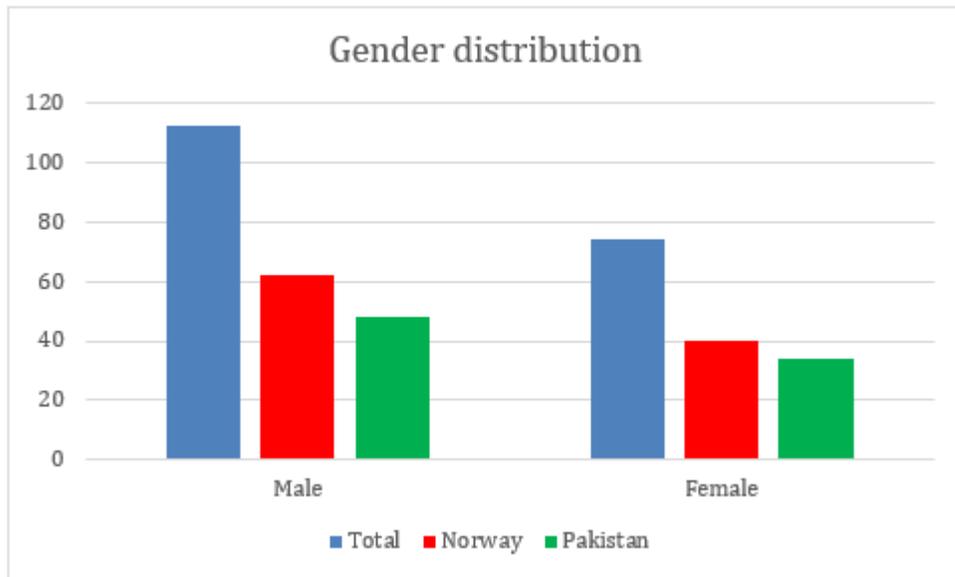
Fig 1 Gender Distribution

Fig 1 shows the distribution of the survey by gender. Total number of surveys distributed among participants was 186. The recorded responses

included 110 male responses, and in contrast, a total of 76 female participants answered the questionnaire. This gives a slight bias towards males, with a distribution of 60.21 percent males against 39.79 percent females. The ration of male and female from Norway was 62 to 40 which is good a distribution between male and female. As it is almost 60 percent male and 40 percent female. From Pakistan we got almost 57-43 ratio as there was like 48 male and 36 females, respectively.

5.1.2   Education level
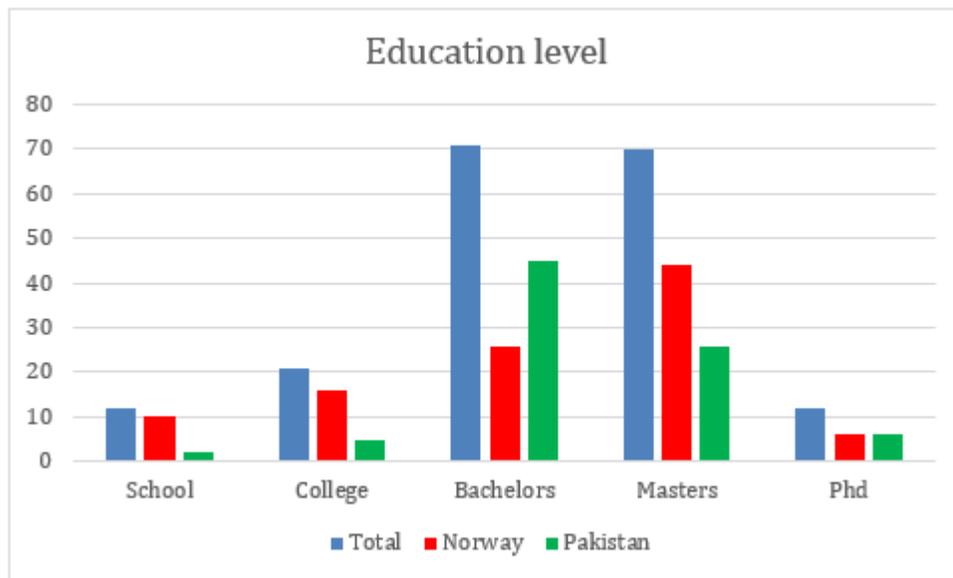
Fig 2 Education level

Fig 2 shows graphical representation of the education level of each of the respondents. The graphs shows that 12 of the survey participants had completed school, 21 completed college, 71 had done a bachelor's degree, and 70 of them had completed post-graduation. Only 12 of the respondents had done PHD. We deduce that most of the respondents were well educated and had graduated college. The people from education level of school in Norway were only 12 and Pakistan were zero. The people from education level college in Norway were 16 and 5 people were from Pakistan. There were a lot of interest from bachelors' level from Pakistan as 45 people filled the survey and 25 from bachelors in Norway. The numbers switches on master education sector as 44 from Norway and 27 from Pakistan in master education

level. From PhD sector 6 people from Norway and 6 people from Pakistan with PhD education level. We can conclude that most of the people had at least bachelors' level which is good.

5.1.3 Country Distribution
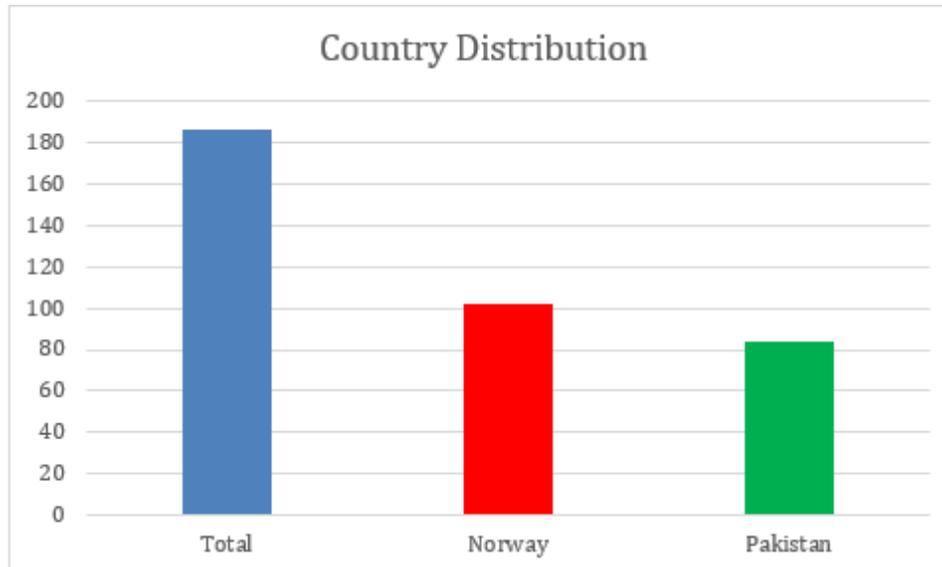
Fig 3 Country Distribution

Fig 3 shows the nationalities of the participants of the questionnaire. 82 Pakistanis and 104 Norwegians responded to the survey. So, 55.9 percent of the data is represented by people living in Norway. The rest 44.1 is the data of people living in Pakistan. As we mostly needed data from these two countries, so this was a good distribution as it is not far from 50-50 which would have the best scenario.

5.1.4 Age group Distribution

Fig 4 classifies the participants of the survey by their age. five options were given for this question which included 10-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, and 51 or older in that order. The total responds from age 10-20 were 23 people which is a little low but maybe they are not in to debates at this early age.
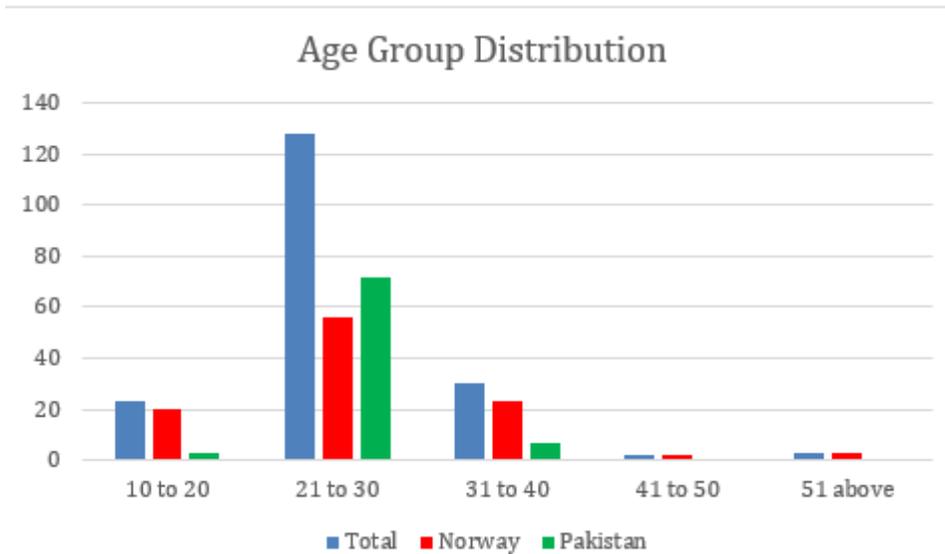
Fig 4 Age group Distribution

The age category from 21-30 had the most responds as almost 130 people responded. Next the people with 31-40 had like 25 responds. Then the number of responds decreases as we go above 40 as only few responds came from 41-50 and above 51 categories. As we know social media can be a mystery for old people so may be they did not like answering survey related to social media. The responds are mostly from people between 20 to 40 age which is a mature age as they are not under age of 18. The responds from Norway were also more in the 21-30 age category and 31-40. From Pakistan the mostly people responded had age of 21-30.

5.1.5 Time spent on social media in a a day

Fig 5 is a visual representation of the time spent on social media every day by the participants. 42 respondents said they spend less than 2 hours where as 29 participants claimed to spend more than 5 hours on social networking platforms. A majority of 52 survey participants said they spend 2-3 hours a day using social media. 38 participants claimed to spend 3-4 hours, and 25 said they spend 4-5 hours using social media every day.
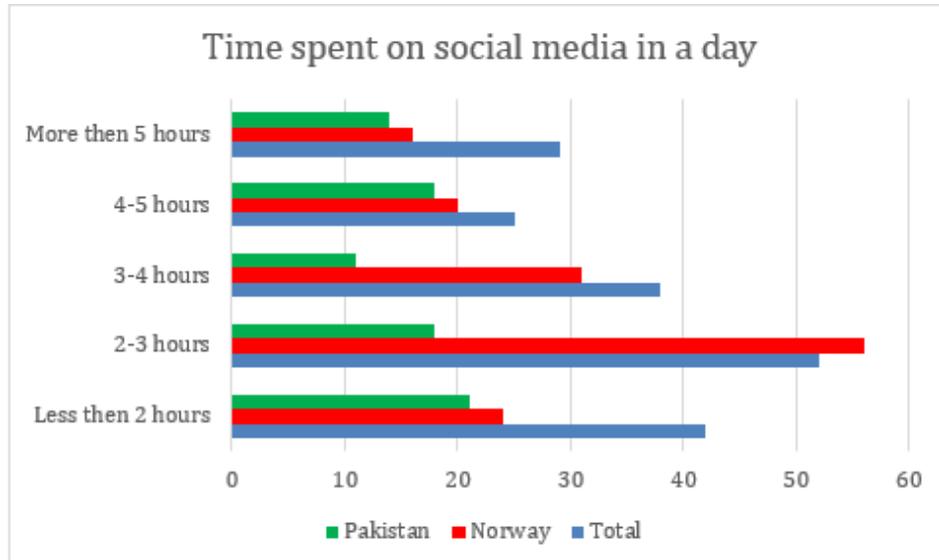
Fig 5 Time spent on social media in a a day

So, almost 76 percent response is from the people who spent more than 2 hours on social media every day which shows they spend a lot of time on social media. The most response from Norway were also from above 2 hours. More then 75 percent of the responds from Norway spent at least 2 hours minimum on social media every day. The respond from Pakistan also has like 71 percent from the category who spent more then 2 hours on social media in a day.

5.1.6 Frequency of social media platforms used

Fig 6 is the representation of the question that shows the frequency of social media platforms used. With 131 users from the responded, Facebook as their most used platform. On the 2nd number was Instagram platform with 114. Twitter and Reddit both had almost the same numbers of users as 68 and 66, respectively. Quora had the least number of users using it as only 14 people said they use it for public debates. Some people use other platforms like YouTube, WhatsApp etc they had like 44 responds. The most used platform in Norway is also Facebook. Then Instagram and Twitter, respectively.
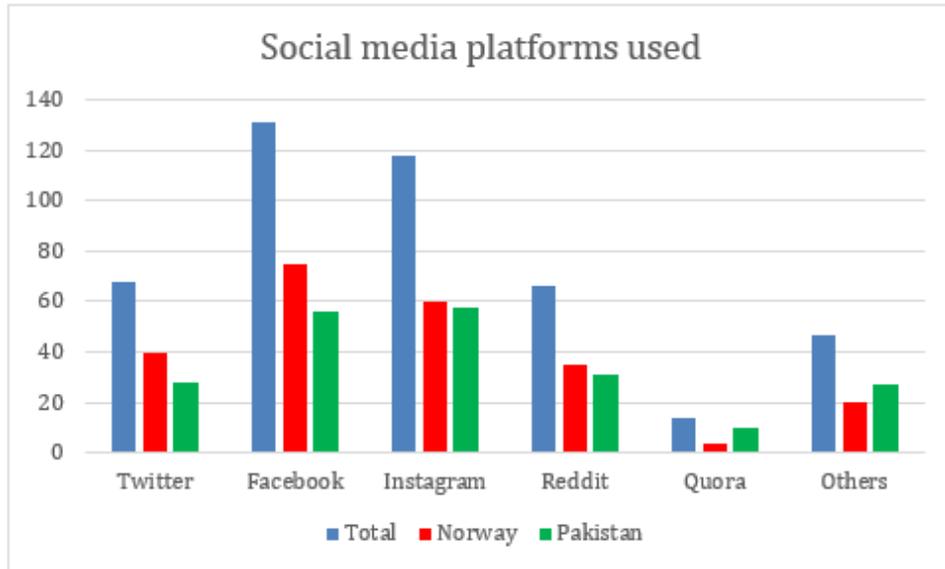
Fig 6 Frequency of social media platforms used

From Pakistan the most used platform is Instagram and Facebook as they have almost equal number of responds near 60. Reddit and Twitter come after these two platforms which also has the same number of responds near 30.

5.1.7   Social media debates grab their attention

According to this figure 7, 79 people out of 186 said that social media debates grab their attention while they are on social media which is like 42.5 percent. 86 people said that sometimes it does grab their attention and sometimes it does not which is equal to 46.2 percent. While 21 people said No, public debates do not grab their attention which equal to 11.3 percent. So almost 90 percent people have some sort of interest in public debates as it grabs their attention. Almost 90 percent from Norway also responded yes or sometime to if public debates on social media grabs their attention.
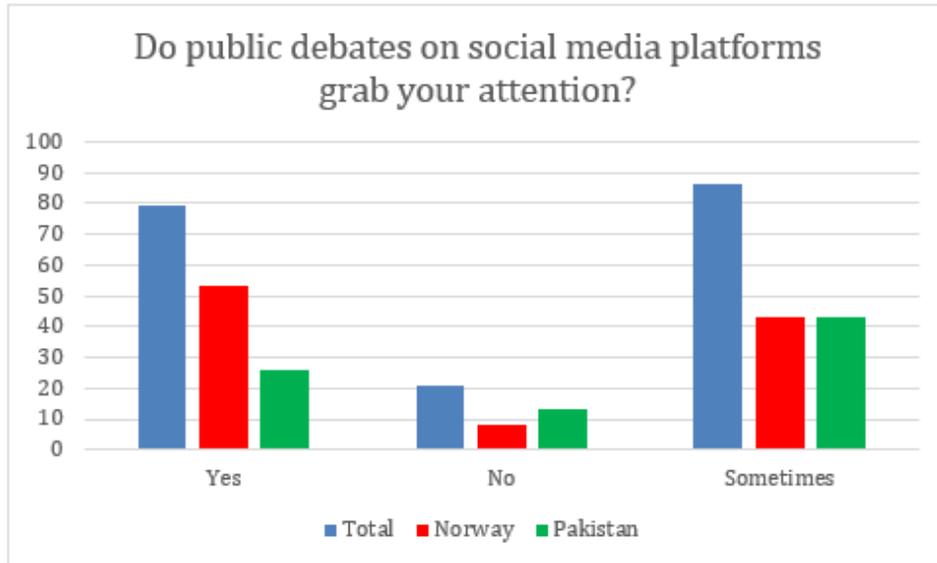
Fig 7 Social media debates grab their attention

Almost 85 percent from Pakistan also responded yes or sometime to if public debates on social media grabs their attention.

5.1.8 Do people like debating on social media
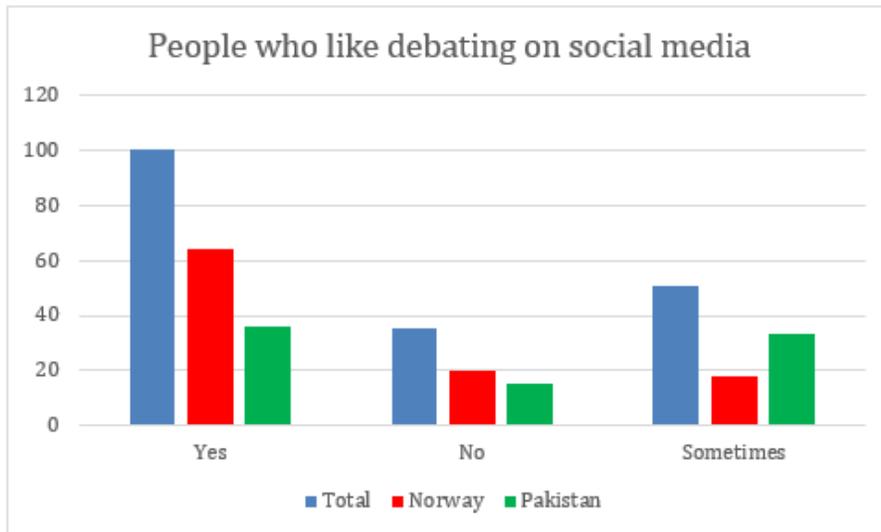
Fig 8 People like debating on social media

According to this figure 8, 100 people out of 186 said that they like debating on social media which is like 53.7 percent and 51 people said that they like debating on social media sometimes which is equal to 27.4 percent. While 35 people said they have no interest in debating on social media, which equal to 18.8 percent. So, 81.2 percent people like debating on social media platforms which is again a high number. Almost 80 percent from Norway also responded yes or sometime to if they like debating on social media platforms. Almost 83 percent from Pakistan also responded yes or sometime to if they like debating on social media platforms.

5.1.9 Platform used for debating on social media
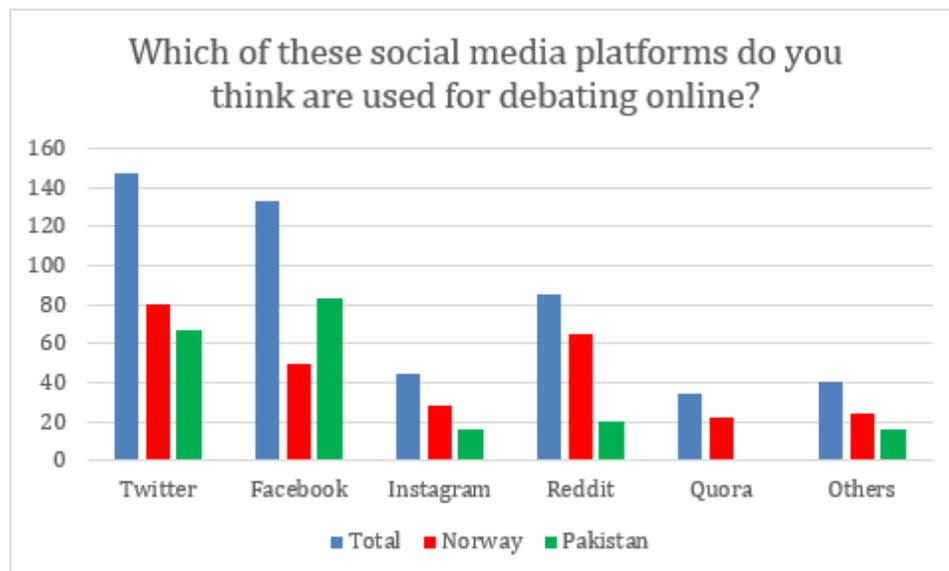
Fig 9 Platform used for debating on social media

According to figures 9, Twitter is the most used platform for debating online. 147 people said they use twitter for debating. The 2nd most used platform for online debating is Facebook as 133 people said they use Facebook for debating online. The 3rd most used platform for debates is Reddit as 85 people use it for debating. Instagram and Quora are used the most least as 44 and 34 respectively by people according to the survey. From Norway the most platform used for debating is also Twitter. Reddit is the 2nd most used platform for debates online in Norway, while the third is Facebook. From Pakistan the most used platform for debates is Facebook. Twitter is in the 2nd place from Pakistan.

5.1.10   Is debating online is a good thing or not
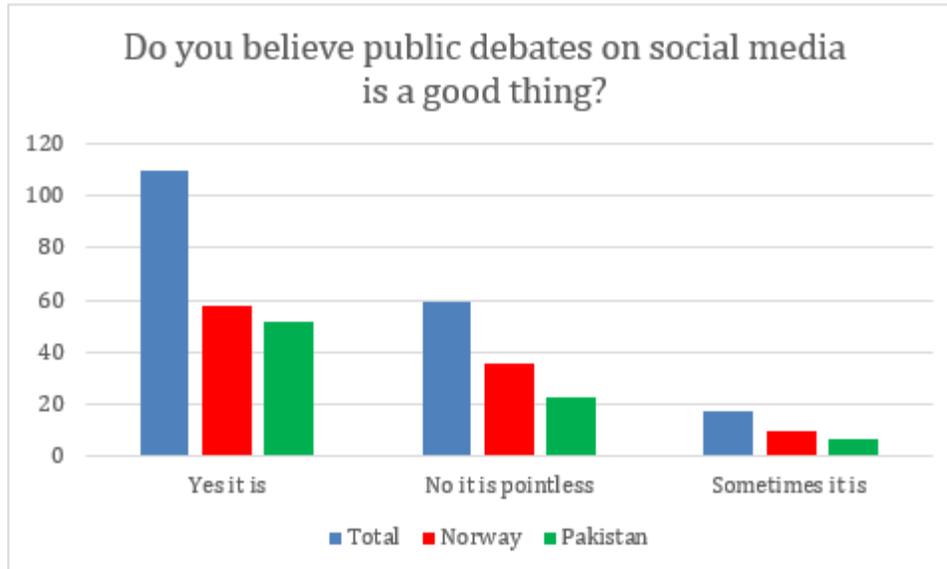
Fig 10 Debating online is a good thing

According to this figure 10, 110 people out of 186 said debating online is a good thing and is useful this 59.13 percent and 59 people said that debating online is pointless and waste of time as nothing is achieved this is 31.70 percent of the total. While 17 people said that debating online is sometimes good which is near 10 percent. The people from Norway also the majority said that public debates on social media is a good thing. While almost 38 percent said it is a waste of time. More then 55 percent also from Pakistan said that is a good thing. While 30 percent it is a waste of time.

5.2   What are the typical consequences of voicing a fake opinion on social media during debates?

5.2.1   Social media as your source of news

According to figure 11, 63 people responded that they use social media as their source of news and 82 people responded that they use social media as a source of news sometimes. 41 people responded that they do not use social media as their source of news.
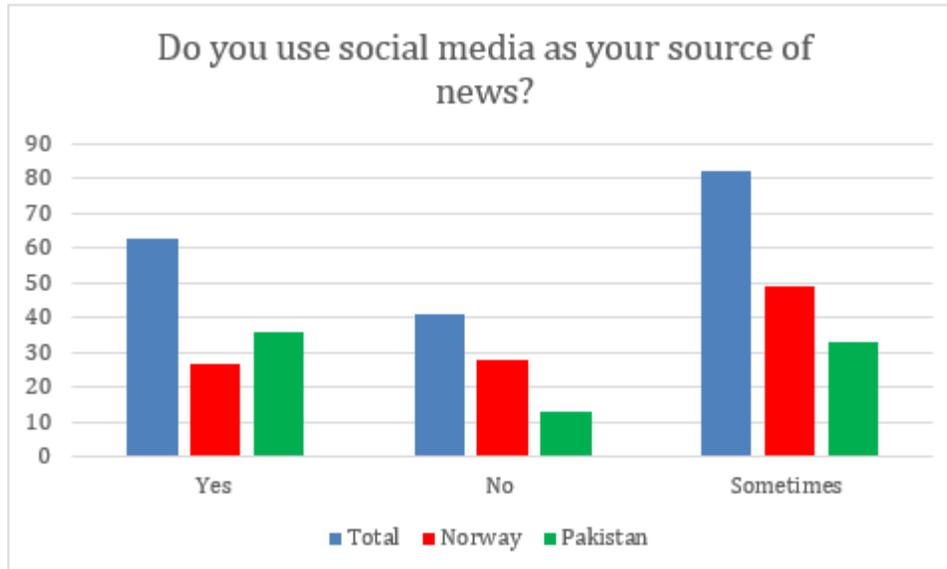
Fig 11 Social media as your source of news

Almost 35 people from Norway said they use social media as source of news. While near 50 people said they use it sometime. Also, near 30 people said they do not use social media as their source of news. From the response from Pakistan near 35 people said both yes and sometimes they use social media as their source. While near 15 said they do not use it as source of news.

5.2.2 Type of news on social media sources you follow

According to figure 12, Sports news were the most followed on social media. Politics was the next most followed. Third on the list was technology. Fashion was in fourth position that mostly people follow on social media. Then the rest we can see from the figure.
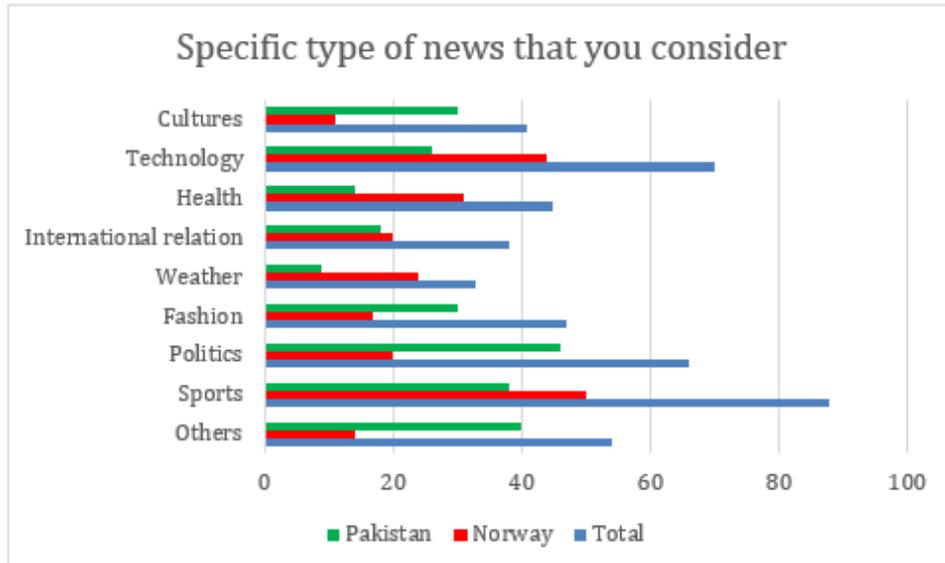
Fig 12 Type of news on social media sources you follow

From Norway the most followed news were of sports and technology. With weather and international relation up next. Pakistan people follows politic news the most on social media. Sports is on second number from people who responded from Pakistan.

5.2.3 Witnessed people share fake opinions on social media during debates

According to the figure 13, most of the people share fake news on social media. 94 people said that they have seen people share fake news in public debates and 76 people said that they have seen people spread fake news sometimes. 15 people saying they have seen people rarely share fake news and only 1 person said he has never seen people share fake news. From this it is obvious that people share fake news most of the time during debates just to win debates.
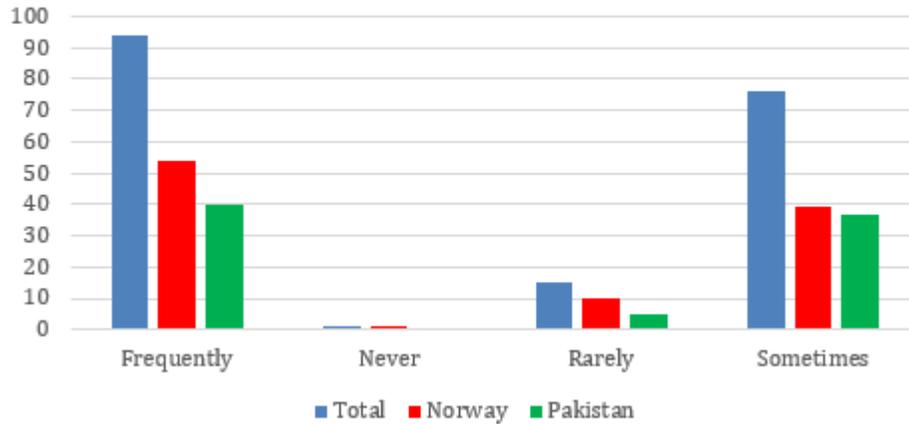
Fig 13 Witnessed people share fake opinions on social media during debates

From Norway more then 50 percent people say they have seen people share fake stuff during public debates. Nearly 40 percent say sometime, and 9 percent say rarely. While only near 1 percent say never. From Pakistan near 50 percent people say they have seen people share fake stuff during public debates. Nearly 45 percent say sometime, and 5 percent say rarely.

5.2.4 People who shared fake opinions did they face any consequence

From the figure 14, most of the people were not sure if people were who give fake opinions on public debates were punished or not. Only 15 people said that they saw who said some sort of fake news face some consequence. That is only 8 percent which is kind of low and why people are not that afraid of saying fake things while debating online. 94 people said they are not sure if they had to face any consequence so this is also not good as people should know if they face any sort of punishment so they can be afraid of using something fake. 77 people said that no punishment was given to the people who spoke something fake during public debates.
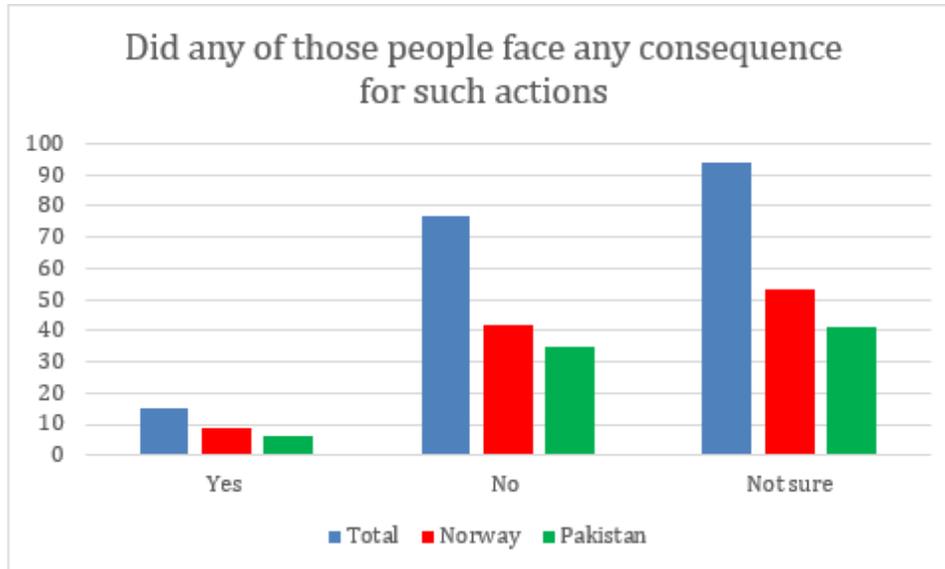
Fig 14 People who shared fake opinions did they face any consequence

From Norway more than 50 percent responded that they are not sure if they were given some sort of punishment or not. While also more near 40 percent said they faced no consequence. While only 10 percent said they did. From Pakistan also near 50 percent responded that they are not sure if they were given some sort of punishment or not. While also near 44 percent said they faced no consequence. While only 6 percent said they did.

5.2.5 Sharing fake news about someone during public debates can have a long-term effect on that person

Spreading something fake about someone can have many effect on him. According to the figure 15, 138 people responded that sharing fake news about someone during public debates can have a long-term effect on that person. While 39 people were in the unsure category and 9 said that it will have no effect on the person. Almost 80 percent from Norway believe that spreading something fake about someone can cause an effect on him. While 18 percent thought maybe it affects him or maybe it does not. While only a few percent thought it does not affect him.
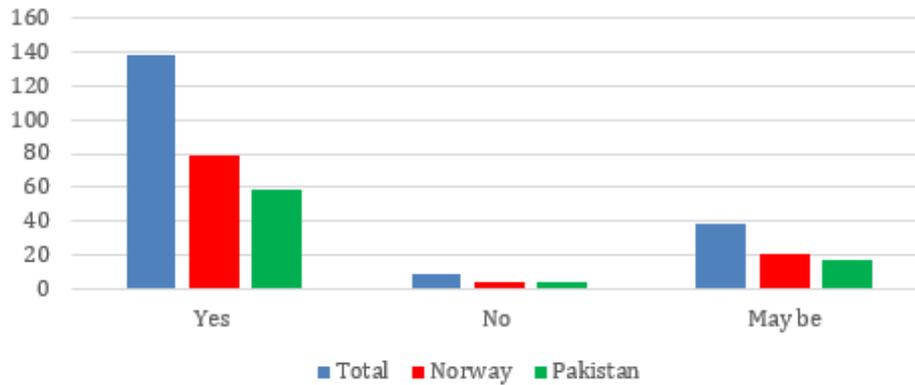
Fig 15 Sharing fake news about someone during public debates can have a
long-term effect on that person

Also, almost 80 percent from Pakistan believe that spreading something fake
about someone can cause an effect on him. While 18 percent thought maybe
it affects him or maybe it does not. While only a few percent thought it
does not affect him.

5.2.6 Long-term effects do you think can happen to that person

The most effect on that person according to the figure 16, is that his image
is ruined when somebody spreads fake stuff about that person. Almost 160
people from 186 believe that this is the biggest effect it has on that person.
The next effect is that people can target him as 130 people responded to
this option. 110 people said that it has effect on his health. While nearly
90 people said that person suffers from financially. The trend is same as the
overall result for both the countries as well as you can see from this figure
16.
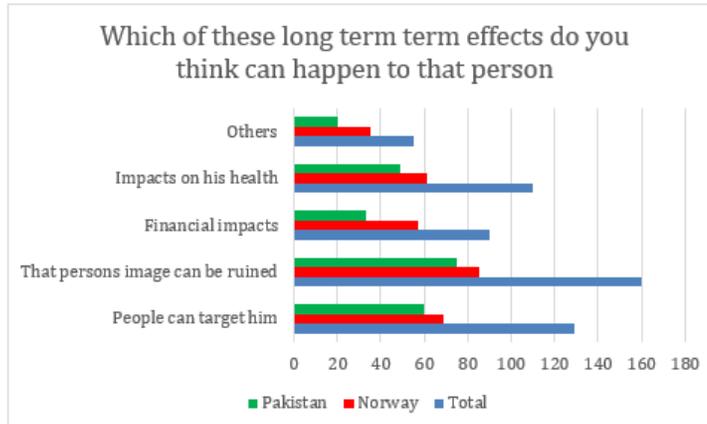
Fig 16 Long-term effects do you think can happen to that person

5.3 Are there common risks a person must accept if he/she wishes to enter the public debate on social media?

5.3.1 Social media has any risks associated with it
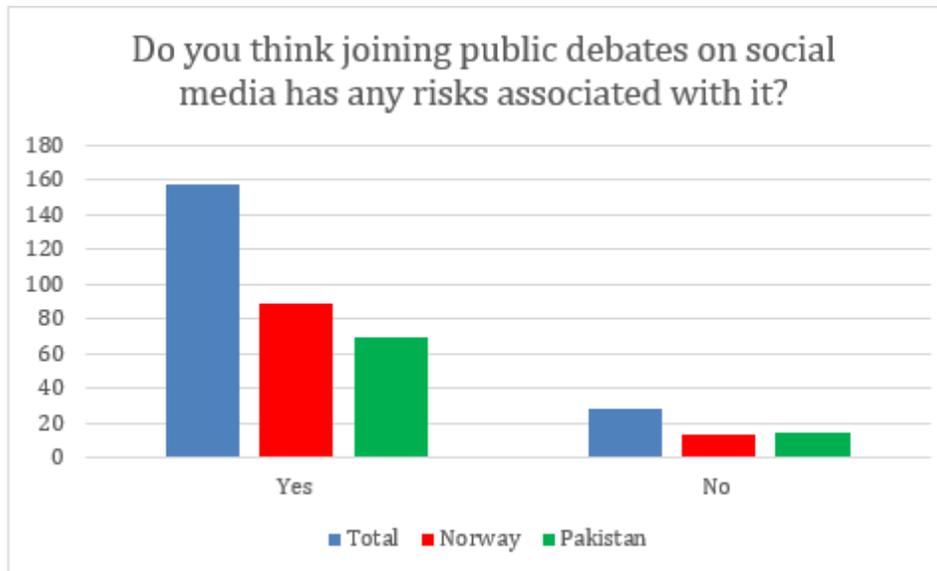
Fig 17 Social media has any risks associated with it

Everything has risk this is simple as it is. So do joining public debates

on social media has many risks associated with it. According to figure 17, almost 88 percent said yes, there are risks to joining public debates on social media. While 12 percent people said that it does not any risks associated with it. From Norway 85 percent think joining public debates on social media has any risks associated with it. While 15 percent people said that it does not any risks associated with it. From Pakistan almost 80 percent think joining public debates on social media has any risks associated with it. While 20 percent people said that it does not any risks associated with it.

5.3.2 Chances of Cyberbullying taking place on social media
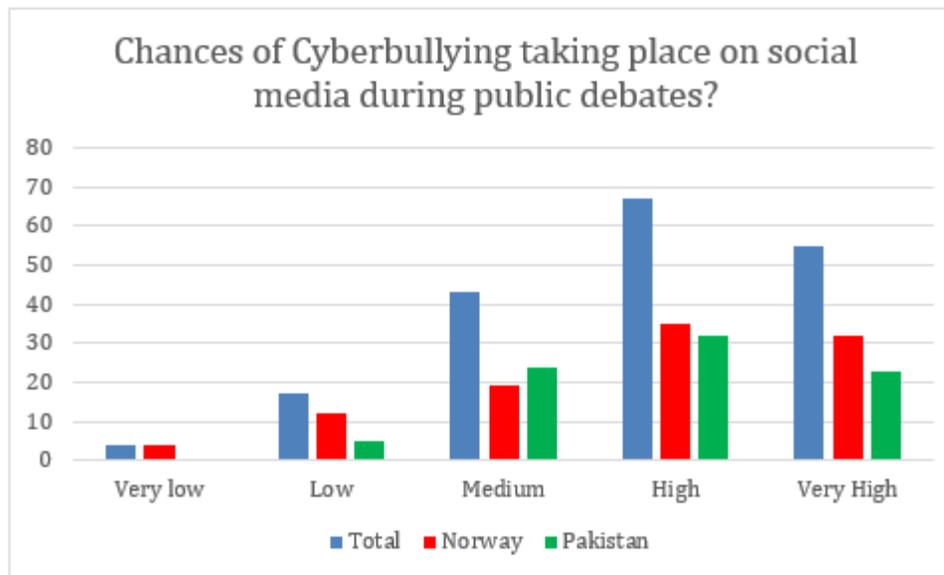
Fig 18 Chances of Cyberbullying taking place on social media

So, I ask through the survey how much chances of Cyberbullying taking place is when people participate in public debates on social media. I ask them to rate it from 1 to 5. With 1 being very low, 2 being low, 3 being medium, 4 being high, 5 being very high. So, the response accordig to figure 18, I got was only 2.2 percent believed the chances are very low of cyberbullying on social media debates. While 9.1 that the chances are low. 23.1 percent believed that the chance of cyberbullying is medium. The majority people believed that the chance of cyberbullying is high as 36 percent selected high as their option. 29.6 percent said its very high chances of cyberbullying to

50

take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.82. the standard deviation is 1.029.

The people from Norway responded that only 3.9 percent believed the chances are very low of cyberbullying on social media debates. While 11.8 percent said that the chances are low. 18.6 percent believed that the chance of cyberbullying is medium. The majority people believed that the chance of cyberbullying is high as 34.3 percent selected high as their option. 31.4 percent said its very high chances of cyberbullying to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.77. the standard deviation is 1.134.

The people from Pakistan responded that zero percent believed the chances are very low of cyberbullying on social media debates. While 6 percent said that the chances are low. 28.6 percent believed that the chance of cyberbullying is medium. The majority people believed that the chance of cyberbullying is high as 38.1 percent selected high as their option. 27.4 percent said its very high chances of cyberbullying to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.87. the standard deviation is 0.889.

So, there is small chance of more cyber bullying in Pakistan then Norway, but the margin is very small according to the data.

5.3.3   Chances of Account hacking taking place on social media

I ask through the survey how much chances of Account hacking taking place is when people participate in public debates on social media. So, the response according to the figure 19, I got was only 3.2 percent believed the chances are very low of Account hacking on social media debates. While 17.2 that the chances are low. 29.6 percent believed that the chance of Account hacking is medium. The majority people believed that the chance of Account hacking is high as 35.5 percent selected high as their option. 14.5 percent said its very high chances of Account hacking to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.41. The standard deviation is 1.037.
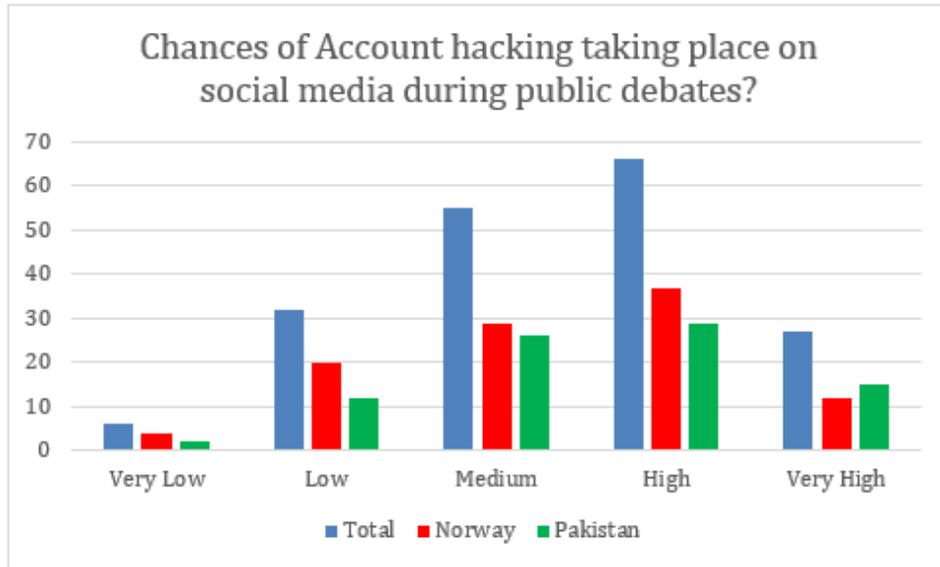
Fig 18 Chances of Account hacking taking place on social media

The people from Norway responded that only 3.9 percent believed the chances are very low of Account hacking on social media debates. While 19.6 percent said that the chances are low. 28.4 percent believed that the chance of Account hacking is medium. The majority people believed that the chance of Account hacking is high as 36.3 percent selected high as their option. 11.8 percent said its very high chances of Account hacking to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.32. The standard deviation is 1.045.

The people from Pakistan responded that 2.4 percent believed the chances are very low of Account hacking on social media debates. While 14.3 percent said that the chances are low. 31.0 percent believed that the chance of Account hacking is medium. The majority people believed that the chance of Account hacking is high as 34.5 percent selected high as their option. 17.9 percent said its very high chances of Account hacking to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.51. The standard deviation is 1.024.

So, there is small chance of more Account hacking in Pakistan then Norway, but the margin is again very small according to the data.

5.3.4 Chances of Identity theft taking place on social media
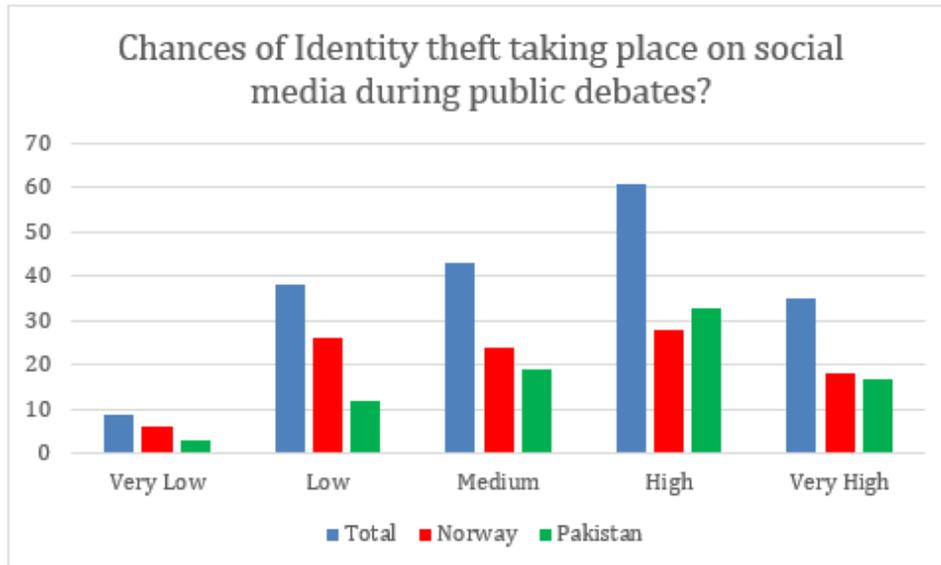
Fig 20 Chances of Identity theft taking place on social media

I ask through the survey how much chances of Identity theft taking place is when people participate in public debates on social media. So, the response according to the figure 20, I got was only 4.8 percent believed the chances are very low of Identity theft on social media debates. While 20.4 that the chances are low. 23.1 percent believed that the chance of Identity theft is medium. The majority people believed that the chance of Identity theft is high as 32.8 percent selected high as their option. 18.8 percent said its very high chances of Identity theft to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.40. The standard deviation is 1.150.

The people from Norway responded that only 5.9 percent believed the chances are very low of Identity theft on social media debates. While 25.5 percent said that the chances are low. 23.5 percent believed that the chance of Identity theft is medium. The majority people believed that the chance of Identity theft is high as 27.5 percent selected high as their option. 17.6 percent said its very high chances of Identity theft to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.25. The standard deviation is 1.191.

The people from Pakistan responded that 3.6 percent believed the chances are very low of Identity theft on social media debates. While 14.3 percent

said that the chances are low. 22.6 percent believed that the chance of Identity theft is medium. The majority people believed that the chance of Identity theft is high as 39.3 percent selected high as their option. 20.2 percent said its very high chances of Identity theft to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.58. The standard deviation is 1.078.

So, there is small chance of more Identity theft in Pakistan then Norway, but the margin is not that much according to the data again.

5.3.5   Chances of Privacy issues taking place on social media
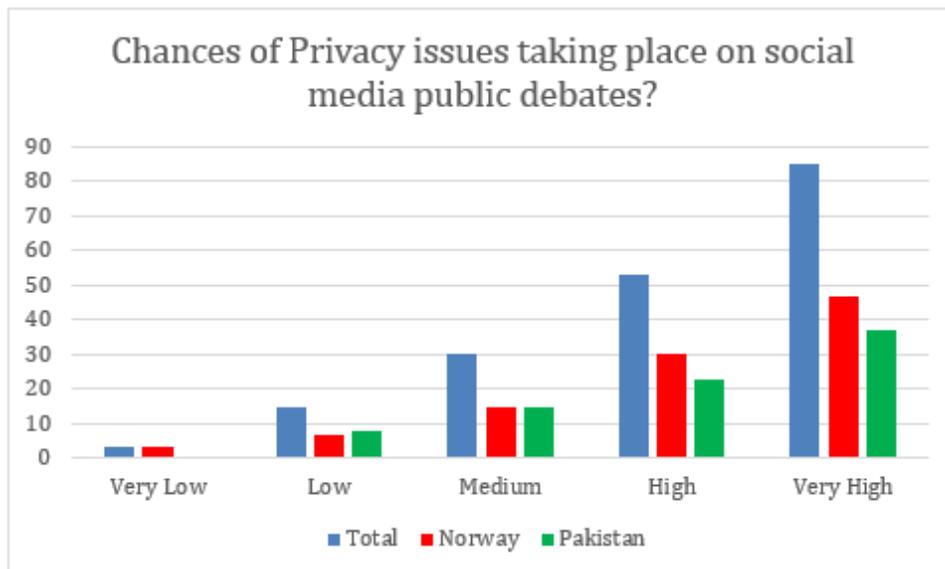
Fig 21 Chances of Privacy issues taking place on social media

I ask through the survey how much chances of Privacy issues taking place is when people participate in public debates on social media. So, the according to the figure 21, the response I got was only 1.6 percent believed the chances are very low of Privacy issues on social media debates. While 8.1 that the chances are low. 16.1 percent believed that the chance of Privacy issues is medium. 28.5 percent said its high chances of Privacy issues to take place during public debates on social media. The majority people believed that the chance of Privacy issues is very high as 45.7 percent selected high as their option. The mean value is 4.09. The standard deviation is 1.041.

The people from Norway responded that only 2.9 percent believed the chances are very low of Privacy issues on social media debates. While 6.9 percent said that the chances are low. 14.7 percent believed that the chance of Privacy issues is medium. 29.4 percent said its high chances of Privacy issues to take place during public debates on social media. The majority people believed that the chance of Privacy issues is very high as 46.1 percent selected high as their option. The mean value is 4.09. The standard deviation is 1.073.

The people from Pakistan responded that zero percent believed that the chances are very low of Privacy issues on social media debates. While 9.5 percent said that the chances are low. 17.9 percent believed that the chance of Privacy issues is medium. 27.4 percent said its high chances of Privacy issues to take place during public debates on social media. The majority people believed that the chance of Privacy issues is very high as 45.2 percent selected high as their option. The mean value is 4.08. The standard deviation is 1.008.

So, there is almost the same chance of Privacy issues in Norway as in Pakistan.

5.3.6 Chances of Harassments taking place on social media

I ask through the survey how much chances of Harassment taking place is when people participate in public debates on social media. So, the response I got according to figure 22 was only 2.2 percent believed the chances are very low of Harassment on social media debates. While 8.6 that the chances are low. 19.9 percent believed that the chance of Harassment is medium. 29.6 percent said its high chances of Harassment to take place during public debates on social media. The majority people believed that the chance of Harassment is very high as 39.8 percent selected high as their option. The mean value is 3.96. The standard deviation is 1.067.
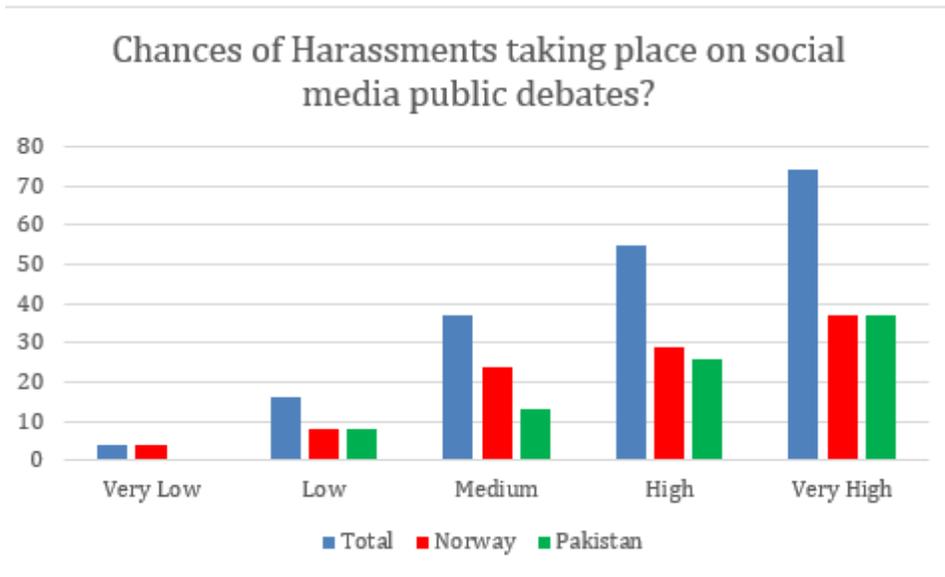
Fig 22 Chances of Harassments taking place on social media

The people from Norway responded that only 3.9 percent believed the chances are very low of Harassment on social media debates. While 7.8 percent said that the chances are low. 23.5 percent believed that the chance of Harassment is medium. 28.4 percent said its high chances of Harassment to take place during public debates on social media. The majority people believed that the chance of Harassment is very high as 36.3 percent selected high as their option. The mean value is 3.85. The standard deviation is 1.120.

The people from Pakistan responded that zero percent believed that the chances are very low of Harassment on social media debates. While 9.5 percent said that the chances are low. 15.5 percent believed that the chance of Harassment is medium. 31.0 percent said its high chances of Harassment to take place during public debates on social media. The majority people believed that the chance of Harassment is very high as 44.0 percent selected high as their option. The mean value is 4.10. The standard deviation is 0.989.

So, there is small chance of more Harassment in Pakistan then Norway.

5.3.7 Harmfulness of Cyberbullying as a social media risk
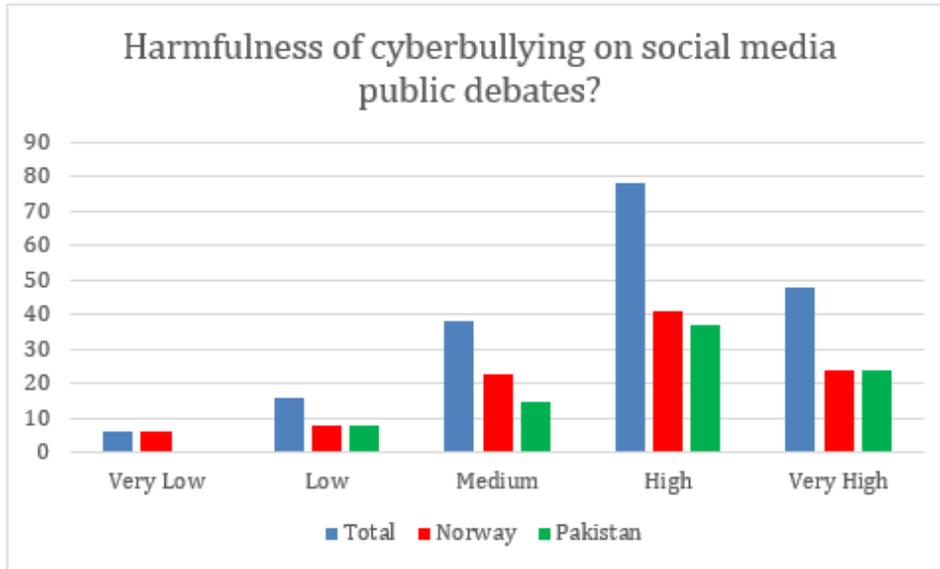
Fig 23 Harmfulness of Cyberbullying as a social media risk

So, I ask through the survey how much people suffer from harmfulness of cyberbullying is when people participate in public debates on social media. I ask them to rate it from 1 to 5. With 1 being very low, 2 being low, 3 being medium, 4 being high, 5 being very high. So, the response according to figure 23, was only 3.2 percent believed the harmfulness from cyberbullying on social media debates is very low. While 8.6 that the harmfulness from cyberbullying is low. 20.4 percent believed that the harmfulness from cyberbullying is medium. The majority people believed that the harmfulness from cyberbullying is high as 41.9 percent selected high as their option. 25.8 percent said they suffer very high from harmfulness from cyberbullying to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.78. the standard deviation is 1.028.

The people from Norway responded that only 5.9 percent believed the harmfulness from cyberbullying on social media debates is very low. While 7.8 percent said that the harmfulness from cyberbullying is low. 22.5 percent believed that the harmfulness from cyberbullying is medium. The majority people believed that the harmfulness from cyberbullying is high as 40.2 percent selected high as their option. 23.5 percent said its very high degree

harmfulness from cyberbullying to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.68. the standard deviation is 1.101.

The people from Pakistan responded that zero percent believed harmfulness from cyberbullying on social media debates is very low. While 9.5 percent said that the chances are low. 17.9 percent believed that the harmfulness from cyberbullying is medium. The majority people believed that the harmfulness from cyberbullying is high as 44.0 percent selected high as their option. 28.6 percent said its very high harmfulness from cyberbullying to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.92. the standard deviation is 0.921.

So, people suffer more from harmfulness from cyberbullying in Pakistan then Norway.

5.3.8 Harmfulness of Account hacking as a social media risk
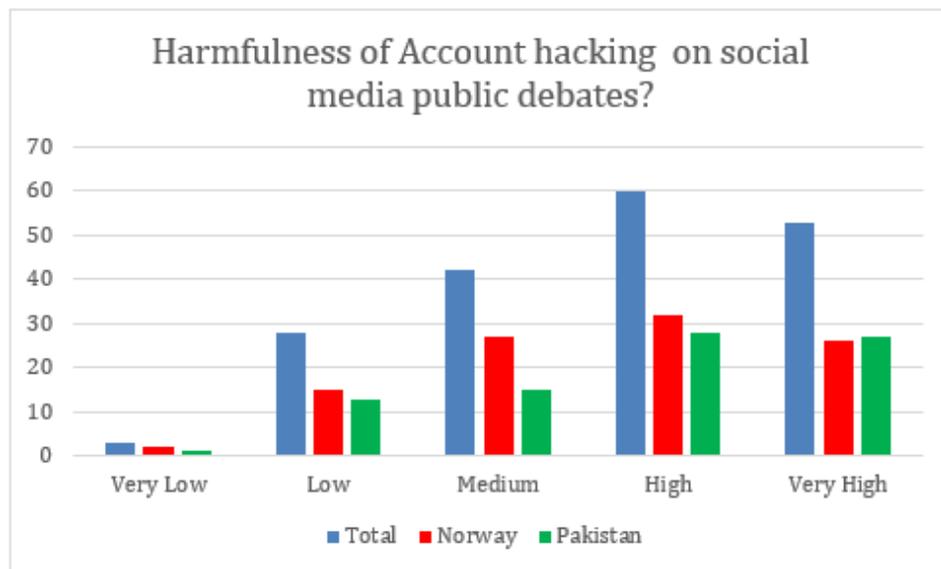
Fig 24 Harmfulness of Account hacking as a social media risk

I ask through the survey how much people suffer from harmfulness of Account hacking is when people participate in public debates on social media. So, the response according to figure 24 was only 1.6 percent believed the harmfulness from Account hacking on social media debates is very low. While 15.1 that the harmfulness from Account hacking is low. 22.6 percent

believed that the harmfulness from Account hacking is medium. The majority people believed that the harmfulness from Account hacking is high as 32.3 percent selected high as their option. 28.5 percent said its very high harmfulness from Account hacking to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.71. the standard deviation is 1.086.

The people from Norway responded that only 2.0 percent believed the harmfulness from Account hacking on social media debates is very low. While 14.7 percent said that the harmfulness from Account hacking is low. 26.5 percent believed that the harmfulness from Account hacking is medium. The majority people believed that the harmfulness from Account hacking is high as 31.4 percent selected high as their option. 25.5 percent said its very high degree harmfulness from Account hacking to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.64. the standard deviation is 1.079.

The people from Pakistan responded that 1.2 percent believed harmfulness from Account hacking on social media debates is very low. While 15.5 percent said that the chances are low. 17.9 percent believed that the harmfulness from Account hacking is medium. The majority people believed that the harmfulness from Account hacking is high as 33.3 percent selected high as their option. 32.1 percent said its very high harmfulness from Account hacking to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.80. the standard deviation is 1.095.

So, people suffer more from harmfulness from Account hacking in Pakistan then Norway.

5.3.9   Harmfulness of Identity theft as a social media risk

I ask through the survey how much harmfulness of Identity theft is when people participate in public debates on social media. So, the response according to figure 25, was only 1.6 percent believed the harmfulness from Identity theft on social media debates is very low. While 10.2 that the harmfulness from Identity theft is low. 15.6 percent believed that the harmfulness from Identity theft is medium. 34.9 percent said its high chances of Identity theft to take place during public debates on social media. The majority people believed that the chance of Identity theft is very high as 37.6 percent selected high as their option. The mean value is 3.97. the standard deviation is 1.044.

Fig 25 Harmfulness of Identity theft as a social media risk

The people from Norway responded that only 2.9 percent believed the harmfulness from Identity theft on social media debates is very low. While 10.8 percent said that the harmfulness from Identity theft is low. 12.7 percent believed that the harmfulness from Identity theft is medium. 33.3 percent said its high chances of Identity theft to take place during public debates on social media. The majority people believed that the chance of Identity theft is very high as 40.2 percent selected high as their option. The mean value is 3.97. the standard deviation is 1.112.

The people from Pakistan responded that zero percent believed harmfulness from Identity theft on social media debates is very low. While 9.5 percent said that the chances are low. 19.0 percent believed that the harmfulness from Identity theft is medium. The majority people believed that the harmfulness from Identity theft is high as 36.9 percent selected high as their option. 34.5 percent said its very high harmfulness from Identity theft to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.96. the standard deviation is 0.963.

So, people suffer almost the same from harmfulness from Identity theft in Norway as in Pakistan.

5.3.10 Harmfulness of Privacy issues as a social media risk
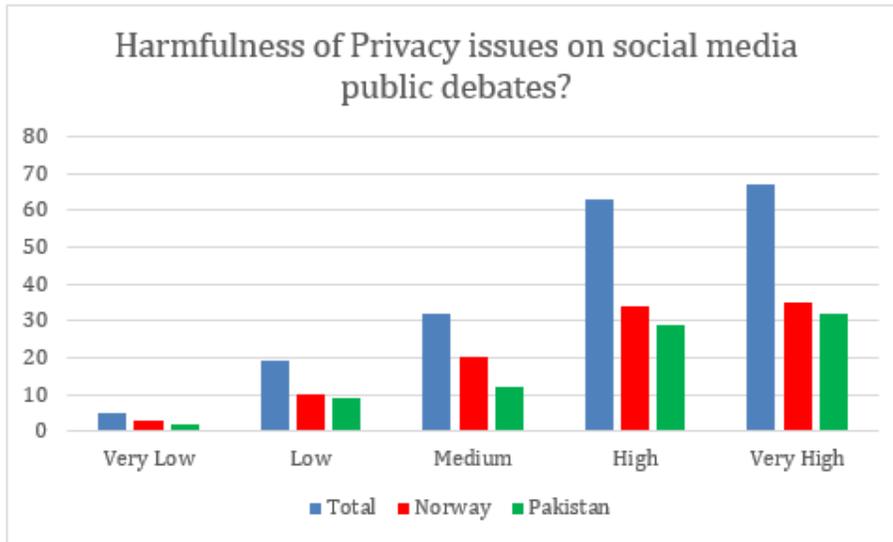
Fig 26 Harmfulness of Privacy issues as a social media risk

I ask through the survey how much people suffer harmfulness of Privacy issues is when people participate in public debates on social media. So, the response according to the figure 26, was only 2.7 percent believed the harmfulness from Privacy issues on social media debates is very low. While 10.2 that the harmfulness from Privacy issues is low. 17.2 percent believed that the harmfulness from Privacy issues is medium. 33.9 percent said its high chances of Privacy issues to take place during public debates on social media. The majority people believed that the chance of Privacy issues is very high as 36.0 percent selected high as their option. The mean value is 3.90. the standard deviation is 1.086.

The people from Norway responded that only 2.9 percent believed the harmfulness from Privacy issues on social media debates is very low. While 9.8 percent said that the harmfulness from Privacy issues is low. 19.8 percent believed that the harmfulness from Privacy issues is medium. 33.3 percent said its high chances of Privacy issues to take place during public debates on social media. The majority people believed that the chance of Privacy issues is very high as 34.3 percent selected high as their option. The mean value is 3.86. the standard deviation is 1.090.

The people from Pakistan responded that 2.4 percent believed harmfulness from Privacy issues on social media debates is very low. While 10.7 per-

cent said that the chances are low. 14.3 percent believed that the harmful-
ness from Privacy issues is medium. The majority people believed that the
harmfulness from Privacy issues is high as 34.5 percent selected high as their
option. 38.1 percent said its very high harmfulness from Privacy issues to
take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.95.
the standard deviation is 1.086.

So, there is more harmfulness from Privacy issues in Pakistan then Norway.

5.3.11 Harmfulness of Harassments as a social media risk
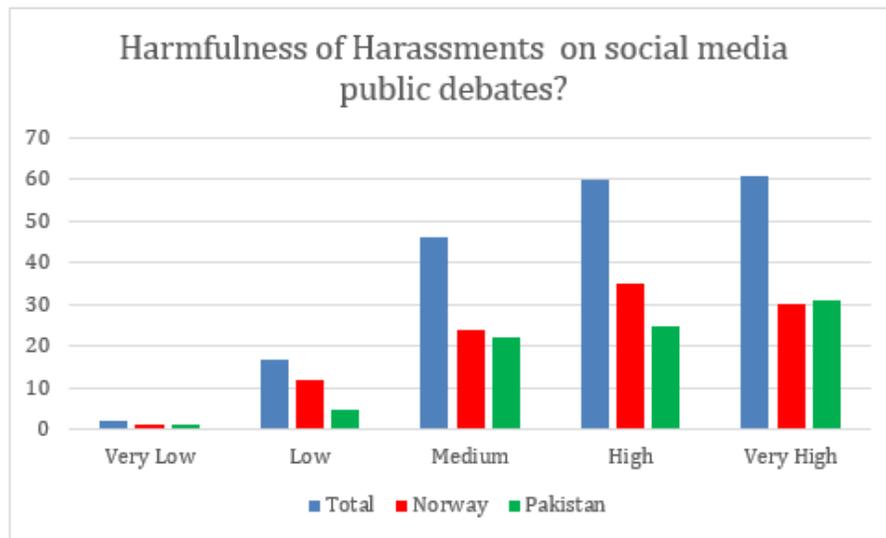
Fig 27 Harmfulness of Harassments as a social media risk

I ask through the survey how much harmfulness of Harassment is when peo-
ple participate in public debates on social media. So, the response according
to the figure 27, was only 1.1 percent believed the harmfulness from Harass-
ment on social media debates is very low. While 9.1 that the harmfulness
from Harassment is low. 24.7 percent believed that the harmfulness from
Harassment is medium. 32.3 percent said its high chances of Harassment
to take place during public debates on social media. The majority people
believed that the chance of Harassment is very high as 32.8 percent selected
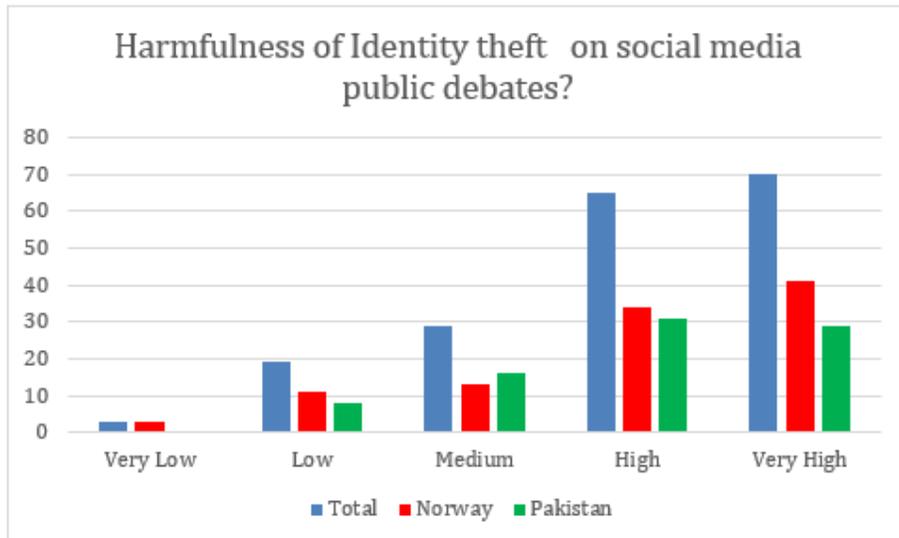high as their option. The mean value is 3.87. the standard deviation is
1.012.

The people from Norway responded that only 1.0 percent believed the harm-fulness from Harassment on social media debates is very low. While 11.8 percent said that the harmfulness from Harassment is low. 23.5 percent believed that the harmfulness from Harassment is medium. The majority people believed that the harmfulness from Harassment is high as 34.3 per-cent selected high as their option. 29.4 percent said its very high degree harmfulness from Harassment to take place during public debates on social media. The mean value is 3.79. the standard deviation is 1.028.

The people from Pakistan responded that 1.2 percent believed harmfulness from Harassment on social media debates is very low. While 6.0 percent said that the harmfulness from Harassment is low. 26.2 percent believed that the harmfulness from Harassment is medium. 29.8 percent said harm-fulness from Harassment is high during public debates on social media. The majority people believed that the harmfulness from Harassment is very high as 36.9 percent selected this option. The mean value is 3.95. the standard deviation is 0.993.

So, there is more harmfulness from Harassment in Pakistan then Norway.

5.4 When people see an opinion during public debates do, they simply accept it? Do they check the credibility of the news before spreading it?

5.4.1 Public debates on social media can affect your opinion about a certain topic

According to the figure 28, most of the people say that it does affect their opinion when they debate or read something in debates. Almost 60 percent said it affects them. Where as near 15 percent said it affects them sometimes but not all the time. Around the 25 percent people said that it does not have any bearing on their thinking regarding a topic. According to the figure the respond from Norway was that it also has effect on their thinking around 55 percent agreed to that. While near 30 percent said it does not affect their thinking about it. 15 percent said it affects their thinking sometimes. the 25 percent people said that it does not have any bearing on their thinking regarding a topic. According to the figure the respond from Pakistan was that it also has effect on their thinking around 80 percent agreed to that. While near 10 percent said it does not affect their thinking about it. 10 percent said it affects their thinking sometimes.
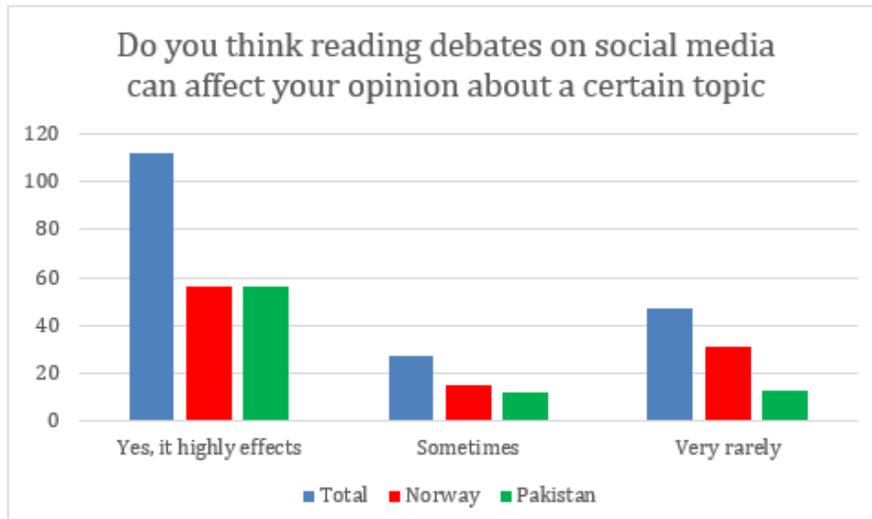
Fig 28 Public debates on social media can affect your opinion about a certain topic

5.4.2 Verify any points you get from social media debates
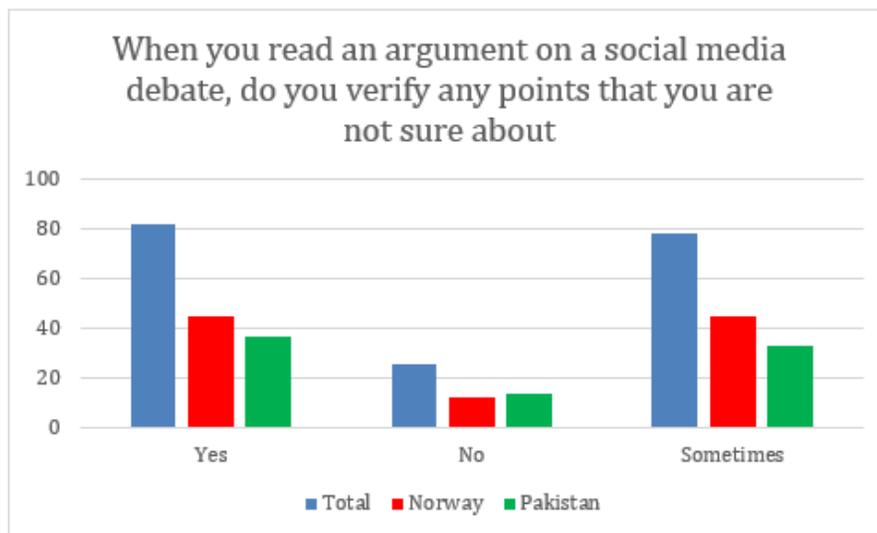
Fig 29 Verify any points you get from social media debates

According to the figure 29, most of the people say they do verify if they come

across something during debate or reading something in debates. Almost 44 percent said they verify it. Where as near 40 percent said it affects them sometimes but not all the time. Around the 16 percent people said that they do not verify it if they come across something during debate or reading something in debates. According to the figure the respond from Norway was equal between that they do verify the news always and sometimes as around 46 percent agreed to that. While near 8 percent said they do not verify it. Again, according to the figure, the respond from Pakistan was equal between that they do verify the news always and sometimes as around 45 percent agreed to that. While near 10 percent said they do not verify it news.

5.4.3   People share news without verifying to others
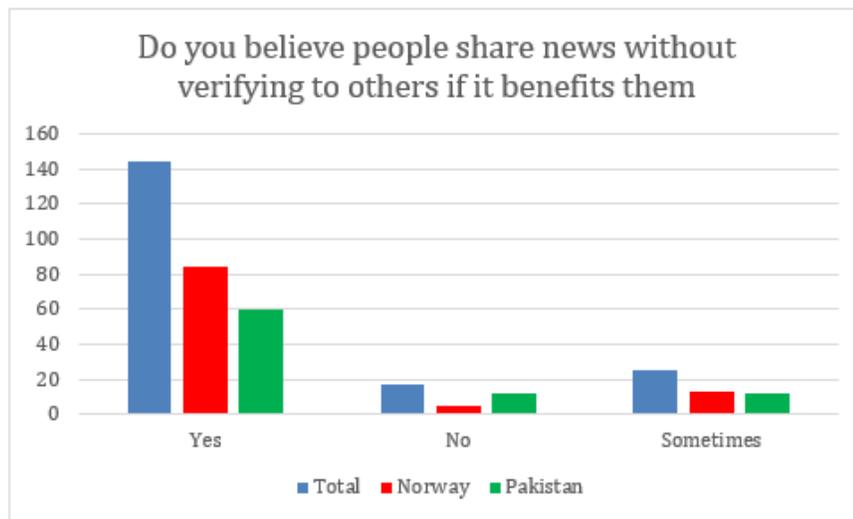
Fig 30 People share news without verifying to others

Most people just start sharing news without checking its credibility according to the figure. According to figure 30 almost 80 percent responded yes to this question. They believe people do not check the credibility before sharing it to others when they read something from social media debates. Only 5 percent people do not this do. 15 percent believe people some time check the credibility sometimes they do not. The pattern follows for both the countries as more then 80 percent believe the same thing that believe people do not check the credibility before sharing it to others when they read something from social media debates. While low believe they do not.

5.4.4 Used any software that tests the credibility
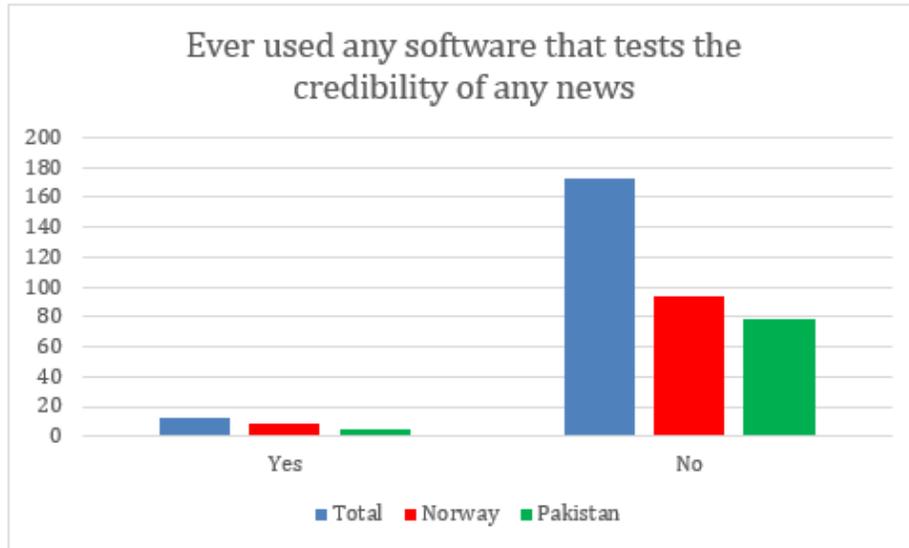
Fig 31 Used any software that tests the credibility

Mostly have not used any software that checks the credibility of the news. According to figure 31, only like 5 percent from overall results and both countries said they have but those software's were like google. So, they have not used any specific software for this. Also, 95 percent said they have not used any software. This is same for both countries as well as almost the 95 percent from both sides said they have not used any software for checking the credibility of the news.

5.4.5   Would you use such software
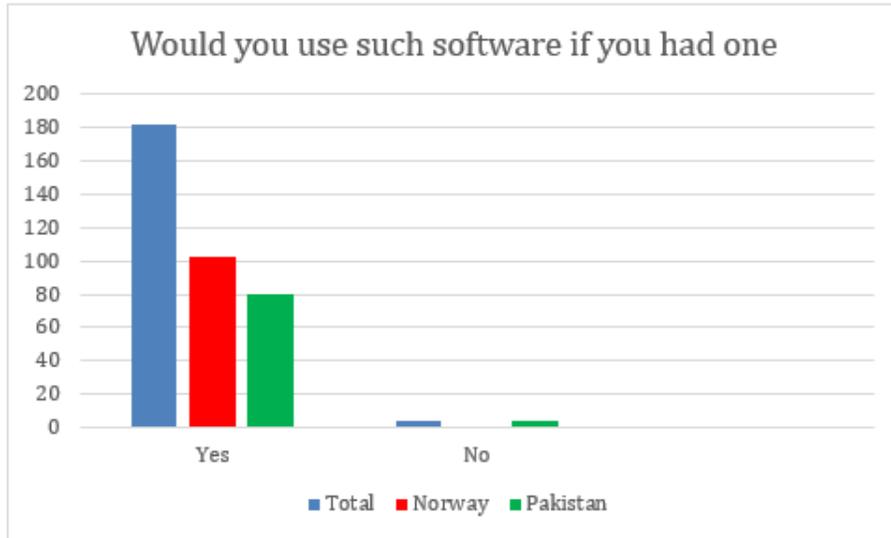
Fig 32 Would you use such software

According to the figure 32, almost 98 percent said they want to use a software that will make their life easier which will tests the credibility of any news. As they will not have to do any research. The software will do this for them. The 2 percent of people who do not want to use this are from Pakistan. As from Norway everyone wants a software like this.

5.5 Do people think that laws of different countries affect the way a person thinks during public debates?

5.5.1 Do you think about social media laws when you are debating on social media
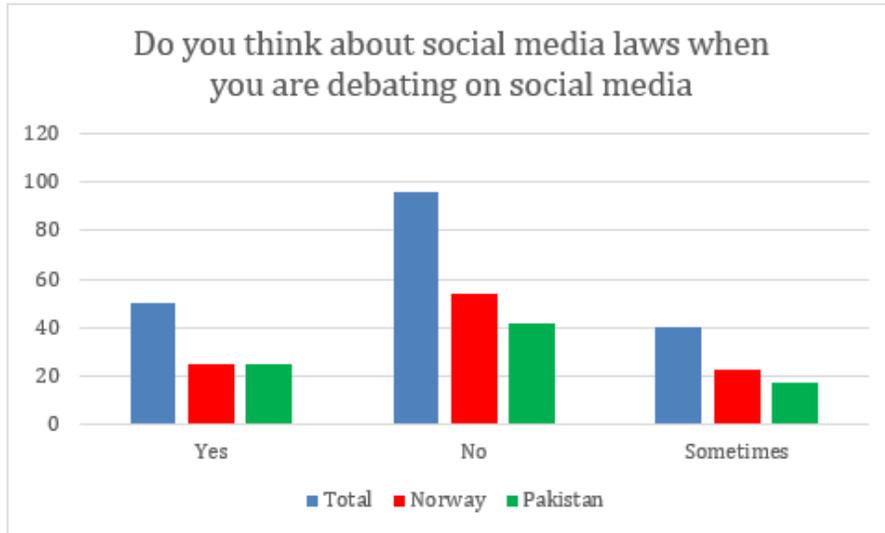
Fig 33 Do you think about social media laws when you are debating on social media?

According to the figure 33, most of the responds were that people do not think about the laws when they are debating online on social media. Nearly 55 percent people from the total responded no they do not. Nearly 30 percent people responded to the option yes that they think about the laws during public debates online. While as 15 percent people were in the sometime category. According to the figure most of the responds were that people do not think about the laws when they are debating online on social media from Norway as well. Nearly 60 percent people from the total responded no they do not. Nearly 25 percent people responded to the option yes that they think about the laws during public debates online. While as 15 percent people were in the sometime category. As for Pakistan according to the figure most of the responds were that people do not think about the laws when they are debating online on social media again. Nearly 65 percent people from the total responded no they do not. Nearly 20 percent people responded to the option yes that they think about the laws during public

debates online. While as 15 percent people were in the sometime category.

5.5.2 Aware of any social media laws
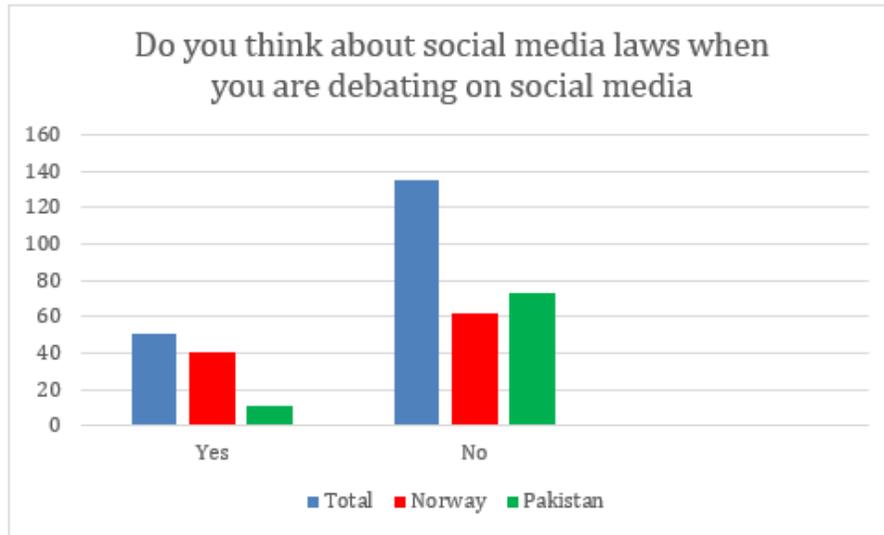
Fig 34 Aware of any social media laws

According to the figure 34, most of the people are not aware of social media laws. As almost 80 percent said they are not aware of social media laws. Only 20 percent said that they are aware of social media laws. The trend is almost same for both countries as well. As the ratio is almost 80 to 20.

5.5.3 During debates is it hard to follow social media laws

According to the figure 35, it is hard to follow social media laws while you are debating online. As 40 percent people responded to the option yes, it is hard to follow them. While nearly 30 percent in the category that sometimes its hard to follow them while sometimes it is not that hard. While 30 percent said it is not that hard to follow them during debates.
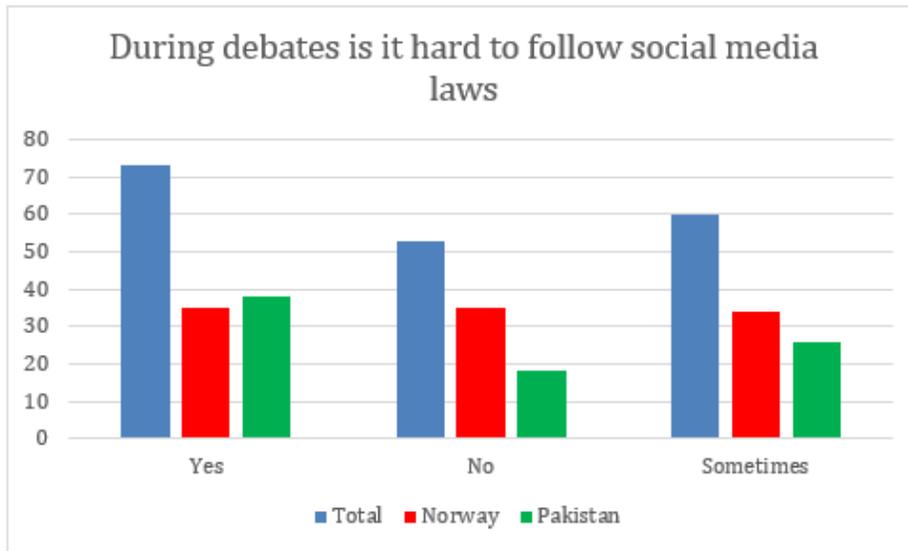
Fig 35 During debates is it hard to follow social media laws

From Norway mostly the people said its not that hard to follow them in social media debates. While almost the same amount of people said it is hard to follow them. Almost same response was given to the sometime option as well. From Pakistan mostly people believed is it hard to follow them. While the 2nd option with high responds were the in the sometimes category. While it is not hard to follow them option was in the 3rd place.

5.5.4 What do you think will happen if you do not follow them social media laws?

Most of the people thought only minor consequences happen if you do not follow the social media laws. According to figure 35, 36 percent selected this option. 22 percent people were not sure what happens if you break the social media law. 21 percent said that nothing will happen. While 21 percent people said there will be serious consequences. Most people from Norway thought only minor consequences happen if you do not follow the social media laws. 40 percent selected this option. 12 percent people were not sure what happens if you break the social media law. 18 percent said that nothing will happen. While 30 percent people said there will be serious consequences. Most people from Pakistan were not sure what happens if you break social media law. 40 percent selected this option. While 32 percent

70

said that minor consequences happen if you do not follow the social media laws. 20 percent said that nothing will happen. While 8 percent people said there will be serious consequences.
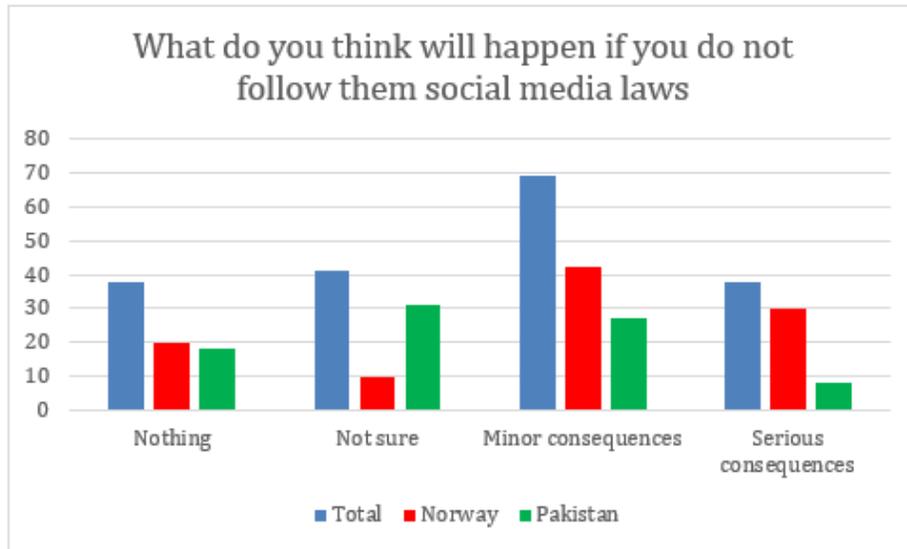
Fig 36 What do you think will happen if you do not follow them social media laws

5.5.5 Do you believe many people escape punishment after breaking social media laws?

According to the figure 37, most of the people almost every time escape from punishment. Almost 40 percent choose this option. The next most selected option was that most of the times people escape punishment as 30 percent selected this option. While 18 percent said sometimes, they do and 12 percent they never escape, they get punished. The trend follows for the responses from Norway. But the response from Pakistan was almost the same except mostly believed in the option of most of the time they get away from punishment. Other then this the trend is same for Pakistan responses as well.
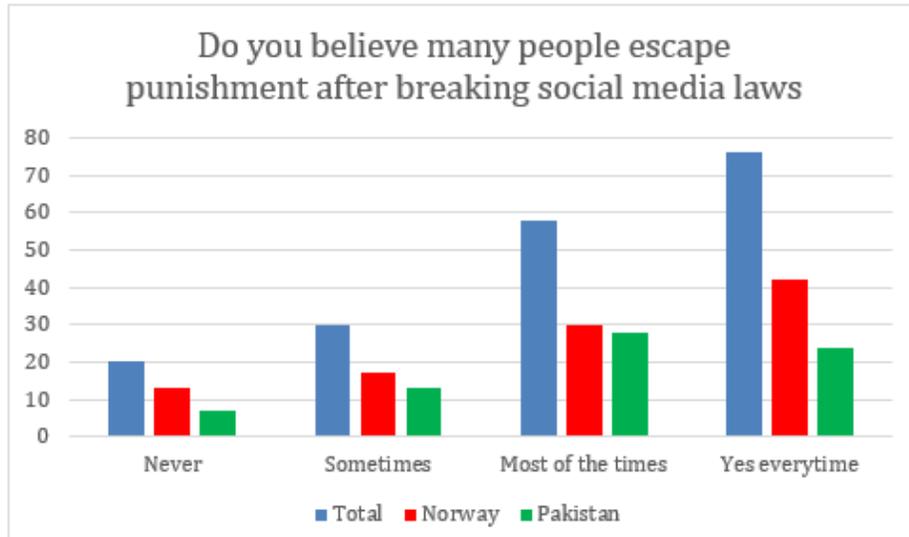
Fig 37 Do you believe many people escape punishment after breaking
social media laws?

5.5.6 Would people say fake stats or news if it is required to win a debate
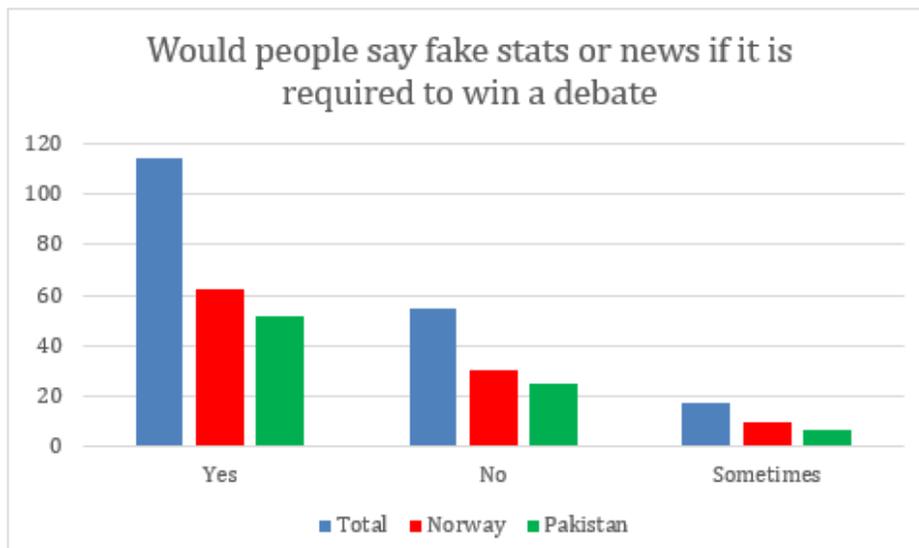
Fig 38 Would people say fake stats or news if it is required to win a debate

According to this most of the people said they will use fake stats or news to win debates in social media. According to figure 38, almost 60 percent people responded to this option. While 25 percent said they never do this, and 15 percent said sometimes they do this. The trend was same for both countries as most of them also selected they will use fake stuff to win in an argument on social media debates.

5.5.7 If people know that social media laws are enforced, will they still use fake information to win in debates
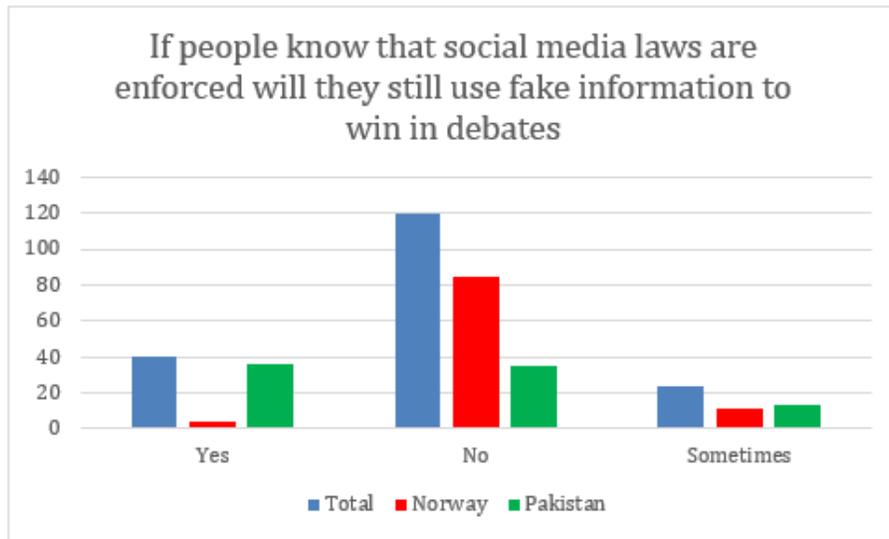
Fig 39 If people know that social media laws are enforced, will they still use fake information to win in debates

Most of the responds were that if social media laws are fully enforce then they will not use fake stuff to win in debates. According to figure 39 nearly 65 percent choose this option. While 20 percent still said they will still use fake information in social debates. While 15 percent choose the option sometimes. From Norway most of the people said they will not use fake information in debates if laws are fully implemented. While some choose the sometime option. While only Handful of people said they still use it. While in Pakistan most of the people said they will still use it to win in debates and the same amount of people said they will not use it. While some people said sometime.

5.5.8 If laws are not implemented properly people will speak more randomly during public debates as they will fear nothing
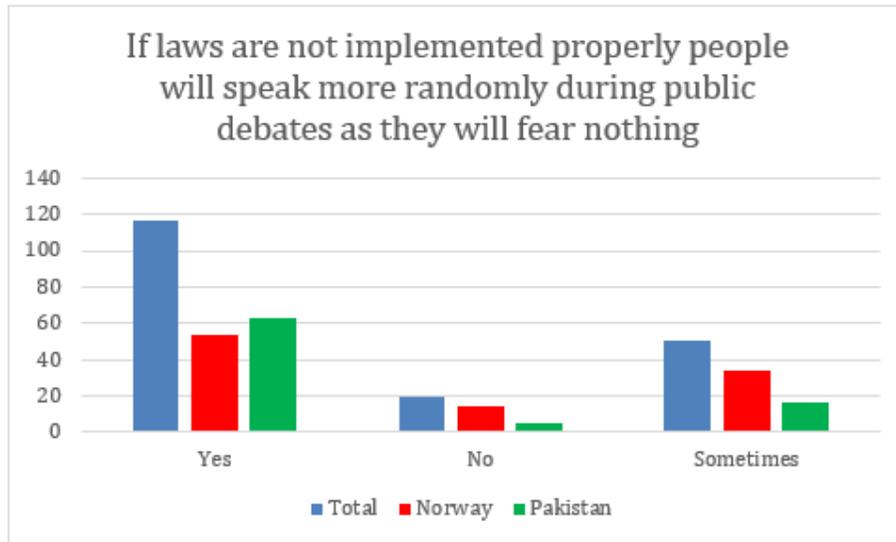
Fig 40 If laws are not implemented properly people will speak more randomly during public debates as they will fear nothing

Most of the responds were that if social media laws are not fully enforce then they will use fake stuff to win in debates. According to figure 40 nearly 65 percent choose this option. While 10 percent still said they will still not use fake information in social debates. While 25 percent choose the option sometimes. From Norway most of the people said they will use fake information in debates if laws are not fully implemented. While the 2nd most choose was the sometime option. While only some people said they will not use it. While in Pakistan most of the people said they will use it to win in debates. The 2nd most selected option was the sometime option. While only a handful people said they will not use it.

5.5.9 Do you believe that your country does implement social media laws fully?

According to the figure 41, many people said that their country does not implement the social media laws fully. About 37 percent were in this category. While 30 percent were not sure if their country implements social

media laws. 22 percent believed that it in some cases they do implement them while in some cases they do not.
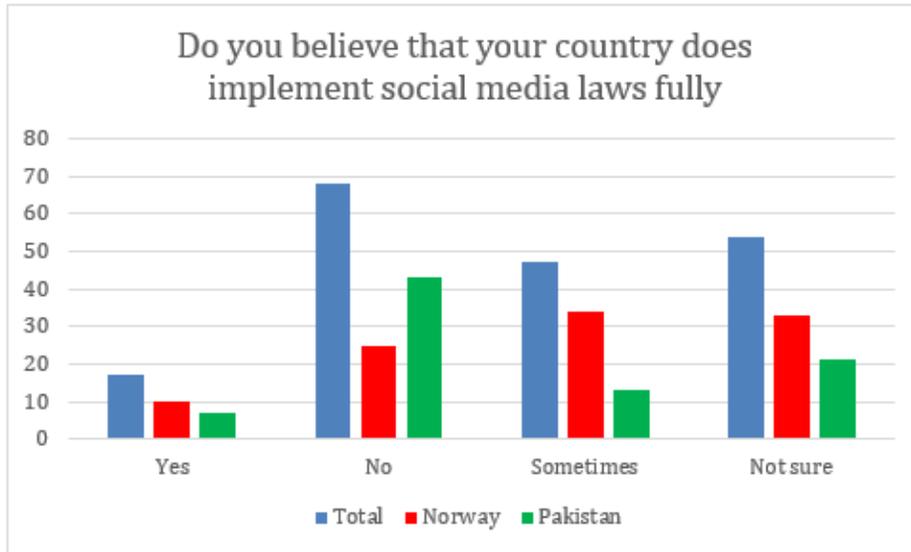
Fig 41 Do you believe that your country does implement social media laws fully

About 11 percent believed that they do implement the social media laws. In Norway, many people were not sure if their country do implement the social media laws fully or not. About 32 percent were in this category. While 28 percent believed sometimes, they do in some cases while in some cases they do not. 28 percent believed that they do not implement them. About 12 percent believed they do implement the social media laws. In Pakistan, many people said they do not implement the social media laws fully. About 54 percent were in this category. While 26 percent were not sure if they implement social media laws. 12 percent believed that in some cases they implement them while in some cases they do not. About 8 percent believed said they do implement the social media laws.

5.5.10 Do you believe it is hard to implement social media laws fully
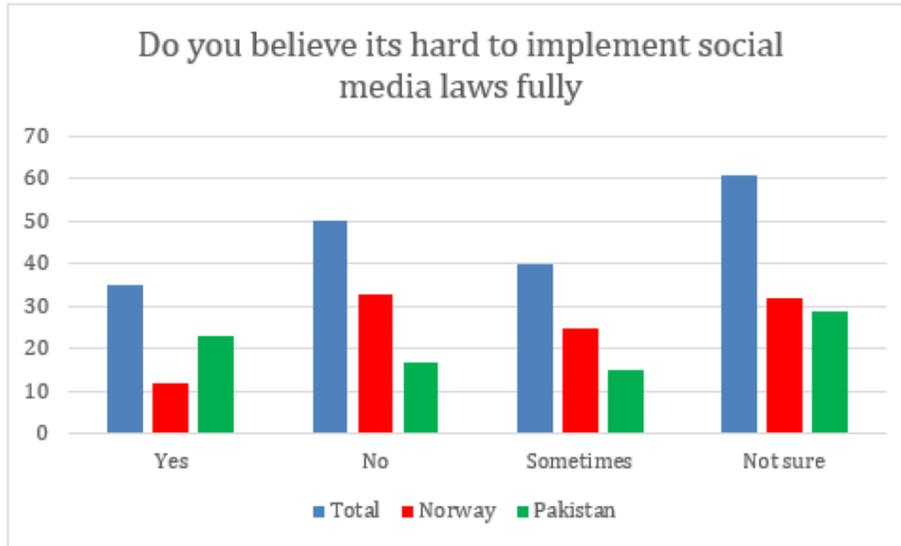
Fig 42 Do you believe it is hard to implement social media laws fully

According to the figure 42, many people were not sure if it is possible to implement the social media laws fully. About 30 percent were in this category. While 26 percent believed its very hard to implement social media laws. 24 percent believed that it in some cases its possible to implement them while in some cases its not. About 20 percent believed that it is possible to implement the social media laws. In Norway, many people said no it is not possible to implement the social media laws fully. About 31 percent were in this category. While 28 percent believed were not sure about this. 24 percent believed that it in some cases possible to implement them while in some cases it is not. About 16 percent believed that it is possible to implement the social media laws. In Pakistan, many people were not sure if it is possible to implement the social media laws fully. About 33 percent were in this category. While 18 percent believed it is very hard to implement social media laws. 22 percent believed that it in some cases possible to implement them while in some cases it is not. About 27 percent believed that it is possible to implement the social media laws.

5.6 Interviews

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data from interviews as they were in qualitative data form. In this method the researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes – topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly[7]. This method includes 6 steps.

Step 1 Familiarization

In this step I went through all the interviews and wrote them down as I had them in an audio form. After writing down them I start to read them and started to get familiar with them.

Step 2 Coding or topics

Next step I went through the interview and started to highlight the different things that were said by the participants in the interview. Then I gave them a code and wrote them down in front the questions. The codes were like a small word or sentence which describes what they are saying.

Step 3 Generating themes

Next, I look at the codes that I gathered from all the interviews. I tried to identify the patterns and come up with theme that describe all the same codes.

Step 4 Reviewing themes

Then I reviewed the themes I named with the interviews to see if they match the data or if I have missed something. Also, I checked if I could come up with better theme.

Step 5 Defining and naming themes

Then I needed to define what each theme means and naming them.

Step 6 Writing up

In this step I wrote about the themes, what is the meaning of it and how it describes the data. Include stuff from the interviews how people said things. This part is done in the discussion chapter. With explaining the themes according to the research questions.

5.6.1 General questions

Table 1

Interview Questions	Codes	Themes
What do you do, your age, your profession, etc.	26-year age 20-year age 38-year age 30-year age 24-year age Student Accountant Writer Doctor PHD Developer Marketing	Sensible ages Different professions
How much time do you spend using social media in a day?	5-6 hours 3-4 hours 2-3 hours 4-5 hours	Enough time
What social media platforms do you use, and do you often debate on these platforms? ?	Facebook Twitter Instagram WhatsApp LinkedIn YouTube Reddit	Many platforms

	Sports Politics Religious-debate Scientific Entertainment industry Health Social-issues Education	Different topics
What kind of debates do you frequently participate in?	Sports Politics Religious-debate Scientific Entertainment industry Health Social-issues Education	Different topics

5.6.2   Research question 1

Table 2

Interview Questions	Codes	Themes
Do you think sharing of this fake information has any consequences ?	People act on it. Breaking news. People believe it. Change their opinion. Business can go out of money. Target people Cyber bullying, Defamation-Highlight them in public, liars, Mental health, Take Revenge, low credibility	People who believe it. People who say fake stuff can face theses consequences
Have you witnessed people sharing fake opinions on purpose on social media? Why do you think people do that?	Win arguments Heat of the moment Sake of argument Do not need to justify it Annoy people	Win at all cost

	Target people they hate, Pay roll, Hired by different companies, Damage reputation, Hidden agenda, Propaganda, Circulates very quickly, Negative trend	Agendas
	Increase their social presence, Famous, Attention seekers, Get popularity	Social-fame
	People will not have time to verify it, Less research	No research

5.6.3   Research question 2

Are there common risks a person must accept if he/she wishes to enter the public debate on social media?

Table 3

Interview Questions	Codes	Themes
Do you think joining social media has any risks associated with it? Describe those risks?	Social media has a lot of risks, Person identity, Cyberbullying, Mental issues, Get personal, Wrong type of people then there are risk, Depression, lose your privacy, Anonymous, Stress, Hacked, The risks come from how you use it	Risks

Which of the social media risks do you think is the most fatal and is the most common and why?	Harassment, People targeting, Cyberbully-ing, Depression, Person identity, Mental stress, Psychological, personal information, Hacking	Common and harmful
Should everyone just accept these risks as a price to joining social media debates?	Today we cannot live without social media. Something you agree before start debating online. No pain no gain. Technology comes with certain risk.	Benefits with risk
	Big price. You must follow certain rules. People should decide themselves.	In your hands
	Committed-suicide. Discussion-nothing more. Some sort of reaction.	Reactions

5.6.4   Research question 3

When people see an opinion during public debates do, they simply accept it? Do they check the credibility of the news before spreading it?

Table 4

Interview Questions	Codes	Themes
Do you think an opinion on social media can affect your opinion about the topic?	Good job of hiding the truth. Evidence to support their lies. First thing I do is research. Do not have mostly that time to check everything.	Deception
	Effects my thinking. See the reviews. Helps me gain knowledge. Very rarely. Read different people opinions. knowledge is increased. Some one expert in the field.	Effect on thinking
When you come across any news on social media, do you verify it?	Google it. Something big. Many people saying same thing then I believe it	Google it
	Hard to verify these things. Like gossiping. Same stuff. Software which can do this itself	Hard to verify it
Do you think people should check the credibility of the news before spreading it as this could have serious consequences?	Spread fake news to others. Cause damage. Might blame them for telling fake news. They will face consequences.	Consequences
	Ethical thing. Make decision regarding it. Believe everyone should do this no matter who tells you. Credible source. From at least 3,4 sources	Right thing to do

Have you ever experienced some sort of wrong news that was given to you?	Paper is cancelled. Son was in an accident. Sale at a shop. My favorite actor died. Donated 52 million to UK for developing sports. Giving my personal details	Different incident

5.6.5 Research question 4

Do people think that laws of different countries affect the way a person thinks during public debates?

Table 5

Are you aware of social media laws in your country?	Cybercrime, Copyrights, Defamation, Harassment, Copyright, Privacy laws, Hacking	Some laws
Do you think people in your country follow any social media laws? Why or why not?	People are fined. More aware about the laws	Why they follow law
	Less afraid of breaking. Very rarely is someone punished. Very little laws here are followed. Not received any sort of punishment. Freedom of expression. less aware of the laws. Very hard to fully implement the social media laws. Country does not own these social media platforms	Why they do not follow law
Do people think that laws of different countries affect the way a person thinks during public debates?	Human being responds to the consequence. Say something fake and other people decide to use law to punish him. Do not fear anything. Defamation case. More people getting punished or banned effects. Heat of the moment Yes, as they see if the laws are followed, they will say less wrong stuff. Police are very fast	People respond to fear

5.6.6 Conclusion

How would you describe your personal experience of social media debates?
Please share your best and your worst experience

Table 6

Interview Questions	Codes	Themes
How would you describe your personal experience of social media debates? Please share your best and your worst experience	Increases your knowledge. Change their opinion. Good thing is that everybody can interact. Understand the point of view of others. Find people talking about things you enjoy. Better than bad	Pros
	Certain topics I believe is not good for debating like Religious topic. Received threats on mobile after debating online. Does not make much difference. Waste of time as you start fighting with others. Impact on your heath. Change their opinion no matter. People are not serious when they enter debates	Cons

6 Discussions

The discussion chapter takes the original research questions and explores them further by discussing the questionnaire and results from the analyzed questionnaire. Also discussing the interviews and results from the interviews.

This section is set up to follow the same order as the research questions, starting with general questions.

6.1 General questions

The were some general questions ask about the participates in the survey.

The survey was distributed across different platforms like Facebook, reddit etc. 226 people responded to the survey, Which was a good number. In the survey all of the questions were necessary to do, so all the questions had a response. 186 out of the 226 responds were selected to do the analysis part. As they were the people with some sort of experience or interest in debating on social media. The responders who had no interest or experience in public debates online were not selected. My research was about risks analysis during public debates on digital platform, but I also wanted to see the difference between my home country Pakistan and Norway how they see these risks according to their . Thus, the survey was distributed only to these two countries. The response from Norway was that 102 people responded to the survey while 84 people from Pakistan responded to the survey. The gender distribution between Norway was 60-40 ratio, 60 being male and 40 being female. Which seems good for this survey as it is not one sided completely. The gender distribution of Pakistan were 57-43 percent. 57 being male and 43 being female.

The majority education level from the responders were mostly from bachelor's level. Which is again something good for this research as most of the responded were either bachelor, masters or PHD degree holders. Also, the age of the people who responded to the survey were mostly more then 20 years old. Almost 88 percent were above 20 years old. So, we can say that the people who responded to the survey were very mature and again is good thing for this research. The responders were also mostly from the section who spend more than 2 hours daily on social media. Almost 78 percent respondents said that they spend more than 2 hours on social media in a day. This shows that most of the people who responded to this survey have daily interest in social media activities.

The most used platforms according to the survey was Facebook. Both from Pakistan and Norway most people responded that they use Facebook as the most used platforms. According to a stat[48] which was performed in October 2020 also concluded Facebook as the most used platform in Norway. Also, according to a website stat counter[54], Pakistan also uses Facebook as the most which backs the result from our survey as well.

The next question on survey was asked that if public debates on social media grab their attention. While surfing on social media do, they like reading it or maybe they like debating themselves. Only 11 percent said that social media does not grab their attention anymore. While 89 percent said that it grabs their attention and some people said it grabs it attention sometimes. The next question was about the people who like debating online on digital platforms. Only 18 percent said that they are do not like debating. They may be only like reading debates. Almost 82 percent said that they like debating online on social media while some people like to debate mostly while others like to debate sometime. So this shows that people like social media debates and it grabs most of the people attention.

The most used platform for debating online according to the survey was Twitter and Facebook. From Norway people mostly responded that they used Twitter for online debates. Twitter is used for debates by many to give their opinion about certain topics. People can interact with any one on Twitter. The second most used platform from Norway according to survey for debates were Reddit. Reddit is a social news aggregation and discussion website[3]. Reddit is where people like debating on certain topics after posting them. From Pakistan mostly people replied that they like to debate on Facebook. On Facebook mostly people debate on different post by commenting on them. This is done by many people all around the world. The 2nd most used platform used for debates was Twitter from Pakistan according to the survey.

6.2 Interviews for general part

The interviews were also done as part of doing further research and getting some more in-depth answers which are sometimes not possible through surveys. The total number of interviews conducted were 14. Seven people from Pakistan were selected for this purpose and the same amount of people were selected from Norway. The responses were mostly the same from people from both countries so I decided to analyze them together. The things that

I felt were different are explained in the Norway vs Pakistan section at the end of this chapter. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, it was not possible to do the Interviews face to face, so the digital interviews were chosen to carry out this activity. The people were selected were mostly those who had some experience in debating online as they do debates, or they used to do debates. But all of them were very much interested in reading public debates on digital platforms as well.

Following step 6 of the thematic analysis which was writing up the themes.

Sensible age

People who participated in this interview had an age above 20. I thought this would be good as they will be mature enough to understand most of the risks on social media debates. Also, they would have Heard a lot of stuff from other people as well. So, I decide to select people who were at least 20 years old. I got different age people which was good for me as some were between 20-30 and some were between 30-40 years old.

Profession

They all were doing jobs. Their professional jobs were like doctor, marketing manager, blogger, student, and developer etc. So, I got to interact with different people from different fields. Which again was good for my research as I got to hear from different people from different professions.

Time on social media in a day

Most of the people who were interviewed spent a reasonable about of time on social media every day. Some even spent like 5 hours per day on social media while the Lowest I got was 2 hours. So, the average number of hours spent by many who were interviewed were around 3-4 hours per day which again was a good thing for my research.

Platforms used for debates

The next thing as in getting to know them the question was do they like public debates on social media and which platforms do they use for it. Many different answers were given as which platforms they use. The most common platforms were Facebook, Twitter , Instagram, YouTube, and Reddit etc. These platforms were used by the interviewers to participate in public

debates. These platforms are already used by thousands around the world, so it was not a surprise. Plus, all of them said they like to debate on these platforms from time to time. The next thing was asked was which debates they like to participate and take part in and as expected the answers were different. The topics included were like sports, politics, religion, science, technology and many more. These are the mostly debated topics anyway, so it was good for the research to know what people debating in these topics say about their experiences.

6.3 Research question 1 What are the typical consequences of voicing a fake opinion on social media during debates

To answer my first research question, I used both the methods of questionnaire and interview. First, I will focus on the results from the survey and then I will focus on the results of the Interview.

Questionnaire

The first question ask in the questionnaires were do people use social media debates as a source of news or information to increase their knowledge about certain topics. Also, which topics are people mostly interested in having debates or reading about it on debates. The purpose of this question was to check what kind of stuff people like to debate about and what they look for when they are on social media. Almost 80 percent of the responds said they use social media debates to gather more information and increase knowledge about different stuff. While only 20 percent said they do not like to use social media debates as their source of news. In Norway almost 85 percent people responded that they use it as source of news mostly or sometimes. While the response from Pakistan was that 80 percent responded that they use social media debates as their source of news. While 20 percent do not use it. When asked which topics they like debating about or reading about the first choice was sports. Politics was on the 2nd number of the list with most response. As for Norway sports and technology is the most followed topics on social media debates. While in Pakistan politics is the most followed topics According to the survey.

So now we know from this question that people do like following debates on social media so if they come across fake things it will have some sort of consequence on their thinking positive or negative.

Almost 90 percent people said that they have seen people frequently or sometimes express fake opinions on social media debates. Which again shows that people use fake stuff all the time on social media debates just to may be win arguments or just to have something to say. While less than 10 percent answered that they they have seen people rarely or never say fake stuff on social media debates which is a low number. This shows that the stuff on social media debates is mostly fake and people should not believe it. From Norway again almost 90 percent were in the frequently and sometimes category. While only 1 percent said they have never seen people share fake stuff. The response from Pakistan was worse that almost 95 percent believes that they have witnessed people share fake opinions on social media debates while 5 percent were in the rarely section. None said they have never seen.

This shows that people spread fake options on social media debates there can be many reasons behind this which we will explore more in the upcoming questions and interview section.

So did these people who spread fake opinions face any sort of consequence this was asked next which the reply was that more that only 8 percent people have seen people face some sort of consequence for using fake stuff which is kind of low. Mostly people near 50 percent did not know if they faced any sort of consequence while near 42 percent said they face no consequence. The trend was same for both countries as well.

So, this show that many escapes by using fake stuff online on social media debates.

This can have huge impact for many people, business, company, and many more things which the fake news are about. Let us consider an example that If someone want to buy a product of some company and people are debating on different platforms that weather should someone buy it or not and someone may be from the company's competition joins the debates and starts saying fake stuff about it like I bought it and it was not worth it etc. Many people will believe him as a recent survey[54] which was done in 2019 suggested that people read about products before they are about to buy almost 97 percent do this and 93 percent people do not buy it if people read bad stuff about it. So, by this way spreading fake stuff can have big consequence for others. As only 8 percent replied that they have seen people face some sort of consequence, so we explored what sorts of consequence they face in the interview section of this research question.

So if people start saying fake stuff about some one on public debates social media does it have effect on that person. Almost 75 percent responded that it does have effect on that person. While 20 percent people were not sure if it had any effect on that person while 5 percent said it does not affect that person. From both the countries the response was almost identical as 80 believed it does have effect on that person while 18 percent were not sure, and 2 percent said it does not. Then we asked what sort of effect they believe it can have on them 85 percent believes that biggest effect it will have on that person will be that his reputation will be destroyed. Which is very common as everyone follows social media know a day for example if someone starts a fake trend about someone everyone will read it and even if they believe it, it is true or not if they meet that person eventually that opinion will remain in their mind. If someone says a bad thing on social media debates about a certain shop that people who are reading it will try to avoid that shop so this will ruin the image of that shop. The next was that people start to target that person if that person is accused of something bad and people start to personally target that person which is very bad for him as this can have effects on that person health also. Which is 3rd on this list as nearly 60 percent believe that it will have a bad effect on that person health. While 50 percent believed it will have ruin that person financially. As we know there are many more consequences that these which can happen to other people.

6.4   Interview part for research question 1

The first question asked was what the consequences of are saying a fake opinion online on social debates and why do you think people do this. Many questions were asked, and their common theme is explained below following the step 6 of Thematic analysis.

Social fame

This was very common according to people that many of them have seen people share fake stuff on debates. The reason they said people do this sometimes is social fame. People like to start trends etc so people will pay attention to them. They will gain more popularity on social media platforms. They will gain more followers and more people will follow them. This is mostly common now if you want to get famous quickly then make a big claim positive or negative it does not matter people will see it and they will start giving your message to others and they will follow you as they will think this person gives information.

People who say fake stuff can have consequences

This can go both ways if people know that he is lying then he could face consequences as well as people can start targeting him personally. People will highlight them on social media platforms as liars and this will spread quickly so many will know about him. In some extreme cases people start to cyber bully him and this can have a serious effect on his health. Also, the person who he says fake stuff about can bring defamation case against that person who says fake stuff and if that is proven then that person can have to pay a big price. Mostly when people are caught then their credibility of their profile is very low, and people stop following them.

Win at all costs

Sometime people do this as they just do not want to lose in debates. In the heat of the Moment they do not have much of argument left so they sometime lie and say fake stuff, so the debate keep going. Also, most of the times when they are debating online, they mostly do not need to justify things with evidence as they can just say stuff without justifying it. As they know many people might not check and do research if what they are saying is true or not. Sometime people also do this just to annoy people and say stuff they know will trigger the other debater. This also happen sometimes as people who are debating do not have time to research what they are saying so they just say it without knowing if it is true or not.

Agendas

Also, sometimes people do this to damage other people, companies , business , parties etc. . These people have hidden agendas, and they might be paid by people to say these sorts of stuff to damage the reputation of companies , businesses etc. If they start a negative trend about a certain business and company etc while debating as it is public everyone will see it and they might believe it then that company will suffer because of it. This is very common as this happens most of the time, just to damage reputation of other people.

People who believe it

Then there are also those people who believe this fake stuff and act upon the information. They suffer a lot sometimes as well. They change their opinions about certain stuff based on fake stuff. They might stop buying , supporting etc some one based on this fake stuff so this can cause consequences for a lot of people.

So, you can see that this has consequences for a lot of people just not one. The people from saying this to the people who reads it to the people who it is about etc everyone faces some sort of consequence in the longer run.

6.5 Research question 2 Are there common risks a person must accept if he/she wishes to enter the public debate on social media

The second research question is about the risk a person must accept before he joins public debates on social media. Do people believe in this that there is risk?. Almost 88 percent said in the response to this question in the survey that public debates social media has risk associated with it. While 12 percent said there is no risk. The response from Norway was like 85 percent believed that public debates on social media has risks. While 15 percent said that there is no risk associated with public debates on social media. This was also the same for Pakistan response as it also had 85-15 ratio.

Cyber bullying

There are many risks on joining public debates on social media, but I decided to ask in the survey the most common risks that we hear everywhere. So, the first risk ask was what are the chances of cyber bullying taking place during public debates on social media. Cyberbullying is the use of online technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another human being[2]. Most of the people believed that the chances of cyber bullying taking place is high. Almost 65 percent were in the high and very high category. So, this says that there a lot of chances of cyber bullying taking place while public debates on social media. The response from Norway was almost the same as 65 percent believed that there is a chance of cyber bullying taking place. While from Pakistan 68 percent believed that there is chance of cyber bullying taking place. Which is higher than the response we got from the Norway people so this show that there is more chance of cyber bullying in Pakistan then Norway. There is increase in cyber bullying in the last few years as there is a stat that in 2019 every month by month there was a 45 percent more increased number of complaints regarding cyber bullying[37].

Then it was asked how much people suffer from cyber bullying and how much harmful is this to people. The response overall was like 67 percent said that the harm suffered from cyber bullying is high to very high. While 20 percent were in the average category. And only 13 percent were in the

below average category. This shows that cyber bullying is very harm full for people and people suffer a lot from it. The response from Norway was like 63 percent were above the average category and only 14 below. While in Pakistan according to the survey 72 percent believed it in the dangerous and very dangerous category. So, this shows that Cyber bullying is more harmful in Pakistan then Norway according to the results.

Cyber bullying causes a lot of problems for people. But it also starts to affect the mental health of people as well. There is study on mental health of people suffering from cyber bullying. Almost 65 percent said they were suffering from depression and aggression due to cyber bullying[43].

Account hacking

Account hacking is when someone else stoles some other person account with out his permission[50]. Another risk that mostly happens is that during or after debates people somehow hack the account of others and start to post stuff through their account and cause them a lot of problems. When asked what the chances of the account are being hacked can take place the response was like 50 percent above the average. So, this shows there is a 50-50 chance of account hacking to take place. The response from Norway was like 47 percent were above the average category and 25 percent was below the average. The response from Pakistan said that there is 52 percent chance of account hacking taking place. So, this shows that the risk of account hacking is low compared to cyber bullying as it is not easy sometimes to hack some body account. Also, there is more of chance of account hacking in Pakistan compared to Norway. This could be the fact that here in Norway from my own experiences people take more security measures to protect their accounts etc while in Pakistan people do not mostly follow all the security protocols to protect themselves. Then we asked to rate the harmfulness of account hacking and 60 percent said that damage from account hacking is high or very high. From Norway the almost 56 percent said this and from Pakistan 67 percent agreed with this. This again shows that account hacking is more harmful in Pakistan and people suffer from it there.

Identity theft

Identity theft occurs when some one uses some others persons name , personal information with out their permission and use that person identity[57]. Another risk that comes up during public debates online on social media is identity theft. Mostly the people who are debating or saying fake stuff might

not be using their own name and stuff rather they steal name and information of others and they use that so if they are caught in some way, they will still get away with it and the person they are using the identity of will have to pay the price.

The response in the survey was like 50 percent were above the the average area and in the high and very high chances of identity theft to take place. Like account hacking this is also not that easy, but this also happens commonly. The response from Norway believed that there are 44 percent chances of identity theft to occur and from Pakistan the chance of 60 percent chances of identity theft to take place. So, this again shows that there are more chances of this risk to take place in Pakistan then Norway.

The harmfulness from identify theft can be huge as people can suffer serious consequences. The results overall suggested that 71 percent people think that the harmfulness of identity theft is very high. So, this shows that this is very big risk if someone is using someone else identify on social media debates. The response from both countries regarding the harmfulness was almost the same as 71 percent believed that people suffer a lot from identify theft and it is very harmful.

Privacy issues

One other risk while on public debates on social media is privacy issues. Mostly when you do public debates you know that it will not remain private but there sometimes chances of that falling in the hands of very bad people and they might then throughout social media find out your personal information where you live what is your name etc and target you. So, this is another big risk.

Almost 74 percent think that there are high chances of privacy issues during public debates on social media. This again shows that there is a lot of chance for this to happen as privacy is something very less protected nowadays on social media as even just to sign up now on platforms you will have to give them your number and email stuff. So, it becomes easy for others to find it if they want to find it. The response from Pakistan and Norway are almost the same as 74 percent said that there are high chances of this to take place. While on the harmfulness of privacy issue the people responded nearly 69 percent that it is harmful very much and while in Norway people said 68 percent that it is harmful. While 72 percent in Pakistan believed that it is very harmful.

So overall from the survey it is clear there are a lot of risk a person must consider before joining public debates on social media. These risks are just the common one that I asked people to give their view on as there are many others also. From the data that is collected there are more chances of these risks in Pakistan then in Norway . The difference is not that much but still there is much more risks in Pakistan. There are some factors that influence this. One of the factors that might influence this is laws of the country which we would look at research question four.

6.6   Interview part for research question 2

In the Interview part the Interviewers were asked do they think a person must accept risks when he enters public debates on social media. Many answers were given, and coming themes were a little a hard so to summarize their answers.

Risks

The first thing was asked do they believe that there are risks joining social media debates to which almost everyone said yes. While describing those risks there were many answers. The most common risks were cyber bullying , person identity, privacy issues and account hacking etc were discussed by everyone. As these risks are commonly found when using social media debates. A lot of people suffer health and mental issues due to cyber bullying , Harassment, and privacy issues. While some people said it also depends on the type of people you are interacting with on debates. Everyone has a different personality and people can respond in different ways so you need to be careful in your response as if you can see the next person is replying to your answers aggressive so maybe you stop and move away from there. Sometimes you can avoid these if you remain anonymous and hide your personal information. It depends how you use it mostly and depends on if you have a high level of tolerance as some people suffer from depression as well when they are getting attack in debates. In general, there were many risks discussed.

Common and harmful risks

Then the Interviewers were asked which of the risk they think is the most common during debates on digital platforms. The most common risks that they have experience during debates Is Harassment , personal attacks , cyber bullying, and depression. One describes an incident as he had his on picture

on his profile while debating and he said when he was debating the other debater started to attack his profile picture rather than replying him in the topic they were discussing. He said that had big impact on him as he used some bad words to describe his physical appearance. From that day he said I never used my picture on my profile. These sorts of things have happened to many times. Also, the the Interviewers were asked which risks they think is the most harmful. The response was again identified theft, mental stress, account hacking and psychological issues. So, this shows that people should take these risks seriously when entering debates as these can harm them very badly sometimes.

Benefits with risk

The last question in this part was asked is that is this a big price to pay to join social media debates. Today in this world everything comes with risks where technology is associated with. So public debates on social media also comes with pros and cons. We cannot live in this world now days with social media. Even though some people do but majority of the people use it. So, if we can enjoy in the fact that we are discussing stuff and giving our opinions on certain stuff with sitting at our home from our mobile to someone who is sitting in some other part of the world then we must also accept that there might be some risk in this as well. Just like people say no pain no gain. Also, these risks are mostly common, and everyone knows about them before joining social media so we should only join these platforms when we are ready to face these risks with their worst-case scenario. But still this is a big price to pay According to some people and the rewards are less.

Reaction

Sometimes people react to everything differently. Some people no matter how much offensive it is they just think of debates as a discussion and move on from it. But some people react badly if they feel that the other debater had gone to further and they start to attack them by different ways. Worst case people accounts have been hacked and to deal with all the emotional issues people have committed suicide when it gets too much for them. So, it depends on how you react, and others react to situations.

In your hands

In the end it is all in your hands and you must decide if the benefits and more or the risks are more. You should always follow the rules that are asked of you to follow and respect boundaries of others.

6.7 Research question 3 When people see an opinion during public debates do, they simply accept it? Do they check the credibility of the news before spreading it

Questionnaire

The third research question was that when people see an opinion during social media debates do, they simply accept it, and do they check the credibility of the news they found on social media debates before spreading it to others. This question was important as to see if people accept other's opinion on debates or does it have any effect on them.

According to the survey response most of the people almost 60 percent said that when they read something on public debates on social media it does affect their thinking about that topic. While as 25 percent people said it does not have any effect on their thinking. While 15 percent were in the sometime category as for certain topics it does, for certain topics it does not. The response from Norway was like that 55 percent said it does affect their thinking while 30 percent said it does not affect them. While in Pakistan almost 80 percent said it has effect on them so in Pakistan most of the people believe what they read on social media.

The next thing was asked do you verify if you find something on social media debates here the response was like 44 percent said they do verify and while nearly 40 percent said they sometimes verify it and sometimes they do not. 15 percent said they do not verify it . While the response from both countries Pakistan and Norway was almost the same. This mostly happens when people do not how to verify stuff, or they might not have the time to verify it then in that scenario if they still believe it to be true then it can be bad for them and if they tell others this news or opinion without checking it credibility then it is wrong. So, the question was asked do people still do this and spread news without verify it if it true or false for their benefit. Almost 80 people believed that people do this if it is benefits them in some way. While 15 percent said sometimes, and 5 percent said they do not do this. The pattern again follows almost the same for both countries.

There could be many factors for this as people might not have time to do the research and see the credibility of the news. They might not know the way of doing this as when you read sometimes on social media debates or in general social media it can be challenging to see if it is true or fake. The next thing was asked to have they used any software or website which checks the

credibility of the news or opinion. Almost 95 percent people said they have not used any software or website like this and the 5 percent who did said it was like they do a lot of research on Google. They check many websites to confirm it which takes a lot of time.

So do they want to use a software which can do all the heavy work for them and they can just find out if what they are saying is true or fake. In the survey almost 99 percent agree they would love a software which can do this and check the credibility of the news etc. The response from the countries were again the same for the above two questions.

6.8 Interview part for Research question 3

The 3rd question in the Interview was about what effect social media debates has on ones thinking regarding a topic and should people tell other things they read on social media without verifying it.

Effect on thinking

Some time when you read some things on social media or social media debates it has very less effect on you and sometimes it can have a huge effect on you. If someone is speaking with facts and evidence and is an expert of that field that people tend to listen to him and change their thinking of certain topics about it. This helps increase their knowledge as well. While some time just reading peoples different reviews about certain stuff can help you decide if that thing is worth it. Reading about different people experiences helps you decide about certain stuff. So, in some way it does have some effect on you. Also, some time people do not have time to do research and do not know how to check if what others are saying is true or not. Sometime people just hide the truth very cleverly.

Deception

They support their fake stuff with so much evidence that people believe it as they do not have the resources and time to do research to check if it true, so they just believe it as it is.

Google it

The next thing was asked how people check the credibility of the news or opinion they read on social media debates that what others are saying is true or false. This can be quite challenging and hard. The easiest way is to just google it ofcourse and hope you get some information regarding it. Maybe it is a big news, and all the people are talking about it at different social media platforms then you might be able to verify it.

Hard to verify it

But most of the time it is hard to verify it as some things are not reported or becomes breaking news, so it is hard for to check the credibility of it. So, the best Solution the Interviewers said would be if there can be a software which does these sorts of stuff for you and quickly displays you the credibility of the news. Then it can be easy for everyone to check it

Consequence

Also, should people check the credibility of news before giving it to others. Everyone said they should always do this as they might be spreading fake news to others which can be quite dangerous if people act on it. They might cause damage to others. Then people might blame them and say why did you give us wrong information and they might face consequences for it.

Right way

At least the ethical thing is to always tell them that you do not if the news you are giving them is true or false as you just read it somewhere so they they can investigate them self. Plus, you should always try to verify it from 3,4 sources before telling them news. Also, everyone should do this no matter who tells them some news always confirm it them self first.

Different incident

A lot of Interviewers had many incidents where wrong news was given to them as the other person just read it on social media debates. Like once some told someone that a paper got cancelled tomorrow due to a certain reason. The person decided not to believe him, and he went next day to give the exam which did happen. So, if he had believed him, it would he might have missed the paper. Many times, people say to others I have heard or read that there is a sale a certain shop and when people go there there is no sale. Also, once while on social media debates it was said that the famous wrestler undertaker had died to which people stated feeling sad, but it was fake rumors. So, these stuffs happen all the time.

6.9 Research question 4 Do people think that laws of different countries effect the way a person thinks during public debates

Questionnaire

The last research question was about the laws of social media platforms as they are the one thing that keeps everyone safe from the harm from social media. Does during public debates on social media platforms people think about the laws and do they affect the way the people debate on social media. Does having strict laws prevent people from using social media badly these sorts of issue were raised.

The first thing that was discussed was do people think about social media laws during public debates on social media. Nearly 55 percent said they do not think about social media laws during public debates on social media. While 30 percent said they do think about it and 15 percent were in the sometime category.

People from Norway almost 60 percent said they do not think about social media laws during debates and people from Pakistan almost 65 percent did not think about laws during debates. So, this shows that majority of the people do not think about social media laws and in the heat of the moment they might break some laws if they are getting annoyed.

Another thing why people might not think about laws might be that they are not aware of them as social media laws sometimes can be a little hard to understand so people often do not remember them or are aware of them. The question was asked according to results almost 80 percent people said they are not aware of social media laws. While 20 percent people said they are aware of social media laws. This is very low as almost everyone in today's age uses social media so to find out most of the users are not aware of social media laws shows that this is a not a good thing as they might break them and cause others harm without even know they are breaking the laws.

Also, sometimes even if you know the laws it might be hard to follow them in the moment of heat as people tend to do stuff normally, they do not do. So, it was asked is it hard to follow social media laws during public debates. 40 percent people said it is hard to follow them during public debates while 30 said it is not hard to follow them and 30 percent were in the sometime category. The response from Norway was that it is not hard to follow them

during social media debates and Pakistan it was that it hard to follow them so here we can see that people in Norway do think that it could be followed even during debates.

One way to ask people to follow them no matter what is to have some sort of consequence if they break it. So, what about social media laws will people who break them suffer from serious consequences or minor. May be nothing will happen to them. So, this was asked and according to the survey many thought that there will be Minor consequence as 36 percent people selected this option. While 21 percent said that nothing happens even if you break social media laws. While again 21 percent said that there will be serious consequences. 22 percent people selected the option that they do not know what will happen which is again not a good thing as everyone should be aware of what will happen if you break these laws. The response from Norway was that almost 70 percent selected the minor or serious consequence option which shows that people do think they will be given some sort of punishment. While the response from Pakistan shows only 40 percent thought you might face some consequence while 40 percent were not aware what happens. While 20 percent were in the nothing category. So, this shows that people in Pakistan are less aware of the consequences of breaking the laws

So do people get punished for breaking the laws or do they still get away with it. This was asked and according to the data from the survey 40 percent thought they escape any sort of consequence after breaking the social media laws almost every time. 30 percent selected the option most of the times they do escape punishment. Only 12 percent believed they do not escape punishment which again is very low number. This might encourage people that breaking social media laws is not a bad thing as you do not get punished. The trend was same for the countries both Pakistan and Norway for this question.

So, during debates most of time people debate and put their opinions forward. Some time to back their evidence they might use fake stats and fake evidence this happens a lot so in the survey it was do people use fake stuff to win in public debates. 60 percent people responded to yes that they use fake stuff to win at Public debates. While 25 percent said they do not do this and 15 said sometimes. The response from both countries Pakistan and Norway was the same. So, what if they know that if they use fake stuff and they get caught and will be punished as they may be broke a law of spreading fake stuff on social media will they still do this. 65 percent people said

no they will stop using fake stuff in public debates if laws are implemented fully. While 15 said they might some time and 20 percent said yes. The response from Norway was that mostly will not use this so this shows they fear breaking laws while response from Pakistan said that they will still use it, so this shows that people in Pakistan fear less breaking social media laws.

Likewise, it was asked that if laws are not implemented fully then will people use fake stiff and talk more freely in social media debates. 65 percent believed that people would use fake stuff more and 10 percent said no they will not use it while 25 Percent were in, they may be category. The trend for both countries follows the same.

So do countries try to implement the laws of social media. This was asked to which the response was 32 percent from Norway did not know if their country implements the social media law. 28 percent believed that they do not implement social media laws fully. While 28 percent believed they do it sometimes. While 12 percent said they never do it. While the response from Pakistan was like 54 percent people did not believe that social media laws are followed. While 26 people were not sure if they are implemented or not. So, this shows that people from Pakistan believe that they are not implemented that much in their country.

But is it possible to implement social media laws as social media is a so big and to monitor everyone always can be quite challenging so can a country fully implement the social laws?. The response was that 30 people were not sure of it is possible to implement social media laws fully. While 26 percent believed it is very hard to implement the social media laws. 24 percent said sometimes it can be implemented fully while 20 percent people said it is possible. The response from Pakistan said it can be implemented fully while the response from Norway was it is hard to implement this.

6.10   Interview part for question 4

Laws

Laws are the only thing that protects human from suffering bad things at the hand of others as they protect us. So social media law is there to protect us from the harm of social media. So do are people aware of social media laws in your country. Mostly said they are not aware of that many laws just the common one like Copyright , privacy laws , cybercrime, defamation, and hacking. These laws are the most common people tend to hear. So,

these were laws that they knew. So do people follow them as well. They do it when they know that if they break the laws, they will be punished or fined. The more awareness spread regarding being punished helps them follow them.

Why they follow the laws

Yes, they do but very few of the people do. When people are fined and are given some sort of punishment that encourages other to follow the laws. Also this increases the awareness of social media laws among people. So when people are aware of laws they tend to followed them.

When they do not follow laws

Mostly people do not follow social laws. They are less afraid of breaking laws as they know mostly people get away with breaking social media laws without any punishment. Very little punishment is given some time a small fine or they will ban your profile. People just pay the fine or make a new profile quickly. So, they are less afraid of the consequences. Also, if they get caught for sharing fake Information about someone and people ask them for accountability, they just say we are using freedom of speech. Also, social media platforms are not own by the countries, so it is very hard for them to check and ask for accountability from everyone. Implementing the social media laws are very hard on a larger scale.

People respond to fear

But as we know people respond to fear and they stop doing stuff when they know they will get caught and face punishment. So, during debates if they know if they say something fake about someone others can use law to punish them then they stop doing this. They will think twice before saying wrong stuff on social media. Also, if they know no one will say anything to them and no punishment will be given this will encourage them to speak randomly more and more on social media debates. If they see every one is following the laws then every one tries to follow them.

6.11   Norway vs Pakistan

This research showed that there is not much difference between the people of Norway and Pakistan with regards to how they think about the risks involved in social media debates. In the research question 2 when we thought

about the risks that come from social media debates like cyberbullying, Account hacking etc Pakistan was marginally in front of Norway according to data. Those risks were more common and harmful in Pakistan according to the data results then Norway. Pakistan is little bit behind on education as the literacy rate is about 60 percent[30]. While the literacy rate here in Norway is about more then 90 percent[1]. So this can be one of the reasons why the data said that risks are more in Pakistan. As we all know people gain more knowledge through education. Moreover there can be many other factors like laws are not strict there or not followed. Figure 36 shows us very low people responded to serious consequences option when people break social media laws. So this shows that people are not afraid of breaking the laws as they do not fear any big punishment. Also on figure 41 people again responded from Pakistan that they believe their country does not implement social media laws fully. So these things encourage people to go out side the boundaries. Figure 39 was another interesting stat that even if laws are followed most of the response from Pakistan still said that they will still use fake Information to win debates. So this shows that may be people are not going to accept defeat no matter what happens to them.

Interview

During the interview most of the things were discussed by both the 7 candidates from Pakistan and 7 from Norway that were discussed above. Some of things I noticed was people from Pakistan said that they were less scared of breaking laws of social media. They said almost everyone does it there. Like it has become so common that people have forgotten that this is wrong. They said they have heard very less times people getting punished or may be fined. Plus they said it is hard for them to verify some stuff they read on public debates as there are not many ways they can do it. As they do it by simply searching on Google and if they do not see some thing regarding that news on first 2,3 links they stop further researching it. Many of the stories do not get reported as they are not national level news. So it becomes hard for them to verify it.

The people from Norway said they just do not have that much time to verify something they read. As most of the time they are busy with their jobs and stuff. But they said they try to avoid breaking any law as if they are caught and punished then they will have that on their record for life. Which can stop them from getting many others things in Norway.

6.12 Are social media debates a good thing or a bad thing

Also, according to the survey 59 percent believed that debates on social media is a good thing while 31 percent said it is pointless and nothing is achieved. 10 percent were in the sometime category. The trend was same for both countries as well.

In the end I asked all the Interviewers to tell me if they think that social media debates are worth it. Some agreed that it a good thing while some said it is not a good thing. So, the positives where it helps people increase their knowledge and helps learn more about different topics. They change their opinions when they discuss certain things with others. They can interact with people all around the world. They can interact with people who share the same interest. They get to understand different people thinking pattern. They get to meet many people and talk with them. So, in general is has many good things.

The negative part as we discussed above there are a lot of risk associated with it. That could influence your health and wellness. Some people are just there to make fun of others and they do not take these debates seriously. They never change their view of thinking no matter how much evidence is given to them. Then it just looks like a waste of time and pointless cycle. And you mostly just start fight with others. Certain topics should always be avoided no matter what like religion as people get very aggressive and emotional regarding it. So, there are a lot of negatives as well.

7 Further work and Limitation

Some things could have gone better during the master thesis, and some findings could be interesting to explore more. This section will explore the limitations of the study and what could be interesting to look at for future works.

The people responded to my survey were 226. The data I selected to do analysis was 186. As they were the people with some experience or interest in social media debates. This number was little lower and could me much higher then this. More over I was gathering responses from two countries only Pakistan and Norway. So to compare two countries the data should have been a little larger. The responds from the surveys were less as sometimes people are not interested in doing surveys that often. So may be their can be a little incentive added to encourage them to fill the survey. The total response of the surveys and Interviewers represents just a fraction of people from both countries. This can not be applied to all the population. As their might be people with complete different set of mind and their answers can be completely different to the ones that I recorded.

Plus I did this research for just two countries. Many other countries could have been involved to make a comparison between them. I chooses these two because Pakistan is my home country and Norway is where I am currently living. But for future work it can be interesting to include many others countries to see how they think about the risks involved in social media debates.

8 Conclusions

Debates on social media is not just an excellent platform to help us stay interconnected with people who share the same interest and love to talk about it but it can also be used by attackers or people with less than honest ambitions trying to exploit people. Plus people use it for so many other reasons other then to debate now a days. Which are bound to have risks involved in it. The conclusion is constructed around the research questions, giving a conclusion to what I found out during this thesis.

Research question 1

There are a lot of consequences in the short term and long term when people share fake stuff on public debates. Based on the data collected and analysis of this research, we can conclude that not only those who share fake news and unverified information in the name of opinion and freedom of expression during public debates on social media are likely to suffer dire consequences, but also those who engage in these discussions face problems when they are unable to distinguish true information from fake news and real facts from unverified data also suffer. The people from saying fake stuff to the people who reads it to the people who it is about etc everyone faces some sort of consequence in the longer run.

Research question 2

This research signifies that a lot of risks are involved when someone engages in social media debates and discussion. For example, cyberbullying, identity theft, and even physical harm if you happen to hurt religious feelings of an extremist, etc. People suffer both emotionally and physically from these Risks. People should be ready to accept these risks before joining social media debates. As these risks are some thing that they might have to face one way or the other in future.

Research question 3

This research also indicates that whenever we read any news, we should first verify it and check it thoroughly before spreading it because a lot of people spread news without verification and there are only few who make sure about its authenticity and truth. The data shows that some people don't have time to check and verify the news, while certain others say that they didn't know how to do it, and some people said that if a software is provided to check the credibly of the news, then they would certainly get

its help in this regard. No matter how much people try to not take these social media debates opinion seriously, still it has some sort of affect on their thinking regarding that topic. So in short it does affect their thinking regarding a topic when they read some thing on social media debates.

Research question 4

The laws with respect to social media prevent many people from doing these wrong things and spreading fake news, but research shows that many people are not even aware of these laws. Hence, if everyone is aware of social media laws and know that there are punishments for breaking these laws, then it can definitely be useful, because some people think that whether they follow the social media laws or not, it is very difficult to catch such culprits. This way they know they can say anything on social media platforms. No body will stop them or punish them so this encourages them to say more untrue stuff. As we know people respond to fear mostly so if they know laws are followed fully then they will think twice before saying anything untrue on public debates on social media. So how laws of a country are followed does have an effect on the thinking of a debater during debates on digital platforms.

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9.1   Appendix

Nettskjema   Meny ≡

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Public Risk Perceptions when participating in debates on digital platforms

14 %

Mandatory fields are marked with this star *

Demographic information

What is your gender? *

○ Male

○ Female

What is your education level? *

○ School

○ College

○ Bachelors

○ Masters

○ PHD

⦿ Other

Which country do you live in? *

<div style="border:1px solid #ccc; height:40px;"></div>

Which city do you live in?

<div style="border:1px solid #ccc; height:40px;"></div>

What age group do you belong to? *

- ○ 10-20
- ○ 21-30
- ○ 31-40
- ○ 41-50
- ○ 51 or 65
- ○ Above 65

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Public Risk Perceptions when participating in debates on digital platforms

29 %

Mandatory fields are marked with this star *

Social media risks

How much time do you spend using social media platforms in a day? *

○ Less than 2 hour

○ 2-3 hours/day

○ 3-4 hours/day

○ 4-5 hours/day

○ More than 5 hours

Which of these social media platforms do you use frequently? *

☐ Twitter

☐ Facebook

☐ Instagram

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☐ Reddit

☐ Quora

☐ Others

Do you have any kind of experience or interest in public debates on social media platforms?

○ Very little

○ Some

○ A lot

○ None

Do you think joining social media has any risks associated with it? *

○ Yes

○ No

For the following questions, answer on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

What are the chances of Cyberbullying taking place on social media? *

1	2	3	4	5

Value [   ]

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What are the chances of Account hacking taking place on social media? *

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Value [ ]

What are the chances of Identity theft taking place on social media? *

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Value [ ]

What are the chances of Privacy issues taking place on social media? *

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Value [ ]

What are the chances of Harassments taking place on social media? *

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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Value [　　]

Rank the harmfulness of cyberbullying as a social media risk on the scale given below? *

1	2	3	4	5

Value [　　]

Rank the harmfulness of Account hacking as a social media risk on the scale given below? *

1	2	3	4	5

Value [　　]

Rank the harmfulness of Identity theft as a social media risk on the scale given below? *

1	2	3	4	5

Value [　　]

Rank the harmfulness of Privacy issues as a social media risk on the scale given below? *

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Value [ ]

Rank the harmfulness of Harassments as a social media risk on the scale given below? *

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Value [ ]

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Public Risk Perceptions when participating in debates on digital platforms

43 %

Mandatory fields are marked with this star *****

Public debates on social media and fake news

Do public debates on social media platforms grab your attention? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Sometimes

Do you like engaging in debates over social media platforms? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Sometimes

Which of these social media platforms do you think are used for debating online? *

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☐ Twitter

☐ Facebook

☐ Instagram

☐ Reddit

☐ Quora

☐ Others

Do you use social media as your source of news? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Sometimes

Have you witnessed people share fake opinions on social media during debates? *

○ Frequently

◉ Sometimes

○ Rarely

○ Never

Did any of those people face any consequence for such actions? *

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○ Yes

○ No

○ Not sure

Do you believe sharing fake news about someone during public deba-
tes can have a long term effect on that person? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

Which of these long term term effects do you think can happen to that
person?(choose as many answers you want) *

☐ People can target him

☐ That persons image can be ruined

☐ Financial impacts

☐ Impacts on his health

☐ Nothing will happen

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Public Risk Perceptions when participating in debates on digital platforms

57 %

Mandatory fields are marked with this star *****

Public debates on social media and fake news

Do you think reading debates on social media can affect your opinion about a certain topic? *

- ◯ Yes, it highly effects
- ⦿ Sometimes
- ◯ Very rarely
- ◯ Never

When you read an argument on a social media debate, do you verify any points that you are not sure about? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

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○ Sometime

Do you believe people share news without verifying to others if it benefits them? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Sometimes

Have you ever used any software that tests the credibility of any news? *

○ Yes

○ No

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Public Risk Perceptions when participating in debates on digital platforms

71 %

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Social media laws(Information)

Social media law is a developing area of law that includes both criminal and civil aspects. Generally, it covers legal issues related to user-generated content and the online sites that host or transmit it. Some of the special legal concerns raised by social media include privacy, including the rights of both social media users and third parties (for example, when photos are posted and used online without the permission of the people depicted); defamation; advertising law; and intellectual property (IP) law. Material shared on social media can sometimes infringe on a copyright, a trademark, or other IP rights.

Do you think about social media laws when you are debating on social media? *

◉ Yes

◯ No

◯ Sometimes

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Are you aware of any social media laws strictly followed in your country? *

◯ Yes

◉ No

During debates is it hard to follow social media laws? *

◯ Yes

◉ No

◯ Sometimes

What do you think will happen if you don't follow them social media laws? *

◯ Serious consequences

◉ Minor consequences

◯ Nothing

◯ Not sure

Have you ever heard about someone breaking social media laws? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

Do you believe many people escape punishment after breaking social media laws? *

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○ Yes everytime

○ Most of the times

○ Sometimes

○ Never

Would people say fake stats or news if it is required to win a debate? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Sometimes

If people know that social media laws are enforced will they still use fake information to win in debates? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Sometimes

If laws are not implemented properly people will speak more randomly during public debates as they will fear nothing? *

○ Yes they will fear nothing

○ No

○ sometimes

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Do you believe that your country does implement social media laws fully? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Sometimes

○ Not sure

Do you believe its hard to implement social media laws fully? *

○ Yes its not easy to implement them fully

○ No they can be implemented fully

Do you believe public debates on social media is a good thing? *

○ Yes it is

○ Sometime it is

○ No it is pointless

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Public Risk Perceptions when participating in debates on digital platforms

86 %

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Feedback

Would you be interested in engaging in a full-length interview over social media debates for this research?

○ Yes

○ No

Feedback regarding this questionnaire if any

[   ]

| Send |