

Role of social media in promoting China-Pak Economic Corridor: A content analysis

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Abstract

Social Media plays an important role in the promotion of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This study conducted to investigate the potential role of the Social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Websites) in the promotion of CPEC project. To achieve the objectives of this study the researchers collected stories (Posts, Pictures, Video and News Shared on Social Media) of One month (1st to 31st December 2017) regarding the project. After collection of the data, a proper code sheet was used for content analysis. The researcher applied Social media theory for the analysis and data presentation. This quantitative research explored the role of social media in the promoting of China Pakistan Economic Corridor and found that Social media provides a forum to users to discuss each and every feature of China Pakistan Economic corridor and they can updated their information regarding CPEC.

Keywords: Social media, CPEC project, Pakistan, China, opinion leader,

Introduction

Smock, Ellison, Lampe, and Wohn (2011) said, social media is a popular medium for communication now a day. Almost everyone i.e. government, politician, businessman, are always looking for new tools

for communication to reach their audience and viewer. Several types of studies have been conducted to analysis the role of social media (Social networking website/application). The researcher like Liu, Min, and Han (2020) discovered people use social media for social interaction, social connection, getting and share information and entertainment. Now a days people and particularly youth is more indebted towards use of social media to share their ideas (Bibi, Bukhari, Sami, Irfan, and Liaqaut, 2018). The organizations utilize social media like, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to communicating with customers and on another hand, the customers also share their opinions, suggestion and criticism about a company or brand, which is quick feedback from their side.

According to Hyllegard, Ogle, Tan and Reitz (2011), customers get information about new brands and items on social media websites. The social media allows the individuals to create their personal profile, share images, tag the friends and family members, they also comment on different posts and thoughts, updating status and finding the friend. It also gives space opportunity to share news information and different tryps of news with each other (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

Literature Review

According to Kapoor et al. (2018), social media is a new area of research for the scholar. As they are conducted research to determine the effects of the internet on different users. The new generation takes more interest in social media and web-based application, it produces both positive and negative effects. Social media is also used by different organizations and even international universities to attract potential students (Irfan, Rasli, Sami, & Liaquat 2017). The good aspects are that social media is providing a virtual space for share personal stories, Pictures, views/opinion, information and other matters of their interest. A number of researchers are working on the positive effect of social media (Irfan, Rasli, Sulaiman, Sami, & Qureshi 2018; Shareef, Mukerji, Dwivedi, Rana, & Islam, 2019). According to Asemah and Edegon (2013), youngsters prefer social media and internet-based website/application as a source of news and information rather than to listening to a radio, watching television or reading

newspaper, magazines. Yang and Brown (2015) agreed that currently the social media is a useful powerful medium for making social networking with friends and family members around the world. It helps to develop important knowledge and social skills and be active citizens who create and share content. Social Media is recognized as the most effective medium in the field of marketing, higher education, customer's relationship management, electronic word of mouth and in public administration. Social media is an important tool for economic development as provide two-way communication and low- cost marketing, to gain information and communicate and build a relationship with its customers. (Irfan, Rasli, Sulaiman, Sami, & Qureshi 2019).

J. Pepitone (2010) stated, the majority of the people use social media for the sake of information. Its also help the people in gather information, share stories civic engagement, discuss concerns, life satisfaction, political participation and social trust. As Pew Report suggested Similarly, different marketing units are get the advantages of using social networking website/application because it is seen as an information equalizer allowing access to information to populations who, in the past, would not have this access (Westerman, Spence and Van Der Heide, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

The social network theory emphases on the role of social and common relations in sharing information, directing personal or influence of media, and allowing behavioral change (Scott, 1991). Back in the 1960s, the informal social network has essentially extended the skyline of media impacts inquire about, with expanding the use of system systematic techniques in different observational settings. The two-advance stream of correspondence speculation, the hypothesis of frailties, and the hypothesis of dispersion of developments are three noteworthy hypothetical methodologies that coordinate system ideas in understanding the stream of intervened data and its belongings (Wasserman and Faust, 1994).

Vargo, Akaka, and Wieland (2020) thinking that the diffusion of innovation is as a technology based process of the spread or adoption of information within a social context. Wang, Liu, Liu, and Wang (2020) farther added that further elaborated on these mechanisms to explain the role of opinion leaders in the media effects context. According to Yang, Tsou, Janowicz, Clarke, and Jankowski (2019) the traditional concept of opinion leaders in diffusion on innovation, research in this domain has found that ordinary users may also have strong impacts on the diffusion of information.

Moreover, Katz (1959) explained the role of opinion leader in his research study, he farther explain the concept of opinion leaders during the two-step flow of communication process in different individuals group. in specific domains. Bergström and Jervelycke Belfrage (2018) explain the role of opinion leaders in social media, he added that opinion leader in the sharing of information from media and public sources. This concept connected into the overall idea of social networking websites/applications where they people sharing the different kind of news and information. This new dynamic between leaders and followers, however, is relatively unexplored in mediated interpersonal settings. (Bergström & Jervelycke Belfrage, 2018)

In other words,

Rehman, Jiang, Rehman, Paul, and Sadiq (2020) explained that Some of social media users may have a strong influence on the other users. So, it's called online/ social networking Opinion Leaders, who play a vibrant role in the speed up the information sharing process and keep the connected the individual in the online discussion process. He added farther that who effectively conversation starter, spread information and exert personal influence on content in social media will be consider as an opinion leader.

Milling and Maier (2020) added that the diffusion of innovations happened between individuals or organizations in a social system. The researcher Lund, Oname, Tijani, and Agbaji (2020) have opinion that The diffusion process is basically a networked/ connected process, where the people social connected, it may for the social support, get advice, family connection or friendship. As innovations travel through

an internet of social connections, the structure and characteristics of this network can determine how widely and how soon the innovations get adopted (Lund et al., 2020)

Research Questions

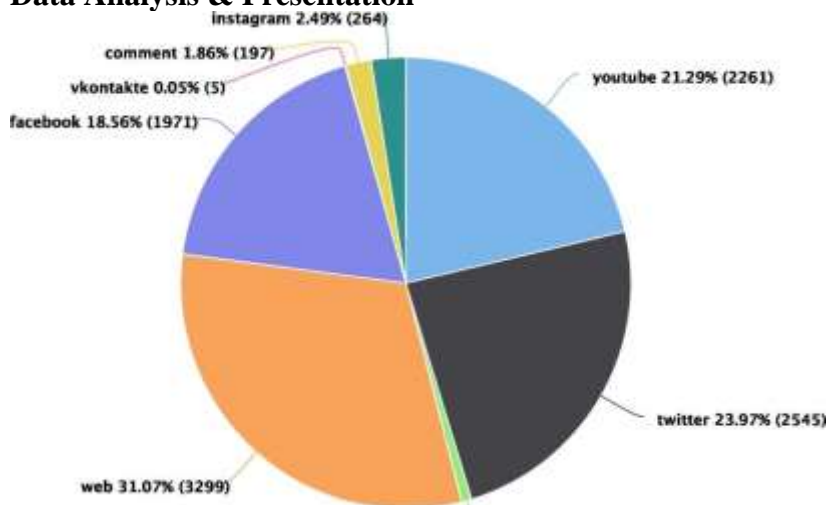
This study raises a major question and its conclusion will provide some understanding regarding the mega project. To identify the specific problems and to allocate the directions for managing such problems.

- Do social media generate public awareness in relation to CPEC project?
- Do social media help Pakistanis regarding jobs in CPEC?

Research Methodology

The procedure of data collection was adopted to access the involvement of people in the CPEC project by using social media. The researchers have collected stories (Posts, Pictures, Video and News Shared on Social Media) of one month (1st to 31st December 2017) regarding the CPEC. After collection of the data, a proper code sheet was designed to analyze it. The statistical analysis tools were used for the findings. In this qualitative study, the researchers presented the results in the form of graphics and tables.

Data Analysis & Presentation



The figure shows that in Dec 2017, in social media the term China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), 10618 times were mentioned by users. It indicates that different social media website was highly used for the Posts about CPEC which were 31% (3299) followed by twitter 23% (2545) Facebook and YouTube 18% and 21%. The results also show that Websites, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube were highly used for the promotion of CPEC, in other words, they shared maximum information about CPEC.

5.1 Major Finding

Web/ websites

The data shows that thenews.com.pk was at the top and they mentioned 132 times CPEC in their stories. Followed by another news website pakistantoday.com.pk have 131 mentions. According to the data 127 times, CPEC was used in app.com.pk and timesofislamabad.com represents 123th. Further, tribune.com.pk have 110th and other websites like nation.com.pk have 78 times. Moreover, dawn.com.pk and 4-traders.com mentioned the word CPEC 70 times on their websites. Other websites like pakobserver.net and dailytimes.com.pk participated in 64 mentions too. Most of the news websites shared stories about the contraction of the CPEC project, government statements, meeting of the delegation of both countries, special reports and different updates.

Facebook

The data shows that different Facebook pages have mentioned CPEC 1971 times in December, 2017. The page titled “CPEC News and Updates” mentioned 107 times the word CPEC in their status in the month of December, 2017. The data also shows that the page is liked by 50,415 people and besides that 50,591 others follow it. In other Facebook page “China Pakistan Economic Corridor” CPEC was mentioned 93 times. The page has 246,147 Likes and followed by 247,176 people.

The following is the details of the Facebook Pages about CPEC

	Title of the Page	Page ID	likes	followed
1	China - Pak Economic Corridor – CPEC	@ChinaPakEconomicCorridor	472,642	476,798
2	China Pakistan Economic Corridor – CPEC	@corridorpakistanchina	246,147	247,176
3	China Pak Economic Corridor – CPEC	@CPEC15	67,022	67,357
4	CPEC Group of Management & Consultancy	@cpecgmc	56,624	56,891
5	CPEC News and Updates	@CPECNewsandupdates	50,415	50,591
6	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company	@KPEZDMC	48,403	48,480
7	China Pakistan Economic Corridor - CPEC Updates	@cpecjobs	24,186	26,734
8	The CPEC	@thecpec.org	20,161	20,187
9	China Pakistan Economic Corridor- CPEC Jobs & Updates	@CPECJobsUpdate	19,714	19,936
10	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor - CPEC.gov.pk	@CPEC.gov.pk	19,361	19,578
11	CPECNews	@cpecnews	12,942	13,007
12	CPEC		11,760	11,812
13	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor	@CPEC.Official	11,522	11,592
14	CPEC Summit	@CPECSummit	11,402	11,430
15	CPEC	@CPEC.Pakistan	10,998	11,016

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16	CPEC	@chainapakistaneconomiccorridor	10,393	10,445
17	China Economic CPEC	Pakistan Economic Corridor @ChinaPakistanEconomicCorridor123	10,136	10,208

The data shows that highest followed page on Facebook is China Pak Economic Corridor - CPEC @ChinaPakEconomicCorridor. Share information regarding CPEC. The contents of the page show that they share news and pictures regarding CPEC project.

Twitter

The data shows that in Twitter 2545 times the word CPEC was twitted in the month of December. The user @Real UsamaPTI used 86 times the term CPEC in the defined time period followed by @zli517 78 mentions and @shamsheer pak 69 mentions. The twits were different languages including Chinese, English and Urdu. Majority of them were in English. In Twitter people describe the whole story in 140 words, they can also share a link or picture regarding their story or views.

YouTube

The data explains that the majority content shared on YouTube were the news story or parts of Television programs. Generally, the YouTube users capture the videos from other sources and then share it on their YouTube channels. The content includes the news-story, talk shows, song etc. The Youtube user “Akashi Tv Talk Point” posted 291 videos about CPEC. Another Youtube Channel “AKASHI Tv ZabarDast Shows” posted 110, “Pakistan Today Breaking News” 84 and “Pakistan Capital Tv Network” 80 posts regarding CPEC.

The following are details highly viewed videos about CPEC.

S No	Duration	User ID	Title of the Video	Total View	Uploading Timing
1.	16:52	Faisal Ashfaq	China Pakistan Economic	1.4M views	1 year ago

			Corridor CPEC Documentary National Geographic		
2.	2:10	Equity Research	China-Pak Economic Corridor - CPEC - China - Highways	953K	6 months ago
3.	17:11	PakNews 24/7 Spqcial clips	National Geographic Documentary Pakistan China Economic Corridor One Belt One Road CPEC	485K views	1 year ago
4.	31:36	Dunya News	Mahaaz 22 May 2016 - Gwadar & CPEC Special - Dunya News	465K views	1 year ago
5.	6:06	IndiaTV	China-Pakistan Friendship: India's Rivals Launch \$46 Billion Economic Corridor CPEC	447K views	2 years ago
6.	3:20	NMF News	India नहीं Pakistan के साथ है Russia, CPEC को दिया अपना समर्थन	396K views	1 year ago
7.	16:49	PakNews 24/7	CPEC One Belt One Road	392K views	11 months ago

		Spqcial clips	Change in Pakistan Documentary Must Watch Pakistan Connect Region & World		
8.	8:15	Zaeem Iqbal	ISPR Documentary on #CPEC #Balochistan.	377K views	1 year ago
9.	7:11	PAKISTANI BABBAR SHER	Russia Join CPEC Giving Sleepless Nights to India - Indian Media Crying	356K views	1 year ago
10.	10:30	Grace Videos	Pakistan is Going to Become Super Power Through CPEC	331K views	1 year ago
11.	28:20	Vande Mataram India	What Is Cpec and Why It Is Threat to India Very Beautiful Explanation Zaroor Dekhiye	287K views	8 months ago
12.	12:06	INDIA The SuperPower	PAK IN HUGE PROBLEM AFTER HEARING THE REALITY OF CPEC PROJECT	284K views	7 months ago

13.	5:43	BRAND INDIA	CPEC IS A FAILED PROJECT PAKISTAN IS DOOMED INDIA ENJOYING	266K views	2 months ago
14.	14:07	Top Games	Is Russia, Turkey, UK and France will Join CPEC? (Urdu Documentary)	265K views	1 year ago
15.	28:20	Study IQ education	CPEC - China Pakistan Economic Corridor + South China Sea issue - Full analysis and explanation i	254K views	1 year ago
16.	4:54	Pakistan Affairs	Indian Media Crying China gives Pakistan 2 ships for security of CPEC sea route	229K views	11 months ago
17.	7:35	Defence Updates	HOW CHABAHAR PORT HAS DEALT A MASSIVE BLOW TO PAKISTAN & CPEC?	226K views	2 months ago
18.	35:02	SAMAA TV	CPEC Pak-China Zindabad	217K views	11 months ago

			Hashmat & Sons SAMAA TV 22 Jan 2017		
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The data also shows that some of the Indian media channels also shared videos regarding CPEC. But most of the videos demonstrate the negative news about the CPEC project.

Conclusion

The research concluded that social media and internet users increasing every day. Majority of social media user used the social media to getting news and information. They also used it to reach their friends and family. CPEC is game changer project not only for Pakistan but also for this region. Most people have interested to get information regarding CPEC. Approximately 10618 posts were shared in one month from different sources about CPEC, which reached to a huge number of users.

Whenever someone shares or post something on social media than the majority of viewers or followers also share their respective opinion on that. Those discussions or debates also helps to solve the problems. Social media provides updated information regarding CPEC to users. It helps them to understand CPEC and also provide a forum for social media's users to discuss each and every feature of China Pakistan Economic corridor.

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