



Social Media Activism, Political Efficacy, and Civic Engagement among Youth: The Mediating Role of Collective Identity

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines how social media activism, perceived political efficacy, and peer influence shape youth civic engagement, with collective identity serving as a mediating mechanism. Drawing on social identity theory and civic voluntarism models, the research conceptualizes collective identity as the psychological bridge linking individual motivation with social participation. Data were collected from 400 university students in urban Pakistan using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings reveal that social media activism and perceived efficacy significantly enhance collective identity, which in turn fosters civic engagement behaviors such as volunteering and online petitioning. Peer influence strengthens this pathway by normalizing civic behaviors within friendship networks. Mediation analysis confirms that collective identity partially mediates the relationship between social media activism and civic engagement, suggesting that digital spaces are not merely platforms for expression but incubators for identity-based mobilization. The study contributes to sociological discourse by integrating digital and identity perspectives within civic engagement models and offers policy implications for youth empowerment and digital literacy programs.

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1.0 Introduction

The digital realm in the twenty-first century has combined the previously separated spheres of communication and politics, especially as young people practice and experience the new forms of civic engagement. New kinds of social media platforms have altered the ways in which people understand, converse about, and take action on issues of a political and social nature. Young people, previously characterized as politically disinterested, have begun to express their views, organize across digital platforms, and actively engage in political and social movements. This tendency is key in the context of Pakistan, a country in which more than sixty percent of the population is under thirty years of age (Khan et al., 2020). In contrast to established political order, social media provides young people with transformed structures and the potential to shape and construct a collective discourse around key issues of social governance, education, human rights, and the environment. Political socialization via social media activism is unique. It is focused on disorganized, loosely connected political action, in sharp contrast to the formal political structures and affiliated institutions that traditional political engagement requires. The classical political order is replaced by a new civic culture organically emerging and evolving around social media, with political engagement constructed through and within new digital networks and social arrangements (Nugroho, 2025).

In light of recent developments, the examination of the roots of social media activism and its impact on civic action has gained prominence and relevance on a theoretical level. Some researchers believe that virtual activism functions as a portal to civic engagement and that online activities seamlessly transition to political action taken in the real world. This movement is not spontaneous nor is it standard. Individual psychological, social, and situational dynamics dictate how a person determines their influence on a political issue and their membership in a sociopolitical group. Social media activism involves the use of social networking technologies, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, to state political views, assemble groups, and engage in advocacy activities for social change (Bari, 2025). Social media activism captures the expressive dimension (the political and social issue sharing, hashtag activism, and commentary on issues of the public sphere) as well as the constructive dimension (participating in online petitions and organizing social mobilization). Evidence suggests that online participation, which some critics disparage as “slacktivism,” can promote real civic action by raising awareness, building social networks, and increasing political efficacy.

For young individuals in Pakistan, where political structures are still traditional and exclude young people, social media presents limits on political expression, building community, and constituting action for shared grievances (Panzeree, 2025). Political efficacy constitutes another important element of this study. It is an individual’s capacity to appreciate and engage with the political processes to make changes. It is generally classified into internal efficacy and external efficacy. Internal efficacy is the positive cognition that an individual’s own capabilities would permit effective participation while external efficacy is the belief that political systems would recognize and respond to active citizens. For young people, the motivational declining political efficacy in democratizing countries such as Pakistan where political systems and institutions are

distrustful and unresponsive (Ahmad et al., 2025). To some extent, social media activism serves to enhance efficacy. This is evident in participation campaigns where social media is used to highlight and rally participation around women's rights, climate activism, and education. Perceived political efficacy predicts individual participation. It is also the mechanism through which social media activism sustains civic commitment. (Chen et al., 2019).

As users become more active on social media, the efficacy of social media activism increases. Social contexts, and especially peers, act as filters. Young people are especially likely to be influenced by peers. Peers influence the construction of political attitudes, identities, and behaviors. People adjust their attitudes and behaviors to align with their peers, usually through social learning and other conformity mechanisms. In civic contexts, peers can encourage participation by talking about it, experiencing it together, and advocating for the same cause. Social media magnifies these effects by showcasing the civic actions of peers and making participation seem like a socially validated act (Campos & da Silva, 2024). People are more likely to engage in activism when they see peers signing online petitions, protesting, or talking about civic issues. This social contagion effect illustrates how digital platforms encourage the spread of civic participation. As a result, social influence can be a critical contextual factor in the activism-initiated engagement continuum (Yolmo & Basnett, 2024).

Collective identity is a focal point of this investigation. This is an entity that denotes a feeling of togetherness and an interpersonal bond that motivates people during a collective action. Connected to Social Identity Theory, collective identity is the emotional, cognitive, and moral component that ties an individual with a group and its cause. It incorporates the acknowledgement of shared objectives and the interplay of encouragement and unity that underline coordinated collective action. Regarding the engagement of civically interested people in collective action, identity is influenced by individual interest. Civically interested individuals embrace the group's cause and value the movement, actively participating in collective action, both in the physical and in the online spaces, as noted by Gherguț-Babii et al. (2025). Such intrinsically motivated individuals engage in civil discussions around the cause during movement actions. Social media networks facilitate the construction of identity by association with individuals and groups around common objectives, and united in a cause to struggle with one another and aspire to attain it. They serve as spaces to build a collective narrative and social infrastructure that underpins people's movements.

Grounded in Social Identity Theory and the Civic Voluntarism Model, the present study seeks to understand the dynamics discussed in the literature. Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals include their group memberships as a part of their self-concept, leading to identification consistent with group behaviors. When the young people view themselves as part of an engaged politically conscious society, their group identity will reinforce behaviors that are aligned with civic engagement. Unlike the Social Identity Theory, the Civic Voluntarism Model considers engagement in terms of resources (time, skills, money), psychological engagement (political interest and efficacy), and social networks that aid recruitment (Park & Hong, 2025). Understanding the intersection of social frameworks and the digital environments in which the

participants engage allows us to appreciate the social movements of an activists' psychological engagement and recruitment networks. Collective identity activates socially directed behaviors that ease individual motivational tasks. Social movements and digital environments enable the engaged participant to transform identity and civic action, reflecting the unique nature of youth engagement in the digital era (Tamkivi & Belarbi, 2025).

Studies on civic engagement have tended to concentrate on Western democracies, which have different institutional frameworks, digital skills, and political cultures than developing democracies. Writing from the Global North tends to treat social media activism as a minor addition to a fully established political engagement repertoire, unlike the case of Pakistan, where digital social media might arguably be the only political space available to some. Further, the previous scholarship on social media activism, political efficacy, and civic engagement has overly disconnected the streams without a sufficient inquiry of the psychology underlying the three (Maxwell, 2025). The role of collective identity as a social mediated non-Western participation proxy has received little attention, despite the prevalence of social structural factors in South Asia participation, Pakistan, particularly. In the discourse on youth civic engagement in Pakistan, the empowering potential of digital social media and identity constructed through social media collaboration in contrast to the dominant political discourse of apathy or institutional barriers, has also been undervalued. The remaining question, and the focus of my inquiry, is the extent to which online participation that is claimed to construct a bounded collective identity also stimulates other civic engagement in contexts of South Asia, Pakistan, political apathy, and restrictive resources (Stein et al., 2025). This study aims to fill these gaps by developing and testing a model wherein collective identity serves as a mediating mechanism that connects social media activism, perceived political efficacy, peer influence, and civic engagement among youth. The research focuses on Pakistan's urban universities, where the youth demographic is very active on social media platforms and increasingly outspoken on a range of social issues.

2.0 Literature Review

The integration of Social Identity Theory with the Civic Voluntarism Model offers insight into the psychological and contextual factors contributing to civic engagement. Social Identity Theory explains the construction of the self-concept through group memberships and activism, as well as the political behaviors of individuals as part of a political unit. When people regard themselves as members of a group with common goals, beliefs, or values, they become aligned with the group and more inclined to perform actions that advance the group objectives. On social media, users identify with a social group or cause through the use of hashtags or participation in a movement, and they engage in social interaction and opinion exchange, thus reinforcing an ideology of social cohesion (Chami, 2025). The Civic Voluntarism Model adds to this by stating that the participation in civic activities can be explained by the availability resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment networks. Political interest, social integration, and political efficacy are the most important facilitators of engagement. Together, these theories explain how digital interactions can lead to social empowerment and psychological identification that promote civic engagement.

Social media platforms provide the cognitive engagement required for the positive functioning of efficacy and the social context for the development of the identity, thus, the participation of youth over these platforms in civic life becomes understandable (Kolb et al., 2025). The phenomenon of social media activism is emerging as one of the most important features of the new participatory dimension. Social media activism engages people through the Internet around social and political causes. It enables people to contest the prevailing discourse and advocate for changes. The youth, for example, engage people in advocacy, ignore the traditional political discourse gatekeepers, and focus on advocacy, awareness campaigns, and grassroots mobilizations through the Internet. A range of studies provide evidence that spends of online activism help in the cultivation of political awareness and serve as the precursor to activism of the offline variety. Information sharing, commenting on political issues, and participating in online campaigns are acts of digital activism that bolster a sense of agency and serve as the precursor to civic activism in the offline world (Gherguț-Babii et al., 2025). In the younger citizen social media as a place for activism offers a route for expression and mobilization in the restricted political environments of most developing democracies. Social media activism in the developing democracies of the Global South is shaped by political issues but when champions causes for social issues develops a co activism that is rooted in the agency in collective action online.

Confidence increases when young people feel their digital voice is heard across a broad audience, helping to bridge the gap between passive observation and active participation (Boshnjaku et al., 2025). Dimensions of political efficacy, both internal and external, are important psychologic constructs that explain the relationship between interest and action within civic engagement. While internal political efficacy is one's subjective feeling of the competence and ability to comprehend and participate in politics, external political efficacy is the one attribution of the political system's responsiveness to the demands of citizens. A strong sense of efficacy engenders a motivation to act because individuals are convinced that their engagement is of worth (Hameli et al., 2025). Research has shown that internal efficacy is enhanced through social media activism, as it provides learning and discourse opportunities, as well as channels through which individuals obtain feedback about their contributions. When individuals participate in discussions and observe the impacts of civic campaigns their peers enact, they view themselves as capable of political action. External efficacy is also reinforced when citizens are responsive to policies that result from mobilization via the Internet. In many developing countries, the absence of bureaucratic structures that regulate social hierarchies means that the feelings of efficacy derived from having digital political participation are a strong compensatory motivator.

The connection between social media activism and political efficacy operates within a cycle of mutual reinforcement: activism improves efficacy and, in turn, efficacy promotes greater activism (Jiménez-Sánchez et al., 2025). Another important social influence on youth civic engagement activities is social influence in digitized environments. Young people are especially influenced by social cues and these cues determine the level of civic and political activism a person engages in. Friends and peers on social media are part of the virtual network of role models. When they are engaged in civic conversations, volunteering activities, and online campaigning, it

stereotypes those activities and lowers the psychological barriers to joining. The civic actions of peers and networks are amplified and diffused through social media platforms. Collectivist cultures are more conducive to these phenomena, especially when social belonging and group conformity are highly valued (Demir, 2025). Endorsement from peers in these cultures looks like sanctioned civic activities and active peer participation is shifted to the indirect positive activity of social volunteering. Furthermore, social influence increases motivation to act as a group emotionally connected to a task. The expectation of peers' civic overload activities correlatively increases participation. Thus, peer networks not only disseminate information needed for civic participation but also form emotionally and normatively the environment for sustained involvement (ANYAOGU et al., 2025).

Collective identity functions psychologically to link individual motivation, individual efficacy, peer influence, and civic engagement in the aggregate. It represents the affiliation with others who have been through the same experiences, who have compatible objectives, or who attend to the same values. While personal identity is focused on the individual, collective identity is concerned with group identification and with group solidarity. Collective identity is formed and transformed through the interplay of shared stories, bonding sentiments, and social interaction. Social media is important to the construction of this identity in that it creates the opportunity for others with compatible opinions to encounter and interact with each and for validations of shared experiences that relate to injustice or hope and social causes meanings (Crivellaro et al., 2025). These systems of social media enable dialogue and storytelling in which users adopt the same icons or symbols, achieving a form of coordination that indicates, psychologically, a preparedness to act in unison. Studies of digital forms of activism, for example on the climate or on the equality of the genders, show that online interaction creates and maintains a communal "we" ethos that is crucial for persistent engagement over time. The dynamic of collective identity is particularly impactful in the self-reinforcing cycle of engagement: it is both a product of collective activism and a self-reinforcing driver of activism, as it becomes a fundamental aspect of the individual's self-concept to participate (Toiviainen & Söderström, 2025).

From both theoretical and empirical perspectives, a few guiding hypotheses for this study can be formulated. Social media provides information, visibility, and means of expression, so it should be expected that more social media activism should enhance political efficacy in the younger population. Thus, the first hypothesis is that social media activism enhances political efficacy. Social and political efficacy are undoubtedly tied and believing one can make a difference is core to civic participation, arguing that actors in online political discourse should develop a belief in their civic efficacy and competence. Social media activism can also foster a sense of community in people (i.e. active 'collective' participants) around a cause or advocacy. Thus, it can be predicted that social media activism enhances one's sense of community. In the order of causation, since collective identity is the motivating force advancing the group, it is also hypothesized that civic engagement strengthens collective identity. Similarly, political efficacy is predicted to contribute to collective identity; a robust belief in one's political agency and efficacy is likely to be framed around actions and aspirations that associate with active and mobilized

groups.

Political efficacy is expected to have a direct positive impact on civic engagement because individuals with a sense of agency related to political issues are likely to take part in civic activities. As one of the most powerful social factors, peer influence is also likely to impact the social-psychological dimension of civic participation, or collective identity. Therefore, it is expected that peer influence will positively impact collective identity and civic participation. Finally, because collective identity is theoretically considered one of the elements that connects social activism to civic engagement, it is expected that collective identity will mediate the influence of social media activism on civic participation.

This literature review highlights the integrated nature of the digital, social-psychological and social elements that characterize youth civic engagement. It combines the insights of Social Identity Theory and the Civic Voluntarism Model to demonstrate the convergence of social media activism, political efficacy, and peer influence through collective identity, resulting in civic action. This study fills the theoretical and contextual voids identified in the existing literature and offers a comprehensive model that reflects the multifaceted nature of the transformation of digital activism into civic engagement. The proposed hypotheses serve as a starting point for empirical research aimed at understanding youth engagement in digital democracies and developing targeted approaches to promote civic participation grounded in social identity.

3.0 Methodology

This study takes a quantitative approach to analyze the relationships between social media activism, perceived political efficacy, peer influence, collective identity, and civic engagement among youth in Pakistan. The use of quantitative methodology stems from the fact that the study seeks to evaluate hypothesized relationships and analyze the degree and importance of causal connections between the latent variables. It also permits the study of mathematical models of the variables. The objective, psychological, and behavioral factors of the study can also be constructed and measured with positivist epistemology. The study adheres to the principles of positivism, which entails the use of empirical frameworks including measurement and hypothesis, which can be routed and replicated, and mathematical frameworks in the study of social phenomena. Such social phenomena can be rationalized as observable and quantifiable data that can be processed to attain rational outcomes. Such positivist principles underpin the use of structural equation modeling of the data as the methodology, which allows the testing of the interrelated complex theoretical framework and quantitative data with minimal bias from the researcher.

This study focuses primarily on university students located in urban centers of Pakistan. This is a segment of the population who is part of the university-going youth. This youth is digitally active, socially aware, and reaching the level of engagement in online political discourse. Students in universities also provide the opportunity of the closest access and exposure to a range of social media platforms and the relative digital literacy necessary. An active interest in the civic space is seen in students. The digitally literate youth population is a major part of the exploding population in Pakistan, which offers the opportunity to understand a constituent part of the civic engagement and digital participation puzzle. The urban centers serve as case studies due to the diverse access

to sociocultural and socio-economic hierarchies and the digital access and infrastructure in the urban centers of Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi. This segment of the population also corresponds to the theoretical aspect of the study, which proposes social media activism and collective identity construction. The younger and educated population who socialize and mobilize through the internet are the most active and visible participants in social media activism.

Based on the statistical nuances of structural equation modeling, a sample size of 400 participants was ascertained because it recommends 10-15 participants per observable indicator. This sample size was statistically appropriate because it balances the statistical power, reliability of the results, and generalizability of the results. The sampling technique was a mixed approach of purposive and stratified random sampling. In the first stage, purposive sampling was used to select participants based on the criterion of social media usage from universities in urban Pakistan. In the educational institutes, stratified random sampling was used to achieve a balance in representation across respondents' gender, academic focus, and level of education. This was under graduate and post graduate. This helped in capturing a wider spectrum of the social sampling bias and helped enhance representativeness. The study targeted students as respondents in this criterion; students having access to at least 1 social media tool and having acted on civic issues in the past 6 months. This helped to meet the basic study constructs.

Self-completed structured questionnaires were utilized to gather information on the major variables of the study: social media activism, perceived political efficacy, peer influence, collective identity, and civic engagement. The questionnaires were initially developed through the integration of established measurement scales from existing literature and contextualized for the study's focus on the sociocultural context of Pakistan. The attitudes and perceptions of the respondents were captured through multiple items on a five-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." In order to increase access and flexibility, the questionnaires were physically circulated and later, for the purposes of the study, distributed electronically through Google Forms. Students received a general overview of the study and were clearly informed of the voluntary nature of their participation. In order to assess the instrument for reliability, validity, and readability prior to the main study, a pilot survey with 30 respondents was administered. The pilot study served to inform refinements in problem wording and overall cohesion.

Data analysis was performed using the SmartPLS 4.0 software for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This was due to its strengths concerning predictive modeling, exploratory research, and intricacies of modeling complex interrelationships among latent variables. For social science research, PLS-SEM operates best for small- to medium-sized samples, as well as non-normally distributed data (often the case with survey data). Two main stages of analysis were performed: the measurement model and the structural model. In the measurement model, the various components of reliability and validity were evaluated through indicator loadings, composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and average variance extracted (AVE). Convergent validity was confirmed as all factor loadings were greater than 0.7 and all AVE values surpassed 0.5. For the measurement of discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) were used. In the structural model, the hypothesized

relationships were tested and evaluated through path coefficients, t-values, and p-values resulting from bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples. Model fit indices (R^2 , f^2 , and Q^2) were used to test the explanatory power and predictive relevance for the model. Mediation analysis was aimed to test the theoretical framework proposed for the indirect effect of collective identity on social media activism and civic engagement.

Ethical considerations were followed during the research process to comply with the standards of academic honesty and the protection of participants. Data collection began only after the university participating in the study granted an ethics review. Potential participants were told the study's aims, objectives, procedures, and the rights of participants, including the voluntariness of participation and the withdrawal of participation at any time with no negative consequences. Informed consent was obtained before administering the questionnaire. No identifying information (names, student IDs, contact information and etcetera) was collected, ensuring respondents' anonymity and confidentiality. Data were stored in password-protected computers and files, accessible only to the principal researcher, ensuring the security of the data. Participants were told the data collected would only be for academic reasons and would be presented in aggregate form. Questions were designed to be minimally intrusive and to avoid any contextual distress. The questionnaire was designed using neutral, non-political and culturally sensitive language to create a non-threatening environment to participants and to alleviate response bias.

4.0 Findings and Results

4.1 Reliability and Convergent Validity Analysis

Table 4.1 Reliability and Convergent Validity Analysis

Construct	Item Code	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Extracted (AVE)	Variance
Social Media Activism (SMA)	SMA1–SMA4	0.812–0.874	0.871	0.907	0.709	
Political Efficacy (PE)	PE1–PE4	0.793–0.861	0.854	0.895	0.682	
Peer Influence (PI)	PI1–PI4	0.801–0.868	0.861	0.902	0.696	
Collective Identity (CI)	CI1–CI4	0.823–0.888	0.879	0.917	0.736	
Civic Engagement (CE)	CE1–CE4	0.814–0.881	0.876	0.916	0.731	

Table 1 illustrates the reliability and validity ascertainment process. This affirms how the measurement model is constructed. All the constructs are assessed to have strong psychometric properties. All the factor loadings of the items fall between 0.793 and 0.888, which is above the threshold of 0.70, suggesting that all the items are worthy contributors to their constructs. Also, the range of 0.854 to 0.879 of the Cronbach's alpha is an indicator of strong consistency and reliability for all the constructs while the composite reliability (CR) of 0.895 to 0.917, which also exceeds the 0.70 index, provides further support. Concerning the convergent validity, the range of AVE values of 0.682 to 0.736, which is above the 0.50 threshold, provides support for the convergent validity association, therefore, a reasonable portion of the variance of the items observed is accounted for by the constructs latent in the items. All in all, the measurement model is presented as reliable and valid which means to say constructs of social media activism, political

efficacy, peer influence, collective identity and civic engagement are measured with validity and internal consistency.

4.2 Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio)

Table 4.2 Discriminant Validity

Constructs	SMA	PE	PI	CI	CE
SMA	—				
PE	0.683	—			
PI	0.627	0.594	—		
CI	0.702	0.655	0.614	—	
CE	0.676	0.637	0.588	0.713	—

The results concerning discriminant validity using the HTMT criterion show that all the constructs in the model remain distinct and in the absence of any multicollinearity or overlap in the conceptual framework. As represented in Table 2, all HTMT values remain under the threshold of 0.85, the highest being 0.713 between collective identity and civic engagement. This indicates a strong relationship that remains theoretical, thus avoiding redundancy. Correlations that are moderately strong such as social media activism and political efficacy (0.683) or social media activism and collective identity (0.702) suggest that while the variables may relate in expected ways, they are still distinct and separate conceptual dimensions. Respondents' ability to differentiate between constructs such as activism, efficacy, peer influence, identity, and engagement, supports the discriminant validity of the measurement model and thereby the theoretical integrity of the latent structure of the study.

4.3 Multicollinearity (VIF) Results

Table 4.3 Multicollinearity

Construct	SMA	PE	PI	CI	CE
VIF Value	2.114	2.048	1.893	2.237	2.301

The results from the calculation of the variance inflation factor (VIF) demonstrate that there is no multicollinearity issue present within the structural model, thereby attesting to the statistical independence of the predictor variables. Illustrated in the accompanying table, all computed VIF figures—which lie between 1.893 and 2.301—constitute a significant margin from

the multicollinearity warning of 3.3 and the critical value of 5.0. This indicates that the model constituents—social media activism, political efficacy, peer influence, collective identity, and civic engagement—do not exercise problematic linear influence on one another to a significant degree. The thus far contextualized and grounded literature review leads to the reasonably held expectation of stable and reliable path coefficient estimates that lack any distorting influence of intervariable multicollinearity. Therefore, the assumptions of the model with respect to multicollinearity are satisfactorily met, offering a high degree of confidence in the precision and interpretative value of the findings derived from PLS-SEM.

4.4 Model Fit Indices

Table 4.4 Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Recommended Threshold	Obtained Value	Assessment
SRMR	≤ 0.08	0.054	Good Fit
NFI	≥ 0.90	0.927	Acceptable Fit
RMS_theta	≤ 0.12	0.078	Good Fit
R ² (Collective Identity)	—	0.521	Moderate Explanatory Power
R ² (Civic Engagement)	—	0.583	Moderate-to-Strong Explanatory Power
Q ² (Predictive Relevance)	> 0	0.362	Predictive Relevance Confirmed

Fit indices reveal an excellent fit of the model with strong explanatory power; The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value is at 0.054 compared to the recommended 0.08 benchmark which indicates a fit of the predicted correlations and the observed correlations. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.927 and the 0.90NFI benchmark indicates that the model rationally captures the empirical data, The value of 0.078 in the measurement of the model quality and model consistency supports the model measurement of the quality and the internal measurement consistency as the measurement of the model quality post 0.12. The predictors range of the R² value states 52.1% concerning collective identity and 58.3% concerning civic engagement, therefore moderate to strong explanatory power is predicted. The positive value of the Q² of 0.362 is indicative of strong predictive power therefore with reasonable forecasting ability of the model. In summation, The fit indices support the model rationally captures the relationships between social media activism, political efficacy, peer influence, collective identity, and civic engagement.

4.5 Structural Model Path Coefficients

Table 4.5 Structural Model Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Path	β (Beta)	t-value	p-value	Decision	f^2 (Effect Size)	Interpretation
H1	SMA $\rightarrow$ PE	0.418	7.036	< 0.001	Supported	0.174	Social media activism significantly enhances political efficacy among youth.
H2	SMA $\rightarrow$ CI	0.347	6.112	< 0.001	Supported	0.152	Social media activism positively contributes to the development of collective identity.
H3	PE $\rightarrow$ CI	0.289	5.487	< 0.001	Supported	0.118	Politically efficacious youth exhibit stronger collective identity.
H4	PE $\rightarrow$ CE	0.264	4.968	< 0.001	Supported	0.103	Political efficacy directly increases civic engagement.
H5	PI $\rightarrow$ CI	0.228	4.021	< 0.001	Supported	0.092	Peer influence positively reinforces collective identity formation.
H6	PI $\rightarrow$ CE	0.197	3.774	< 0.001	Supported	0.078	Peer influence positively affects civic engagement behaviors.
H7	CI $\rightarrow$ CE	0.384	6.759	< 0.001	Supported	0.165	Collective identity strongly predicts civic engagement among youth.

The actuarial social structure supports all the framework propositions on their fully positive, significant, and theoretically consistent relationships. This testify to the dependability of the articulated framework. Political socialization is encouraged to the maximum by social media activism ($\beta = 0.418$, $t = 7.036$, $p < 0.001$). This means online participation and digital mobilization activism social media provide more means access and support to youth on distracted political

competence. Relative to the to the comparable political socialization effect, the social media activism aid collective identity development to the maximum ($\beta = 0.347$, $t = 6.112$, $p < 0.001$). More digital participation encourages youth social solidarity. Political competence not only strengthens collective identity ($\beta = 0.289$, $t = 5.487$, $p < 0.001$) but also advances civic engagement directly ($\beta = 0.264$, $t = 4.968$, $p < 0.001$). The youth feeling politicized to the greatest level is the greatest to partake in civic actions. Peer influence has its also noteworthy effect in reinforcing identity ($\beta = 0.228$, $t = 4.021$, $p < 0.001$) and civic engagement ($\beta = 0.197$, $t = 3.774$, $p < 0.001$). These statistically, means the strengthening of societal behaviors and peer expectations framing the indicators of participation.

The variable reflective of social identity indicates the strongest direct effect on civic engagement ($\beta = 0.384$, $t = 6.759$, $p < 0.001$), confirming its primary position as the psychological linkage between personal motivation and collective action. To summarize, the results suggest the consolidation of social media activism, political efficacy, and peer influence as vectors of civic engagement among the youth, operating through the formation of a strong collective identity. This reinforces the theoretical integration of social identity theory with the civic voluntarism framework.

5.0 Conclusion

This study showcases a range of empirical and theoretical contributions. Integrating social identity theory with the civic voluntarism approaches provides a more robust theoretical framework for explaining contemporary civic engagement in the digital age. By showing that online spaces can foster a collective identity, the study empirically extends traditional theoretical models by showing that digital activism can encourage sustained offline participation. The study also highlights the case of a developing country by providing evidence of youth in Pakistan overcoming significant structural and political obstacles to social media use as a form of civic empowerment and social integration. This case illustrates the potential of technology-based civic engagement to support and bolster democratic participation in developing contexts.

This study has established that social media activism, political efficacy, and peer influence operate together to influence the civic engagement of the youth through the mediation of collective identity. The findings affirm the value and power of the internet in driving civic consciousness and fostering an active social solidarity. The study further demonstrates that engagement in the digital space, coupled with strong identity and empowerment, can lead to active engagement in civic and political spheres. This study closes the gap between digital and physical activism by illustrating that online activism can lead to activism in the physical world when both are grounded in a strong shared purpose and collective identity.

Irshad Hussain: Problem Identification and Theoretical Framework

Bushra Yasmeen: Data Analysis, Supervision and Drafting

Asad Ali: Proof Reading, Writing, Method

Conflict of Interests/Disclosures

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