

EXPLORING CONSPIRATORIAL IDEATION, SOCIOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF DIGITALIZATION

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Abstract

The study examines the societal implications of being exposed to conspiracy theories. Respondents were subjected to various conspiracy theories about media consumption, conspiratorial ideations in terms of socio-political and education, and their mutual relationship for creating a fertile ground for conspiracy theories. On the other hand, literacy does not provide meaningful knowledge about political and social efficacy or insight into conspiratorial thinking. As a result, it is an attempt to see if conspiratorial ideation may exist. In a 2017 publication, Joseph DiGrazia developed a novel notion of conspiracy ideation. In his research, he attempted to establish and convey a sociological understanding of the structural factors that are related to conspiratorial ideas and attitudes. To measure the reactions, he employed an aggregate of Google search data. His research found that socioeconomic factors such as unemployment, demographic change, and partisan control of government or changes in government are linked to an increase in conspiratorial ideation. The underlying research is based on and inspired by Joseph DiGrazia's work on conspiratorial ideation.

1-Introduction

Conspiratorial ideation believes false beliefs or information. It is the misinterpretation of knowledge and the acceptance of supposition. A group of individuals working to achieve their objectives by building or disseminating false narratives through various means mainly formed conspiratorial ideation, manufacture, and supply conspiracy theories. (Swami et al., 2012). According to Chamorro et al, (2010), once a person believes a conspiracy theory, he or she finds it attractive. He or she begins to believe additional similar hypotheses formed and inspired by hidden groups and psychological inclinations.

Political wings and groups seeking to achieve their aims through them heavily

developed and pushed conspiracy theories rather than any natural or unintended tendencies, according to Oliver et al., (2014). "If a conspiracy theory is just a theory that imagines a conspiracy, then every politically and historically informed individual is a big-time conspiracies theorist," said Charles Pigden, a renowned philosopher, in 2007. People less engaged in politics and generally less informed are more likely to be victims of conspiratorial thinking (Miller et al., 2016).

Historical facts and genuine current events are also altered in the public by the state apparatus to sustain its narrative (Goertzel, 1994). Conspiratorial ideation is also present in social, political, health, and behavioral areas of life. It also influences climate change (Jolley et al., 2014). In the theory of alienation, Marxism holds that if workers feel silenced, helpless, and deprived at any time, they become conspiratorial thinkers. Rather than examining their thinking abilities, people trust in socio-political processes and blame themselves for their shortcomings, which is

Many individuals find conspiratorial interpretations of social reality appealing, particularly when it comes to explaining complicated events or when official explanations are seen as weak or contradictory (Clarke, 2002). Take, for instance, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which are one of the most recent occurrences that have sparked conspiracy theories. According to a 2006 national telephone survey in the United States, more than 36 percent of respondents thought it was "extremely likely" or "fairly likely" that the US government assisted with terrorists and did nothing to stop the assaults (Stempel et al. III, 2007). Similarly, many individuals believe that climate change is a hoax perpetrated by academics and politicians with vested interests (Jolley & Douglas, 2014b). In recent research in America, one-third of respondents believe that perhaps the severity of climatic changes is overestimated (Jones et al., 2018), while 15 percent move further and disagree that climate change is happening anymore or has any connection to individual activities (Smith, 2019).

Not everybody is drawn to conspiracy theories in the same manner. Previous research suggested that certain people have a conspiracy cognitive style, which is linked to a "monological belief system" (Goertzel, 1994, p. 741) in which previously accepted conspiracy theories support the adoption of new ones (Swami et al., 2011). More current opposing approaches imply that people believe conspiracy ideas that are based on their higher-level belief system, making conspiracy-ism a type of motivated cognition (Douglas et al., 2017). The desire to regain control of one's non-immediate social surroundings is one of the motives for adopting a conspiracies attitude (Swami et al., 2016). In this manner, conspiracy theories provide seemingly rational' (Hofstadter, 2008) and simplistic explanations of significant events that may be useful in meeting these demands.

According to Jon (2001), culture is the fourth pillar of society in any social structure, holding other pillars such as the economy, the environment, and the family together, and cultural literacy includes cultural skills and knowledge of one's own and other cultures, as well as the ability to make the best changes according to the needs of the hour. Furthermore, Chrisman (2007) extended the notion by claiming that the capacity to comprehend cultures aids in the stability of socioeconomic and environmental relationships. Participating in cultural and tradition-related acts is the most effective way to learn about cultural literacy (Purcell, 1995).

According to McKibben (2006), cultural literacy is critical to any community's elite and middle strata. In the long run, these classes control society's power and riches. Cultural literacy aids them in maintaining the riches and power they have gained. Elites' interest in cultural literacy may be shown in sending children to the state's most outstanding schools and institutions and expecting them to have a diverse understanding of cultural literacy. A more profound grasp of cultural literacy leads to more effective management and dominance of society's socioeconomic sectors. McKibben found that students from underprivileged or the worst financial backgrounds had limited cultural literacy understanding, middle-class students had some, and students from privileged backgrounds had considerable cultural literacy knowledge. The two primary conclusions he made are that educational successes are strongly tied to the socioeconomic background of the student's families and that pupils who cannot respond to questions about cultural literacy should be taught in a separate and more educated method. Rich and resourceful parents assist their children in attending top universities and managing money and power in society (McKibben, 2006).

According to Cambell et al, (1954), political efficacy may be accomplished via political dialogue and event participation, and it can enable individuals to affect the desired outcome and play a significant role in the overall social fabric. Political efficiency, on the other hand, has two major components: on the one hand, it equips individuals with knowledge of how political institutions perform and make contributions to societies; on the other hand, it makes individuals realize how political engagement or participation can have a positive impact on societies (Balch, 1974; Cambell 1972 & Mattei 1991). According to Schmidt et al, (2005), internal political efficiency is an individual attribute of efficiently comprehending political processes. Conversely, external efficiency is linked to society's knowledge and comprehension of governmental organizations and their interactions with state people. Political efficiency, a crucial component of citizenship and politics, is linked to one's understanding of politics and trust in the political environment. In a democratic system, political efficiency is primarily attained. In any democratic society, politically effective individuals seek civil rights and information about government policies and decisions on state concerns.

Over the preceding decades, the increased usage of social media sites and the variety of channels has considerably transformed and varied people's perspectives on political information, communication, and possibilities to express their thoughts and alternatives. It has also offered a chance to learn more about the general people (Zhou et al., 2012). According to research, people's attitudes have changed as a result of their exposure to the media, and they now participate actively in politics and express their opinions on political policy. People may now be more educated and updated on the government and its activities, thanks to social and other media types (Bennet 2008 and Benkler 2006). Rather than watching television, young people prefer to learn about current events through social media sites on their mobile phones. They enjoy, share, and comment on videos and postings on politics (Rainie, 2008).

2- Literature Review:

It is to support the core concept of the research with past studies on the same issue

and a rationally supported beginning. It explains all linked variables using past research and offers a new milestone and direction to the research. **Socio-demographic correlates and conspiratorial beliefs:**

Age, gender, employment, and education are all socio-demographic characteristics that appear to have a larger link with conspiratorial ideation. However, several types of research have shown no substantial or indirect association between conspiracy theories and conspiratorial thinking (Darwin, 2011; Simmons et al., 2005). Gender and educational level are demographic elements linked to conspiracy theories. Minority ethnic groups are more susceptible to conspiracy theories. Their lower socioeconomic situations, as well as other characteristics such as gender and unemployment, enhance the probability of conspiratorial ideation spreading and favoring them (Goertzel, 1994).

Another line of research looks at the possible socio-cultural roots of conspiratorial views at the individual level. Academics have studied the impact of people's perspectives and opinions of their social circle on the spread of conspiratorial thinking in this field. According to Sullivan et al, (2010), people who believe their surroundings are dangerous or hazardous will typically project the world's diverse threats into a single individual or group to whom they give immense power and terrible intentions. According to the authors, this approach assists individuals in maintaining a sense of personal control over their environment or, at the very least, in knowing the source of the threat. This tendency usually leads to conspiracy theories. As a result, conspiratorial thinking should be more common in frightening, unclear, or hostile situations.

Another line of independent study sheds light on the societal origins of conspiratorial views. Scholars in this field have studied the function of people's perspectives and opinions of their social surroundings in instigating conspiratorial thought. Individuals who consider their surroundings to be unsafe or dangerous, according to Sullivan, Landau, and Rothschild (2010), will almost always project the plethora of complicated risks that occur in the world onto a single person or group of people to whom they credit great power and nefarious objectives. The authors claim that this process permits people to preserve a sense of self-control over their surroundings or, at the very least, a sense of knowing where the threat is coming from. Conspiratorial thinking is frequently the result of this inclination. As a result, conspiratorial thought should be more prevalent in circumstances that are seen as scary, unpredictable, or unfriendly.

Social literacy and conspiratorial beliefs:

According to Jon (2001), culture is the fourth pillar of every civilization since it has the strength to keep the connected components of society together. Culture has a more significant effect on social institutions, whether it is the family, the business, or the environment. Cultural literacy, he said, provides citizens with strength, critical analysis, and the capacity to grasp state affairs and avoid falling victim to conspiratorial thinking. According to Chrisman (2007), knowing the local and global culture is essential for unlocking the doors to knowledge and awareness.

Purcell (1995), nevertheless, emphasized cultural engagement and informed that it

results in the spread of knowledge and cultural skills. Muller (2008) claimed that cultural education helps in knowing cultural intricacies, vulnerabilities and strengths and enables critical thinking to make the desired change. In particular, cultural literacy is linked to those who are in power and have control of society. Therefore, they continue investing a considerable quantity in the education and socialization of their offspring so that they might pass the reins to them (McKibben, 2006). He went on to say that kids from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are more culturally knowledgeable than those from lower and intermediate socioeconomic groups, according to his research.

Political efficacy, lack of trust in government, and conspiratorial ideations:

According to studies, people with low trust in the government or government institutions tend to believe in conspiracy theories. They become interested and begin to believe the conspiratorial system that is being used to discredit the government and its institutions. They also participate in disseminating false and misleading information, which leads to promoting and disseminating conspiracy theories. Individual knowledge is the concept of political efficacy. This knowledge can influence change by involving individuals in political debates and events. Technology has a significant impact on the improvement of political efficacy and public participation. The viewer has become more involved due to social media sites and electronic media. It has had a positive impact on the youth. Young people use social media to share, comment, and critically evaluate political opinions, speeches, and legislation (Smith et al., 2008). In contrast to those who watch television, Bimber and Norris (1998) found that mobile phone users are more actively involved in identifying flaws in governmental policies, decisions, and programs.

Furthermore, there are two types of government roles in conspiracy theories. It will be a question of whether the conspiracy will be censored so that it does not reach the public or whether the government will be complicit in pushing the hypothesis (Swami, 2010). Some Pakistanis, for example, thought the operation on Usama Bin Laden was a hoax, according to Wood (2012). Some conspiracy theorists believe he is alive, while others believe he died long before the raid and the US is simply trying to score points internationally. Other conspiracy theorists described it as an attack on Pakistan's image and sovereignty. They coined the phrase "international conspiracy against Pakistan" to describe it. Others believe Pakistan was actively engaged in the attack and that it was a Pakistani military operation to assassinate Usama bin Laden.

Conspiracy theories, on the other hand, have both harmful and beneficial consequences. Negative consequences result in public alienation, suspicion, and distrust, whereas positive consequences result in a strong desire for responsibility and openness from government officials and authorities (Jolley & Douglas, 2014). Governments' ownership or disowning of conspiracy ideas has a greater correlation. Few governmental conspiracies aim to mislead the public regarding major events. The killing of M. Gandhi, Joao Bernardo Vieira, and Ghaddafi, as well as with the attack on Malala Yousafzai, there are only a few cases. In these circumstances, the government performs the character of a conspirator, attempting to conceal its participation by sowing uncertainty and misinformation (Slater 2007 & Stroud 2007).

Media and belief in conspiracy theories:

Technology has shown to be the most revitalizing weapon in the fight against authoritarian regimes, their unneeded hidden networks, and their tendency for conspiracy ideas (Schmidt 2005 & Cohen 2005). People create conspiracy theories are based on hidden information about governments and their main governmental issues, which can lead to socio-political issues. Dean J. is a well-known author (2005). People with technological conspiracy ideas build and propagate conspiracy theories in public to malign governments and authority using highly developed professional talents (Baker, 2007). Compared to those who spend no or negligible time on media or social media, literature shows that those who spend more time on social media sites are more involved in conspiracy theories, promoting them to others and believing them to be true. Conspiracy theories paint a prominent picture of events in history.

The most common instances include assassinations, scandals, and gossip about celebrities, businesspeople, and politicians (Oliver & Wood, 2014). People are aware of this hidden knowledge and the specifics of previously operational conspiracy theories thanks to the media, which is regarded as the primary source.

According to conspiracy theories, the Moon landings, the 9/11 attacks, and Diana's death were all the product of planned and intentional operations by strong, highly organized, and secretive groups keeping the truth from the public. The majority of these concepts have three fundamental characteristics. They assert that mysterious and malign power is to blame for a sequence of odd social and political events. Second, most conspiracy theory stories have a conflict between good (those who want to know the truth) and bad (those who want to maintain the secret) characters (e.g., those who deceive the public for their gain). Finally, conspiracy theories claim that official or mainstream explanations of unusual social and political events are meant to confuse or misinform the public. As a result, conspiracy theories provide unapproved or alternative viewpoints on various public events and societal processes.

3- POLITICAL EFFICACY, MEDIA CONSUMPTION, AND CONSPIRATORIAL IDEATION CONCEPTUALIZATION

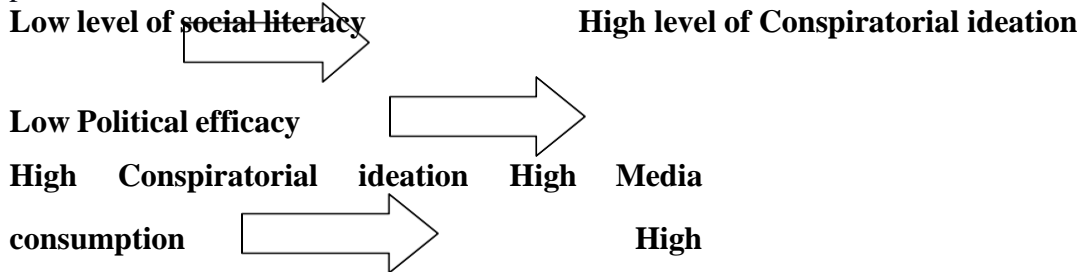
Voting, supporting, campaigning, convincing people to vote for their favored candidate, and providing money and other advertising materials to the public to gain the confidence of their voters are all examples of political conduct. According to earlier studies, such political behaviors (both internal and external) have reduced globally in recent years. Because of the effect of exposure to various conspiracy theories, individuals are less engaged in various political activities such as political meetings, interest in the election process, and even the belief that their vote makes no difference. As a result of the low level of confidence in government, conspiracy theories have a detrimental impact on people's political involvement (Fiorina 2002 & Putnam 1995).

Saunders and Farhart (2016) said that individuals with little or no political effectiveness are more interested in and believe in conspiratorial belief systems. Regarding the link to conspiratorial ideation, McKibben (2006) believes that culturally knowledgeable students can better grasp societal issues, but culturally illiterate students become victims of numerous conspiracies and conspiratorial ideation. The

argument is that those conspiracy theories are seen positively by upper-class (culturally educated) individuals, whereas conspiracy theories are viewed negatively by lower-class (culturally illiterate) people.

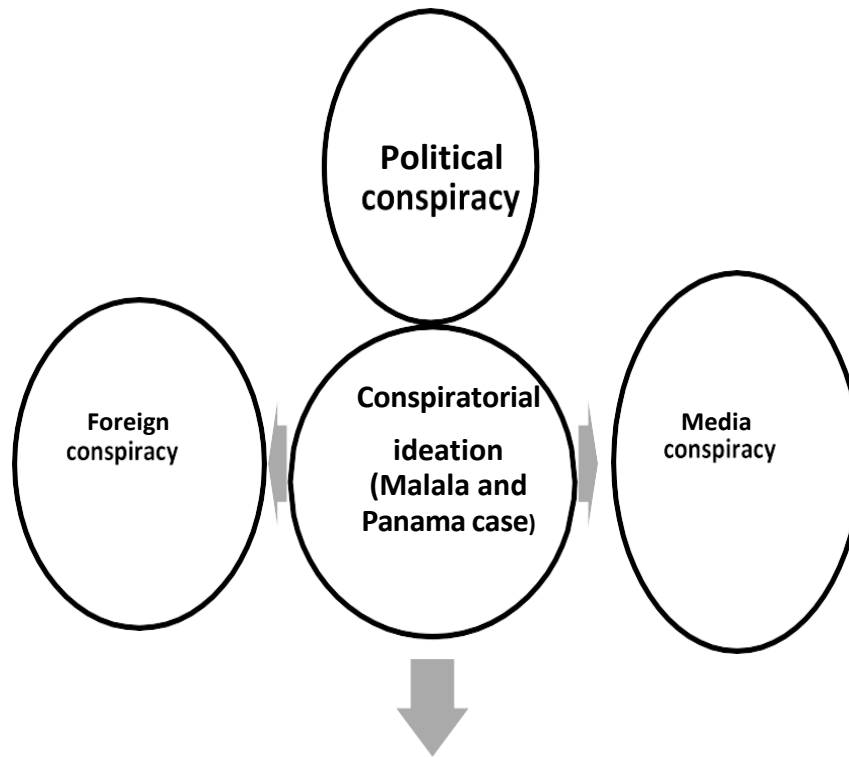
Technology is the most potent weapon against authoritarian governments' conspiratorial and overly hidden networks (Schmidt & Cohen, 2005). according to Dean J. (2005), People have satisfied their suspicions by building conspiracy theories based on obtaining a large amount of hidden information about the government and other public and national concerns, which may result in a slew of social and political issues. Many people, individuals, or groups interested in technological conspiracy have fully advanced intellectual, professional, or technical qualities to promote any conspiracy theory and influence public opinion or interest in the government or other strong authorities in that society.

In comparison, Conspiracy stories describe key cultural and contemporary events as the result of organized and hidden groups concealing the facts and reality from the public spotlight (for instance, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, American military operation against Osama Bin Laden, and the assassination attack on Malala Yousafzai in Pakistan) (Oliver & Wood, 2014). In a nutshell, the media is the only source of knowledge regarding such sensitive information or conspiracies for the public.



**Conspiratorial ideation
 VARIABLE CONCEPTUALIZATION AND
 OPERATIONALIZATION CONSPIRATORIAL THINKING or
 IDEATION:**

Conspiratorial thinking is a mentality whereby a person believes in fiction and unreliable data, misunderstands reality, and begins to trust in presumptions. Moreover, it is generated through insane conspiracy theories that are part of fake stories. Often, a group of individuals is engaged or cooperated to construct numerous conspiracy theories. So, as a dependent variable, the researcher employed conspiratorial ideation, and selected two renowned Pakistani conspiracy theories: "The Terrorist Attack on MALALA YOUSAFZAI" and "The PANAMA Case on Politicians." In this part, participants were asked a series of questions on these two instances to detect conspiratorial thoughts among children and university students.



ORIGINAL SCALE FOR CONSPIRATORIAL IDEATION

Five scales were employed to assess conspiratorial ideas in this study. 1 represents highly agree; 2 represent, 3 represents disagree, 4 represents strongly disagree, and 5 represents Don't know

RECORDED SCALE FOR CONSPIRATORIAL IDEATION

Due to the nature of data analysis and interpretation, item 5 for conspiratorial ideation was recorded as 1 for low conspiratorial ideation and 2 for strong OR high conspiratorial ideation.

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF INDEPENDENT POLITICAL EFFICACY

According to Kenski et al, (2006), the degree of influence citizens has over their federal and local governments is called political efficacy. Persons with limited influence and confidence in governments have poor political efficacy. In contrast, citizens with solid political efficacy have excellent faith in their governments, feel that the government responds well, and have high trust in government. Political efficacy, he believes, has two components. The first is personal political knowledge, such as how political institutions have shaped society, and the second is how one's political activity may have an impact on society (Balch, 1974; Converse, 1972 & Niemi, 1991). An individual's personal or self-understanding of political processes is characterized as internal efficacy. External political efficacy, on the other hand, is described as a government's understanding of its institutions as well as the demands

of its citizens. Political effectiveness or efficacy is crucial to politics and citizenship tied to political understanding and trust in politics and government. However, it can only be attained in a democratic system. Politically effective citizenship necessitates citizen rights and expectations from their government and awareness of the government's business and actions.

The use of the internet and media, mainly social media networks and other media outlets, has increased in recent decades, extending the metrics of political efficacy. Citizens' access to the internet and electronic media has dramatically altered their perceptions of political networks, knowledge, and opportunities to express themselves. This involves knowledge of the government, its actions, and the general population (Zhou, 2012). According to research, the more individuals utilize social media and electronic media, the more politically engaged they are, and the more they express their opinions about politics and government, staying informed and up to date on others (Lyenger 2008 & Benkler 2006). Young people prefer social media and cell phones to watch television and talk shows for political and government information, according to Smith et al, (2008). Instead of other age groups, they like to share various messages and watch videos on politicians, which may be humorous or critical of governmental and national issues. Individuals who observe or discuss positive things about politics and government contribute favourably to the beneficial growth of politics and society, as Bandura (1997) shows in social cognitive theory. Political efficacy studies how people's assessments of their political experiences influence their participation. These actions are influenced by a broad feeling of self-mastery, which impacts decisions, ambitions, effort, and tenacity in achieving any given objective (Bandura, 1991). In a democratic society, how and whether a person engages in politics impacts whether they acquire confidence in their ability to solve problems (Mill, 1991). Efficacy is thought to increase the relevance of politics in everyday life, leading to more behaviors that align with democratic principles (Kenski et al., 2006). An increased sense of political competence has been crucial in determining levels of politics, the likelihood of voting, contacting the public Officials attend demonstrations and political conversations (Bennett, 1997; Gastil, 1999; McLeod et al., 1999; Walsh, 2004). Angus Campbell and colleagues defined political efficacy as "the perception that individual political participation has, or may have, an influence on the political process, i.e., that fulfilling one's civic duty is desirable" (Campbell et al., 1954, p. 187).

Political efficacy is very contextual, like other perceptual and psychological aspects (Gil, 2006). According to Bandura, efficacy beliefs should be explored according to the manner of interaction in social life (Wollman et al., 1991) because people have varied reasons, experiences, and capacities (1991, 1997). Political efficacy is a multi-dimensional word generated from NES survey items to differentiate internal and outward efficacy. Individuals' judgments of personal capacity "to comprehend and successfully participate in politics" are referred to as internal efficacy (IE) (Craig et al., 1990, p. 290; Niemi et al., 1991). External efficacy (EE) refers to citizens' perceptions of government responsiveness to their requests (Balch, 1974; Converse, 1972). In theory, examining the relationship between a voter, a politician, a citizen, and an elected official is referred to as external effectiveness (Craig et al., 1990).

Various political engagement types demand various efficacy assessments if we assume efficacy measurements are not universal (Velasquez et al., 2015).

External political efficacy advances from personal convictions to institutional "responsiveness." External political effectiveness refers to a person's belief in his or her ability to influence the political process and the willingness of political institutions to respond to their requests (Craig, 1979; Craig et al., 1990). It is essential to understand that external political effectiveness does not (necessarily) refer to a person's ability to influence policy (i.e., internal political efficacy). However, it pertains to people's perceptions of how accommodating organizations are to specific requirements. Even though the two are frequently confused, external trust is fundamentally distinct from political trust. Suppose a situation in which a person has low external political efficacy, which means he or she believes he or she has limited influence over the political process but has a high level of political belief. He or she, in other words, may believe that political institutions produce policies that benefit all citizens.

External political efficacy is used to explain populist party support. One of the three key components of populism is external political efficacy, which is based on the belief that the political elite is unresponsive to citizen demands because politicians do not listen to citizens' concerns. As a result, it responds to populism's anti-elitism. Although external political efficacy has a more positive view of people than political trust, individuals are not always characterized as pure or homogeneous. External political efficacy thus feeds into broader feelings of political unhappiness, which are linked to the lack of responsiveness of political institutions. As a result, as the definition of populism emphasizes, it has nothing to do with the idea that the people are ultimately sovereign.

4- DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

this chapter will include a comprehensive analysis and interpretation. The chapter is broken into two sections: descriptive and inferential analytical. Frequency and percentages are provided for this purpose in frequency and contingency tables. When appropriate, charts and graphs are employed to highlight the essential parts of the study findings.

DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

The background factors and the primary study variables are presented in this chapter of the research report.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The researcher used three demographic profiling factors: respondents' gender, caste, and parental education. Table

shows the frequency table and percentage dispersion of such variables throughout the sample of participants.

Respondents Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Total	<u>N=262</u>	<u>%= 100</u>
Gender		

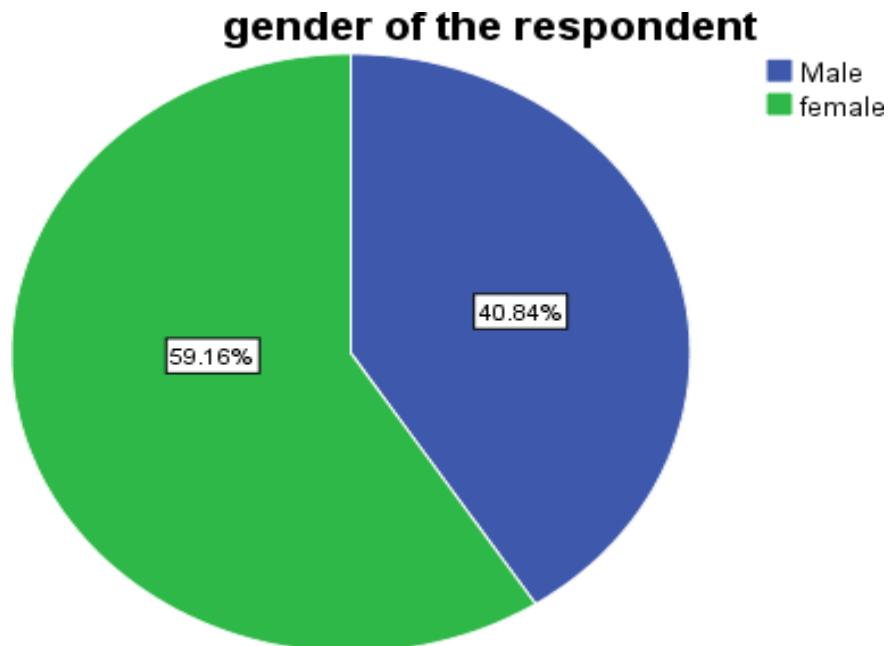
Male	109	41.6
Female	153	58.39
Fathers' Education		
Primary	34	12.97
A levels	56	21.37
O levels	68	25.95
Graduation and higher	104	39.69
Mothers' Education		
Primary	59	22.5
A levels	92	35.1
O levels	51	19.5
Graduation and Higher	60	22.9

Table 4.1: Socio-economic profile of the respondents

According to Table 4.1, male participation in the sampling data is lower than female participation. However, males account for 41.6 percent of the total sampling, and females hold the highest share, 58.39 percent of the research

The gender of the respondents

As seen in Table 4.1, male respondents account for over 40 percent of the total sample, while female respondents account for 60 percent. This, in turn, correlates to the features of the population under investigation. Female participation was higher than male students in this study. This characteristic of the sample is graphically represented in Pie 4.1 below.



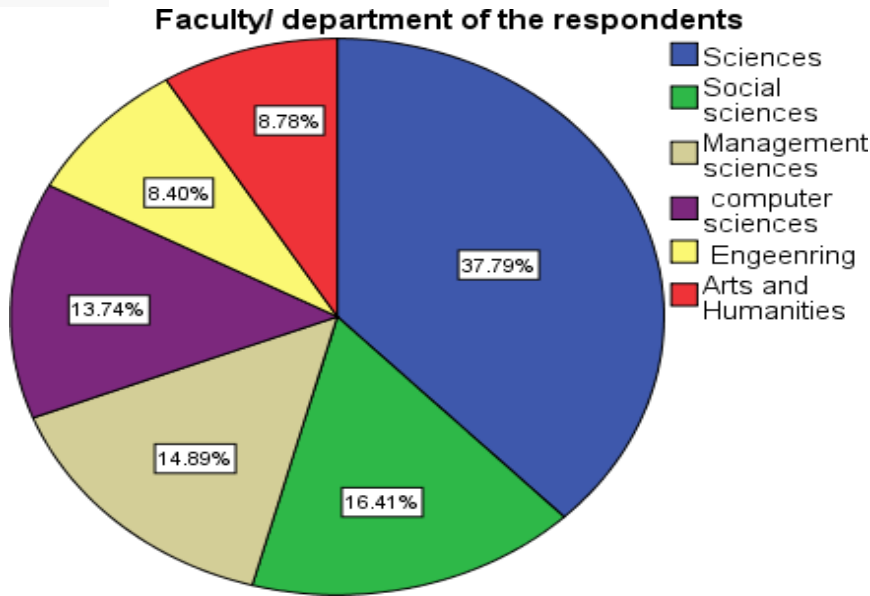
Respondents' educational background

The researcher used three criteria to profile the responses academically: the respondents' faculty, program, and semester. The frequency analysis distribution of each variable across the sample of participants is shown in Table 4.2.

Academic profile	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Total	N=262	%= 100
<i>Faculty</i>		
Bio-Sciences	99	37.8
Social Sciences	43	16.41
Management Sciences	39	14.88
Computer sciences	36	13.74
Engineering	22	8.39
Arts and Humanities	23	8.8
<i>Program</i>		
Bachelor	194	74.0
Masters	45	17.2

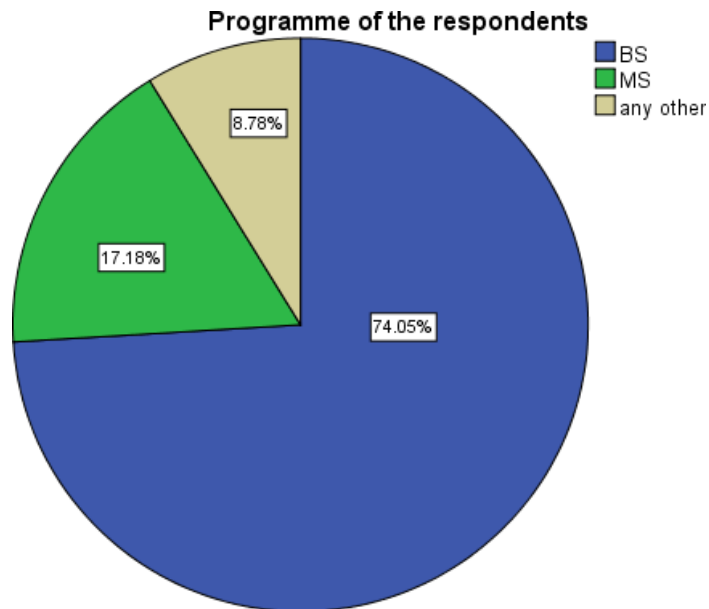
Faculty of the respondents

According to Table 4.2, the faculty of sciences accounts for 37 percent of the total sample. In contrast, the remaining faculties of social sciences, management sciences, computer sciences, engineering, and arts and humanities account for 16 percent, 15 percent, 14 percent, 8 percent, and 9 percent of the total sample, respectively. The sample's characteristics are graphically depicted in Pie 4.2 below.



Programs of the respondents

As shown in Table 4.2, 74 percent of the sample is enrolled in a BS program, 17 percent are enrolled in an MA program, and 9 percent are enrolled in another program. This characteristic of the sample is graphically represented in Pie 4.2 below.



Respondents believe in the conspiracy:

The researcher used five-dimensional variables to measure respondents' conspiratorial ideation: personal belief in conspiracy, political belief in conspiracy, media belief in conspiracy, and foreign belief.

Belief in conspiracy, and Panama case belief in conspiracy. The frequency and percentage

distribution of these aspects throughout the sample of respondents are shown in the table below.

Belief in the conspiracy by individuals:

Personal belief in conspiracy is one of several sub-divisions of conspiratorial thinking. The frequency and proportion of respondents are shown in the table below.

Table 4.3: personal belief on conspiracy

Personal belief in conspiracy	Frequency	Percentage
Total	N=262	%=100
<i>To what extent do you believe that terrorism is a real threat to the world</i>		
Strongly agree	121	46.17
Agree	108	41.3
Disagree	14	5.34
Strongly disagree do not know	9	3.43
	10	4.81
<i>To what extent do you believe terrorism is an international agent by some states to have a hold on other countries?</i>		
Strongly agree	24	9.16
Agree	34	13
Disagree	104	39.7
Strongly disagree do not know	50	19
	50	19
<i>To what extent you believe that terrorist groups use conspiracy theories in requirements of terrorists.</i>		
Strongly agree	51	19.46
Agree	80	30.5
Disagree	62	23.66
Strongly disagree do not know	13	5
	57	21.7

As shown in the table above, respondents' conspiratorial ideas about global terrorism were expressed at an individual level in response to various questions about whether terrorism is the real threat to the global world, with 46.17 percent, 41.3 percent, 5.34 percent, 3.34 percent, and 4.81 of the entire sample

responded strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and I do not know, respectively. In the second case, that terrorism is an international agent by states to have an influence on other countries, 9.16 percent, 13percent, 39.7percent, 19percent, and 19percent of respondents strongly agree, agree, disagree, firmly disagree, and I do not know, respectively. Participants were asked about the terrorist groups that employ conspiracy theories to recruit militants in the third question, and 19.46 percent, 30.5 percent, 23.66 percent, 5 percent, and 21.7 percent strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and I do not know, respectively.

Belief in a political conspiracy

Conspiratorial ideation has numerous elements, including the belief in political conspiracies. The frequency and proportion of respondents are shown in the table below.

Table 4.4: belief in a political conspiracy

Belief on political efficacy	Frequency	Percentage
Total	N=262	%=100
<i>To what extent you believe Malala Yousaf Zai was attacked by foreign or international actors</i>		
Strongly agree	9	3.43
Agree	12	4.58
Disagree	32	12.21
Strongly disagree I do not know	13	4.96
	195	74.42

To what extent you believe that Some countries had hidden intentions in attack on Malala

Strongly agree	30	11.45
Agree	12	4.58
Disagree	103	39.31
Strongly disagree	70	26.71
do not know	47	18

To what extent you believe politicians tried to hide truth about Malala attack

Strongly agree	12	4.59
Agree	12	4.59
Disagree	36	13.74
Strongly disagree	6	2.29
do not know	196	75

As seen in the table above, respondents at the political level have conspiratorial beliefs regarding the Malala issue. When asked whether international countries, national governments, or politicians were engaged in the Malala Yousafzai terrorist attack, 3.43percent, 4.58percent, 12.21percent, 4.96percent and 74.42% of the total sample strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed, and I do not know, respectively. In the second case, respondents were asked if some countries had hidden intentions for this strike, so, 11.45percent, 4.58percent, 39.31percent, 26.71percent, and 8 percent of respondents strongly agree, agreed, disagree, strongly disagree, and I do not know, respectively. In response to the third question, that politicians tried to hide the truth about the Malala attack from the public, 4.59percent, 4.59 percent, 13.74 percent 2.29percent, and 75 percent said they strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and I do not know, respectively.

Believe in a media conspiracy:

Another aspect of conspiratorial thinking is the alleged conspiratorial involvement of the mass media. Table 5.5 shows the frequency contribution of belief on mainstream press conspiratorial ideation.

Table 4.5: conspiratorial ideation on media

Conspiracy theories in the media	Frequency	Percentage
Total	<u>N=262</u>	<u>%=100</u>
<i>To what extent do you believe media play a great role in discovering truths</i>		
Strongly agree	82	31.3
Agree	101	38.54
Disagree	49	18.7

Strongly disagree	10	4
I do not know	20	7.6

To what extent you believe international media paints a terrible picture of countries with war and conflicts

Strongly agree	50	19.1
Agree	65	24.8
Disagree	29	11
Strongly disagree	2	0.7
I do not know	116	44.3

To what extent you believe media houses play role in spreading conspiracies

Strongly agree	80	30.5
Agree	114	43.5
Disagree	44	16.8
Strongly disagree	6	2.3
I do not know	18	6.8

To what extent you believe media houses hide the truth from public.

Strongly agree	91	34.7
Agree	106	40.4
Disagree	41	15.6
Strongly disagree	4	1.5
I do not know	20	7.6

Participants had conspiratorial thoughts about public and global media channels regarding covering the truth, as shown in the table above, in which different participants responded about media that play a crucial role in discovering the truth and participation in spreading negative news and concealing appropriate information from people about the attack. According to the table above, the respondents were asked

about the significant role of media in discovering the truth, so, 31.3percent, 38.54percent, 18.7percent, 4percent and 7.6percent of respondents in the whole sample strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and I do not know, respectively.

Regarding international media’s role in painting a terrible picture of countries with war and conflict, 19.1 percent,

24.8 percent, 11 percent, 0.7 percent, and 44.3 percent of respondents strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and I do not know were the results of the second case, respectively. However, in terms of the third question, respondents were asked that media houses play a role in spreading conspiracies, probably,30.5percent, 43.5percent, 16.8percent, 2.3percent, and 6.8percent of participants strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed, and I do not know, respectively. Moreover, in the case of the 4th question, that media houses hide the truth from the public, 34.7percent, 40.4percent, 15.6percent, 1.5percent, and 7.6percent of respondents strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and I do not know how to make the result. The above table shows the conspiratorial ideation with respect to media propaganda or media outlets. A significant number of people were severely victims of such media conspiratorial ideation. However, on the other hand, a minimal amount of people knew the truth regarding such concerns.

Belief in a media conspiracy

The alleged conspiratorial function of the mass media is another facet of conspiratorial thinking. Table 5.6 illustrates the contribution of belief in media-based conspiracy theories.

Table 4.6: Belief in an International Conspiracy

Belief in foreign conspiracy	Frequency	Percentage
Total	<u>N=262</u>	<u>%=100</u>
<i>To what extent you believe terrorist attacks on France were international conspiracy</i>		
Strongly agree	44	16.8
Agree	61	23.3
Disagree	33	12.6
Strongly disagree do not know	8	3
	116	44.3

As shown in the table above, global respondents hold conspiratorial thoughts about the attack on France, in which questions were posted on the involvement of various foreign governments or international conspiracy in the assault and their support for terrorism in France. According to the above table, 16.8 percent, 23.3 percent, 12.6

percent, 3 percent, and 44.3 percent of respondents from the total sample strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. I do not know about the concealment of the facts about the attacks in France, respectively. In the second scenario, half of the respondents agree, and half reject that foreign governments finance terrorists— moreover, the majority were ignorant about this particular tragedy.

Conspiracy about the Panama case by individuals

The imagined conspiracy behind the Panama case is another contemporary example of conspiratorial ideation. Table

5.7 shows the frequency and percentage of people who believe in media-based conspiratorial thinking.

Table 4.7: Belief in Panama conspiracy

Panama case conspiracy	Frequency	Percentage
Total	<u>N=262</u>	<u>%=100</u>
<i>To what extent do you believe disqualification of international leadersthrough the Panama leaks was planned</i>		
Strongly agree	37	14.1
Agree	75	28.6
Disagree	10	3.8
Strongly disagree	39	14.8
I do not know	101	38.5
<i>To what extent you believe Panama cases were a conspiracy set by different states institutions.</i>		
Strongly agree	55	21
Agree	61	23.3
Disagree	83	32
Strongly disagree	31	12
I do not know	32	12.2
<i>To what extent you believe Panama leaks is a conspiracy set by US</i>		
Strongly agree	68	26
Agree	89	34

Disagree	53	20.2
Strongly disagree	22	8.3
I do not know	30	11.4
<i>To what extent you believe disqualification of leaders due to Panama was unfair</i>		
Strongly agree	94	36
Agree	84	32
Disagree	32	12.2
Strongly disagree	12	4.5
I do not know	40	15.2

From the numerous things stated here, the following item, "think that disqualification of an international leader through Panama leaks was pre-planned", generates the percentage that, 14.1percent 28.6percent, 3.8percent 14.8percent and 38.5percent with 50percent of the respondents strongly agree, to agree, disagree, strongly disagree and I do not know, respectively. The second item, "that the Panama case was a conspiracy set by different state institutions", has a level of strongly agree 21 per cent, agreeing 23.3 per cent, disagreeing 32 per cent, and strongly disagreeing 12 per cent. I do not know 12.2 per cent. The 3rd item, the "Panama leaks is a conspiracy set by the US", generates a level of strongly agree 26 per cent and 32 per cent agreement, disagreement 20.2 per cent, strongly disagreement 8.3 per cent, and I do not know 11.4 per cent. Moreover, in the case of the 4th question, I think the disqualification of leaders due to Panama was unfair, representing, 36percent 32percent, 12.2percent, 4.5 per cent, and 15.2percent with a reference strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and I do not know respectively. **Table 4.8**

Belief on Panama conspiracy	Frequency	Percentage
Total	<u>N=262</u>	<u>%=100</u>
<i>To what extent you believe stronger political parties may have set up the Panama conspiracy</i>		
Strongly agree	42	16
Agree	56	21
Disagree	47	18
Strongly disagree	57	22
I do not know	60	23
<i>To what extent you believe disqualification of political leaders was a strategic decision</i>		
Strongly agree	69	26.4

Agree	11	4.2
Disagree	25	9.5
Strongly disagree	57	22.5
I don't know	100	38.1

To what extent you believe some senior members of the ruling parties were also involved in the disqualification process.

Strongly agree	50	19
Agree	21	8
Disagree	59	22.5
Strongly disagree	54	20.6
I do not know	78	29.7

From the numerous items given above, the following item, "Disqualification of political leaders was a strategic decision", generates a high level of agreement 26.4 per cent, 4.2 per cent agreeing with the statement and 9.5percentdisagreeing, strongly disagreeing, 22.5 per cent, I do not know 38.1percent. While the item, "some top leaders within the ruling party participated in behind-the-scenes disqualification," likewise has a high level of agreement19 per cent, agreement 8 per cent, disagree22.5, strongly disagree20.6 per cent, and I do not know, 29.7 per cent. The item " I think stronger political parties may have set up the Panama conspiracy " generates a significant level of agreement16 per cent and agreement 21.3 per cent, disagreement 18 per cent, and strongly disagreement 22%. I do not know 23 per cent, respectively.

The political effectiveness of respondents

Political effectiveness was employed as an independent variable in this study to examine whether political efficacyand conspiratorial ideation were linked, which was also the dependent variable. As a result, the researcher used two-dimensional factors to assess respondents' political efficacy: internal and external political efficacy. The table below shows the % distribution of these parameters among the respondents in the sample.

Respondents' political efficacy

Another variable that influences conspiratorial ideation was employed in this study. Table 5.9 displays the prevalence and proportion of respondents who believe in political efficacy.

Table 4.9

Political efficacy	Frequency	Percentage
Total	<u>N=262</u>	<u>%=100</u>
<i>To what extent do you believe you have a good understanding of political matters?</i>		
Strongly agree	64	24.4
Agree	104	39.5
Disagree	48	18.3
Strongly disagree	20	7.6
I do not know	22	8.4
<i>To what extent you believe you are informed about politics in a way that most people aren't</i>		
Strongly agree	49	19
Agree	23	9
Disagree	76	29
Strongly disagree	31	12
I do not know	83	32
<i>To what extent you believe have the ability to influence the political process</i>		
Strongly agree	49	19
Agree	51	19.4
Disagree	87	22.5
Strongly disagree	32	12.2
I do not know	43	16.4
<i>To what extent you believe you can take a stand for my political views</i>		
Strongly agree	59	22.5
Agree	101	38.5
Disagree	67	25.5
Strongly disagree	17	6.4
I do not know	18	6.8
<i>To what extent you believe political participation is something participants believe in</i>		
Strongly agree	50	19
Agree	67	25.5

Disagree	54	21
Strongly disagree	30	11.4
I do not know	61	23.3

From the many categories stated above, the item "strong understanding of political affairs" produces a high level of agreement, with 39.5 percent strongly agreeing and 24.4 percent disagreeing with this assertion. Even though the item "Respondent can play a part in the political process" also has a high level of agreement (64%) and 26% disagreement. Meanwhile, the percentage of those who did not have any idea lay at 8.4. Even though the item "Respondent can play a part in the political process" likewise has a pick level of agreement (57%)and disagreement (41%). Political efficacy is generally high in the sampled data of respondents, as shown in the table above. Respondents were asked about their political influence and meaningful political participation, which stood at 41 percent and 44 percent, respectively. It shows their firm belief in the political process and meaning. The percentage of respondents with no contribution to the subject stood at 16 and 23.3 percent.

Internal political efficacy of respondents'

The frequency analysis and contribution of political efficacy across participants are shown in Table 4.10.

Internal political efficacy	Frequency	Percentage
Total	<u>N=262</u>	<u>%=100</u>
<i>To what extent you believe you understand role of the political actors in the context of current political issues</i>		
Strongly agree	56	21.3
Agree	73	28
Disagree	60	23
I strongly disagree do not know	11	4.1
	62	24
<i>To what extent you believe have Understanding of thecountry's present economic Difficulties</i>		
Strongly agree	53	20
Agree	71	27
Disagree	55	21
Strongly disagree do not know	15	6
	68	26

To what extent do you believe you understand Political institutions and how theywork?

Strongly agree	40	15.2
Agree	71	27
Disagree	56	21.3
I strongly disagree do not know	16	7
	79	30.1

To what extent you believe you know few of organizations that work on social and political issues

Strongly agree	47	18
Agree	48	18.3
Disagree	80	30.5
Strongly disagree. I do not know	17	6.4
	70	27

From the many things stated above, the following item, "understanding the function of political leaders about political concerns", produces a high level of agreement, with 49 percent agreeing and 27 percent disagreeing. The percentage of respondents who did not apply to any agreement or disagreement stood at 24 percent. The item "Aware of political institutions and how they function" likewise has a high level of agreement 42.2 percent and disagreement 28.3 percent. They do not know if the percentage stood at 30.1 percent. The item "knowing political and social organization working to resolve socio-political issues " has a lower level of agreement, 36.3 percent, anddisagreement, 36.9 percent. The "do not know" option was answered by 27 percent of the respondents. As the tableabove shows, internal political efficacy is likewise high in the respondents' sample data.

External political efficacy

Here, External political efficacy, a subset of political efficacy that promotes conspiratorial ideation and is also usedin this study, is a subset of political efficacy. The distribution of the respondents' political efficacy is depicted in

Table 4.11: external political efficacy

Internal political efficacy	Frequency	Percentage
Total	<u>N=262</u>	<u>%=100</u>

To what extent you believe you understand role of the political actors in the context of current political issues

Strongly agree	56	21.3
Agree	73	28
Disagree	60	23
Strongly disagree do not know	11	4.1
	62	24

To what extent do you believe have an Understanding of the country's present economic difficulties

Strongly agree	53	20
Agree	71	27
Disagree	55	21
Strongly disagree do not know	15	6
	68	26

To what extent do you believe you understand Political institutions and how they work?

Strongly agree	40	15.2
Agree	71	27
Disagree	56	21.3
Strongly disagree do not know	16	7
	79	30.1

To what extent do you believe you know a few of organizations that work on social and political issues

Strongly agree	47	18
Agree	48	18.3
Disagree	80	30.5
Strongly disagree I do not know	17	6.4
	70	27

Strongly disagree	33	12.4
I do not know	30	11.4

To what extent you believe that Election forces the government to pay heeds to the public

Strongly agree	12	4.5
Agree	52	20
Disagree	58	22.1
Strongly disagree	27	10.4
I do not know	113	43.1

From the many things stated above, the following item, “Your vote makes a difference,” produces a high level of agreement, with 60 percent agreeing and 15 percent disagreeing with this statement. 25 percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. While the statement "believe that governments do what the people desire" generates a significant level of agreement

53.1 percent and disagreement 21.4 percent. At the same time, 27 percent of respondents did not come up with any opinion. Elections, in general, make the government pay attention to what people believe, with an agreement of 24.4 percent and disagreement of 32.5 percent, respectively. Participants who did not agree or disagree stood at 43.1 percent. External political efficacy is likewise high in the collected data from the respondents, as indicated in the table above.

The table above shows how much social media respondents used in this survey, which impacts young people's conspiratorial ideas. Because of the item "type of social media used the most," 51 percent of participants use all social media accounts listed in the table. However, 49 percent used the other apps mentioned in the question. On the other hand, when asked how much time people spend on social media, 76 percent said they spend less than two hours, while 24 percent said they spend more than two hours. As indicated in the table and graphs above, the ratio of social media use in the sampled data is high. Social Media Consumption Table 4.12

Social media consumption	Frequency	Percentage
Total	N=262	%=100

Are you a social media user

Yes	260	99.2
No	2	0.76

Which social media platform do you use the most

Facebook	51	19.4
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WhatsApp	70	27
YouTube	7	2.6
All of these	134	51.1
<i>Time spent on social media a daily basis</i>		
Less than one hour	107	41
1-2hour	94	36
2-3hour	31	12
More than three hours	30	11

The table above shows how much social media was utilized by respondents in this survey, which has an impact on young people's conspiratorial ideas. Because of the item "type of social media used the most," 51 percent of participants used all social media accounts listed in the table. However, 49 percent used the other apps mentioned in the question. On the other hand, when asked how much time people spend on social media, 76 percent said they spend less than two hours, while 24 percent said they spend more than two hours. As indicated in the table and graphs above, the ratio of social media use in the sampled data is high.

Mass media consumptions

The mainstream media is also employed in this study to influence conspiratorial thinking. Table 5.13 depicts the frequency distribution of respondents' media intake.

Table 5.13 Mainstream Media Consumption

Mass media consumption	Frequency	Percentage
Total	N=262	%=100
<i>Do you watch TV on a daily basis?</i>		
Yes	223	85.1
No	39	15
<i>Your most-watched channel</i>		
News	73	28
Sports	16	6
Entertainment	102	39
All of these	71	27
<i>How much time do you spend watching television?</i>		
Less than one hour	108	41

1-2hour	93	35
2-3hour	32	12
More than three hour	29	11

Conclusion

This research was conducted among the students of the University of Bangor, who have been shown to have conspiratorial ideas. This university holds international students with different backgrounds and greatly impacts the news and sources of disinformation, resulting in conspiratorial ideas. Meanwhile, the level of education and major of studies had a vital role. Demography plays a crucial role in the conspiratorial ideation of the father's schooling. Father's background, educational setting, and level of education are factors linked to conspiratorial ideation. Conspiratorial thought is linked to individual conspiracy. Transnational conspiracy with local and global social awareness, and political conspiracy with social literacy. On the other hand, Political

Conspiracy with external political efficacy, individual conspiracy with general and external political effectiveness, and international conspiracy with general and external political efficacy are all tied to conspiratorial thought. Moreover, Conspiratorial ideation is connected to media consumption, including the Panama theory, as well as political and individual conspiracies linked to social media usage.

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