THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON TRANSPARENCY AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract. *Social media has had an impact on society in many ways during the past two decades. It has changed the way public discourse and communication occurs. Numerous studies in the past have indicated that governments need to increase transparency, the policy of social media communication and general responsiveness to achieve a high level of citizen engagement and satisfaction. Therefore, open communication, participatory engagement strategies and transparency need to be aimed. However, in countries like Uzbekistan, where Authoritarian style governance is still in power, the mass media, social media and internet use are restricted and controlled by the governments to prevent the narratives of the online discourse. In the current study, a mixed-method approach is used to understand the kinds of strategies that the Uzbek government is using for social media communication with its citizens, finding out the typology of information that is made available online by the government in Uzbekistan to its citizens and the impact that the government use of social media has on the citizen trust, engagement and perceived responsiveness. The findings of the study revealed that the content mainly published by the government is informational. The major strategies being implemented are relating to engagement, networking and representation of information and the government. Also, significant associations between citizen engagement and the perceived responsiveness of the government were indicated. Overall, this study is a significant addition to literature and has numerous practical and policy-oriented implications. The researcher has also listed the study's limitations and the future research directions that can be adopted.*

Keywords: *Social-Media, Government Organization, Transparency, Citizen Trust, Citizen Engagement, Government Agency, Communications.*

Background

Transparency was a major focus of the Uzbek government's economic reforms, which recognized its importance to both efficient governance and public confidence. Previously, the public was unable to see how their tax dollars were being spent due to a lack of open data. Initiatives to enhance public participation and create legislative frameworks for budgeting were also successful. The Citizens' Budget, which was first published in 2018, lays out government goals, resource allocation, and total expenditure in simple terms (Figenschou, 2020). For the first time, the government released medium-term macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts, as well as an analysis of fiscal risks that the government should be aware of. Rather than relying solely on a presidential decree to make budgetary decisions, the Uzbek Parliament has taken on a more active role in this year's budget bill. The government of Uzbekistan decided to implement a bold and comprehensive plan to overhaul the nation's economic tax system, and it appears to be working.

Another advantage of using social media by the government bodies lies in the increased collaboration that is supported by use of such a medium between the governance stakeholders. From the point of view of the citizens, social media is a platform for increased engagement with the

programs, services and any information about the government and allows to bridge the gap that traditionally exists between the government and the locals in the society. As from the governments point of view, social media provides a viable platform that can be used to engage public participation and motivate increasing collaboration. Social media, therefore, not only strengthens public relations, but also provides a means for creating an informed citizen body (Arshad & Khurram, 2020a; Enke & Borchers, 2019; Solis & Breakenridge, 2009; Xiong, Feng, & Tang, 2020; Yakobi). the level and type of information available on the social media handles of government bodies or individuals is their personal choice and is dependent on communication and information sharing rules and strategies that are drafted by the government. The challenge in this regard lies in two aspects; the typology of shared information and the content of information that is shared (Medaglia & Zheng, 2017). The type and content both need to be reflective of the truth as these persons or organizations will be under scrutiny and it will also need to keep the rules of professionalism in check (Chen et al., 2020; DePaula & Dincelli, 2018; DePaula, Dincelli, & Harrison, 2018). The movement towards increased social media use by government to increase responsiveness, customer satisfaction, trust and engagement is based on transparency, staff preparedness to handle the scrutiny, time, skills of communication and a positive attitude towards it all (Medaglia & Zheng, 2017; Verma, Kumar, & Ilavarasan, 2017).

Personal income tax and social tax rates were lowered to a single 12.5 percent and VAT payments were simplified, while the number of taxes and other obligations were reduced as a result of the reform. Taxes on small businesses and individuals were also reduced, as was the tax on corporations. As a result of these rate reductions and increased compliance, revenue increased by 33 percent, despite widespread criticism and showing that well-designed reforms can work. There is a lot at stake for the platforms if the public sees what they're up to. Platforms make money by displaying advertising, and by keeping their algorithms private and obscuring data on where the ads appear, they evade responsibility, avoiding complaints from advertisers, protests from users, and even congressional inquiry. Without reliable information on how these massive platforms operate and how their technology works, there can be no real accountability. Despite its partnership with the Social Science Research Council, Facebook has been slow to release information. " External watchdogs are needed to ensure that the platforms are acting in the best interests of the public, despite their lack of transparency. Initiatives like this have made a difference in the lives of authors. Although these and other companies have caused widespread destruction, their actions go far beyond simple economics and market dominance.

The significance and reach of social media is difficult to exaggerate, mainly, because it continues to grow at an unprecedented rate in the type and kind of tools used, introduced, and the different levels of participation and resultant effects of such activities on the engagement and loyalty of the citizens and users. Particularly for the local governmental institutes and organizations, the research indicates that the citizens that engage with the governmental agencies and utilize their content effectively demonstrate higher levels of civic engagement and increased participation in community events compared to the citizens who aren’t involved in any dialogue with the government. Research also indicates that the usage of social media of the government inspires citizen trust in the institutions. These findings relegate a strong case for the governmental agencies to create effective and active social media presence that singularly focuses on the development of citizen engagement and increase the transparency of the governments. Social media has also been used by the local governments for increase of efficiency and effectiveness in other areas for instance building of community and encouragement of civic improvement.

The research by Dobos and Jenei (2013) outlined that the citizen participation can be converted to active engagement mainly by the use of instrumental and normative activities that are supported by social media platforms. A responsive government would lead to an engaged citizen body as they would be receiving active responses from the governance processes and would be in knowledge of activities supported and takin place by the government officials (Barr, 2016; Kasymova, 2017). Dialog and communication in social media are active means of increased instrumental communication between the government and citizens and can increase overall engagement as this medium is a place that the government officials are active, are listening and using innovative interaction means provided by these social media platforms. These platforms provide a two-way mechanism for inquiring about strategies and actions, expressing opinions about specific actions and plans, making suggestions of tackling with a social or global issue, and taking responsibility (Gálvez-Rodríguez, Haro-de-Rosario, & Caba-Pérez, 2018; Keller & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2018; Lovari & Valentini, 2020).

A full overview of these issues is provided in Tackling Corruption in Uzbekistan, which details how these issues became ingrained in the country's political and economic landscape. Informal decisions are made, rules are unclear, and supervision is lacking. Inequality in Uzbekistan is exacerbated by these factors, which lead to power battles amongst the country's economic and political elites. The country's long-term stability is under jeopardy as a result of this. The anticorruption efforts of the Uzbek government are mostly ineffective in addressing the root causes of the issue. Officials use them to settle scores and consolidate power via selective prosecutions. Independent journalists and civil society activists who keep tabs on corruption are often harassed, persecuted, and imprisoned by the government (Premade). International technical aid initiatives have so far had little effect. Tackling Corruption in Uzbekistan presents analyses and suggestions to assist the international community better its efforts to investigate claims of money laundering and business misconduct, and to encourage individuals who confront corruption both inside and outside the country. As a foundation for market trust and long-term economic viability, fiscal openness is essential to good public financial management. Citizens in every nation may hold their leaders to account by having a better understanding of how their government spends its money.

However, some researchers have heavily critiqued the uses of social media by the government sector as it is considered to be an inadequate means of communication of strategies, plans and other information regarding public and private policies by the government (Mergel & Greeves, 2012; Nagarwal, 2019; Permadi, Shabrina, & Aziz, 2019). Social media is considered as a platform that supports freedom and free speech; hence they seem like an unlikely pairing (Barley, Treem, & Kuhn, 2018; Gao & Lee, 2017) as the proper citizen engagement will need for a systematic means of probing, not supported by social media.

Furthermore, the desire of the government to increase development and recognition of knowledge and understanding in the citizens regarding the political and administrative policies and activities can lead to influencing them to post information that may not be entirely true and can lead to impacting the ability of the citizens to analyze, express unbiased opinions, participate and debate in current issues, etc. Social media may have quickly grown into public organization tools but there is still a need for face-to-face communication to ensure accurate development of policy and strategy.

In this authoritarian state, independent media is majorly considered as non-existent ref. Censorship is pervasive in all sorts of media, including the strategy of self-censorship due to the utter of fear of the consequences of publishing or posting anything that the regime or the government might

not approve of (Mamatov, 2020). While this strictness was worse before 2016, it has eased, only a little, overtime (Khalilova, 2020; Mamatov, 2020). The freedom on the Net index, published every year by freedom house indicated a slow but gradual increase in the freedom of internet in Uzbekistan, however, it is as of yet considered as not free (FreedomHouse, 2021). Uzbekistan proves to be on the path of incremental increase in internet freedom, as shown in figure 1 given below, primarily as the internet access across the country has shown to be improved. However, the grip of the government sector and authorities over the online environment are still tight in the country.

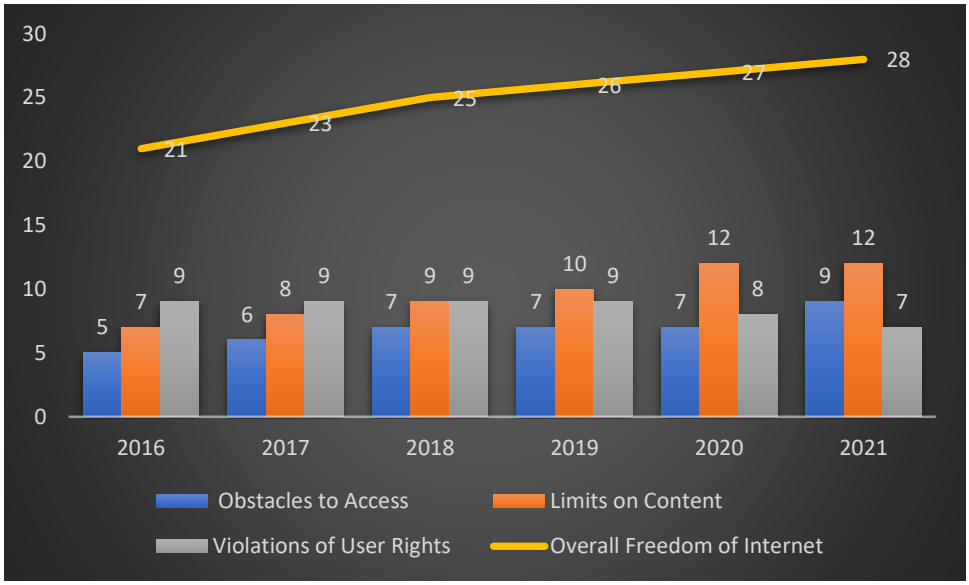

Figure 1: Internet Freedom in Uzbekistan

Source: (FreedomHouse, 2021)

The government is still continuing to block any websites that are deemed detrimental to their control and multiyear prison sentences are handed out to citizens that protest or try to gain access to restricted networks. Moreover, Uzbekistan's government has strict data protection laws that require the localization of user data for safety purposes, this is how the authorities justify their acts of blocking prominent social media platforms in the country. However, the social media use is increased in the country, nonetheless, over the past few years. This is depicted in the accounts of last 12 months of social media use as shown in figure 2 below. While the ongoing reforms carried out in the country in past few years under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev have led to improvements on several social issues in the country, including a visible and modest reduction in the repression of social and mass media, Uzbekistan is as of yet an authoritarian regime that has not depicted a movement towards democratization in the minimal. All media sources are tightly controlled by the government authorities, and there is little to no freedom of speech.

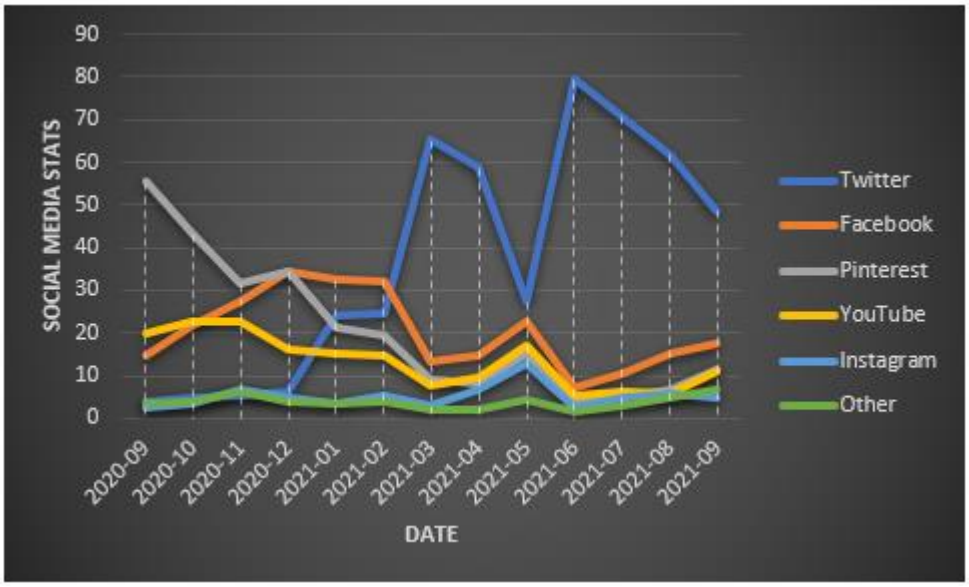

Figure 2: Social Media Use in Uzbekistan in past 12 Months

Source: https://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/all/worldwide/2018

During the meeting, participants discussed the implementation of the law, the actions of government agencies, and the rights of individuals to access information, among other things. In this manner, Uzbekistan has also made major efforts. Internationally compliant regulations and other legislative actions are critical to the steady growth of this country's media landscape. Uzbekistan's continuing democratic changes have also resulted in a new legislation on civil service openness. During the conference, authors learned about the law's implementation and discussed ideas with members of parliament, journalists, and specialists from across the world.

To begin, the Uzbek administration concentrated on the most serious flaws in the economic model that had governed their country's growth plan since independence. The allocation of resources and outputs among state-owned businesses had been planned and orchestrated by the state. Apart from commodities like gold that linked the nation to global markets, the economy was shut off. With limited competition in markets, the model and attitude were inward-looking, which resulted in little economic and social dynamism (Bashir & Bhat, 2017; Gezgin, 2017). Heavily industrialized societies made extensive use of natural resources and physical capital, but they neglected to invest in people's education, training, and job opportunities as part of their growth strategy. Jobs were limited at the time. Misjudgments were made in the allocation of resources. There was a lack of freedom of movement for the workforce.

The previous style of government rationed essential services to everyone, with no regard for efficiency, accountability, or productivity, since the government did not relate budget outlays to outcomes. A lack of government involvement throughout the economy impeded the country's ability to expand at a sustainable pace, resulting from the government's over- or under-involvement in certain sectors. As in Eastern Europe and Asia, the earliest reformers have followed a similar pattern in implementing changes (Barley, Treem, & Kuhn, 2018). The administration was steadfast in its pursuit of pricing and trade liberalization and the unification of the currency rate. To restructure the financial structure of the government and rethink its role in the economy, more time has elapsed. Reorienting capital expenditures toward reform priorities and significantly increasing social sector expenditures have changed public spending, and the tax system has been simplified and neutralized through

comprehensive tax policy revisions and improved tax administration. The openness of fiscal and debt matters has greatly increased. It has been possible to establish a new economic model and provide a foundation for future growth because of changes in fiscal policy and the structure of public finances.

Research method

The stage of data analysis can be defined as the process of conversion of raw data into meaningful and useful information. Several steps are included in both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis which include preparation of data, exploring the data, analyzing data using either descriptive or statistical methods, representing and interpreting the analysis and results and validating the interpretation (Cresswell, 2014). Mostly, these steps are carried out in a sequential form during a quantitative analysis and in iterative form during a qualitative analysis. In studies that are designed as mixed method researches, data analysis can involve various kinds of analytical techniques that may be applied to both quantitative and qualitative data or may be applied to only one kind of data. As in this study mixed method design is implemented, the data was collected via interviews and online surveys. The research has been divided into a qualitative and quantitative phase and the methods of population, sampling and data analysis have been discussed in the next section.

The research strategy can be explained as the researcher's plan about addressing the specific research questions. The success of a research is dependent on the strategy selected for data collection and analysis (M. Saunders, Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A., 2009). Qualitative studies require to involve the use of action research to solve a specific problem (Maxwell, 2012). The strategy adopted for the qualitative section of this study is based on qualitative interviews for exploratory analysis. The strategy for this study was to evaluate the type of information, social media strategy and outlook of the government relating to the usage of social media. The researcher evaluated previous research on government's usage of social media and conducted face to face interviews with governmental agents with experience of using and planning content for social media. The researcher collected information from government agents from different departments i.e., emergency management, media wing, volunteer leadership, policy planning, etc. following the direction of Kavanaugh et al. (2012). The interviews were conducted with five officials from the above mentioned departments, but details aren't being disclosed to maintain the anonymity of the respondents. The questions were focused on the governmental policies of social media, content development process and the future strategies and outlook of the digital presence of the government. These questions were exploratory and will evidently support the findings of the quantitative portion of the study which is exploring the perceptions of the individuals/citizens relating to the government usage of social media.

Qualitative data, such as interview transcripts, may be analysed using qualitative analysis. Rather than generating predictions or attempting to explain phenomena, qualitative analysis focuses on "sense-making" or gaining an understanding of a phenomenon. Creative and exploratory mindsets are required for qualitative analysis, which requires ethical awareness and participation in the setting. When we talk about "qualitative data," we're talking about anything that isn't quantifiable. In-depth interviews or diary entries may be used to gather this sort of information, which can then be evaluated using grounded theory or a thematic approach. Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, conduct their research in the real world, aiming to understand and explain occurrences in terms of the meanings that individuals assign to them. Only by putting things into perspective can they be fully appreciated. A qualitative researcher, on the other hand, immerses herself or himself in the natural environment. The settings of the investigation aren't made up; they're derived from real life. In the end, there is nothing that can be taken for granted (Maxwell, 2012). Those who are being investigated

by qualitative researchers want to speak for themselves and express their thoughts and feelings in words and other ways. In other words, qualitative research is a collaborative effort between the researcher and the people being examined. As a result, without the active engagement of the qualitative researcher, no data could exist. In the course of the research, the study's design might be modified or reworked. To a qualitative researcher, reality exists only in relation to the observer; there is no objective, objective truth. As the facts are gathered, the theory evolves based on what is known at the time.

The researcher received several confirmative responses from potential participants, however, as the study objectives indicated to conduct detailed in-depth interview that needed to be analyzed for content and themes, it was deemed suitable to select a smaller group of respondents. Hence, a sample selection was made of 6 interviewees. From these interviewees, 1 was later unable to attend the interview as scheduled. Therefore, the study is conducted using interview data from a final set of 5 expert respondents for the qualitative stage.

The researcher needs to collect data once from all respondents in virtually the same time zone i.e., data is collected at a single point of time from the social media experts. Hence, the time horizon of the study can be termed as cross-sectional (Olsen & St George, 2004). As for data collection strategy, an interview strategy was finalized and for conducting these interviews, a semi-structured interview questionnaire was preferred as it allows the interviewers to prepare questions beforehand to help control and guide the conversation and keep respondents informed of time limitation so they are encouraged to stay on the main topic (Adams, 2015). Moreover, this interview design allows for open-ended responses from participants so that a more in-depth information collection can be carried out using a two-way communication (Harvey-Jordan & Long, 2001; McIntosh & Morse, 2015). In the study setting, the interview protocol included providing the details of the purpose of interview and objectives of the study to the participants along with a tentative list of questions one day prior to the interview. Moreover, they were communicated the set time for interview 1 week beforehand so they could confirm their participation at least 3 days prior to the interview. The responses of the interviewees were recorded using a good quality phone recorder and the individuals were informed of this recoding. Later on, the data was transcribed, edited and summarized for analysis by the researcher.

Data is analyzed and managed by using the NVIVO software for the qualitative stage in this study. This software enables a researcher to clearly upload textual data, tag it and categorize it for a clean organization and storage of qualitative type of data (Hilal & Alabri, 2013; Welsh, 2002). After the data was recorded during each of the five interviews, the researcher transcribed the data and uploaded it on NVIVO software. Then each of the responses was scrutinized to formulate distinct themes of in the answers of the respondents and tagged them as common of unique responses. After this step, the researcher reviewed the coded data again and organized it into suitable themes. Overall, two strategies were used for conducting content analysis; framework-based technique and word cloud generation. The framework-analysis is a popular qualitative tool that is an analytic technique to organize data in a tabular format to understand and depict the underlying themes. Each row of the table will include a theme and corresponding views of the respondents arranged in form of similar and distinct opinions that will be already tagged using NVIVO (Abdel-Basset, Zhou, Mohamed, & Chang, 2018). The word cloud analysis will also allow to provide a further insight into explanation of each particular theme by highlighting the most frequent words and notions observed in response

Result and discussion

The qualitative analysis focused on the last two objectives of the study. The main focus was on evaluation of the typology of information presented by the Uzbekistan's government i.e., the category and type of information being put out by the governmental social media accounts and also the strategies they use for planning the content and the overall strategy behind the use of social media at the governmental front. Social media has become an active component of everyday life of people and the usage by the governmental agencies has seen the increase over the last couple of years. It has become a tool for communication for the governmental agencies and plays a large part in humanizing the government and its agents for the masses (Adrees et al., 2019). Studies have indicated that the two-way interaction made plausible by the social media has created a framework due to which the agencies can improve the dissemination of information to the citizens, increase their reach and responsiveness (Dekker, van den Brink, & Meijer, 2020; DePaula & Dincelli, 2018). Thus, the present section will be focusing on the method and strategy that is adopted by the government of Uzbekistan for the social media usage by their representatives. This tool has enabled the information to be passed along to the citizens and the public with marginal bureaucratic barriers. For the purpose of evaluation of the information collected by the social media specialists has been evaluated based on the framework analysis and word cloud analysis, after creation of themes via NVivo.

The data for the qualitative analysis was collected through interviews. The data was transcribed and entered into the NVIVO software for evaluation of the key themes present in the data. The researcher first arranged the data with respect to the interviewers. Then the data was coded and themes were created by manually going through the contents of the transcription. The main features of the discussion with the social media strategists were the strategy behind the formulation and design of content for the social media, the type of content published by the governmental agencies of Uzbekistan and the process of planning and strategizing for the design of social media content. The data was scrutinized carefully and a total of five themes were found to be present in the data. These themes were then used for the framework-based and word cloud analysis as well. The following table indicates the main themes and highlights the key aspects of the information coded among these themes as well;

Theme	Characteristics
Typology of information	The major strategy and rationale behind the creation and usage of the social media platforms is the dissemination of relevant information.
Content strategy	The strategy design for the content development and creation by the governmental agencies and agents of Uzbekistan. The main planning strategies as discussed by the social media strategists are representation, engagement and networking.
Feedback	Recently the focus of the government has been on mobilizing the voice of the people and has been passing laws and policies for facilitating open and honest journalism as well. Thus, this theme focused on the responses of the strategists related to the suggestions, complaints and messages by the citizens to the governmental social media accounts.
Tools	The main tools and applications for the social media in Uzbekistan were discussed and the discussion related to this aspect was coded into

	this theme. The research and discussion with the strategists indicate that Facebook, Instagram, and Telegram are the most active social networks in Uzbekistan. Thus, most of the strategies of the governmental agencies are focused on development of a repertoire with the citizens through these applications or also by using the domestic ones.
Participation	The participation by the citizens or the people in the discussion around the social media and the communication with the governmental agencies through the usage of the social media. The social media strategists were asked to share their perceptions. The discussion entailed that Uzbekistan is moving towards a model of participatory democracy. With this vision and with the evaluation of the current proceedings of the agencies greater responsiveness and regular interaction is required by the government agencies and a focus on the mobilization of social media is being focused.

In the first step of the analysis, the transcriptions were uploaded to NVivo for evaluation of the main themes. Once the main themes were identified, the data was codified in order to be analyzed through the framework-based method. This method is a systematic approach for the review of data and allows the researcher to present the data in accordance with the major themes. In the present analysis, the transcriptions were sifted, coded and sorted in accordance with the main objectives and themes. The following table presents the themes, and the responses of the social media experts. The responses have been presented as similar and unique responses to present an overview of the overall discussion;

Theme	Similar response	Unique response
Typology of information	The major strategy and rationale behind the creation and usage of the social media platforms is the dissemination of relevant information. Mainly, the agencies and governmental agents use social media as a tool for educational and promotional purposes for policy information and also for building a participatory democracy.	Mainly educational, informational, campaign related and sometimes for some crisis management as evidenced by the pandemic.
Content strategy	The biggest and the most important role of governmental social media is always to serve the community by important updates. This includes all information and news from public holidays to road closures, to election and campaign announcements to policy changes and breaking news. The main planning strategies are representation, engagement and networking. Through these strategies the	The engagement on the official postings is pretty low. Also, the main strategy of these agents is to network with the community and humanize the agencies, which can only be achieved through building active engagement

	social media agents seek to push forward the information dissemination activity and mainly focus on publishing news and official information through public announcements, press releases or simply posting on the preferred channels.	
Feedback	By listening actively to the suggestions, complaints and messages forwarded to the governmental accounts by the citizens. The best way is to focus on developing citizen cells and portals, hotlines, complaint registers etc. so that all information and feedback can be registered. According to the social media agents, in this way they can consider the most relevant feedback and include it in the policy considerations if it aligns with the overall goal of the strategy and the general direction adopted by the government.	The consideration of the people is essential for management of these accounts. You can't throw information out there if no one is waiting for it. Unfortunately, these aspects have been somewhat compromised in the context of Uzbekistan. The government has a strict mandate for publishing of wrongful or blasphemous information and mainly the push is concentrated for the usage of the domestic platforms. The community needs to feel heard and adjusted if the plan to be productive and use it to your advantage. There have been studies showing that voters tend to be more involved when they see transparency and authenticity from the government. So, the key to being more engaging or developing your reach is to become authentic and as honest as possible. All the developing and developed countries of the world are leveraging social media to make the citizens feel heard and as participatory democracy is on the agenda, making them feel heard and acknowledged is the best way. Also, the incorporation of feedback within the policy development is a latter issue for the time being, first of all mediums for receiving the

		feedback need to be devised. We can set up helplines, emails and citizen portals for registering the feedback from the public.
Tools	Facebook, Instagram, and Telegram are the most active social networks in Uzbekistan. We can build a repertoire with the citizens through these applications or also by using the domestic ones. The approach you say, in my opinion it is transparency and openness. The more open, accountable and transparent we become, the more the public will support the agencies and ministries and all the politicians.	Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. She uses the social media as a tool to put her opinions forward and she engages actively with her followers on twitter and Instagram. She also gives her followers a look into her personal or daily life and a behind-the-curtain look at how Congress operates. This strategy of her humanizes herself and the congress. So, I think a similar approach if applied would work anywhere, as the community will feel that they are a part of everything that is happening
Participation	Social media offers everyone a chance to provide individuals with a platform that overcomes barriers of distance and time, allowing them to connect and reconnect with others and thereby expand and strengthen their networks. The future outlook of the government is participatory democracy. With this vision and with the evaluation of the current proceedings of the agencies greater responsiveness and regular interaction is required by the government agencies, so that they can work with the citizens through open dialogue and develop a safe space for communication.	need of open law-making portals to gain trust and increase transparency of our officials. The evaluation of the current system shows that there is ardent need for developing a single body that mandates the governance and data portals and facilitates the vision of the e-government The freedom on the internet is very low in Uzbekistan, in 2020 it was 27/100 by the ranking maintained by freedom house. Also, for making the internet accessible, developing a true participatory democracy and building engagement with the community the government needs to ease the sanctions on the internet and content

Additionally, studies substantiate evidence suggesting that quality content and increased interaction invigorates trust of the citizens in the governing agencies. The dialogue and interaction

humanize the government and its agents for the public. Also, the increase in response to citizen queries and issues helps in building trust and association with the government. Also, Bryer (2011) proposed that the limited governance bodies cannot hold the queries of the larger population that is why this condition is also overwhelming in Uzbekistan. Thus, along with quality and scheduled content, governance is also required for inspiring trust and satisfaction in the citizens. Furthermore, Chun, Shulman, Sandoval, and Hovy (2010) proposed positive association between good governance and citizen trust as well. Accordingly, scholars suggest that public trust is essential for success of the government. Bonsón et al. (2015) has proposed that good governance is also something effective that can be secured through the good governing practices of the state and government. Trust of the citizens is vital as it can be achieved by performing better governing practices across the country. The maximum level of public trust can be achieved by showing the loyal sympathies of the government to its citizens. The trust and interaction through social media of governmental agencies is required as the usage of social media was restricted previously in Uzbekistan. The present is working on improving the digitization of the country. Thus, the present government is working effectively towards the incorporation of social media in their governmental procedures and communication with the citizens. The medium was adopted for communication during the pandemic and twitter and Facebook are increasingly used for postings related to policy procedures.

Thus, in accordance with the framework analysis and opinion of social media experts there are primarily four different typologies of information that can be adopted on social media by the governments or their representatives; including information dissemination, online dialogue, agency presentation and input seeking. These ideas have been put forward by previous researchers as well, suggested that the governmental usage of social media stems from need for creation of online dialogue, information and agency dissemination, crisis communication and input seeking. The provision of information and the process that goes into the development of content for socials is detailed and the governmental agencies refer to the operations, events and policies for design of content. Social media has been increasingly used by governments and its agencies for putting across regulatory information and also directions for different procedures. Discusess that the second most observed content on social media is related to the public service announcements including the announcements regarding well-being of the public, health and safety of the public as well. Also, in the recent pandemic, the social media was excessively used by governments around the world for educating public about SOPs, vaccinations, social distancing and other requirements. Indicated that the second most highlighted and discussed content on social media in Uzbekistan is information seeking and dissemination of citizen based information. Moreover, the governmental agents and agencies set out polls and question answer sessions for interacting with the public and to know of their opinions and feedback. These activities suggest of online dialogue persistent on the social media platforms and contributes towards the development of an amicable relationship between the citizens and government. Studies indicate that the online dialogue is essential for the development of trust in the citizens and works as an effective image building tool as well. The information sharing between the governmental representatives and the citizens, the posts and online interaction through the comments, lives, stories, agency posts, results in increased dialogue between the two parties and works by decimating the perceived distance between the citizens and governments.

The governments adopt the technique of political positioning, expressing and taking a position on a political issue, which also enhances the level of interaction and responsiveness of the government towards the citizens on political issues (Ishii, Lyons, & Carr, 2019). Thus, all of these actions are

facilitating to the development of dialogue between governments, agencies and citizens which ultimately leads to the development of trust and invigorates responsiveness in the government pertaining to the issues of the citizens. Also, the developmental perspective of the governmental agencies and agents for postings on social media relates with the mission or agenda of the government. The primary essence of the content is information and education-oriented messages. Dekker et al. (2020) showed that social media has been successfully adopted despite some of the social, policy and strategic barriers in various public organizations and was integrated into the daily activities of several public service organizations (law enforcement) and other governmental bodies for dealing with emergency and crisis situations (FREW & Griswold, 2016).

This facet of the data is important for generalization of the results and explains how the respondents based on their profile will be responding to the constructs under evaluation. In accordance with Connelly (2013)., it is important to describe and evaluate the research participants i.e., the demographics and the profiling of the respondents is an essential part of reporting. Demographics have been realized as components or variables that are collected by the researchers to explain the nature of the sample used with the inferential statistics. The demographical data mainly responds to the sample and helps in explaining the facets of the people or subjects that have been drawn from the population, following a particular technique. The process of demographical profiling is among the key facets among the survey research and defines from whom to collect the data and in what way the overall survey response data needs to be broken down so that a meaningful group of respondents can be achieved. The information collected from the participants under the characterization of demographics, is essential for generalizing the results of the study. Moreover, these are independent variables because they cannot be manipulated through any other variable. In this research, data has been collected from the citizens of Uzbekistan that use social media. The objective of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the social media usage by the government of the country and the degree of trust and engagement it inspires within the populace and also the responsiveness of the government on part of any complaint or request adhered by the citizens on social media. For illustration of the demographical profile of the respondents, the frequency distribution method has been and the results can be seen in table 2.

Table 4: Profile

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	217	55.2
	Female	176	44.8
	Total	393	100.0
Age	Less Than 25 Year	124	31.6
	25 to 35 Years	160	40.7
	35 to 45 Years	94	23.9
	More Than 45 Years	15	3.8
	Total	393	100.0
Experience	Less than 2 Year	55	14.0
	2 to 5 Year	167	42.5

	5 to 8 Year	132	33.6
	More than 8 Year	39	9.9
	Total	393	100.0

It can be seen that the researcher has used 3 measures for defining the respondent profile. The study reports on the gender, age and experience of the respondents. There are a total of 393 respondents in the study and from these 217 i.e., 55.2 percent are male whereas 176 i.e., 44.8 percent are female respondents. The gender disparity shows that more men or male population took part in the study in comparison to the female population, as it was an online survey. The second characteristic is the age. The age variable has been divided into intervals of 10 years. The first interval is comprised of all respondents under 25 and last one comprises of those above 45. 124 respondents fall in the first range i.e., below the age of 25 years representing 31.6 percent of the sample, the second interval is from 25-35 years and includes 160 respondents representing 40.7 percent of the sample, 94 in the third range i.e., 35-45 years and is representative of 23.9 percent of the sample and 15 are in the last interval of more than 45 years i.e., 3.8 percent of the sample.

The age distribution shows that most of the respondents in the study are falling in the dimension of early twenties to middle age. The third and final characteristic of people included in the sample is their experience. The experience is defined in terms of the usage of the social media. The researcher inquired for the level of experience in terms of years, i.e., the amount of time or the number of years for which the citizens has been using the social media applications. There are 55 respondents, 14 %, that have below two years of experience, 167 respondents, 42.5%, which have experience between 2 to 5 years of experience, 132 respondents, 33.6%, which have below between 5 to 8 years of experience and 39, 9.9%, having over 8 years of social media usage experience.

The descriptive analysis is used to present an explanatory evaluation of the general features of the data like the summary statistics of the variables being studied (Fisher & Marshall, 2009). The studies that are based on large datasets, use the descriptive analysis to manage the data and study the essential details like the outliers, missing values, normality and response orientation of the data. Generally, the descriptive statistics are used for numerically describing and summarizing the basic features of the study.

Rearranging, reorganizing, and altering data to make it easier to understand and evaluate this same presented data are all examples of data reshaping. Constructive analysis refers to the process of describing, explaining, or summarizing data in such a way that it allows for the formation of patterns that satisfy all of the data's requirements. Both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis methods have significant differences. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the data, rather than draw conclusions from it.

There are three ways to describe the average, median, and mode of the data set's distribution's frequency, which is used to determine the most frequently occurring patterns. The mean, standard deviation, and frequency are some of the descriptive and inferential statistics used to characterize or summarize a sample or data set. Inferential statistics can help shed light on large datasets. The sample mean, variance, but also distribution of a variable can help us better understand the world and the things in it.

The statistics that are computed through the descriptive evaluation are used to inform the researcher of the main characteristics and these are essential to be evaluated for the application of the

SEM analysis. The presence of outliers affects the model fitness and increases the incidence of error values, thus it needs to be evaluated and the presence of missing values leads to faulty estimates. According to J. F. Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2011) the presence of missing data is considered to be a significant problem as the results and analysis can be affected due to its presence. The impact of missing values or data is more severe when the structural equation modelling is to be applied (Arbuckle, 2009), which is true in the present case. The normality is also a prerequisite for most of the regression-based studies and was a considerable factor in the present study as well.

Structural equation modeling, a powerful multivariate tool, is increasingly being used in scientific research to investigate and evaluate causal links involving multiple variables. SEMs, in contrast to previous methods of modeling, examine the impact of causality assumptions on the models under study, both directly and indirectly. Both route and confirmation factor analysis are used in structural equation modeling. People's attitudes and levels of contentment are a primary focus of the psychological assessment technique known as confirmatory factor analysis . Route analysis is often used to mediate the correlation between two variables, assuming that one variable impacts an outcome directly and indirectly through the other. To estimate composite variables, it is not possible to use factor analysis because it doesn't take into account any variation in error among the indicators Hypothesize a latent variable by considering why you want to do it. Model assessment uses quantitative indices to gauge the overall performance of the model's fit.

The conceptual model and fitness of the model were verified in the previous section and in this section the structural model and relationships have been evaluated. Structural equation modelling is a widely used method in the field of social sciences, mainly due to its many advantageous features. It is a multivariate technique of statistical modelling and analysis that is used to test the truth of the relationships. SEM is a combination of factor and multiple regression analysis (Kerlinger, 1966). A statistical technique that is used to “analyze the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables” is known as “multiple regression analysis”. Such analysis helps in assessing the “strength of the relationship between the variables”. These variables include: dependent and the independent variables as well as several “predictor variables”. However, the impact of “predictor variables” is eliminated statistically considering only the outcomes and the independent variables.

Many studies have showed a significant relationship between perceived transparency and individual perception of the government’s social media usage. According to Gelders (2005), the information provided by the government for the citizens by means of social media should be complete as well as trustworthy. This is also supported by other scholars. According to Jaeger and Bertot (2010), the information given to the citizens by the government is found to be more impactful if it is reliable. This shows the significant impact of perceived transparency. According to Rebolledo, Medina, and Rodríguez-Virgili (2016), the transparency of the methods also help the citizens in pointing out the flaws thus providing them a room to give suggestions. Thus, an accurate and impactful information provided by means of social media to the citizens help in encouraging them to participate in policy making decisions (S. S. Park, Rohani, & Bae, 2015). This also leads to a significant association between the social media usage by the government and the citizen engagement. The e-government is found to have an important impact on the participation of the citizens. According to I. Mergel (2013b), the government of a country uses social media for three important reasons which include: “to get citizens’ opinions regarding improvements in policies”, “to seek citizen cooperation in solving issues”, and “to keep citizens updated regarding government processes and decisions i.e. to enhance

transparency". This shows the significance of social media in engaging the citizens in the decision making processes of the government. The findings obtained from the study also showed that the social media has significant and positive associations with the content type. The quality information provided on the social media, is found to have a significant impact on the citizens. The social media helps the government in reaching the larger audience in a short period of time and more effectively. This provides the citizens an opportunity to access the information provided by the governments more easily (Porumbescu, 2017). This supports the democratic system of the country. Thus, the content provided by the government on the social media should be informative as well as accurate for the citizens so that they can be able to make their decisions accurately on the basis of the provided information. This leads to more effective outcomes (Rebolledo, Zamora Medina, and Rodríguez-Virgili, 2016).

Many studies have also contributed towards the associations between the social media usage by the government and perceived responsiveness. Such association is found to be significant by many scholars. The responsiveness of the government towards the citizens is highly considered especially in a democratic society. According to Powell Jr (2004), the government is needed to be responsive to the wants of the majority of the people. This helps in creating trust among the citizens. The satisfaction of the citizens is considered to be related to the responsiveness of the government (Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014; Torcal, 2014). Thus, the social media platform, if used properly can play an important role in perceived responsiveness of the government to the citizens. However, the results obtained from this study showed a weak relationship between the citizen trust and social media usage by government. However, many other research studies have contradicted to it.

According to Houston & Harding, 2013, the trust is considered to be an important factor for the smooth running of the system. Such trust helps in gaining the needed confidence by the citizens which encourage them to accept the policies, regulations as well as rules implemented by the government (Park et al., 2015). It has also been observed that an increase in no. of scandals as well as cases of corruption results in mistrust of the citizens towards the government and this results in lowering of economic growth of the country as well (Gracia & Arino, 2015). It has also been concluded that without the support of citizens, no reforms of the government could be applicable and this is only possible if the citizens have full faith in the government and thus, trust is found to play an important role in this regard. Thus, the government of Uzbekistan, is using the social media platform especially Twitter and Face book to provide quality information to its citizens with full transparency. However, the content provided by the government by social media means show the responsiveness of the government to its citizens. This helps in encouraging the citizens to take part in dialogue with the government through social media platforms to put forward their thoughts and suggestions which are respected by the government of Uzbekistan while making any reforms or policies. However, the chaos observed on the social media platforms has resulted in obtaining weak trust of the citizens in the government.

Many research findings have also helped contribute to the connections between the government's use of social media and the perception of responsiveness. ' Many academics believe that this connection is significant. Democracy places a high value on government responsiveness, especially when it comes to citizens. Having a responsive government is essential, says Powell Jr. (2004), because it allows citizens to voice their concerns and desires. As a result, citizens have a greater sense of confidence in the government. The government's responsiveness is thought to be associated with citizen satisfaction (Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014; Torcal, 2014). As a result, the

use of social media can play a significant role in the public's perception of how responsive the government is. A correlation between trust in the government and its use of social media was found to be weak in this study. Many other studies, on the other hand, have found the opposite. For the system to function properly, trust is critical. This kind of trust encourages citizens to accept the government's policies, regulations, and rules because they give them the confidence they need (Park et al., 2015). It's also been found that as the number of scandals and cases of corruption rises, citizens lose faith in the government, which has a negative impact on economic growth (Gracia & Arino, 2015). Government reform cannot be implemented without any of the endorsement of citizens, and this can only be done if the citizens have complete faith in the government, which is why trust is so important in this context. As a result, the Uzbek government uses social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook, to provide its citizens with high-quality information that is also completely open. Social media posts from government agencies show how responsive they are to their constituents. When the government is making whatever reforms or policies, it encourages citizens to participate in the dialogue via social networking sites to express their thoughts and ideas, which are taken into consideration by the government. As a result of the confusion on social media, citizens have lost faith in their government.

Discussion

Mainly, this research looks at how the use of social media platforms has affected the openness and participation of government agencies in Uzbekistan. Researchers opted for a mixed methodology, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques, to address the concerns raised by this line of inquiry. Among the quantitative goals of the research was a better understanding of how social media can be used to increase public trust in and participation with government agencies in Uzbekistan. The government's reaction toward its people was the focus of the second goal. The researchers chose to make the government's use of social media the independent variable and the trust in government, public participation with government via social media, and the perception of government responsiveness to citizens the dependent variables in order to achieve the study's quantitative aims. Perceived honesty and content type have also been considered as mediators in the study. The qualitative goals of the study include, first, an analysis of how the government of Uzbekistan categorizes the material it uses, and second, an examination of the policies and practices of the government in regard to social media. These two goals are connected to the investigation's qualitative component.

All throughout the world, governments have made it a top priority to facilitate more public engagement with the online community and dialogue. Citizens' active involvement in government's daily operations demonstrates their trust in the institution and, in turn, increases openness and interaction between the parties. The inclusion of citizens remains a top priority for governments as they seek to improve the morale and trust of their populations. For instance, a recent study by Goncalves looked into the function of municipal governments and their use of Facebook. The study found that digital administrators utilize a number of different social media platforms to help them create content that is both relevant and interesting. Results like this provide credence to the study's working hypothesis.

The operators' connection with residents via the social media pages fostered confidence and spurred them to interact more frequently with the governmental agents, according to a comparable study that analyzed the role of the Canadian immigration authorities. The Canadian government confirmed this to be true. Similar strategies have been used by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. She's a

Republican in the United States who uses social media like Twitter and Instagram to have conversations with her fans and spread her political views. By taking part in these many events, citizens' views on the positive potential of social media and its various applications can be shifted.

There is a wide variety of buyers and sellers in Uzbekistan's media market, making it reminiscent of a lively bazaar. It's no secret that journalistic freedom in Uzbekistan was severely restricted when Karimov was president. Bonsón et al. (2019; 2015) Those who dared to speak out against the established order were met with severe legal consequences. Being a journalist was not seen as a very noble profession, and neither was the salary.

A noticeable change has occurred during the previous three years. The amount of coverage provided by traditional media has increased significantly. In response to market demand, an increasing number of businesses are entering the television and internet media distribution industries. The media sector is benefiting from a rise in revenue. It has deteriorated to the point where it is now an overcrowded, noisy, scandalous convenience shop. Social media facilitates people's continued interaction with one another. Moreover, young people appreciate social networking sites as a way to keep in touch with their peers and project an image of coolness.

To begin, we'll talk about the section of the conversation that centers on the findings from the quantitative analysis performed to address and focus the study's quantitative elements. The study's first hypothesis states, "The influence of government usage of social media on citizen trust in government is significant." Prior research was reviewed in order to form this hypothesis for the current study. The research results support this idea, showing a favorable and statistically significant effect. These results are in line with those of a different study (Alryalat, Rana, Sahu, Dwivedi, & Tajvidi, 2017) that argues citizens will have more faith in their government if they see it actively participating in social media. This is due to the fact that people feel closer to their government while communicating with it via social media. The results here agree with those of the study. Multiple studies have shown that when governments are active on social media and interact with their constituents, it fosters more openness and trust on both sides (Bonsón et al., 2019; Bonsón et al., 2015). This has been proven to be true. It is also hypothesized that "the impact of government usage of social media on citizen involvement with government through social media is significant," and this will be investigated in the research. This research suggests that this idea is valid. Furthermore, it was discovered that the government's usage of social media has a favorable impact on citizen interaction with the government via social media. Previous studies (Bonsón et al., 2012) found similar associations between the government's usage of social media and increased citizen involvement with that same administration. The results line up with what has been found in the past.

One of the worst things that can happen to an adolescent is to go out of step with current fashion. It's no longer just the largest social networking sites that carry social media's weight; their impact has broadened considerably. In today's world, keeping up a strong profile on multiple social media sites is crucial. Talented journalists remain hard to come by. There was a lack of education for journalists in the past. The most talented journalists in the country all left the country for other nations since there was no place for them to learn and no one to follow in their footsteps. A lack of trained journalists prevents the market from expanding. In 2020, many universities will launch brand-new journalism programs, which will go a long way toward meeting the demand for qualified journalists. Media in Uzbekistan probes businesspeople, state businesses, and internal and foreign policy to the best of their ability and with the most courage they can muster because they have no other obstacles. Teens can use this to see beyond their immediate surroundings and learn about the world beyond their

community. As a result, on her special day, people all around the world wish their grandmother a happy birthday by sending her an electronic message.

Conclution

The study is mainly focusing on the impacts of social media on the transparency and citizen engagement of the government organizations in Uzbekistan, for the purpose of addressing this research problem, the study has chosen a mixed methodology including both quantitative and qualitative aspects and objectives. The objectives related with the quantitative part of the study included analysis of the citizen trust and engagement with the government organizations in Uzbekistan with the help of social media whereas, the second objective focused on the response of the government towards the citizens.

For the achievement of the quantitative objectives of the study, the study considers social media used by government as independent variable, citizen trust in government, citizen engagement with government through social media and perceived responsiveness of government to citizens as the dependent variables and inculcating the variables of perceived transparency and content type as mediators for the research. The total respondents include 393 participants and as far as the results for the quantitative analysis are concerned, the impacts have been found out with the help of structural equation modeling. Moreover, the analysis was also done with the application of the tests including descriptive statistics, KMO and Bartlett's test, rotated component matrix, confirmatory factor analysis and convergent and discriminant validity.

According to the results of the quantitative portion, it has been found out that the impact of social media used by the government is significant and positive on the citizen trust in the government, citizen engagement with the perception of the government through the social media and perceived responsiveness of the government to the citizens. As far as the mediation of perceived transparency is concerned, it has been found out that there is significant medication of the mediator perceived transparency in between the independent variable social media used by the government and the dependent variables citizen trust in government, citizen engagement with government through social media and the perceived responsiveness of government to the citizens.

Moreover, the mediation of perceived transparency is concerned, it has been found out that there is significant medication of the mediator content type in between the independent variable social media used by the government and the dependent variables citizen trust in government, citizen engagement with government through social media and the perceived responsiveness of government to the citizens. The objectives related with the qualitative portion of the study include the first objective that addresses the typology of information that is utilized by the government of Uzbekistan whereas, the second objective focuses on the strategies Uzbekistan government for the usage of the social media. As the interview-based approach is utilized for satisfying the qualitative objectives, so, the first question and the first theme identified in the study was of the content type published by the governmental social media handles.

As a result of which, it is found out that, the major typology of information that is shared by the government with the citizens on the social media platforms and handles include educational campaigns, informational campaigns, and information related with different policies, regulations and crisis management steps. The second question focused on the content planning strategy used by the governmental agencies, ministries and agents for the social media. As a result of which it has been found out through the responses of the social media experts that the objectives behind the strategies

include utilization and creation of social media platforms for the dissemination of important and relevant information.

The government uses the social media platforms for providing the citizens with relevant and important information and updates. Furthermore, it has been found out strategies also involve objectives to connect with the citizens and form is significant and positive network between the citizens and the government as well.

The third question focused on the strategies used by the governmental agents and agencies for planning and also the basic strategy that they have towards the social media. As a result of which it has been found out that the major planning strategies include engagement, representation and networking strategies. With the help of these strategies, the social media agents have the objective to push forward the information dissemination activity and majorly focus on the publishing of news and dissemination of official information with the help of press releases, public announcements and posts on the preferred channels.

The fourth question focused on the incorporation of the feedback received by the governmental agencies through the social media platforms. To which the social media experts responded that with the help of listening closely to the suggestions and complaints of the citizens, the feedback can be improved, so it is important that the government not only makes sure that feedback is taken from the citizens, but steps are taken as well in order to improve public relationships based on the feedback.

The fifth question focused on the incorporation of the feedback received by the governmental agencies through the social media platforms. In response to which, it has been observed that the social media experts are of the idea that the best possible way is to focus on the development of portals and cells, complaint registers and hotlines for creating a valuable network and connection in between the government and the citizens as well.

Furthermore, according to the social media agents, with the help of these platforms and portals, the government can make sure that only the constructive and most important feedback is considered, and then the government can align the relevant feedback with the strategies and goals of the government as well.

The sixth question focused on the future digital outlook for the country and also the tools and mechanisms that can promote access to and participation in social media technologies to all members of society. It has been found out that the government today is utilizing Facebook, Instagram and telegram for the purpose of networking with the citizens, whereas the most effective approach for the government has been found to be transparent and open towards the citizens. The social media agents propose that the government must be accountable, transparent and open towards the citizens, so that the citizens can be supportive and trusting towards the government as well.

The social media agents propose that if utilized positively and with transparency, social media platforms can significantly remove the barriers in between the government and the citizens that are there because of the time and distance. This is going to allow the government to connect with the citizens, strengthening and expanding the network and connection between the citizens and the government as well. This will also result in enhanced participation of citizens and democracy in Uzbekistan so, there is a significant requirement of transparent, open and vivid communication and information sharing between the government and the citizens.

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