Exploring Perspectives of Undergraduate Students on Contributions of Social-Media towards Their Enhanced Academic Growth

Ahmad Zada[1]*, Azmi Abdul Latiff [2], Safra Liyana Sukiman[3]

[1]Department of Department of Education, University of Malakand, Pakistan.

[2,3]Centre for Language Studies, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia Parit Raja, Batu Pahat, 86400, Malaysia.

*Corresponding Author: ikbalchitrali@gmail.com

Abstract: Social-media appears to be rapidly gaining popularity in this "technology era," particularly among university students. The purpose of the study was to study and analyze the impact of social media on the academic performance of undergraduate students and to give recommendations regarding the use of social media for the betterment of academic performance. The study was performed using the qualitative method. Data were collected from 14 undergraduate students from different departments through interviews using a purposive sampling technique. Seven research questions guided the study. The data were analyzed through tabulation of frequency and percentage and the thematic analysis-based research findings showed that using social media negatively affects the academic performance of undergraduate students. This study further revealed that using social media has positive effects on undergraduates' assignments and using social media has negative effects on the health and physical activities of the undergraduate students.

Keywords: Social Media, Academic Growth, Undergraduate Students, Health, Physical Activities

1. Introduction

We live in a technological world nowadays. In the last few decades, technology has dramatically revolutionized the globe. The term "communication" is highly trendy right now. Today, despite geographical distances, technology has brought us together. There are numerous various communication applications on the internet. In current history, social media has risen as one of the most crucial means of communication (Apeanti & Danso, 2014). Most individuals that are involved in any type of career use social media. The term "social media" refers to approaches to communication in

which users develop, share, and exchange ideas and concepts through online networks and forums. Individuals have the capability to share on social media, which increases interconnectivity and transparency (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Social media is a term that describes a vast network of websites and applications that enable users to engage, communicate, and swiftly share information with the public. Additionally, it allows users to share information such as images, events, ideas, and facts as well as to create, trade, and debate content that is already available online (Andone, Dron, & Pemberton, 2006). Through it, everyone is connected to one another As a subcategory of online discourse, social media has evolved, gathering a prodigious degree of content creation, sharing, bookmarking, and networking engagement. Social media, which is cheap, quick, and wide-reaching, is quickly altering contemporary discourse and establishing trends and agendas in a variety of areas, including politics, the environment, technology, and the entertainment world (Calestine et al., 2017).

People now have easier access to social networks through mobile applications because of the rapid proliferation of smartphones. While many individuals use social media platforms to connect and stay in touch with their colleagues, others utilize them to engage with diverse communities. Additionally, companies use social media platforms as a tool for product and brand marketing. The way people live and conduct business has been influenced by this trend and altered as a result. In conclusion, social media use has had a variety of effects on society. Due to the advancement of social media over the past ten years, young people are now able to exchange ideas, emotions, personal information, images, and videos at a mind-boggling rate. Social networking websites are now used by 73% of American teenagers (Apeanti & Danso, 2014).

Students frequently utilize social media for a variety of purposes, including study and pleasure, as social media makes it simple and quick to get any information you need in a matter of seconds. Since social media is now approved by higher education institutions, it serves as a forum for students to interact with their professors, fellow students, and other higher authorities. Social media websites have grown in popularity over the past few years, giving young people new opportunities for interpersonal interaction and global communication. Between 2004 and 2006, social networking saw a rise in popularity because of the creation of Facebook and Myspace. For instance, Facebook, which has over 500 million users and is still expanding, is used by 85% of college students (Apple, 2012).

The use of social media is rapidly rising in the last few years. It is not only being used by working people but also there is a heavy increase in the use of social media by the students or education society. With such broad acceptance, there is no surprise that social media have affected the way people live and socialize (Arshad, Zaidi & Mahmood, 2015). Social Networking Site such as Facebook is one of the latest examples of communication technologies that has been widely adopted by students and, subsequently. It has the potential to become a valuable resource to support their educational communications and collaborations with faculty. Social media are mostly used by students to communicate and exchange ideas with lecturers specifically in Western contexts (Asemah & Edegoh, 2012). Researchers claim that people spend more time communicating with their friends and sharing information on social media platforms. They develop a reliance on reviewing their own status after a few minutes throughout the day. Social media has become a global phenomenon. According to statistics from 2011, there were 20,431,000 regular Internet users in the world (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Incorporating social media into academic courses creates challenges even if it can improve student learning through student interactions. Teachers may unintentionally fail to provide the skills or encouragement required to facilitate student usage and learning if they assume that students are familiar with and comfortable using specific types of social media (Calestine et al., 2017). Scholars have discovered that even when social media is used for educational purposes, students may use the technology in ways that are contradictory to the course instructor's aims. For instance, due to social

media's primary purpose as a tool for social networking, debates that are off-topic or not academic constantly take place there (Deng & Tavares, 2013).

Students have been found to use social media extensively. For instance, some researchers believe that prior studies have found that more than 90% of tertiary education students use social networks. Additionally, research shows that as part of their daily routine, students spend approximately thirty (30) minutes each day on social networking sites (SNSs). This shows the extent to which students are using these websites, which could have both beneficial and negative consequences on students' academic achievement (Drury, 2008). Teenagers today live in a technologically advanced world that moves quickly and where several forms of communication are happening at once. As an illustration, he or she might be simultaneously emailing someone else, talking on the phone, sending instant messages to a buddy, and using a social networking site. While there can be some benefits to this, such as the teen learning how to multitask and type more quickly, there might also be a breakdown in much of that communication (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007).

Individual placement in academic institutions and work are significantly influenced by academic accomplishment or quality. As a result, many people are less interested in strategies that can improve academic performance. A lot of research on the conditions for academic excellence's promotion has been stimulated by the attention on it that is placed on it all over the world. Research has studied how social networking sites affect students' study habits and other behaviours. The researcher highlights the value of social media for interpersonal communication as well as its favorable and unfavorable effects on education. The findings indicate a conflict between priorities for education and the usage of mobile technologies. According to the research, both boys and girls used social media for 1.5 hours each day on average. Nowadays, most kids and students have Facebook profiles. The explanation for why many of them struggle in school might not be implausible. While many people may be eager to point the finger at bad teachers, if they have not heard about the Facebook craze, they may have to think even harder (Englander, Terregrosa & Wang, 2010).

Examining the effects of social media on university students' academic performance in Abuja. An undergraduate project presented to Caritas University's Department of mass communication management and social sciences. The study's goal was to examine how social media usage affects students' academic performance (students from the University of Abuja). The survey research approach was employed to achieve this. With the help of purposive sampling and simple random sample techniques, subjects were selected from the University of Abuja. The study was led by four research questions. The results of the study indicated that many students at the University of Abuja have access to the Internet. The researcher suggested that websites be made for educational purposes as a result. This is done to strike a balance between students' social-networking and academic activities to prevent declines in their academic performance (Farooq et al., 2011).

Most college students today use a variety of technological tools, including laptops, smartphones, desktop computers, and tablets. This indicates that kids frequently use social media. In recent years, social media platforms have had a significant impact on pupils' academic achievement. Students are impacted by social media in both positive and negative ways. Social media, on the one hand, aids students in learning and research by reducing communication time, exchanging ideas and resources, and other things (Pasek & Hargittai, 2009). Overusing social media has a negative impact on academic performance; it impairs cognition, diverts attention, and may result in psychological issues like despair and anxiety. Given social media's popularity and dominance among university students, stakeholders in the education sector around the world have been extremely worried about its potential effects on students' academic performance. This is due to research showing that social media can have both advantageous and detrimental effects on kids (Pehlivan, 2009).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

According to researchers, using technology like the Internet can have a beneficial or negative impact on students' academic achievement. Social media use among students has increased since last year (Piccoli, Ahmad & Ives, 2001). It serves as a platform for developing relationships with people outside of academic institutions as well. Due to its rising popularity, educators are wondering if students' academic performance will not be affected by how much time they spend on social media. In this study, the researcher attempts to find out the impacts of using social media on the academic performance of undergraduates, the purpose of undergraduates using social media, the relationship between time spent on social media and academic performance, impacts of using social media on submission of assignment, impacts of using social media on health, impacts of using social media on co-curricular and physical activities.

1.2 Research Objectives

The main of this study was to find out the effects of using social media on the academic performance of undergraduate students at the university.

2. Methods

The research design was conducted based on a qualitative case study. The qualitative research aims to explain the details to comprehend concepts, ideas, or experiences. It helps readers reach in-depth insights into an issue or suggest new ideas for further research.

2.1 Participants

The data were collected from 14 students from different departments at the University of Malakand, Pakistan. Only one student was selected from each department including the Department of Education, Department of Software Engineering, Department of English, Department of political science, Department of Economics, Department of Law, Department of Zoology, Department of Biotechnology, Department of Pharmacy, Department of Sociology, Department of BBA, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Department of Islamic studies and Department of chemistry at University of Malakand. In this study, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their surveys. This technique is followed as the researcher needed more reliable and comprehensive data from the target population.

2.2 Instrumentation

A semi-structured interview protocol was used for data collection. Individual interviews were designed to find out deeper information as well as students' experience. Each one of the questions should have a valid reason to be included that they should help in finding answers to the research question. Semi-structured interviews are non-standardized and are frequently used in qualitative research. The interviewer does not do the research to test a specific hypothesis (assumptions) or theories but rather to achieve the questions or objectives of the study (David & Sutton, 2004). Interviews are primarily done in qualitative research and occur when researchers ask one or more participants and record their answers.

2.2.1 Interview Questions

The interview contains both types of questions closed-ended as well as open-ended questions as mentioned above.

   a. Does using social media affect your academic performance positively or negatively? And how?
   b. How much time do you spend on social media and how much on reading books? And how does the time you spend on social media affect your Grade Point Average (GPA)?

    c.   Is using social media have any effects on your assignment? And how?

    d.   Is using social media have any effects on your health? And how?

    e.   Is using social media have any effects on your co-curricular and physical activities? And how?

    f.   What recommendation do you give to the students regarding the use of social media for their betterment of academic performance?

2.3 Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed by transcribing the interview data from the data sheets, thorough reading for the identification of codes, and development of themes for exploration and interpretation. Thematic analysis is a flexible method that allows the researcher to focus on the data in numerous different ways. With thematic analysis, researchers can legitimately focus on analyzing meaning across the entire dataset or examine one aspect of a phenomenon in depth. We can report the obvious or semantic meanings in the data, or you can interrogate the latent meanings, the assumptions and ideas that lie behind what is explicitly stated.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Research Question 1: Does using social media affect your academic performance positively or negatively? And how?

Most of the respondents during the interview answered that using social media affects their academic performance negatively. One of the respondents from the political science department mentioned:

"Students who spend more time on social media sites are likely to demonstrate poor academic performance. This is because they spend time chatting online and making friends on social media sites instead of reading books."

Another respondent from Software Engineering Department mentioned that:

"Using social media is like one-sided traffic which subdues our mental potentials, which reduces our mental efficiency whether it's learning, thinking, will power or power of decision. Watching and reading through social media has long-lasting effects on our consciousness which lead to lack of focus or concentration and interest."

Another respondent from English Department mentioned:

"These platforms are addictive and as a student, we get addicted to it and waste our time."

A respondent from Education Department mentioned that:

"When I am going to search something regarding my academic (topic, lecture, presentation, etc) there must accruing of irrelevant materials compelling by dragging towards that to search and see. Once enter toward that site leaving is difficult and thus whole time is wasted."

On the basis of data analysis, the researcher concluded that social media has negative effects on undergraduate students' academic performance. Most undergraduate students waste their time chatting and watching entertaining content.

3.1.2 Research Question 2: For what purpose do you use social media?

The majority of the respondents during the interview answered that they use social media for Non-academic purposes. One of the respondents from the Sociology Department mentioned:

"I use it for watching news and some entertainment."

Another respondent from Pharmacy Department mentioned:

"I use social media for news, for entertainment and to connect with my friend. Furthermore, I am a freelancer, so social media provided me with the best customer."

One another respondent from Economics Department mentioned that:

"I use it for music and chatting."

Another respondent from Biotechnology Department mentioned that:

"Mostly I use social media to get aware of the world sometimes I also use it for online shopping."

On the basis of the data analysis, the researcher concluded that most undergraduate students used it for non-academic purposes such as watching news, viewing movies, listening to music, and chatting.

3.1.3 Research Question 3: How much time do you spend on social media and how much on reading books? And how the time you spend on social media affects your Grade point average (GPA)?

Most of the respondents during the interviews answered that time spend on social media affects their GPA negatively. One of the respondents from the Political Science Department mentioned:

"Using social media made me reluctant and hesitant to read, that's why it has profound effects on my GPA."

Another respondent from Zoology Department:

"It affects our GPA in such a way that on normal days of classes, we spend time using social media and do not cover the lectures (course) and the whole work becomes bundled during exam days. On exam days the uncovered topics and due to incomplete study, the papers are not properly attempted and thus it affects our GPA."

One another respondent from Journalism and Mass Communication Department mentioned that:

"The time spent on social media affects my grade point because when I use it for the purpose of entertainment."

On the basis of data analysis, the researcher concluded that undergraduate students spend daily 5.4 hours on social media and 2.2 hours reading books and the time spent on social media has negative effects on their GPA because most undergraduate students waste so much time using social media instead of studying.

3.1.4 Research Question 4: Does using social media have any effect on your assignment? And how?

The majority of the respondents answered during the interview that using social media has positive effects on their assignments. One of the respondents from the Computer Science Department mentioned:

"When the teachers assign some tasks to us, we can get help from social media to complete them. So due to social media, we can complete our assignment on time."

Another respondent from the Software Engineering Department said that:

"Through social media (e-mail, WhatsApp, etc) we can send or receive our assignment easily."

One another respondent from English Department said that:

"Due to social media, we do quality work, we manage assignments differently, and can ask the question from different angles."

Some other respondents said that social media helps us in submission, writing, and content collecting. Thus, in this case, it helps me more and positively. So, on the basis of data analysis, the researcher concluded that using social media has positive effects on the assignment of undergraduate students.

3.1.5 Research Question 5: Is using social media have any effects on your health? And how?

The majority of the respondents answered that using social media has negative effects on health. One respondent from the Education Department answered:

"It has the worst effect on our health. When we use it for a long time daily, our eyes sight will become affected. Using mobile phones or any other tool emits some rays which are harmful to our health. It also has an impact on our sleep. We use social media late at night so our sleep will be disturbed due to it."

Another respondent from Sociology Department said that:

"Social media use is negatively associated with mental health and contributes to increased risk of depression and anxiety symptoms."

One another respondent from Zoology Department said:

"It has bad effects on health like headaches and created sight problems for me."

Some other respondents said that "It very badly affects my health. Overuse often causes anxiety, headache, and tension and I feel bored all the time after using it. Due to the prolonged use, I have eye problems with headaches and improper sleep accompanied by tiredness." So, on the basis of data analysis, the researcher concluded that using social media has negative effects on undergraduate students' health. It may cause eyesight problems, headaches, depression, and sleep problems.

3.1.6 Research Question 6: Does using social media have any effects on your physical activities? And how?

Based on the interviews, the majority of the respondents said that using social media has negative effects on their physical activities. One of the respondents from the Computer Science Department said:

"Nowadays, people have made social media an entertaining source and leave physical activities which is not good for our health too."

Another respondent from Economics Department mentioned that:

"Due to social media, we cannot walk properly, we cannot take part in games and other physical activities so, our health is affected."

Some other respondents said that "…due to social media, I cannot go out with friends and cannot do exercise. It heavily affects my physical activities. It limits my physical activities. So, on the basis of data analysis, the researcher concluded that using social media has negative effects on the physical activities of undergraduate students because students spend more of their time using social media and don't take part in any games and forget physical activities.

3.2 Discussion

The aim of this research question was to find out the positive or negative effect of using social media on academic performance of undergraduate students. From the findings above, it is clear that social media has negative effects on undergraduate students' academic performance. The findings here are in line with the findings. According to Farooq et al., (2011), students' use of social media sites revealed a negative effect of the use of social media sites on students' academic performance. From the

findings above, most undergraduate students were found to use social media for Non-academic purposes. These findings received the support of Emeka and Nyeche (2016) who revealed that students use social networks mainly for making friends and chatting. The result showed that only 26 percent of the students (respondents) indicated that they use social media for academic purposes. From the above findings, it is clear that undergraduate students spend daily 5.4 hours on social media and 2.2 hours on reading books and the time spent on social media has negative effects on GPA. These findings received the support of Grant (2005). This study further indicated that students are spending too much time on social networking sites to the detriment of other necessary things such as their studies. They explained that Youths' use of these social networking sites even points towards obsession. The youths have made social media their top priority and continued to need more usage to feel satisfied.

From the above findings, it is clear that using social media has negative effects on the health of undergraduate students. This finding received support from Jha et al., (2016) who surveyed 450 students where almost 70 percent of the users said that Facebook had a negative impact on their studies. Burning eyes, disturbed sleep, and headaches were widely seen to be a problem in this study from excessive social media use. There were both positive and negative impacts on students' academics, social life, and health. From the above findings, it is clear that using social media has negative effects on physical activities of undergraduate students. This finding received the support of other researchers (Pasek & Hargittai, 2009) that revealed that numerous scientists have emphasized in the studies that the most crucial factor that prevents young people from physical activity participation was digitalization.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that social media has negatively affected the academic performance of undergraduate students. Mostly, undergraduate students use social media for non-academic purposes. The average time undergraduate students spend daily on social media and reading books are 5.4 hour and 2.2 hours respectively, and the time spend on social media negatively affect their grade point average GPA. Furthermore, this study revealed that using social media has positive effects on undergraduate assignments but using social media has negative effects on the health and physical activities of undergraduate students.

It is suggested that students should use social media mainly for academic purposes by using social media with purpose and results-oriented purpose. Students should get help from social media while doing their research, project, or assignment. Social media is a great platform for a student and students should get benefits from it they can join different learning groups/online classes which are easily available on social media and they should not involve in doing such activities on social media which can badly affect their academic achievements. Students should do their self-assessment about what they gained and what they lost. This will give them some motivation to avoid excessive use of social media. Students should keep everything on a priority basis. Social media should only be used for refreshment or obtaining some information but for a limited time to avoid its effects on health and grades. Students should follow the pages of highly educated and talented experts concerning their own field. Students should make a timetable to use social media. Students should spend less time on social media for the purpose of entertainment. Students should not disturb their sleeping time because when sleep is disturbed, their health will also be affected. Students should not waste time on social media. Students should install or activate the "Digital Will Being " application on their mobile. It will help them more. Students should be aware of the importance of time. Students should do exercise or their physical activities for the sake of their good health.

5. Implication of Study

The internet now serves as an innovative platform for students to communicate via social media due to emerging trends in technology. Students build and maintain ties with professors and friends through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram. A person can submit

photos to social media, post what they are doing and any academic activities, and send private or public messages to anybody they choose. Social media appears to be rapidly gaining popularity in this "technology era," particularly among university students. Students were seen spending a similar amount of time on social media. Social media use can be addictive for certain users. The importance of the findings of this study's significance lies in its ability to show undergraduates how social media might have an impact on their academic performances. Furthermore, the findings will encourage students to use social media as productive communication tools and instructional media to advance their knowledge and abilities. The findings of this study will be helpful to educators, policymakers, researchers, teachers, and students as well.

Acknowledgement

References

Ahmed, I. & Qazi, T. (2011). A look out for academic impacts of social networking sites (SNSs): A student based perspective. *African Journal of Business Management, 5*(12), 5022-5031.

Andone, D., Dron, J. & Pemberton, L. (2006). A dual device scenario for digital students dimple. IADIS International Conference on Cognition and Exploratory Learning in Digital Age (CELDA 2006), 201-207.

Apeanti, W.O. & Danso, E.D. (2014). Students' use of social media in higher education in Ghana. *Innovative J., 3*(1), 3-9

Appel, M. (2012). Are heavy users of computer games and social media more computer literate? *Computers & Education, 59,* 1339-1349. DOI:10.1016/j.compedu.2012.06.004

Arshad, M., Zaidi, S. M. I. H., & Mahmood, K. (2015). Self-esteem & academic performance among university students. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6*(1), 156-162.

Asemah, E.S and Edegoh, L.O.N. (2012). Social media and insecurity in Nigeria: a critical appraisal. 15th National Conference of African Council for Communication Education, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria.

Boyd, D. M & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history and scholarships. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13*(1), 210-230. DOI:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x.

Calestine, J., Bopp, M., Bopp, C. M., & Papalia, Z. (2017). College student work habits are related to physical activity and fitness. *International Journal of Exercise Science, 10*(7), 1009.

Deng, L & Tavares, N. (2013). From Moodle to Facebook: Exploring students' motivation and experiences in online communities. *Computer Education, 68*, 167-176.

Drury, G. (2008). Opinion piece: Social media: Should marketers engage and how can it be done effectively. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice, 9*, 274-277.

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook "friends:" Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 12*(4), 1143-1168.

Emeka, U. J., & Nyeche, O. S. (2016). Impact of internet usage on the academic performance of undergraduates students: A case study of the University of Abuja, Nigeria. International *Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research, 7(10),* 1018-1029.

Englander, F., Terregrosa, R. & Wang, Z. (2010). Internet use among college student: Tool or Toy? *Educational Review, 62*(1), 85-96.

Farooq, A.I.T., Chaudhry, M., Shafiq, M. & Berhanu, G. (2011). Factors affecting students' quality of academic performance: A case study of secondary school level. *Journal of Quality and Technology Management, 7*, 1-14.

Grant, I. (2005). Young; peoples' relationship with online marketing practices: An intrusion too far? *Journal of Marketing Management, 21*(5/6), 607-623.

Pasek, J. & Hargittai, E. (2009). Facebook and academic performance: Reconciling a media sensation with data. *First Monday, 14*(4-5), 1-25.

Pehlivan, Z. (2009). The expectations of the families from their children who are participating sports, behavioral changes that are observed in children and obstacles to participation to sports. *Spormetre Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi, 7*(2), 69-76.

Piccoli, G., Ahmad, R. & Ives, B. (2001). Web-based virtual learning environments: Research framework and a preliminary assessment of effectiveness in basic IT skill training. *MIS Quarterly, 25*(4), 401-426.