Examining the Undergraduate Library Science Students' Usage of Social Media Tools and its Impact on their Academics: A Case Study at Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar, Pakistan

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Abstract

Purpose: The excessive use of Social Media platform has negatively impacted the undergraduate students, academic activities but also has a bad impact on their social activities as well. The present study investigates the Social Media habits of undergraduate Library and Information Science students and their impacts on their academic performances. Methodology: The study adopted a qualitative research approach using focus group discussions and interviews with informants through appropriate questionnaires. One focus group discussion was conducted with 15 selected students from the Library and Information Science (LIS) department at Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology, located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Additionally, a total of 4 teachers were also interviewed as key informants. The results have been analyzed with appropriate statistical test such as mean, frequency and percent evaluation. Findings: The findings revealed concerning trends among the undergrad students of LIS at SUIT. The average student spent 3-4 hours on daily basis on Social Media, with WhatsApp and Facebook being the most used platforms. Similarly, the majority (80%) of the students felt that social media negatively impacted their academic performance, citing distractions and reduced study time. Additionally, 60% of students reported decreased face to face communication with peers, showing a decline in social interactions. Teachers echoed these concerns, with 75% highlighting that social media significantly affects students' ability to focus in class. The implication of the study may improve the positive use of social media among students at undergraduate level.

Keywords: Social media, undergraduate students, impact on academic performance and Pakistan, LIS,

Background of the Study

In recent years, social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube have profoundly transformed how university students engage with information, communication and learn particularly in the library and information science (LIS) discipline. In Pakistan where mobile and internet access continuous to expand, these platforms offer rich opportunities for academic collaboration information sharing and enhanced scholarly.

Syed Abdul Siraj, Zafar Ali (2023) expressed that social media is a versatile asynchronous communication platform that facilitates the global sharing and informal discussions, it can be learned to bustling party, drawing people in to share, interact learn and enjoy. Hassan Kazim Juneojo, Nazar Hussain, Ali Raza Lashari (2022) highlighted that according to the definition of social media, it is a set internet based apps the expand on the conceptual and technological underpinnings of Web 2.0 and allow the production and sharing of user generated content. Tine et al. (2023-2024) were of the opinion that it is possible that students extensive use of social media is contributing to their struggles in academies and their mental health and academic performances, there is not enough research on the subject. Our research objective aims to explore how entertainment and education aspect of social media, affect sleep, anxiety, depression and academic performance in college student, were seek to understand the complex relationship between social media use, mental health and academic achievement offering valuable insights in to these dynamics. Zulfiqar et al. (2024) said that in this modern world, young adults, especially students are using social media for the purpose of education, entertainment and interaction with each other's, due to its easy availability they can become easily addicted which can result in poor mental health. Muhammad Arsalan, Ashfaq Sabir (2023) said that the rise of social media has had a profound impact on concerns among educators, parents and mental health experts. While these platforms offer connectivity and information, the exposure to idealize images and social pressure has raised worries about their influence on students wellbeing. It indicates that excessive social media use can lead to heightened anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem among students. The act of comparing one's life to carefully constructed online personas can breed unrealistic expectations and feeling of inadequacy. Additionally, cyberbullying, digital harassment, and the fear of missing out can compound stress and emotional distress. On a positive note, social media also serves as a vehicle for awareness, support and community building, allowing students to express themselves, seek guidance, and connect with like mental individuals. Furthermore, efforts promoting digital wellbeing and mindfulness are emerging to counter the negative efforts of social media on mental health.

Objectives of the Research

1. To investigate the social media usage patterns of undergraduate LIS students at SUIT, including frequency, duration, and primary purposes.
2. To examine the impact of social media usage on the academic performance of undergraduate LIS students at SUIT.
3. To explore the perceptions of LIS students and faculty members regarding the benefits and drawbacks of social media usage for academic purposes.
4. To assess the potential of social media as a tool for academic resource sharing and collaboration among students and faculty members.
5. To identify differences in social media usage patterns and academic performance based on gender, age, and year of study.

Methodology

The study adopted qualitative research methods to investigate the impact of Social Media

among undergraduate level students in Pakistan. Focus group discussion (FGD) and Key Information's Interview (KII) are two main strategies used for collecting the required data. These methods can be considered ideally suitable to investigate behavioral changes and attitudes of students. Towards exposure to social media tools like Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp previously Whiting & William (2013) applied qualitative research techniques to find out the significance and consequences of social media from consumer's perspectives. Students group were selected for focus group discussions, and the university teachers were also contacted for Key Informant's Interviews.

Data Collection and Analysis

The necessary data from this study have been collected from Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar Pakistan. The study organized one Focus Group Discussion (FGD) at Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology (SUIT) was comprised of 15 conveniently chosen participants who were performing their undergraduate studies in Library Information Science disciplines among 15 undergraduate students 4 key informants (FGD) items were organized in such a way that they were able to explore the discussant's perceptions and uses of social media. An interview schedule was developed and information was collected from selected informants. Before the effective discussion on the topic, the purpose and intention of the study were explained to the participants clearly and their verbal consent was also taken accordingly. Both FGD and KII were conducted at the end of July 2025. The data was statistically analyzed for drawing conclusions.

Results and Discussion

Participants Ratio in FGD and KII Studies

Table 1 showed that a total of 15 participants took part in Focus Group Discussion whereas, 4 teachers were part of Key Informants group. Two focus group were made of the fifteen graduate students, selected in a predetermined way. The demographics information of FGD participants has been presented in table 2. Majority of the FGD participants were male students (53.33%) and belonged to the age category of 17-19 (60%). The respondents were homogeneously distributed within the focus group in the selected university. The specific items to be discussed in FGD were chosen before and presented to the participants chronologically to obtain their opinions which have been presented in the following subsections:

Table 1:   *Participants' Details*

Data Collection Tools	University	Participants Frequency
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Undergraduate students of LIS, at SUIT	15
Key Informants (KII)	Teachers at DLIS, SUIT	4

Table 2:   *Back Ground Information of FGD Participants*

Variables	Participant Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	8	53.33%
	Female	7	46.67%
Age	17-19 Years	9	60%
	20-24 Years	5	33.33%
	25 Years Above	1	3.67%

Frequency of Using Social Media

The results in table 3, revealed that almost 53.33% of the participants were in favor of using face book, 20% of them preferred to use YouTube and 26.67% showed that the WhatsApp as the most frequently used Social Media network. The results of this study were found to be similar to the data reported previously in literature where Facebook and YouTube were identified as the top social media which were being by students for maintaining their virtual communication.

Table 3:   *Frequency and Social Media by FGD Participants*

Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	8	53.33%
You Tube	3	20%
WhatsApp	4	26.67%

Purposes of Using Social Media Network

The participants were asked to provide the responses regarding the purpose of using social Media networks. The accumulated responses obtained revealed that students have been using different social media networks mostly either to maintain connectively with their friends or for personal entertainment. They have also been using social media networks due to their availability and easy access. Some of the participants also stated the special offers by mobile phone companies. Sometimes lure them to use and spend more time on social media. however, a significant number of participants stated that they use social media to get updates on academic information and share and transfer the learning materials associated with different courses they took in their postgraduate studies. Previous literature studies (vaterlaus and Tulane, 2015; Fined, 2016) showed that students could make relationship, establish communication and enjoy entertainment content by using different social media. However, we observed the students of private universities in Pakistan were mostly using social media platforms to chat with others.

Table 4:   *Purpose of using Social Media Networks*

Purposes of using Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
Communication	4	26.67%
Information Update	2	13.33%
File Transfer	1	6.67%
Easy Access	1	6.67%
Chatting	1	6.67%
Connect with Friends	2	13.33%
Entertainment	2	13.33%
Job Search	2	13.33%

Suitable Time to Access Social Media

The participants were requested to mention the suitable period during which they feel easy and comfortable accessing social media networks as presented in table 5. The results showed that a good percentage 33.33% of participants responded that they use social media during the break while staying on the university campus and some students 20% also disclosed that they use social media even during the class times. These results where more or less comparable to

the data reported previously by Homaid (2022) which pointed out that students could conveniently use social media due to easy accessibility and consider them as suitable ways to connect with others when students stay on the university campus for their class activities and other work, they get very easy access to various social media without any cost which might have influenced them to be involved in social media even during the class period.

Table 5:   *Choices Of Convenient Time To Use Social Media By The Participants*

Convenient Time for Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
During Break	5	33.33%
During Class Hours	3	20%
From Evening to Midnight	7	46.67%

Whether Accessing Social Media Effects Study Time

Table 6 highlights the information regarding use of the social medial effects on study time and academic performances. Most of the FGD participants 60% agreed that their daily study times were considerably affected due to their addiction to various social media. They disclosed that every fifteen minutes they feel a strong intention to observe their friend's posts, news or share items viable on social media platform. However, 40% showed disagreement with it. These findings are strongly supported by the results of previous studies (Samaha and Hawi, 2016) which identified that social media could engage students in non-educational activities for excessive time which might directly hamper their study time.

Table 6: Effect of social media usage on daily study times of FGD Participant

Effect of Social Media Usage on the Assignments or Homework Submission

Effects of Social Media Use on Daily Study Time of Students	Frequency	Percentage
Due to addiction, accessing social media effects daily study Time	9	60%
Do not effect study time	6	40%

The Students were also asked whether the submission of their assignments and homework have been affected due to spending out much of their time on social media. It was found that only 33.33% of FGD participants were able to submit their assignments and home work on time while they were being involved in social media activities regularly. Table7, showed that 40 of students responded that they were not able to turn in their academic work within the deadlines and they had to delay submitting their respective works on academic courses as they were very busy with social media and other works. The results were highly comparable to the previous studies which explained that the excessive use of social media affect the academic performance of students (Malik et al 2020).

Table 7:   *Effects Of Social Media On Assignments Or Home-Work Submission*

Effects of Social Media on academic activities	Frequency	Percentage
Timely Submission of Assignments	5	33.33%
Delay Submission of Assignment / home work	4	26.67%
Sometimes delayed submission of assignment/Home work	6	40%

Key Informants Interview (KII)

The Key Informants Interview (KII) conducted to know the views of faculty members

regarding the effects of social media usages activities on students' behaviors and learning outcomes. The information obtained after the interviews has been summarized in Table 8.

Use of Social Media and Students' Academic Performance

The results of this analysis of the teacher's observation on student's social media usage and corresponding consequences have been displayed in table 8. Almost 25% of teachers provided their opinions which explained that social media usage could decrease the concentration of students in their studies and they are busy using various social media during the class break. Other faculty participants 18.75% argued that social media usage could kill student valuable study. Time and leisure period and force them to keep away from physical activities. These finding were observed to be more or less similar to the result of some previous studies which demonstrated that social media could engage students in different entertainment activities and thus waste their valuable time during the study period (Abdulahi et al 2014' vateralous and Tulane, 2015).

Table 8: *General Observations Of Faculties Regarding Social Media Use Of Students*

Faculty Response Statement	Frequency	Parentage
Away from regular academic activity due to spending too much time on social media.	4	25%
It decreases the concentration on regular studies	2	12.5%
Students seem to be busy with social media during the class break.	3	18.75%
Kill student's valuable time on their academic life	3	18.75%
Hamper's Study time, Leisure time and Physical Activities	4	25%

The Positive Effects of Social Media Usage on Students as Observed by Teachers

Some positive perceptions have also been found from faculty responses after the evaluation of student's academic performances which have been depicted in table 9, most of the faculties (75%) who were involved in this study agreed that students could get appropriate information on learning materials and other academic activities from social media and it is an easy platform of communication among students for group studies (75%) students for group studies respondents agreed that face book messenger and WhatsApp could help student in the formation of appropriate study groups and good opportunities to exchange their views and ideas in learning course materials together (Table 9). Similar observations were realized from the previous literature studies (Tur and Marin 2015; Handerson et al., 2016) which illustrated that social media could work as a good platform for effective communication and provide opportunities to build up suitable study groups among students from different disciplines and background.

Table 9: *Teachers Opinions On The Positive Effect Of Social Media Usage By Students*

Positive Effects of Social Media on Students	Frequency	Percentage
The quest of enhance knowledge of academic affairs	3	75%
The gat good learning information	1	25%
The easy communication among students for group Students	2	50%
To share notes and academic documentsthrough social media	1	25%

The messenger and WhatsApp help students in group formation and learning Together	3	75%

The Social Media Effects on the Classroom Activities

The effects of social media use on student's classroom activities have been summarized in table 10. The results showed that social media platforms could be a very supporting tool for students to perform their different academic activities. It has been observed that students could share class announcement (100%) and class schedules (50%), and transmit classwork and other academic information to their peers (100%) by using social media network. The results by balcikanli (2015) pointed out that students could share academic information and class activities through social media.

Table 10:   *Social Media Supports Classroom Activities*

Social Media Support	Frequency	Percentage
Transferring of Information to one another	4	100%
Sharing Announcement	4	100%
Sharing Class Schedule	2	50%
Solving Problem in Academic Work	3	75%

Social Media Usage and Academic Resources Sharing

The Teachers were requested to provide their opinions with five statements arranged in multiple. Choice options, on whether social media networks could be utilized for teaching and academic knowledge sharing.

Ninety percent of respondents expressed that social media helped them to share class lecturer, PowerPoint presentations, and word documents with their students, and eighty percent of them considered social media as an effective platform for sharing academic resources (Table 11). However, seventy percent of faculty preferred to use email for sharing academic materials with students. These findings are well supported by the out comer for several previous studies (Sobaih et al., 2016; Soldner, 2023) which also observed that social media could work as an effective tool to share academic resources among students.

Table 11:   *Sharing Academic Resources through Social Media Usage*

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
Platform to share academic resources	3	75%
Academic resources can be shared by using email and no need to share through Social media	3	75%
Using email or a secure online portal e.g. university web page	2	50%
Sharing of different kinds of study materials	4	100%
Sharing class lectures, Power Point presentations and word documents	2	50%

Negative Effects of Social Media Usage

The teacher's observations on the degradation of the academic performances of students due to social media usage have been social media usage have been summarized in table 12. The academic performances of students were found to be decreased with the excessive usage of various social media which was realized by 100% of faculties. Seventy-five percent of faculties

are convinced that social media distracted students from their learning and other academic activities. They also observed poor class attendance 50% and abysmal academic performances (25%) of students who were adversely addicted to various social media and spent too much time using those media platforms (Table 12). A similar study conducted by kirschner and Karponski (2010) showed that excessive use and addiction to social media could result in poor attendance as well as a reduction in academic performance among students.

Table 12:   *Teacher's Responses On The Negative Influences Of Different Social Media Usages By Students*

Teachers responses on negative effects of Social Media on students	Frequency	Percentage
The decrease in academic performances of students due to the excessive use of social media	4	100%
The distraction from academic activities due to addiction to social media	3	75%
The poor classes attendance	2	50%
The poor academic performance	1	25%

Conclusion

The present study potentially considered the feedback of students as well as the valuable suggestions from teachers to find out the possible impacts of social media on different learning activities and academic performances of students who were studying in Library and information science under graduate program at Sarhad University of Information and Science Technology Peshawar Pakistan. Social media usage has been found to affect students in both positive and negative ways regarding their learning activities as well as the corresponding academic results. The study has revealed that despite having many benefits that despite having many benefits that students receive from using different social media networks, they considerably hampered their academic activities and caused the degradation of their overall grades in classes. The misuse of social media platforms and spending to much time them adversely affected their academic life, make them isolated from family, community and society as well as kept them away from real life environments. The study applied a qualitative approach to investigate and identify the possible impacts of social media on under graduate level students in Pakistan based the perceptions, realization and feedback from groups of students as well as from their respective teachers.

Future studies can be considered with a quantitative approach to larger groups of students and teachers to find out the possible consequences of excessive social media usage from greater perspectives such as gender, residence type, demographic background and future career path. Moreover, a comparative study can also be performed to figure out the similarities and contrasts within the possible impacts of social media usage among LIS undergraduate students in Pakistan.

Recommendations

The research was a potential attempt to investigate consequences of social media on the scholastic performance of undergraduate level students of LIS studying at Sarhad University of Information Science Technology, in Peshawar, Pakistan. The policy makers can utilize the significant results of this study while formulating necessary guidelines and policies for social media usage. Based on the findings of the present study, the following suggestion were made for adopting necessary strategies as well as for implementing important policies on social media usage.

Make proper awareness among the student to use social media in appropriate ways with positive perspectives so that their regular academic activities are not being hampered or affected. Formulate necessary guidelines for social media usage such as the proper scheduling to use social media by student's types of social media usage, and set up some limits for students to get access to different social medias. Restrict social media access in educational institutions to some extent and encourage students to participate more in curricular activities. Encourage the students to increase their participation in different events that require in person attendance, rather than their online appearances. In addition, the following guidelines may also be followed to make social media participation more effective and highly useful for achieving academic success. Based on the study loads, some specific times or schedules should be fixed for students to use different social media and they can only be allowed to utilize social media platforms within the respective schedules. Both teacher and guardians should properly observe the regular activities of students and motivate them to effectively utilize their valuable time following the guidelines and schedules set up for them by their academic institutions. Opportunities for extracurricular activities in academic institutions should be concerned as well as interactive so that the students cannot waste their valuable study time and trail their sincere concentration from regular studies due to the excessive use of social media. Students should be more careful and understanding so that their excessive involvement in social media networks does not develop any mental pressure and other related issues.

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