



Unveiling The University Students' Perspective on Social Media Networks - A Student-Centric Exploration

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Abstract

This exploratory research, by employing mixed method approach, intended to explore the understandings and perspectives regarding the way social media networks are being used by the university students. The main objective of research was to understand the university students' perspective of SMNs and identify the patterns and purposes of social media usage by university students. One hundred and seventy students of two public sector universities in Sindh province participated in this research. Survey questionnaire was used as a major data collection tool. This questionnaire has twenty statements regarding social media usage and one open ended question related to problems associated with use of social media. Collected data was analyzed using demographic statistics, descriptive statistics, central tendency statistics and t-test. Thematic analysis and word clouds were used to analyze the open-ended question. From the analysis of data, it was found that use of social networking sites has positive as well negative influences on the academic performance, study habits and social interactions of the students. Many of the students (81%) believe that SMNs have brought improvement in their academic performance. It was also found that WhatsApp is the most preferred SMNs among university students. Another important finding was that on average 3-4 hours are daily spent on SMNs by the students. It was also found that faculty encourage the students to use SNS, however, percentage of teachers who do not encourage is also considerable. The study recommends that since internet and social media are accessible to a large population, particularly students, its usage may be planned in a responsible fashion particularly in educational institutes. It is also recommended that detailed guidelines to be developed by the concerned authorities for restricting social networking sites and other online sites during certain times for the students. To conclude, the findings of this research bring awareness regarding the good and bad impacts of this resource on students' academic as well as personal habits.

Keywords: Social Media Networks (SMNs), Academic purposes, Misuse of SMNs, Responsible usage, Exploration



Introduction

The Internet has become an essential requisite of today's life. It's tough to envision a modern young man not checking social media at least once a day and skimming the feed. To live and keep up with today's fast-paced world, one must maintain ongoing contact and understanding of global happenings. We began to live in separate online and offline environments with the development of social media networks such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Research on the efficacy of online social networks has attracted many people, particularly related to extensive usage of social media and online forums among students of all levels. Scholars have conducted studies in the past to determine the impact of social media and other online networking sites on students' academic performance. That is why it has been described as a "fast-growing" internet application of the twenty-first century. The most rapid progress is aided by technological improvements. (Legaree 2015).

According to Chaffey (2023), 60% of the world's population uses social media. The average daily usage is 02 hours and 24 minutes. People have reaped the benefits of social media (SM) and will continue to do so, and no one can deny the platform's importance in terms of communication. Over the last decade, particularly during Covid19 times, the worldwide online trend has shifted considerably. Because of social media innovations, today's youth can express their thoughts, opinions, images, videos, feelings, and biographical information more swiftly than in the past.

Globally, an estimated 4.9 billion individuals will use social media by 2023. The global population of social media users has reached a new high of 4.9 billion individuals. Furthermore, by 2027, this figure is predicted to rise to 5.85 billion people. (Wong, B. 2023). Asia is the region with the most social media growth in 2019-2020, according to Dean 2023, followed by Africa, South America, North America, Europe, and Australasia (+16.98%, +13.92%, +8.00%, and +6.96%, respectively)

Social media is internet-based technologies that facilitate communication between individuals at separate locations. It is a tool for bringing people together and strengthening bonds. These inventions allow us to communicate across continents and oceans and share things like music, books, and photographs. With the introduction of social media, our lives have become easier



while also keeping us closer to ourselves than ever before (Hussain et al., 2022, and Khan et al., 2021).

While it is indisputable that social media platforms such as Facebook provide several benefits to users, academia is increasingly concentrating on the network's harmful usage. The substantial majority of children use social media for purposes other than academics (Pirzada & Shaikh, 2022).

As reported in Iqbal 2018, students' time spent on social networking sites is diverted from academics and used for inappropriate purposes such as meaningless gossip. Taking everything into account, it is reasonable to assume that kids' time spent on social media may be detrimental to their education.

Students' usage of the Internet for non-academic purposes, including social media, was inversely connected to their performance on three exams administered during the semester and one at the end of the term. Neuroscientists Greenfield and Wintour warned about the harmful consequences of social media use on children's attention spans (quoted in Akhter et al., 2017 and Rehman et al., 2021).

Shahzad et al. (2020) discovered that students who spent more time on social media had poor time management skills, which hampered their ability to complete assignments and fulfil deadlines. Similarly, Khan et al. (2020) discovered that excessive usage of SNS related to poor study habits, such as less time spent on homework and less involvement in class.

According to a survey conducted by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, Facebook is the most popular social media platform in Sindh province, with more than 14 million users (Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, 2021). WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter are among prominent social media platforms in the region. It demonstrates that as the population of Sindh province has grown, social media networks have grown in popularity. These social media platforms are used to stay in touch with friends and family, share information, and participate in political and social events.



Statement of the Problem

Social Media Networks (SMNs), as a global phenomenon, have provided an opportunity for communication and engagement to individuals in Sindh, as well as the rest of Pakistan. Students, being the key benefactors of technological advancement, have access and opportunities to use and misuse the SMNs. As internet and social media networks expand, it is critical to recognize their potential benefits, risks, and challenges. There is a need to understand the the positive and negative usage and effects of social media networks on students enrolled in educational institutions.

The purpose of this study was to understand the perspective of students regarding SMNs usage and efficacy, learning behaviors, and the negative and positive effects on psychological well-being. As a result, this study investigated the respondents' social media usage, viewpoints and opinions of interest, media consumption concerns, and other issues, particularly in the context of students' academic settings.

Objectives of the Research

Objectives of this research were to:

- a. Understand the university students' perspective on SMNs.
- b. Identify the patterns and purposes of social media usage by university students.

Research Questions

- i. What are the students' purposes when using Social Networking Sites (SMNs)?
- ii. What is the impact of social media on the academic performance of university students?
- iii. Is there any difference in outcome regarding social media use by male and female students?
- iv. What are the concerns, as perceived by students, associated with usage of SMNs?
- v. How much time is spent by university students daily on Social Networking Sites?

This study was delimited to:

- a. Two Public Sector Universities of General Category in Sindh Province
- b. Academic Session 2022-23
- c. Students enrolled in 4th and 5th semesters of Management Sciences, IT & Computer Sciences, Social Sciences, Languages and Humanities Departments



Significance

This research is important for the decision makers to decide the acceptable usage of social media for academic purposes. This study is also important for the educators to decide and plan the usage of internet and social media in classroom settings. It is also useful for parents to know the positive and negative influences of social media on their children.

Literature Review

Social media started in the mid-1990s with the beginning of platforms like GeoCities, Classmates.com, and SixDegrees.com. There was already instant messaging at the time, but "Six Degrees was different as it was the first online service designed for real people to connect using their actual names" It was "the very first social networking site" because of features including profiles, friend lists, and school affiliations. (Chenda 2011)

There are multiple types of social media networks, and these have been identified as "Synchronous Communication Tools and Asynchronous Communication Tools" Synchronous social networks are those which facilitate real time communication while asynchronous networks work on the principle of 'different time and different space.' Yadav 2021 has placed social media networks into following overlapping categories:

- i. Instant Messengers: WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger, Skype, Google Meet, Zoom, IMO, Tango,
- ii. Social Networking Sites: Facebook, LinkedIn,
- iii. Social News: Flipboard, Play Newsstand, BBC News, CNN, HT, TOI, DNA,
- iv. Media Sharing: YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Intranet,
- v. Wikis: Wikipedia, Semapedia, online dictionaries,
- vi. Blogging: WordPress, Google Blogger, Blogspot.com,
- vii. Micro Blogging: Twitter, Telegram,
- viii. Emailing: Gmail, Outlook, Yahoo, Hotmail,
- ix. Apps of Podcasts by British Council, Audiobooks, Hello English, speaker and writer of OALD, Speed Reading, Readerly, Shipboard, Cambly, Duolingo, and Netflix



Timeline of Social Media Networking Sites

According to online available resources, chronological timeline of various application and social networking sites is given below:

Table 1

Timeline of Social Media Networking Sites

Year	Platform	Developer/Founder
1973	<u>Telomeric</u>	Dave Wooly, Douglas Brown
1997	<u>SixDegrees.com</u>	Andrew Weinreich
1997	<u>AOL Instant Messenger</u>	Barry Appelman, Eric Bosco, Jerry Harris
1999	<u>Yahoo Messenger</u>	Jerry Yang, David Filo
1999	<u>MSN Messenger</u>	Microsoft
1999	<u>LiveJournal</u>	Brad Fitzpatrick
2002	<u>Friendster</u>	Jonathan Abrams
2003	<u>LinkedIn, Myspace, Skype</u>	Reid Hoffman, Thomas Anderson, Microsoft
2004	<u>Facebook, Orkut</u>	Mark Zuckerberg, Orkut Bukkake
2005	<u>YouTube, Reddit</u>	Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, Jawed Karim, Aaron Swartz
2006	<u>Twitter, VK</u>	Jack Dorsey, Pavel Durov
2008	<u>Next-door</u>	Nirav Tolia, Sarah Leary, Prakash Janakiraman, David Wiesen
2009	<u>WhatsApp</u>	Brian Acton, Jan Koum
2010	<u>Pinterest</u>	Ben Silbermann
2010	<u>Instagram</u>	Kevin Systrom
2011	<u>Snapchat, Google+</u>	Evan Spiegel, Bradley Horowitz
2011	<u>Twitch, WeChat</u>	Justin Kan, Allen Zhang
2012	<u>Tinder</u>	Sean Rad
2013	<u>Google Hangouts</u>	Larry Page, Sergey Brin
2015	<u>Discord</u>	Jason Citron, Stan Vishnevskiy
2017	<u>TikTok</u>	Zhang Yiming
2020	<u>Clubhouse</u>	Paul Davison, Rohan Seth

Sources: Global Web Index, Pew Research, Wikipedia (Cited by Dean 2023)



Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Pakistan

It is observed that social networking sites (SNSs) have become a part of modern society, establishing connections between people across the globe and making communication and sharing of information. Pakistan, a country in South Asia, is no exception to this trend, with an outside proportion of its population using SNS. The use of social networking sites (SNSs) has become increasingly popular among students in Pakistan, with an increasing number of students using SNSs to communicate, share information, and collaborate with friends.

According to OOSGA (2023) reports, throughout 2022, on average there are about 72.9 million active social media users in Pakistan monthly with an annual growth rate of 4.3 % in 2021-22. Social networking sites are widely available in Pakistan, with an estimated 71.70 million users as of January 2023 (Datar portal, 2023). The popularity of SNS in Pakistan can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the widespread availability of smartphones and affordable data packages. The most popular SNS platforms in Pakistan include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Facebook is the most widely used platform, with over 36 million users in the country (Statista, 2021). The use of SNS in Pakistan has grown rapidly over the last fifteen years, with the number of users increasing by an average of 12% per year since 2010. This growth is expected to continue in the coming years, with an estimated 55 million users in Pakistan by 2025 (Statista, 2021). SNS usage in Pakistan is highest among young people aged 16-24, with 64% of this age group using social media regularly (Datar portal, 2022). However, there has been a significant increase in the use of SNS among older age groups in recent years.

The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) introduced three major initiatives to provide access to high-speed Internet and internationally famous online databases at public universities and R&D institutions in Pakistan. Firstly, the National Digital Library, which features e-books and databases from throughout the world and these books are available to researchers. Second initiative of HEC is Pakistan Educational Research Network (PERN), and third intervention is Pakistan Educational Research Network 2 (PERN2). Because of these advancements, currently 150 institutions of higher education and research and development are linked and making use of the services (Pakistan HEC, 2015).



Use of social media among university students in International Perspective

Mensah and Nizam (2016) discovered that students' grades at Malaysian institutions were negatively impacted by their use of social media. Aside from social media, time relevance and health addiction were discovered to have the greatest major influence on students' academic performance. They believe that time appropriateness is important. If a student does not use social media during that period but does not devote enough time to schoolwork, the results will be the same. This is since how one spends their time has a significant impact on whether they reach their goals. Students with weak time management skills are more vulnerable to the negative impacts of social media. According to research conducted at Kogi State University, students' use of social media negatively impacts their schoolwork. Students' academic performance is negatively impacted by their use of social media, as has become increasingly evident. Rather than reading books, students who spend more time on social media will spend time chatting and finding acquaintances via social media, which will have a negative impact on their academic achievement.

Khan et al (2021) investigated how students' use of social media affects their academic achievement. The results show that students' use of social media has a significant impact on their academic achievement. In addition to academic achievement, innovation, information exchange, and teamwork were enhanced. According to this study, students' access to social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram dramatically improved their ability to work in groups and communicate with their lecturers to accomplish course work. This study contributed to the field of education by laying the basis for employing social media in the classroom, which teachers can then use to design creative methods of instruction.

Students' socialization patterns and methods have changed dramatically because of social media. It is essential to their social and intellectual development. As a result, students make the most use of technology and social media. Amerika (2020) investigated how students in Mumbai-area universities use social media and how it affects their personal and academic life. Social media, according to the studies, helps students connect and learn. Students use social media to spread memes and political opinions. When asked to limit their social media use, half of students answered, "just a few more minutes," lending credence to the notion that children are addicted. Students' social lives have changed because of their social media addiction. The poll also indicated that students were divided on whether social media hurt their academic performance,



but the evidence suggests that they are unwilling to prioritize academic activities over social media. Thus, this topic warrants more study. Social media has pros and cons, yet it can improve kids' academic performance and relationships.

Socialization, according to Gener and Suess (2017), is an "exogenous process in which individuals adapt to their social environment." Media has been recognized as a powerful agent of socialization, and now Social Media networks are viewed as a powerful agent of socialization. Though socialization via social media differs for each individual and even between generations. Social media has distinct effects on children, teenagers, and the elderly. The following are some crucial features of socialization via social media:

- Live Events and Online Active Groups/Communities
- Creative Personal Expression
- Sharing of Information and Knowledge

Ogechi (2020) examined how children's use of social media impacted their academic performance and the potential implications for counselling services there. The findings indicated that a large number of college students are addicted to social media. The researcher made the following arguments considering this

- educational organizations should use social media to promote their causes.
- existing social networking sites should be expanded.
- New pages should be created to support academic activities.
- It is imperative to prevent student academic performance issues.

Research Methodology

This research study is descriptive and exploratory in nature and both quantitative and qualitative procedures were adopted. According to McCombs (2022) and George (2022), descriptive research endeavors to describe the situation, population, and phenomenon in an accurate and systematic manner. Mixed method research design was employed for the study as Creswell (2009) suggests that it is more reliable as compared to other methods.



Population & Sample

This study was conducted in Universities in Sindh. Sindh province had twenty-seven public sector universities/degree awarding establishments. (HEC Recognized Universities 2022). The sample for this study was made up of 02 universities from a total of eleven universities in the General category. Two universities, one in Sukkur and the other one in Khairpur were chosen at random. The survey included 170 students (95 male and 75 females).

Development of Research Instrument

Survey questionnaire was used for data collection. The research instrument was developed based on the objectives of study and modified after getting insights from literature review. The questionnaire consisted of 20 structured statements and 01 open-ended question. These statements were related to usage and effects. Apart from these statements, demographic questions related to gender, age, and internet usage were also included. Likert scale with structured response including Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree was used.

Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Tool

The data collection tool was validated by two experts of Educational Research. One expert was the supervisor of this researcher while the other one was working in the Education Department at University of Karachi. They examined the items of the tools to ensure that the items were clear and complied with the objectives of the study, as well as the suitability of the instruments` items in terms of the language used.

This study was applied with the pilot test to determine the quality of the developed questionnaire with sample data collected from 25 respondents from Ghotki Campus of Shah Abdul Latif University. Under those responses, the effectiveness of the questionnaire was checked along with its usefulness to the study.

Statistical Analysis of Collected Data

The data obtained from the questionnaire was coded, tabulated, and analyzed by using SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics 26) through demographic analysis, descriptive statistics, and statistics of central tendency. To analyze the open-ended question, which was related to problems associated



with SNS usage, thematic analysis was carried out. First, the value of Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the questionnaire data. It was 0.75, which means that the internal consistency of the questionnaire was good enough to proceed for further analysis.

Analysis of Demographic Statistics

The following table 2 showing the number of male and female students and age ranges of the students from whom data was collected.

Table 2
Gender & Age-wise Distribution of Sample

Students			Age Ranges	%
Male	Females	Total	20-25	62
95	75	170	26-30	26
55%	45%	100%	31-35	12

Descriptive Statistics

Frequency Percentages: Response percentage on each statement is recorded and presented in three tables (Tables 3 to 5).

Table 3
Analysis of Responses of Student Questionnaire (Category-I)

#	Statements	Response Percentages					
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Access to SNS at university is limited to you	30.7	6.79	7.72	12.04	20.91	20.83
2	There is improvement in your grades since you started using social networking sites (SNS)	3.70	5.25	9.10	16.36	37.65	27.93
3	Knowledge gained through SNS is shared with classmates	23.15	6.94	6.94	14.97	26.08	21.91
4	Information retrieved through SNS helps you to do your assignments	2.47	5.56	6.02	17.59	34.72	33.64



5	The usage of SNS helps to improve your understanding in research	4.63	5.09	9.98	14.66	26.09	37.65
6	Teachers encourage the use of social networking sites in the classroom	8.49	9.26	12.04	16.98	27.16	26.08
7	Materials obtained from blogging sites facilitate your learning in the class.	6.49	7.72	12.35	18.67	29.63	24.69
8	Use of social media helps you to perform well in the class.	9.57	7.56	10.03	14.20	30.56	28.09
N= 170							

Percentage (%) scores of first category statements are indicative that most of students agreed to the statements which were related with positive effects of SNS on their performance. However, a suitable number of students disagreed with some statements which were related to sharing of knowledge gained through SNS. The highest percentage score of 37.65 was recorded for “the usage of SNS helps to improve your understanding in research” while 2.47% respondents disagreed on the same statement. The second category of statements was related to the effects of SNS on academic performance of the students. Frequency distribution against various responses is given in Table 4.

Table 4
Response of Students on Statements 9-15 (Category-II)

#	Statement	Response Percentages					
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9	Use of social media leads to absenteeism in the class	8.95	14.20	9.88	20.22	24.38	22.38
10	Social media leads to procrastination	30.86	10.80	11.73	15.12	15.59	15.90
11	Access to SNS has adversely affected your academic performance	35.19	10.96	9.72	14.66	15.59	13.89
12	Academic discussions on SNS have improved your academic performance.	7.10	8.49	10.19	16.36	31.02	26.85



13	Use of SNS is helpful in attaining the educational targets	6.02	8.95	9.57	15.28	31.48	28.70
14	Engaging in academic forums on SNS increases your knowledge	6.94	7.10	8.18	17.44	30.71	29.63
15	Online social networks distract you from your studies.	32.10	11.57	8.33	15.28	19.44	13.27
N= 170							

Table 5
Response of Students on Statements 16-20 (Category-III)

#	Statements	Response Percentages					
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
16	SNS is used to pass leisure time	7.78	8.64	9.72	17.13	31.64	25.00
17	Time spent on SNS is beneficial than reading books	10.65	9.88	10.34	15.28	29.48	24.38
18	Social media provides a useful platform for academic group discussions	6.64	9.88	7.87	15.74	32.25	27.62
19	Social media is used for academic purposes with faculty	9.26	9.41	10.80	13.58	30.71	26.23
20	Apart from studies, SNS are used to interact with friends	6.94	7.25	8.18	15.12	27.93	34.57
N= 170							

Analysis of Table 4 and 5 is indicative that most of the respondents highlighted that use of SNS promote absenteeism in the class, however, at the same time use of SNS has increased their knowledge and helped them to attain their educational targets. Highest frequency was recorded on statement “Access to SNS has adversely affected your academic performance.” More than 45% of students have disagreement on this statement. This means students do not think that this is adversely affecting their academic performance. This high percentage shows students’ opinion about usefulness of SNSs. Similarly, more than 70% of students agree that academic discussion increases their knowledge. It also indicates the usefulness of SNSs.



Analysis of Time & Preference Based Questions

There were two questions which were related to time spent on social networking sites by students and their preferred SNS. Analysis of responses is presented in Table 6 and 7.

Table 6
Time Spent on Social Media Networks

#	Time Duration	Percentage
a.	1-2 Hours	13
b.	2-3 Hours	28
c.	3-4 Hours	37
d.	5-6 Hours	22
N=170		

The second question was related to preferred SNS. Students were asked to give their preference for the various SNSs. Frequencies were calculated and then converted into percentages which are as under:

Table 7
Students Preference on Using SMNs

SNS	Response %	Ranking/Order
WhatsApp	35	1
YouTube	30	2
Facebook/ Messenger	22	3
Instagram	05	4
LinkedIn	06	5
TikTok	01	6
Twitter	01	6
Others (Please specify)	0	-
N=170		

According to students' preference, WhatsApp is the most preferred SNS followed by YouTube and Facebook.

Another research question was to know the difference of outcome of male and female students for using social media. The t-test is a commonly used statistical test in quantitative research that



compares the means of two groups to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between them. Results of the t-test are given in Table 08.

Table 8

T-test Results of Male & Female Students regarding Social Media Networks

#	Statements	t-test for Equality of Means		
		t	do	Mean Difference
1	Access of SNS is limited to you	0.157	646	.025
2	There is improvement in your grades since you started using social networking sites (SNS	-.363	646	-.038
3	Knowledge gained through SNS is shared with classmates	1.123	646	.168
4	Information retrieved through SNS helps you to do your assignments	0.727	646	.073
5	The usage of SNS helps to improve your understanding in research	0.633	646	.072
6	Teachers encourage the use of social networking sites in the classroom	-0.323	646	-.041
7	Materials obtained from blogging sites facilitate your learning in the class.	0.245	646	.029
8	Use of social media helps you to perform well in the class	0.249	646	.032
9	Use of social media leads to absenteeism in the class	-0.682	646	-.088
10	Social media leads to procrastination	0.738	646	.110
11	Access to SNS has adversely affected your academic performance	0.595	646	.089
12	Academic discussions on SNS have improved your academic performance.	-.184	646	-.022
13	Use of SNS is helpful in attaining the educational targets	0.164	646	.020
14	Engaging in academic forums on SNS increases your knowledge	0.660	646	.079
15	Online social networks distract you from your studies.	1.634	646	.242
16	SNS is used to pass leisure time	-.107	646	-.013
17	Time spent on SNS is beneficial than reading books	-1.941	646	-.253
18	Social media provides a useful platform for academic group discussions	0.608	646	.074
19	Social media is used for academic purposes with faculty	-.030	646	-.004
20	Apart from studies, SNS are used to interact with friends	-.034	646	-.004

Overall, the t-test results show that responses from male and female students evaluating the influence of social media networks do not differ significantly from one another. The size of the



mean differences is less, which raises the possibility that their practical impact may not be considered. It can be concluded that values shown in Table 10 are not significant as far gender is concerned. It means that female and male students are equally using social media sites and their opinion is also same about the said question. It implies that the difference among opinion of male and female students about the said question are not statistically significant.

Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Questions

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research technique that identifies and analyses recurring themes, patterns, and trends in a dataset. Braun and Clarke (2022). All responses of students were transcribed in a Microsoft Word document, and theme analysis was performed using the "Atlas's" application. This downloaded application is free for the first five days. Using the features of this app, all student replies were shared with this app, and AI Coding was generated. The researcher manually analyzed all the themes. Table 9 contains a summary of the frequent themes that appeared.

Table 9
Thematic Analysis of Students' Responses

#	Codes & Labels	Theme	Sub Theme	Sub Theme
1	Authenticity of Information	Information Credibility	Disinformation	False Information
2	Addiction	Impact on Mental Health	Sleep disturbance,	Anxiety and depression
3	Harmful Usage of SNS	Negative Consequences	Unproductive Use	Unwanted content distracts
4	Time Management	Screen Time vs. Productive Activities	More time on screen than books	Relationship management in real life
5	Makes People Uncomfortable	Privacy Concerns	Hacking and Security	Online Safety, Data safety
6	Misuse of Opportunities	Cybercrimes	Bullying	Unwanted messages
7	Network Issue	Connectivity Challenges	Slow Speed	Limited access
8	Distraction from Studies	Academic Impact	Notification Disruption	Concentration issues
9	App Restricted to Open Even on Wi-Fi	Restricted networks	App Functionality	Technical Accessibility
10	Fear of Missing Out (Foo)	Pressure to keep up with friends	Friends' expectations	Compulsion to remain online



These themes and subthemes reflect the diverse landscape of SNS usage. University students face a variety of issues, ranging from concerns about the trustworthiness of information to the influence on mental health and privacy, network connectivity, and academic performance. Understanding these themes is critical for establishing solutions to solve SNS concerns and promote responsible and balanced use. Finally, this dataset provides useful insights on the diverse nature of SNS usage and the issues that are experienced by the students.

The following are some of the main problems faced by university students associated with SMNs:

- a.** Students are concerned about the spread of inaccurate and false information on SMNs. This can lead to confusion, distrust, and destructive views.
- b.** SMNs are addictive, and students may find themselves spending excessive time on these platforms. This might result in sleep disruptions, anxiety, sadness, and other mental health issues.
- c.** Students use SMNs in ways that are detrimental to themselves or others. This can involve cyberbullying, publishing improper content, or spending too much money on in-app purchases.
- d.** Students have difficulty managing their time, particularly when it comes to balancing SMN use with other commitments such as studies, job, and social activities.
- e.** SMNs are a source of discomfort for students, especially when it comes to privacy concerns, unwanted messages, and cyberbullying.
- f.** SMNs can be misused for cybercrimes, such as hacking and identity theft. They can also be a platform for bullying and harassment.
- g.** Students may face network issues when using SMNs, such as slow speed, limited access, and connectivity challenges.
- h.** SMNs can be a major distraction from studies. Students may find themselves constantly checking their social media feeds, even when they are supposed to be studying.
- i.** Students may feel pressure to keep up with their friends and classmates on SMNs. This can lead to anxiety and depression if they feel like they are not living up to the expectations of their peers.



- Communication with faculty and class fellows
- Academic discussions
- Chatting with friends and family members
- Passing the free time
- Entertainment

Another question was regarding the impact of SMNs on academic performance. Survey results reveal that there is improvement, according to students, in academic performance. Third question was “Is there any difference in outcome regarding social media use by male and female students?” Data analysis reveal that there is no significant difference of usage among male or female students. Similarly, all genders are benefited or affected equally.

Another important question was “What are the concerns, as perceived by students, associated with usage of SMNs” To know the concerns, the researcher has also asked one open ended question about the problems associated with social media usage from students. The five major problems highlighted by students with social media platforms are waste of time while searching for required materials, complex information, health issues and unnecessary advertisement.

As far as question related with time duration is concerned, it was found that majority of respondents (37%) use SMNs 3-4 hours daily while 28% use 2-3 hours daily.

Conclusions

1. Most of the students (81%) believe that SMNs have brought improvement in their academic performance.
2. Most of the students believe that social media is helpful in doing assignments and sharing knowledge.
3. WhatsApp is the most preferred SMNs among university students.
4. 3-4 hours are daily spent on SMNs by the students.
5. SNSs are quite helpful in developing the understanding of students.
6. Faculty encourage the students to use SNS, however, the percentage of teachers who do not encourage is also considerable.
7. Apart from recognizing the role of SNSs and students’ academic performance, students also view SNS as source of distraction from studies.



8. SMNs are used to pass time and for socialization purposes.
9. Male and female students are using the SMN in a comparable manner.
10. Students' opinion of social media use is positive, viewing it as a useful resource for academic work.
11. Social media use can have both positive and negative effects on academic performance, depending on how it is used.
12. Social media use can impact students' time management and academic workload.
13. Students who use social media for only academic purposes have positive vibes for utility of SMNs.
14. Access of internet is limited for students in universities.
15. SNSs are helpful for students to complete their academic assignments.
16. Faculty encourage the students to use SNS.
17. SNSs are also used for entertainment purposes.
18. Screen time needs to be restricted for students.
19. There are negative sides of usage as well like sleep deprivation, stress, peer pressure and wastage of time.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made:

1. Internet connectivity is pivotal for gaining access to information. This connectivity may be improved and extended to classrooms and laboratories for university students, allowing them to obtain useful information instantly.
2. The public, particularly teachers and parents, must be aware of the benefits and drawbacks of SMNs.
3. The information offered by various search engines must be validated. There may be an arrangement in place to filter out unwanted academic content.
4. Information obtained from numerous search engines must be validated. There could be some sort of structure in place to filter out irrelevant and outdated academic content.
5. Social networking sites (SNS) are a significant mode of communication. More features may be added to make them more user-friendly for learning.



6. The state should set proper criteria for regulating SMNs and other web sites during specific times, particularly during study hours.
7. Responsible internet usage may be planned and ensured in universities or educational organizations.

Replication of the Study

1. The current study used a small sample size and a small number of universities. Extensive research on this topic is desired, with samples drawn from all public and private universities in Sindh.
2. In the current investigation, a survey questionnaire was used to collect data. The same results can be obtained by employing additional data collection procedures in addition to surveys, such as Focused Group Discussions and Interviews.

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