Impact of Social Media on Students' Academic Performance: A Case Study of University of Chitral

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Abstract

This descriptive study, conducted at the University of Chitral, focused on examining the influence of social media on student's academic performance. The research formulated four hypotheses and aimed to investigate the impact of social media engagement on student's academic performance. From a total population of 1000 undergraduate students, a random sample of 250 was initially chosen. However, due to common bias errors, the final sample comprised 243 students. The Likert-type rating questionnaire was employed to collect data, and descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages were utilized to analyze demographic information. The study utilized regression analysis to test the formulated hypotheses by using SPSS software. The findings revealed a negative influence of social media on students because most of the students at the University of Chitral were addicted to social media. Despite the adverse effects, the research highlights the potential for positive use of social media in an educational context. This study contributes to the understanding of the complex relationship between social media and student's academic performance providing insights for educators and policymakers to harness the positive aspects while mitigating the negative impacts of social media on undergraduate students.

Keywords: Social Media, Academic Performance, Addictiveness, Social Media Exposure

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1. Introduction

The globe as a whole rejoices in the amazing advancements made in communication technology in the current time period. These developments have not only broadened the scope of communication but have also profoundly changed the world, making it a more inter-connected

"*Global Village*." But technology has an impact on our lives in both positive and harmful ways, just like a coin which has two sides, (Peter, 2015).

Meanwhile, education is essential to making sure that individuals are well informed, enlightened, and able to keep up with world events. Technology's ability to perform things more effectively and efficiently exposes humans to methods that improve our quality of life. Many people use these social networking sites to stay in touch with friends they've met both virtually and in person as well as with new and old acquaintances (Asemah and Edegoh 2012). The rapid advancement of technology has had a dramatic impact on our world leading to the general recognition of technology as the most effective means of exploring the vast domain of knowledge.

On the other hand, social networking is essential for filling the gap between people who live far apart. These platforms enable users to send messages, create personal blogs, participate in real-time discussions, and exchange a variety of media, including files, photos, and videos. The ability of these platforms to enable smooth communication between friends, co-workers, and acquaintances is what sets them apart as "social" platforms (Al-Rahmi and Othman 2013). Moreover, these platforms possess an amazing ability to connect people quickly and effectively, which helps to strengthen the bonds amongst members of these online communities. Social media behemoths like face book, twitter, and others stick out among the plethora of websites accessible as important tools for communication.

A strong academic record is essential for success in both the classroom and the workplace. Academic performance has a big impact on where someone gets placed, in the job market or in academic institutions. Considering the influence that academic performance has on many facets

of life, many people are keen to raise their scores. Many studies have analyzed the factors that contribute to academic excellence because of the emphasis being placed on it globally. According to Kyoshaba (2009), academic achievement is a strong indicator of future success in life as well as academic advancement from elementary school to higher education and increased employability in the workforce. Studies by Hafeez and Ahmad (2002) and Ahmad and Hafeez (2007) examined similar relationships for education and labor market earnings. The primary objective of academic institutions is for students to achieve academic success which is determined by their exam scores. According to Hoyle (1986), the purpose of schools is to impart knowledge and skills to students who attend them and the underlying principle is of improving scholastic success. Exams and ongoing assessments are among the traditional tools used to evaluate academic performance. But there is still disagreement about the best ways to assess and rank elements whether they are declarative knowledge which includes factual understanding or procedural knowledge which includes practical skills (Stoker et al. 1996). This diversity of viewpoints highlights how difficult it is to evaluate academic success and encourages continued research into more thorough and efficient assessment techniques in the field of education.

There is a clear link between the use of social media by university students and their academic achievement. But there are drawbacks to technology's quick development. Chief among them is the disintegration of moral principles which is especially evident in the majority of student users of social networking sites. These digital spaces are intended to promote social interactions and reflect groups of people who have similar hobbies or pastimes. Due to the abundance of social networking sites available online, students are putting their commitments to reading and studying on hold in favor of conversing with friends online.

As social media sites like Facebook and Twitter gain prominence, more and more students are developing addictions to these trends. The notion that the increasing preoccupation with Facebook could be linked to poor academic performance was discussed in a study conducted by Oche and Aminu (2010). This study implies that, in addition to teacher-related factors, the pervasive use of social media, specifically Facebook, may be impacting the concentration of students, study habits, or overall academic engagement of young individuals. It suggests that a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to academic performance should encompass not only traditional educational elements but also the influence of contemporary

digital platforms. To put it simply, a study by Olubiyi (2012) found that students today are, deeply immersed in various social media platforms, staying online almost all the time even during classes. Instead of dedicating their attention to learning, conducting academic research, or exploring innovative ideas, some students choose to engage in activities like chatting, gaming, or using Facebook while in the classroom.

According to the findings of Bulus et al. (2012), the usage of social media platforms has an impact on how students express themselves in English and use English grammar. The study revealed that students often bring the informal language and shortcuts from their online chats into the classroom setting. For instance, they might replace "for" with "4," "you" with "U," "the" with "D," and so forth. This tendency to use abbreviated forms and informal language in formal educational settings could potentially influence their performance in class assessments. Teachers may find it challenging to evaluate their understanding of proper English usage when students incorporate these casual language habits into their academic work.

In the study conducted by Kuppuswamy and Narayan (2010), it was observed that social networking sites can captivate the attention of students. However, rather than serving as platforms for educational purposes, these sites often become conduits for engaging in activities that are both non-educational and inappropriate. One prominent example highlighted in the research is the prevalence of meaningless chatting among students on these platforms. Kuppuswamy and Narayan (2010) and Ounnas et al. (2007) presented a contrasting perspective. Their research indicates that students leverage social connectivity not only for leisure or non-educational purposes but also to actively share their daily learning experiences. However, it's also important to realize that social media can be beneficial when used appropriately, (Dahar et al., 2023).

During the pandemic, according to a study conducted by Khatun et al.(2023), utilization of social media platforms can contribute to fostering good academic performance among students by promoting collaboration and enhancing attention. By leveraging such platforms, students are encouraged to engage actively with course materials, participate in discussions, and collaborate with peers, thereby creating an environment conducive to learning. This active engagement facilitated by social media not only enhances students' understanding of the subject matter but

also cultivates important skills such as critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving. Consequently, the study underscores the potential of social media as a valuable tool for promoting academic success by encouraging meaningful interaction and collaboration among students.

In our research we took social media use as our independent variable. According to Oueder and Abousaber (2018) social media refers to online tools that let people create, share, and swap information and ideas. It is all about connecting and communicating through the internet. Our dependent variable is academic performance. It can be defined as the way students handle their academic work and the way they complete various assignments, (Charles et al., 2009).

1.1. Problem Statement

Social media is everywhere in our lives, today, affecting how we connect and communicate. Students have been found extensively engaged in use of social media. It has been examined that students spend incredible time on social media without worrying about their studies. Instead they remain busy in making new friends and in entertainment activities, (Afzal et al., 2016). In addition, not much research has been done so far to examine the impact of social media usage of students on their educational performance in a backward region of Pakistan, like Chitral. Analyzing this issue can help the students in University of Chitral to better manage their time. So that they can better perform to achieve their educational objectives. Therefore, it was found essential to conduct a research like this study to examine the impact of habit of social media usages on the academic performance of students at University of Chitral.

1.2. Significance of the Study

Teachers, students and parents can take advantage of this study in order to enhance the performance of students. Teachers can gain insights into how social media may be a source of distraction for students during class hours. This knowledge can help them design strategies to minimize distractions in the classrooms. Parents can take help of this analysis to understand the potential impact of excessive social media use on their children's academic performance. Students can better understand that how their social media habits may affect their academic performance. This awareness can empower them to make choices about their online activities

and time management. Understanding the impact of social media use on academic performance can encourage students to practice good digital etiquette ensuring that their online activities complement rather than hinder their learning.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to examine the impact of social media use on students' academic performance. The objectives are disaggregated as follows: that is to find the impact of social media access, social media usage, social media addictiveness and age of users of social media on students' academic performance in the University Of Chitral.

Organization of the study is as follows: second section comprises of Literature Review. Section 3 presents research methodology. Analysis of data is given in section 4. Conclusion and recommendations are presented in section 5.

2. Literature Review

This chapter contains the previous studies related to this work carried by different researchers.

2.1. Student's Exposure to Social Media and Student's Academic Performance

The advent of widespread internet access and ubiquity of social media have significantly transformed the way with which students engage with information and communicate. In the contemporary landscape, students enjoy continuous and effortless access to the internet, facilitating global communication through computers. The prevalence of smart phones has further streamlined connectivity allowing students to virtually exchange messages anywhere, even from cybercafés, (Peter, 2015).

In a study at Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, Haryana India, Dhiman, (2022) revealed that most respondents possessed mobile phones with internet access and were familiar with various social media platforms and mobile applications. The study also found that many respondents primarily accessed social media via their mobile phones, spending between 30 minutes to 3 hours daily on these platforms. These smart phones play an important role in interaction between users and their surroundings. Moreover, a study by Palla and Sheikh (2021) found that most

students spend approximately one hour daily on social media accessing these platforms via laptops, mobile phones, and personal computers.

Results from study conducted by Alam & Aktar (2021) at Islamic University in Bangladesh showed that almost all students at the Islamic University have internet access and most of them use various social media platforms, which mildly impacts their academic performance negatively.

2.2. Social Media Usage and Students' Academic Performance

Certainly, social media has emerged as a significant catalyst for enriching students' educational experiences, fostering a deeper understanding of various subjects. The internet, acting as a dynamic marketing platform, has undergone substantial expansion in its programs, thereby, providing diverse opportunities for learning and engagement. The interactive dynamics of online environments have particularly flourished due to prevalence of social networking. Initially, social networking was a specialized and somewhat exclusive activity. But over time, it has evolved into a widespread phenomenon that influences students' academic journeys. The multifaceted nature of social media platforms allows them to serve various purposes beyond their initial design. They have become instrumental in community building acting as hubs for like-minded individuals to inter-connect, share ideas, and collaborate on educational initiatives. Communication has also been transformed through the pervasive influence of social media. Students can now engage in real-time discussions, share resources, and seek help from peers and educators across the globe. The platforms also serve as effective tools for expression, enabling students to articulate their thoughts through blogging and other creative means. Shafiq and Parveen (2023) showed that utilizing social media's knowledge-sharing features positively impacts academic performance. Additionally, students who actively engage with social media show improved learning outcomes. The study also suggests that insights gained from social media can benefit students, teachers, and educational institutions in enhancing academic purposes.

Another study by Palla and Sheikh (2021) indicated that most students utilize social media networking sites to meet their educational requirements, with YouTube emerging as the most frequently utilized platform among undergraduate students. Most students find social media networks easy to navigate and have been using these platforms for the past three years. The use

of social media significantly aids students in knowledge sharing, improving academic grades, and enhancing reading and writing skills.

Another study by Cao and Tian (2022) showed that use of social media platforms indirectly influences academic performance through student collaborative learning, student-instructor interaction, and academic distraction.

2.3. Social Media Addictiveness and Student's Academic Performance

In the digital age, students are actively involved in a diverse array of online activities, and some of these activities carry the potential for developing addictive behaviors, as examined by Kuss and Griffiths (2011). The increasing prevalence of social media, particularly accessed through smartphones, has heightened concerns about the extent of online engagement among young individuals. As smart phones become increasingly ubiquitous among college students, concerns about their impact on learning have emerged. Sumuer and Kaşıkcı (2022) investigated the role of smart phones in college students' mind-wandering during learning. In the quantitative phase, data from 402 college students were analyzed to assess the extent to which smart phone addiction predicts mind-wandering among students. Results from a simple linear regression analysis revealed that smart phone addiction accounted for 26% of the variance in students' level of mind-wandering. Analysis of the interviews highlighted the significant influence of text messages, incoming calls, social media, and smart phone functions on students' smart phone-related mind-wandering during lectures or while studying.

As the use of social networking sites (SNSs) continues to rise, understanding the factors contributing to addiction and its implications becomes crucial. Griffiths et al. (2022) investigated the association between students' needs and Instagram addiction with a focus on physical activity as a moderator. A sample of 364 university students was surveyed to explore the relationships between Instagram addiction and academic performance. The study revealed adverse impact of Instagram addiction on academic performance. Besides, it increases social anxiety and depression.

In recent times, the ubiquitous nature of social media has reached its zenith, presenting both opportunities and challenges, particularly for students. Perera and Harshanath (2022) aims to

delve into the repercussions of excessive social media usage on academic performance and overall well-being among school students, especially exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic-induced shift to virtual learning. By exploring the various facets of social media addiction, including its effects on mental and physical health, as well as its role in disseminating mis-information, this research seeks to shed light on the multifaceted impact of social media. Additionally, this project proposes the development of a specialized social media platform tailored to meet the educational and social needs of students while mitigating the adverse effects associated with mainstream social media platforms.

2.4. Social Media Usage by Age

In the nascent era of personal computers and widespread internet access, social media platforms were predominantly employed as tools for information gathering and research, (Salas and Alexander, 2008). Nonetheless, in recent years, a significant transformation has occurred, marking the internet as the central hub for human communication and a primary source of entertainment. This shift underscores the profound impact of digital landscape on the way individuals connect and engage with each other. In the latest research findings, the study showed that the connection between social media use and feeling connected to school differed depending on the age of high school students. Older students tended to have a stronger relationship between their social media use and feelings connected to their school compared to younger students, (Chaput et al., 2019)

It has been revealed that students are among the most active users of social media, (Alam & Aktar, 2021). This demographic has showcased a notable reliance on various online platforms, including social networking sites, email, instant messaging, blogging, and online journals. The impact of these digital mediums has been profound, causing a paradigm shift in the way adolescents communicate with each other and access information, (Raacke and Bonds-Raacke 2008).

In contemporary times, there is a discernible generational shift in lifestyle preferences, particularly among the younger demographics as highlighted by Lewis (2008). Unlike their predecessors, today's youngsters have seamlessly integrated into a lifestyle where social media takes center stage. The findings from a recent survey shed light on the pervasive use of the

internet and social media among teenagers in the United States, as reported by Kist (2008). The data reveals that an overwhelming 90% of teens in the country have access to the internet signifying a widespread connectivity within this demographic. Moreover, a substantial 75% of these teenagers are actively engaged with social media with a frequency of use extending to multiple times per day. This attests to the integral role that online platforms play in the daily lives of American teenagers shaping their communication and information consumption patterns.

According to a research by Goodman (2007), adults use social media as an extension of their individuality, showcasing whom they are and what they concern about; to friends and the world and to create connections with other identical people. It's estimated that almost all Nigerian teenagers visit at least one social media site about twenty times a day, Valkenburg and Peter (2009).

According to De Souza and Dick (2008), many adults are concerned about teens sharing unnecessary or too much data on social media. According to a recent study on teens and their Myspace participation, around 65 percent of teens with Myspace accounts had very private data displayed on their profiles. Details such as their address, email addresses, phone numbers, school knowledge about the workplace, and many other interests were included, De-Souza and Dick (2008).

Contrary to concerns about the potential pitfalls of social media use among teenagers, there is a contingent of adults including professionals like teachers and school faculty who advocate for the positive aspects of incorporating social networking sites, such as Facebook, into the educational landscape, (Salas and Alexander, 2008).

3. Research Methodology

Research Design

In this study, a descriptive survey was employed. This choice was considered suitable because it enables the researcher to gather data through standard techniques using well-structured research tools. This approach helps in exploring ideas and related factors with clarity and specificity. The term descriptive survey implies a methodical approach to gathering information, wherein the

emphasis is on describing and analyzing the prevailing characteristics of a particular phenomenon.

The population of the study is the undergraduate students at University of Chitral having a population size of approximately 1000 during the year 2023. The data was collected through the adopted questionnaire developed in google form and the link was sent via WhatsApp to all departments of University of Chitral. From the total population of University of Chitral, 250 students were selected through convenient sampling technique. Total 250 questionnaires were distributed to prevent common bias error. Out of them, data was drawn for 243 respondents.

A questionnaire was obtained from the base article like Peter (2015) which is entitled as "*Social Media And Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire*". The survey was segmented into two parts, labeled as Section A and Section B. Section A focused on gathering personal data from respondents whereas Section B comprised of questions designed to elicit responses. The respondents expressed their opinions using the response options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Data Analysis

The survey responses underwent analysis employing descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages using SPSS software. For the examination of demographic variables, descriptive statistics were utilized. Additionally regression analysis, specifically the t test statistics, was employed to test the stated hypotheses with significance set at 0.05 level.

This section contains the presentations and analysis of the data. Table 1 shows the distribution of students according to their departments having the following frequencies and percentages.

Table 1: Distribution of Social Media Using Students According to Departments

Department	Frequency	Percentage
English	39	16.04
Urdu	15	6.17
Botany	12	5.00
Zoology	17	7.00
Sociology	13	5.34

Impact of Social Media on Students' Academic Performance: A Case Study of University of Chitral

BBA	15	6.17
Tourism	28	12.00
Political science	21	9.00
Computer science	33	14.00
Economics	24	10.00
Education	26	11.00
Total	243	100

Table 1 indicates that out of total respondents, highest frequency belongs to departments of English and Computer Sciences followed by department of Tourism and Education. This shows that maximum number of students among social media users belong to departments of English (39%) and Computer Sciences (33%). It has been observed that students belonging to department of biology have shown least contribution in total social media users in the university.

Table 2 and 3 represents the demographic information of the respondents. Table 2 and 3 presents the frequencies and percentages of social media users students with respect to their gender and years of age respectively.

It has been found that more than 55 percent of social media users are male students where less than fifty percent social media users are female students.

Table 2 and Table 3 show the distribution of social media users with respect to gender and age of respondents respectively. Results show that male students are more likely to use social media as compared to female students.

Table 2: Distribution of Social Media Users Students With Respect to Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	134	55.15
Female	109	44.85
Total	243	100

Table 3: Distribution Social Media Users Students With Respect to Years of Age

Years	Frequency	Percentage
16-20 years	65	26.74
21-25 years	175	72.016
26 and above	3.00	1.23
Total	243	100

It has been observed that frequency of social media user increases with age. Findings in Table 3 shows that majority of the social media using students belong to 21 to 25 years of age. Intensity of social media users largely decline for the students older than 25 years of age.

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics related to the data. It shows composite reliability of 0.77 which indicates a good level of internal consistency for measuring social media addictiveness. The average variance is 40 percent which indicates moderate convergent validity. The mean of 3.31 represents the average level of social media addictiveness in the sample. The standard deviation indicates that individual scores on social media addictiveness vary around the mean. Descriptive statistics for the other variables can be interpreted in a similar way.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Composite Reliability	Average Variance	Mean	Standard Deviation
Academic Performance	0.76	0.42	3.04	0.62
Access To Social Media	0.75	0.43	4.94	0.55
Social Media Usage	0.68	0.62	4.65	0.76
Social Media Addictiveness	0.77	0.40	3.31	0.46
Age	0.70	0.54	3.09	0.60

Hypothesis testing and data analysis

The T-test regression analysis was used in the study for testing the stated hypothesis.

Impact of Social Media on Students' Academic Performance: A Case Study of University of Chitral

Table 5 shows the academic performance as the dependent variable, which is dependent on the independent variables that are students' access to social media, usage of social media and students' addictiveness to social media.

Table 5: Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	P - Value	SE	t-value	Decision
	Access to Social Media	0.0022*	0.011	2.33	Accepted
Academic Performance	Usage of Social Media	0.0113*	0.032	2.45	Accepted
	Addictiveness to Social Media	0.0032*	0.62	2.25	Accepted
	Age of users Social media	0.0400*	0.043	4.23	Accepted

Note: $**p < 0.01$; $*p < 0.05$

Research Hypotheses and Findings:

Hypothesis 1: Students' access to social media has a significant influence on students' academic performance.

This hypothesis was accepted because the significance value (0.002) is less than 0.05 showing that students' access to social media has a significant influence on students' academic performance.

This finding is consistent with the work done by Olubiyi (2012). That is, nearly all students mainly remain online even during lecture halls and classrooms due to their intense use of social media. Some students have been seen to be constantly occupied with internet platforms like Facebook. Instead of scholarly research and educational activities, students spend their time mainly in making new connections and in pointless online conversations. As a result, they find less time spare for studies and therefore feel difficulties in academics.

Hypothesis 2: Social media usage has a significant impact on students' academic performance.

This hypothesis is accepted because the significance value is found less than 0.05. This indicates that social media usage has a significant impact on students' academic performance.

The result from the study conducted by Shafiq and Parveen (2023) underscored the significance of utilizing social media as a tool for sharing knowledge and fostering collaborative learning environments. Moreover, the study highlighted that students who actively engage with social media not only benefit academically but also experience notable enhancements in their overall learning outcomes. This suggests that effective utilization of social media can serve as a valuable adjunct to traditional educational methods, facilitating deeper engagement and knowledge acquisition among students.

Hypothesis 3: Social media addiction has a significant influence on student's academic performance.

The hypothesis was accepted because the significance value (0.032) is less than 0.05 which implies that there is a significant influence of social media addictiveness on students' academic performance and the hypothesis claim is correct. This explains that most of the student's life revolves around social media and they spend a lot of time on several social media networks. For example, Sumuer and Kaşıkcı (2022) investigated the role of smart phones in college students' mind-wandering during learning. In the quantitative phase, data from 402 college students were analyzed to assess the extent to which smart phone addiction predicts mind-wandering among students. Results from a simple linear regression analysis revealed that smart phone addiction accounted for 26% of the variance in students' level of mind-wandering.

Hypothesis 4: Age has a significant impact on social media usage.

The fourth hypothesis stated that age has a significant impact on social media usage. Similar results are also drawn from the work of Lewis (2008) that unlike the older generation who solely depends on newspapers and televisions for information, the younger generation is predominantly using social media in their daily lives for the sake of gathering facts and stay up to date.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was carried out at the University of Chitral for the investigation of impact of social media usage on students' academic performance. The study used a descriptive survey research

Impact of Social Media on Students' Academic Performance: A Case Study of University of Chitral

design. From the 1000 undergraduate students in the population, a sample of 243 students was randomly selected at confidence interval of 95%. An adopted Likert-style measure named "Students' Academic Performance and Social Media Questionnaire" was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics of percentage and frequency counts was used for analyzing the collected data. Regression analysis was used for testing the hypothesis. The data was run through using SPSS software. The findings demonstrated that: 1). Students' academic performance is significantly impacted by their being exposed to social media networks. Similarly 2). Student interaction with social media has an important effect on their academic performance. 3). Students' academic performance is significantly impacted by their addiction to social media. Moreover, the study found that students' usage of social media networks varies significantly by age.

The recommendations related to this study are given below which will be helpful in mitigating the negative effects of excessive social media usage and promotes a healthy balance.

- Parents and teachers should be encouraged to monitor and guide their children and students in use of social media, emphasizing the importance of creating supportive environment for academic activities.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study's findings may lack generalizability and may not accurately represent the broader population beyond the University of Chitral. The small sample size limits the external validity of the results, making it challenging to apply the findings to a larger or more diverse population. Due to less availability of time, it may not capture the diversity of perspectives or experiences that could be presented in a more extensive and varied sample.

2. The use of convenience sampling introduces a selection bias, as participants were chosen based on their availability or accessibility. This can compromise the study's external validity and limit the ability to make broader inferences about the population. The findings may not be representative of the entire target population; as certain groups or perspectives may be overrepresented or underrepresented in the sample.

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