

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE UNDERGRADUATES OF SEUSL.

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the impact of social media on the academic performance of the undergraduates of SEUSL. Population of this study comprised 60 first year male and female students from the faculty of Islamic studies and Arabic Languages(FIA) of SEUSL. The total population was selected through random sampling and a mixed method approach was used to conduct this research. Social media is a popular tool for communication among undergraduates of SEUSL. However, excessive social media usage can raise questions whether academic performance is affected. This research explores this question by conducting a questionnaire survey and focused group interview on undergraduates of SEUSL in regard to the impact of social media usage on the academic performance. The questionnaire was used to explore which social media network is the most popular among the undergraduates of SEUSL. Moreover, what students' perception on their social media usage and factors besides social media usage which negatively and positively affect academic performance.

Keywords: Social media, Academic performance, undergraduates

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the use of Social Media has become enormously popular especially among the younger generation due to the ubiquitous access to handy devices such as smartphones, i-phones, black berry, tablets and i-pad which are connected to the internet anywhere and anytime. Social Media is a must-wanted trend and plays an imperative role on people's lives. Meanwhile the growing emphasis on the use of social media by University students cannot be underestimated. It has become part and parcel of every student's academic span. Social media is not a media. The key is to listen, engage and build relationships(David Alston). In literature, the term Social Media has different connotations. Some researchers define it as "socially interactive technologies" for example; instant

messaging or text messaging or other networks which offer fast –paced, inexpensive online communication which allows social interaction to start and evolve (Brian et.al,2006).

The rapid growth of internet, specifically social media networks potentially has imperative influences on students' lives. Academic excellence plays an integral part in an individual's life. Greater consideration is emphasized on academic enhancement because of the role it plays in every individual's life to accomplish a successful and respectful life which are concerned in every part of the world. The term "Social Media Addiction" is highly addressed in recent times as a result of its excessive usage. It is perceived that academic performance will suffer when spending too much time on social sites such as Facebook, twitter as valuable study time is lost. (Kubey,2001). It has been observed that students devote more attention and time to social media than they do for their studies and they cannot pass their examinations well if they do not learn (Osharive,2015).

Accordingly, the current study is important to be worthy of attention because, the students' behavior constantly changes as a result of highly depending on the latest innovations in cooperated in Social Networking sites. besides the traditional tools, the students tend to get attracted towards the fashions of adopting latest technological means at a quick pace. Consequently, there is an urge to identify whether Social Media is improving or crippling the academic performance of the university students. This research therefore necessitates the impact of social media on the academic performance of the undergraduates of SEUSL. Hence, the study investigates the relations between the social media usage and academic performance of the SEUSL undergraduates. Moreover, the paper is aimed to extend awareness on how the undergraduates of SEUSL use Social Media and how Social Media can best support to accomplish higher academic achievements. Thus, the objectives and research questions of the study can be identified as follows.

1.1 Objectives

1. To analyze the students' perspectives about using social media for improving academic performance.
2. To investigate the impacts and relationship between social media and the academic performance of the undergraduates of SEUSL.

1.2 Research questions

1. How do the undergraduates of SEUSL use social media for academic purposes?
2. What are the impacts and relationship between social media and the academic performance of undergraduates?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media employs mobile and web based technology to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and community share, co-create, discuss and modifies user-generated content (Kietzmannn, 2012). Social media is a phrase being tossed around a lot. It is a website that does not just give you information but interact with you while giving you information. It is a group of interest based application that allows the creation and exchange of users generated content. According to Nielsen (2010), students continue to spend more time on the social media than any site.

There are six different classes of social media (Kaplan and Haenlien, 2010).

1. Collaborative project.
2. Blogs and micro blogs.
3. Content communities.
4. Social networking site.
5. Virtual game world.
6. Virtual second world.

When social media is used in combination with mobile devices, it is called mobile social media. Different researchers have conducted research to ascertain the influence of social media on users; for example, Moon (2011) in a study on “Impact of Facebook on undergraduate academic performance, averred that social media have negative impact on students. According to the result, the more students use Facebook, the more it affects their academic performance.

Also the study conducted by Maya(2015), revealed that media use contribute to lower academic performance, low self-perceptions and less interest in college oriented carriers. According to Nicole, (2007), students and teenagers have especially recognized these social media platforms to be able to contact their peers, share information, reinvent their personas and showcase their social live. Studies have also revealed that social media affects students’ use of English. They tend to use short-handwriting to chat with friends and get used to it thereby replicating the same errors during examinations (Obi, Adamu and Sala’at, 2012).

Though social media can increase student learning through student interactions, challenges arise when social media are incorporated into an academic use. The assumption that students are familiar with and agreeable to using certain types of social media can cause educators to inadvertently fail to provide the resources or encouragement necessary to support student usage and learning (Cole, 2009; Valjataga & Fiedler, 2009).

According to Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010) social network websites grab attention of the students and then diverts it towards non-educational and inappropriate actions including useless chatting. The internet is no doubt evolution of technology but specifically social networks are extremely unsafe for teenagers, social networks become hugely common and well-known in past few years (Trusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels, 2009).

3. METHODOLOGY

The sample for this study was drawn from the population of first year, FIA undergraduates of SEUSL. Sixty male and female undergraduates were randomly selected. The researchers designed a set of questionnaire in which responses were collected from the

respondents. The questionnaires were personally administrated by the researchers from various students in their lecture halls for effective feedback. The researchers made use of SPSS analysis.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section of the paper deals with the summary of the research findings conducted for the purpose of investigating the research questions.

Table 1 illustrates the social media sites that the undergraduates of SEUSL commonly use.

Table 1:

Social media	Percentage
Facebook	24%
WhatsApp	93%
Twitter	10%
YouTube	60%
Instagram	20%

It was found that WhatsApp is the most popular social media used among the undergraduates of SEUSL. The results clearly show that 93% of undergraduates use WhatsApp mainly as their social networking site. Other major social media used by the students is YouTube and it is used by 60% of the students . While comparing these two, other social media like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are scarcely used by the SEUSL undergraduates.

Table 2:

Items	1 hour or less	2-3 hours	4-5 hours	Above 6 hours
Time spend for social media	4 (7%)	20 (33%)	22 (37%)	14 (23%)
Time spend for academics	14 (23%)	14 (23%)	8 (14%)	24 (40%)
Time spend on social media for academic purposes	22 (37%)	36 (60%)	2 (3%)	-

Considering the data analysis on table 2, it manifests how much time do the students spend on social media, the time they spend for academics and how much time do they spend on social media for academic purposes. According to the findings, majority of the students spent about 4-5 hours per day on social media. 23% of students spent above 6 hours. Least number of students use social media for an hour or less. On the other hand 40% of the students spent their time on academics above 6 hours per day. While considering the time they spend on social media for academic

purposes, most of the students spent about 2-3 hours and a least number of students use it for 4-5 hours. The survey which was collected from the students clearly explains that majority of the students use social media for both personal and academic purposes.

Table 3:

(SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NA/ND=Neither Agree nor Disagree, D= Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree)

Statements	SA	A	NA/ND	D	SD	Total
I believe that I can enhance my academic activities using social media.	32 (54%)	8 (13%)	-	20 (33%)	-	60 (100%)
Usage of social media affects my academic life.	10 (17%)	30 (50%)	14 (23%)	-	6 (10%)	60 (100%)
Social media distracts my concentration on studies.	20 (33%)	12 (20%)	16 (27%)	12 (20%)	-	60 (100%)
I share my academic notes via social media.	36 (60%)	18 (30%)	6 (10%)	-	-	60 (100%)
Social media usage is a waste of time.	24 (40%)	20 (33%)	6 (10%)	10 (17%)	-	60 (100%)
I will not perform well in my academics even I stop using social media.	7 (12%)	26 (43%)	14 (23%)	6 (10%)	7 (12%)	60 (100%)
I can't academically perform well without social media usage.	8 (14%)	18 (30%)	14 (23%)	20 (33%)	-	60 (100%)
Social media motivates me to perform well on studies.	12 (20%)	34 (57%)	10 (17%)	4 (6%)	-	60 (100%)
I use social media to improve my English language skills	28 (47%)	20 (33%)	4 (7%)	8 (13%)	-	60 (100%)
I watch academic lessons on YouTube.	24 (40%)	12 (20%)	12 (20%)	12 (20%)	-	60 (100%)

Table three indicates how do the undergraduates use social media for academic purposes and their opinions about using social media. It shows that 32(54%) of the respondents strongly agree that using social media enhances their academic performance while 20(33%) of the participants response disagree.

Social Media is an utmost necessity for bringing the world under a fingertip. With the upraise of this technology, people accomplish their needs at a high pace. It is obvious that, the positive and negative effects of social media usage are certainly inevitable. University students show greater interest on using social media to join the virtual world of communication. Parents, teachers and education researchers have paid a considerable attention on discussing the advantages and disadvantages of frequency of use and time spent on social media. There are research studies, which identify social media is beneficial in the sense that it facilitates teacher-student and student-student interaction and learning improvement both inside and outside the classroom. Nevertheless, there are certain studies which are against the use of social media by students because, social

media cuts short the time of the students and thus effects their academic performance. One of the objectives of this research is to investigate the impacts and relationship between social media and the academic performance of undergraduates.

As per the current research findings, it is evident that most of the SEUSL undergraduates use social media especially WhatsApp for sharing course materials, academic notes, instructions, explanations, academic announcements, notices and schedules etc. Further, social media is used as a tool to maintain interpersonal and academic relationship between the students, it is a fine medium for motivating the students to accomplish better standards in the learning process effectively. Moreover, social media plays a vital role in promoting collaborative abilities among the undergraduates which is apparent as majority of the students have been joint WhatsApp groups to share immediate information with customized participants (girls only, boys only, batch only, society only).

It was conspicuous from a focused group interview with FIA undergraduates that the university lecturers encourage the students to use social media sites in their academic activities such as working on assignments, presentations and providing continuous feedback as necessary. Furthermore, from the focused group interview with undergraduates, the respondents mentioned that, certain undergraduates take part in group chats including their lecturers incharge for specific subjects like English, ICT and so on. The lecturer and the students share supplementary materials on Social Media groups relevant to the topics learned in the classroom. Simultaneously, the students get the opportunity to clear their doubts on the subject area.

Although the role of Social Media enhances active participation, speedy information delivery, easy access to resources, these desired performance cannot be fully attained unless the Social Media usage is not carefully proctored. The current research identifies one of the negative effects of social media is that, it distracts the students' concentration on studies. The pop up notifications deviate the concentration on studies. Table 3 shows it clearly that 33% of the participants response strongly agree to this statement. The over dependency on social media debilitates the capacity of retaining information. Moreover, using shorter forms while chatting tend to create a negative environment on the side of writing proficiency. Further, proper internet connectivity, cost of data packages and cost of electronic devices are some other common challenges encountered on using social media.

Table 3 explains that 40% of the participants strongly agree that social media usage is a waste of time. Considering this issue the following is a statement given by a participant in a focused group interview:

"I often use social media for my academic purposes such as sharing notes, images and so on. Though it is useful most of the time it distracts me from my studies. Especially during my exam periods as I involve in my studies the notifications from social media pull me towards it and then my whole study is spoiled. So I think that it is a waste of time."

One of the other drawbacks of social media on academic performance was spotted during the time of interviewing an invigilator. The excessive involvement on social media has led to bring out certain mal practices, amidst which the most challenging one is that, it has promoted cheating culture especially during test circumstances. the students use social media especially WhatsApp as a

answer sharing tool during their final examinations. Also he/she mentioned that students use this trick even in their mid-term tests. This is one of the most dangerous things about using social media on academic activities.

5. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the impact of social media on the academic performance of FIA students of SEUSL. As a conclusion it is believed that students use social media for their personal and academic usage. Most of the students use WhatsApp rather than other social media. However the usage of social media gives some benefits to their academic activities such as sharing academic related notes photos and videos. There is a possibility to engage in academic related discussion via social media with their peers and lectures. It would be beneficial to use social media for academic purpose. In addition, the study revealed that there are some negative impact on their academic performance because of the excessive and improper usage of social media. Most of the respondents revealed that academic distraction is the major problem of accessing social media sites. Although, the undergraduates spend comparatively less amount of time for academic purposes, they tend to lose vast amount of time on other non-academic conditions.

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