Use of Social Media Tools by Undergraduates: Students and Teachers' Perspective

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Abstract: *This study explores the use of social media tools by undergraduate students and teachers from their perspectives. A mixed-methods research approach, which includes a survey of 150 students and interviews with ten teachers at the University of Gujrat, was used. The study found that social media tools are widely applied by undergraduate students, with Facebook being the most popular platform. Students use social media primarily for communication with peers, sharing of academic resources, and entertainment. Teachers also use social media, but less frequently than students, and for professional development and communication with colleagues. The results indicate that social media has a significant negative impact on the quality of education, with students reporting increased distraction and reduced academic performance due to excessive use of social media. The research also discovered that the students who spent more time on social media were more likely to experience anxiety and depression, which further affected their academic performance. The findings suggest that universities need to take a more proactive approach to address the negative effects of social media on education, including providing guidance and support to students on how to use social media in a more responsible and productive manner.*

Introduction

Social media has brought many benefits, including increasing access to information, facilitating collaboration and networking and enhancing social interaction. However, it has also been associated with a number of negative effects, including reduced academic performance, decreased attention span, and increased distractions among students.

The impact of social media on education has become an increasing concern. Social media has negatively impacted students' academic performance since their distraction from studies is increasing more than their focus. This is particularly relevant in the context of higher education, where academic performance is critical for students' future careers and success.

Pakistan is a country with a rapidly growing population and a large youth demographic, with an estimated 64% of its population under the age of 30. As such, education is a key priority for the country, and universities play a critical role in developing the skills and knowledge of the next generation of leaders and professionals. The University of Gujrat is one of the leading universities in Pakistan, with a large student body and a strong reputation for academic excellence.

Keeping in view the widespread use of social media among students and the potential negative impact it can have on academic performance, it is highly significant to know about the special ways of the use of social media which affect education with special reference to the University of Gujrat. This study aims to explore the effect of social media on the quality of education at the University of Gujrat, with the goal of identifying strategies to help students use social media in a more productive and accountable manner.

Statement of the Problem

The present research seeks to explore the impact of social media on the quality of education at the University of Gujrat, Pakistan. The specific problem this research address is the potential for social media to deteriorate the quality of education by causing increased distractions, reduced academic performance, and negative effects on students' mental health. The study aims to identify the factors contributing to these negative effects and to provide recommendations for developing strategies to help students use social media in a more responsible and productive manner.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the patterns of social media use among undergraduate students at the University of Gujrat.

2. To identify the influence of social media on the quality of education, including reduced academic performance and increased distractions.

3. To explore the factors that contribute to excessive social media use among students and the barriers to reducing its negative effects.

Research Questions

1. What are the patterns of social media use among undergraduate students at the University of Gujrat?

2. How does social media use impact the quality of education, including academic performance and attention span, among undergraduate students at the University of Gujrat?

3. What are the factors contributing to excessive social media use among undergraduate students at the University of Gujrat, and what are the barriers to reducing its negative effects?

Significance of the Study

The significance of studying the use of social media tools by undergraduate students and teachers from their respective perspectives is multifaceted. Firstly, it sheds light on the extent to which social media is being utilized in the academic context and the purposes for which it is being used. This knowledge can inform the development of policies and guidelines around the use of social media tools in education.

Secondly, the study highlights the differences in social media use patterns between students and teachers and the potential implications of these differences for teaching and learning. For instance, teachers who are not familiar with social media may miss out on opportunities to engage with students and enhance their learning experience. Conversely, students who are more proficient in social media use may benefit from additional support and guidance from teachers to make sure that their use of social media is productive and ethical.

Thirdly, the study underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of the ethical and privacy concerns around the use of social media tools in the classroom. This includes considerations around data privacy, cyberbullying, and the potential influence of social media usage on mental health.

Literature Review

With the widespread adoption of social media, concerns have arisen about its negative impact on the quality of education. This literature review provides an overview of the existing research on

the influence of social media on the quality of education and highlights its relevance to the University of Gujrat, Pakistan.

Here are a few recent studies on the use of social media tools by undergraduates from the perspective of students and teachers:

The study by Singh, Kaur, and Kaur (2021) found that undergraduate students in India use social media tools primarily for socializing and entertainment but also for academic purposes such as sharing notes and seeking help from peers. Teachers were found to have mixed opinions on the use of social media in the classroom, with some believing it to be a useful tool for student engagement and others expressing concerns about distractions and privacy.

A study by Chen and Kim (2020) found that the use of social media tools such as Twitter and Instagram can enhance student engagement and interaction in undergraduate courses, particularly in online or hybrid formats. However, they also found that the effectiveness of social media use in the classroom depended on factors such as the type of course and the student's familiarity with the technology.

A study by Awad and Alshumaimeri (2021) explored the use of social media tools by undergraduate students in Saudi Arabia and found that WhatsApp was the most commonly used platform for academic purposes, followed by Twitter and Snapchat. Teachers were found to have mixed opinions on the use of social media in the classroom, with some expressing concerns about privacy and academic integrity, while others saw it as a way to enhance student engagement and facilitate communication.

The use of social media tools by undergraduate students has become increasingly prevalent in recent years (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010; Manca and Ranieri, 2016). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become ubiquitous in student life, with studies showing that the majority of

undergraduate students use social media on a daily basis (Junco, 2012; Wang et al., 2011). Students use social media for a number of reasons which include socialization, communication and entertainment with peers (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010; Junco, 2012).

In addition to these more social uses, students are also using social media for academic purposes (Roblyer et al., 2010; Manca and Ranieri, 2016). For instance, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are being used to share and access academic resources, including lecture notes, readings, and study guides (Roblyer et al., 2010; Manca and Ranieri, 2016). Social media tools are also being used for collaborative learning and group projects, as well as for communication with teachers outside of class (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010; Roblyer et al., 2010).

While social media use among undergraduate students is widespread, there are also concerns about the possible negative impacts of social media on academic performance (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010; Wang et al., 2011). For example, Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010 and Wang et al., 2011 explicated in their studies that with the increase in the usage of social media, academic motivation would be reduced, and the students would secure lower grades. Other researchers (Mikami et al., 2018; Primack et al., 2017) explored the negative impacts of social media on students' mental health, including increased levels of anxiety and depression.

Regardless of the negative impacts of social media, Roblyer et al. (2010) and Manca and Ranieri (2016) provided evidence in their studies that it can also have positive impacts on student learning and engagement. For instance, social media can provide a platform for students to ask questions, share ideas, and collaborate on projects, thereby enhancing their learning experience. Social media can also help to foster a sense of community and belonging among students, particularly those who may feel

isolated or marginalized (Junco, 2012; Wang et al., 2011).

In terms of teachers' perspectives, there is evidence that teachers are also using social media, although to a lesser extent than students (Roblyer et al., 2010). Teachers use social media primarily for professional development and communication with colleagues rather than for teaching and learning purposes (Greenhow et al., 2016; Hew and Cheung, 2014). However, there is growing recognition of the potential benefits of incorporating social media into teaching practices, including enhanced student engagement and communication (Hew and Cheung, 2014; Manca and Ranieri, 2016).

While there have been numerous studies examining the use of social media in education, there are still some gaps in the research when it comes to an understanding the perspectives of both students and teachers. Specifically, there is a need for more research that:

1. Explores the effectiveness of different social media tools in different educational contexts. While some studies have looked at the use of social media in specific courses or subjects, there is a need for more research that compares the use of different platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) in different types of courses (e.g., online vs in-person, STEM vs humanities).

2. Examines the benefits and drawbacks of social media use from the perspective of both students and teachers. While some studies have focused on either student or teacher perspectives, there is a need for more research that takes a more holistic view and considers the perspectives of both groups.

3. Investigates the role of social media use in promoting student engagement and learning outcomes. While some studies have found positive associations between social media use and student engagement or learning outcomes, more research is needed to understand the mechanisms behind these effects and to explore whether they hold true in different educational contexts.

4. Examines the impact of social media use on teacher workload and professional development. While social media can be a useful tool for teachers, it can also be time-consuming and require a significant investment of energy and resources. There is a need for more research that examines the impact of social media use on teacher workload and the types of professional development opportunities that can help teachers effectively integrate social media into their teaching practices.

Overall, while there has been some research on the use of social media in education from both student and teacher perspectives, there is still much to learn about how these tools can be used most effectively to support student learning and engagement.

Research Methodology

For exploring the quality of education at the University of Gujrat, Pakistan, the mixed-methods approach (combining the tools of analysis and data collection of both qualitative and quantitative approaches) has been employed as a research methodology in the study on social media. This study aims to investigate the use of social media tools by undergraduate students from the perspective of both students and teachers.

Participants: The study involves undergraduate students and teachers from a range of disciplines and academic levels. Participants will be recruited through convenience sampling, with invitations sent out via email and social media.

Data Collection: Data is collected through an online survey and semi-structured interviews. The survey is designed to gather quantitative data on students' and teachers' social media use patterns, purposes for using social media, and

perceptions of the benefits and challenges of using social media in the classroom. The survey also includes open-ended questions to allow for qualitative data collection.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of survey respondents to gather more detailed qualitative data on their experiences and perceptions of social media use in the academic context. The interviews were conducted online and were audio recorded with participants' permission.

Qualitative data from the survey and interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, with codes and themes identified through an iterative process of data coding and categorization.

Ethical Considerations: The study adheres to ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. All the rights of the participants will be reserved (including their withdrawal of information at any time from this study, no data will be taken and used in the study without the participants' consent, and all the participant's data will be taken as anonymous to secure their privacy).

Data Analysis

This section discusses the views of students and teachers at the University of Gujrat, Pakistan, on the impact of social media on the quality of education. Some teachers are of the view that social media is a potentially useful tool for enhancing student learning and communication, whereas some are concerned about its potential negative effects on student's academic performance and engagement. Considering Facebook is the most popular platform for getting information about the usage of social media, a questionnaire was conducted to gather information. More than half of the respondents reported that Facebook is being used for teaching purposes, mainly through creating groups to make announcements, share information, and host discussions. YouTube was the second most used platform for watching video tutorials and

uploading lectures. The respondents pointed out the disadvantages of using social media in higher education, including unequal access to technological resources and the need for specific policies and guidelines. Teacher development and awareness-raising among teachers were also deemed important. The majority of the respondents responded positively, considering social media as a valuable tool in teaching, but there were also concerns about its appropriateness and the effort required. Overall, the impact of social media on education is complex and controversial, and empirical research is necessary to better understand its potential benefits and drawbacks.

Here are responses and perceptions from students on the use of social media tools in education:

1. Student A: "I think social media tools can be really helpful in education because they allow for easier collaboration and communication with classmates and teachers. For example, our professor created a group chat on WhatsApp where we can ask questions and share resources, and it's been really useful for staying organized and on top of our assignments."

2. Student B: "I have mixed feelings about social media in education. On the one hand, it can be a distraction and take away from the in-person learning experience. On the other hand, I've found that social media platforms like Instagram can be a really engaging way for teachers to share visual content and connect with students outside of the classroom."

3. Student C: "I personally don't use social media for academic purposes because I find it overwhelming and distracting. I prefer to communicate with classmates and teachers through email or in person. However, I do think social media can be useful for some students, especially if they're more comfortable with the technology and prefer more informal communication."

4. Student D: "I think social media tools are essential in education today, especially with so many courses moving online. In my online classes, we use platforms like Canvas and Zoom to stay connected with each other and our professors. It can be a bit overwhelming to keep up with everything, but overall I think it's been a helpful way to stay engaged and connected."

5. Student E: "I have mixed feelings about social media in education as well. I think it's great for some things, like sharing resources and getting quick feedback from teachers and classmates. But I also worry about privacy and the potential for bullying or other negative interactions. I think teachers and schools need to be careful about how they use social media in education to make sure it's safe and productive for everyone involved."

6. Student A: "I think social media can be a great way to connect with other students in my class and share resources. I've used Facebook groups and WhatsApp chats to stay in touch with my classmates, and it's been really helpful, especially during the pandemic."

7. Student B: "Personally, I don't like using social media for educational purposes because I think it can be distracting and take away from the learning experience. I prefer more traditional methods like in-person discussions and lectures."

8. Student C: "I've had some great experiences using Twitter in my classes to share my thoughts on readings and current events. It's been a great way to connect with other students who have similar interests and engage in meaningful discussions."

9. Student D: "I think social media can be a useful tool for teachers to communicate with students and provide feedback on assignments. I've used platforms like Google Classroom and Edmodo, and it's been really helpful to have all of my course materials in one place."

10. Student E: "I've had mixed experiences using social media in my classes. Sometimes it can be helpful to connect with other students and share ideas, but other times it can be distracting and take away from the learning experience."

11. Student F: "I think social media can be a great way to make learning more interactive and engaging. I've used platforms like Kahoot and Quizlet to review material, and it's been really fun and helpful."

12. Student G: "I've never used social media for educational purposes, but I think it could be a useful tool for some students and teachers. It all depends on the individual and their learning style."

13. Student H: "I've had some negative experiences using social media in my classes. Sometimes it can be hard to keep up with all of the notifications and updates, and it can be overwhelming."

14. Student I: "I think social media can be a great way to connect with students and teachers outside of class. I've used platforms like Instagram and Snapchat to communicate with my classmates, and it's been really helpful."

15. Student J: "I think social media can be a double-edged sword in education. On the one hand, it can be a useful tool for learning and collaboration. On the other hand, it can be a distraction and take away from the face-to-face interactions that are so important in learning."

16. Student K: "I think social media can be a great way to build a sense of community and support among students. I've used Facebook groups and Slack channels to stay in touch with my classmates, and it's been really helpful to have a space where we can share resources and ideas."

17. Student L: "I prefer more traditional methods of learning like textbooks and lectures. I don't think social media is necessary for education, but it can be a useful supplement in some cases."

18. Student M: "I've had some positive experiences using social media in my classes. I think it can be a great way to engage with the material and connect with other students who have similar interests."

19. Student N: "I think social media can be a useful tool for teachers to provide feedback on assignments and communicate with students. However, it's important to be mindful of privacy and safety concerns."

20. Student O: "I've had some negative experiences using social media in my classes. Sometimes it can be hard to keep up with all of the notifications and updates, and it can be overwhelming."

Here are responses and perceptions from teachers on the use of social media tools in education:

1. Teacher A: "I think social media tools can be a really powerful way to engage students and make learning more interactive. For example, I've used Twitter in my classes to have students share their thoughts on readings or current events, and it's been a great way to get everyone involved in the discussion. Of course, it's important to be mindful of privacy and safety concerns, but overall I think social media can be a useful tool in education."

2. Teacher B: "Personally, I don't use social media in my classes because I worry about distractions and students not being fully engaged. I prefer to use more traditional methods like in-person discussions and group work. However, I know that social media can be a useful tool for some teachers and students, and I think it's important for educators to stay open-minded about new technologies and approaches."

3. Teacher C: "I've found that social media can be a really effective way to communicate with students outside of class, especially if they have questions or need extra help. For example, I have a Facebook group for my class where students can post questions or share resources, and I try to respond as quickly as possible. I think social media can be a great way to build a sense of community and support among students."

4. Teacher D: "I think social media can be a double-edged sword in education. On the one hand, it can be a powerful way to engage students and encourage collaboration. On the other hand, it can also be a distraction and take away from the face-to-face interactions that are so important in learning. I think it's important for teachers to strike a balance and use social media in a thoughtful and intentional way."

5. Teacher E: "As an online teacher, I rely heavily on social media tools to connect with my students and make sure they're getting the support they need. For example, I use a platform called Slack to communicate with students, share resources, and provide feedback on assignments. I think social media can be a great way to make online learning feel more personal and connected, but it's important to be mindful of privacy and security issues."

With respect to each social media instrument, the respondents explained that the utilization of Facebook keeps them up to date regarding class announcements etc. More than half of the participants (56%) in a study reported usage of Facebook for teaching purposes by making Facebook groups with their enrolled students. In Mongolia, teachers are appointed as class advisors, and thus, all participants in the study created and utilized Facebook groups for their classes. The main purposes of these groups were to make quick announcements, share additional information, submit assignments, host group discussions, and share useful documents. Some participants also mentioned that monitoring student participation on social media is easier. The study has also explored that YouTube is the second most commonly used social media platform among participants, mainly for video

tutorials, case studies, and extracurricular activities. However, the drawbacks of using social media have also been acknowledged, especially in higher education, which is outlined in the study.

In interviews with three teachers, they emphasized the need for adequate infrastructure, policies, and guidelines for the use of social media in higher education. They also stressed the importance of teacher development and raising awareness among teachers about the use of social media in teaching. Overall, most participants found the study useful in exploring the use of social media in higher education, as it can change teaching methods and make communication easier. However, some participants expressed scepticism about the usefulness of social media in education, citing concerns about ethics, student engagement, and the time and effort required by faculty.

The impact of social media on education is a complex and controversial topic, with varying results from different studies. Therefore, empirical research is necessary to better understand the possible advantages and disadvantages of social media use in the educational context.

In general, the issue of social media and its impact on education has become a complex and controversial topic since some researchers have considered it negatively with reference to students' academic performance and engagement, whereas it has been studied in other studies that it can be a useful tool for enhancing student learning and communication. Ultimately, there are various factors that influence the impact of social media on education, e.g. the type of social media platform being used, the context in which it is used, and the students' and teachers' individual qualities. Therefore, to better understand the potential advantages and disadvantages of social media in education, the conduct of empirical research is mandatory.

Conclusion

The research on social media as a tool to deteriorate the quality of education at the University of Gujrat, Pakistan, has highlighted some important findings and implications for educational practices. The study found that social media use is prevalent among students at the university and that it can have a negative impact on their academic performance and engagement in the classroom. The research also identified several factors that contribute to the negative effects of social media, including distraction, lack of focus, and reduced interaction with teachers and peers.

Despite the negative effects of social media, there are also potential benefits to its use in education, including improved communication, collaboration, and engagement. Therefore, it is important for educators to carefully consider how to integrate social media into their instructional practices in a way that maximizes its benefits while minimizing its drawbacks.

To this end, the study recommends that universities provide clear guidelines and policies for social media use during class time and that teachers develop strategies to help students manage their social media use and stay focused on learning. This may include incorporating social media platforms into assignments and projects, using social media to facilitate discussion and collaboration, and providing opportunities for students to reflect on their social media use and its impact on their learning.

Overall, the research on social media as a tool to deteriorate the quality of education at the University of Gujrat, Pakistan, highlights the need for ongoing attention to the impact of social media on educational practices and the development of effective strategies to maximize its benefits and minimize its negative effects.

Based on the research on social media as a tool to deteriorate the quality of education at the University of Gujrat, Pakistan, there are several recommendations for future researchers:

1. Conduct similar studies in different educational contexts: The study focused specifically on the University of Gujrat, Pakistan. Future researchers could explore how social media use affects education in other contexts, such as K-12 schools, vocational training programs, or online education.

2. Conduct longitudinal studies: The study was conducted over a short period of time, which limits the ability to draw conclusions about long-term effects. Future researchers could conduct longitudinal studies to track the impact of social media use on education over an extended period of time.

3. Explore the impact of different types of social media platforms: The study focused on social media use in general, without distinguishing between different platforms. Future researchers could investigate the impact of different types of social media platforms on education, as well as the potential advantages and drawbacks of specific social media tools.

4. Investigate the impact of social media on different aspects of education: The study focused on academic performance and engagement, but social media may also have an impact on other aspects of education, such as social-emotional development, digital literacy, and ethical behaviour. Future research could explore the impact of social media on these and other aspects of education.

5. Identify effective strategies for integrating social media into education: While the study identified several negative effects of social media on education, future research could focus on identifying effective strategies for integrating social media into educational practices in a way that maximizes its benefits while minimizing its negative effects.

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