

Effects of Social Media Platforms on the Academic Motivation, Research Skills and Academic Performance of University Students

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Abstract

The social media platforms playing a vital role in leisure, entertainment and learning. In this study, the effects of social media platforms (SMPs) on students' academic motivation, research skills and academic performance were investigated through descriptive and correctional research approach. The population of the existing study were the students at general universities of Punjab Province of Pakistan. Through simple random sampling technique, a sample size of 504 students was selected for data collection. On the basis of previous literature, a structured questionnaire based on five-point Likert scale was developed and the same was used for data collection after confirming its reliability and validity. The researcher collected data through online method (Google Form) and personally from the sampled universities. After it, the data were analyzed by using SPSS. The descriptive and inferential statistics were performed to explore answers of the research objectives. Results discovered a moderate positive relationship among social media platforms and students' academic motivation. Results revealed a high positive relationship among social media platforms and students' research skills and academic performance. It is recommended that in order to enhance students' learning, teachers should encourage students to utilize social media platforms for academic purposes beside entertainment.

Key Words

Social Media Platforms, Academic Motivation, Research Skills, Academic Performance

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How to Cite

Tabassum, S., Aslam, M. O., Abbas, Q. (2025). Effects of Social Media Platforms on the Academic Motivation, Research Skills and Academic Performance of University Students. *The Knowledge*, 4(4), 52-59.
<https://doi.org/10.55737/tk/2k25d.44104>

Introduction

Today, we are living in an environment full of complex technologies that are changing our lives in every field. In this era, people communicate not only in person but also through social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, as well as many others. Social media has developed as an essential component of human life in this digital era (Kemp, 2020; Statista, 2020). In September 2024, there were 3.07 billion active Facebook users (Blachnio et al., 2024). Social media platforms are known as interactive technologies in this technological period. The main purpose of social media platforms is to provide facilitation for

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the creation as well as transfer of contents, ideas, interest, and various other kinds of sentiments through online communities and networks (Obar & Wildman, 2015). These statistics shows that social media platforms are playing a vital role in the life of most of the individuals around the globe.

According to Christian (2017), the term of “social media” is related with the platforms that are user-centric and enable collective activities. Social media is viewed as online facilitators of human networks, websites of people who increase social connectivity. The previous few decades have seen a sharp increase in the usage of new media applications, and not only are working people using them, but students and the education community are also using social media extensively (Vishranti & Prafulla, 2016). According to a 2015 Zambian survey, 71% of the people use the internet nearly every day, and 63% of them are college students (ICTA, 2015). Thus, it is pertinent to mention that the usage of internet for different purposes by the people is increasing day by day.

Social media is considered as a vital tool for connecting other people across the globe for sharing of knowledge, ideas and sentiments (Kind & Evans, 2015). The utilization of social media platforms for educational purposes have several advantage in the current digital environment. These social media platforms foster students’ engagement, facilitate students in order to share their knowledge, concepts and sentiments. In this case, social media becomes more than just a communication tool; it becomes an academic instrument that may stimulate original thought, encourage intellectual curiosity, and improve learning in general (Kind & Evans, 2015). Therefore, social media has great potential as an academic instrument even though it can frequently be an indicator of distractions for students. For both teachers and students, forming a balance between these two factors reducing distractions whereas optimizing learning potential is important.

Literature Review

Several specific social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and many others, were used by students, based to available literature on the use of social media platforms for academic purposes (Ojukwu, 2021). Social media usage in higher education institutions is growing daily. According to academics, the rise is caused by students using social media for both academic and personal purposes at higher education institutions. According to Santoveña-Casal (2019), social media adoption by instructors and students has a good effect on their academic achievement. Students are constantly monitoring their social media accounts, which indirectly enables them to participate in conversations, study, and share concepts, information, and expertise. Students now have more options to acquire new skills and knowledge.

According to Saini and Abraham (2019), Facebook significantly increases students’ engagement and learning achievement. According to Gallardo-Lopez and Lopez-Noguero (2020), the usage of social media platforms in educational setting promotes participatory learning, interaction and collective investigation. Social media platform like Twitter have the potential to stimulate students’ academic motivation, social interaction and promote common activities for enhancing educational practices among the students of higher education. Malay (2019) also discovered a positive effect of Instagram on students’ social adjustment and learning new skills. Orus et al. (2016) evaluated into how using YouTube affected students' satisfaction and learning outcomes. The results of the research demonstrated that learner-generated content is not frequently utilized on YouTube, regardless the platform's promise as an instructional resource. The results demonstrated that students' reported acquisition of cross-curricular competencies and academic performance were directly impacted by their involvement in the video creation process. According to Lopez-Carril et al. (2021), LinkedIn improves students' motivation, engagement, and performance. Additionally, Hamadi et al. (2022) found that using LinkedIn as an educational tool enhances students' collaborative learning. Furthermore, studies demonstrate that university students' behavior and academic

achievement are significantly impacted by their use of mobile devices and social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp (Aiyende & Omojola, 2021).

An investigation that was completed by Barton et al., (2021) through which they employed a survey with the help of a structured questionnaire and collected data from the both graduate and undergraduate university students. The main aim of their study was to investigate the relationship between social media and students' academic performance. Their study revealed that usage and attention of social media are significantly predicted academic performance. While Malik et al., (2020) conducted a study regarding usage of social media and its effect on students' academic performance and creativity and discovered that students' usage of social media is positively linked with their academic performance and creativity. Furthermore, Ramzan et al., (2023) discovered that social media use for academic purpose contribute to promote students' academic motivation.

According to a study completed by Hussain et al., (2023), most students agree or strongly agree that social media networking sites help them communicate with investigators, comprehend research content, stay up to date on research papers, understand recent developments in research, enhance research skills, and facilitate logical thinking and reasoning. According to the study, SNS can improve undergraduate students' research skills. It was recommended that students have been advised, nevertheless, to use social networking sites responsibly.

According to Tahir et al., (2024), social media makes it easier for students to access research articles, journals, and other academic resources; encourages learners to participate in research discussions; increases students' interest in conducting research; allows students to interact with peers for discussion on research-related topics; allows students to join academic groups and forums to improve their research collaboration; and allows students to receive feedback on their research work from peers through social media platforms. Tahir et al., (2024) investigated how social media affected students' ability to conduct research. They used a survey to engage university students. Their research indicates that social media platforms enable cooperative learning opportunities that provide university students with convenient access to a variety of scholarly materials, allowing them to delve deeper into their research and eventually enhance their academic achievement. Furthermore, recent studies completed by Ullah et al., (2025) and Chao et al., (2025) also discovered a positive relationship between social media and university students' academic performance.

Considering the above importance of usage of social media platform by learners for academic purposes, the current research aims to achieve the below research objectives:

Research Objectives

- (1) To investigate the effect of social media platforms on students' academic motivation,
- (2) To explore the effect of social media platforms on students' research skills.
- (3) To examine the effect of social media platforms on students' academic performance.

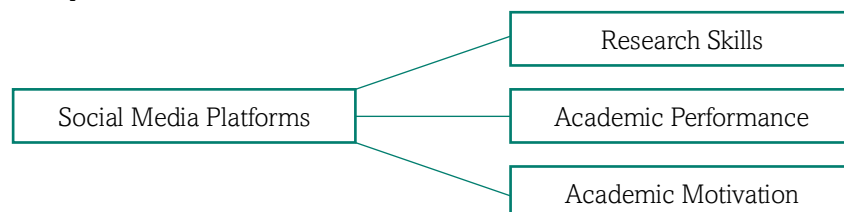
Research Methodology

This investigation used a descriptive and correlational research approach for the collection of data from the study's respondents. The students studying in the BS, MS/MPhil, and PhD programs in general universities located in the Punjab Province constituted the population. A simple random sampling approach was used to select a sample size of 504 students from twelve universities. A five-point Likert-based structured questionnaire with 44 statements was developed and the same was utilized for data collection. Before the application of the research instrument, its validity and reliability were checked through experts' opinions and pilot testing. The questionnaire's reliability statistics were ($\alpha = .88$). The entire data were collected by the researcher through an online technique (Google Form) and personal visits to the sample universities. Later, the collected data were coded, and SPSS software was

used to perform the descriptive and correlational tests to explore the relationship between the independent variables (Social Media Platforms) and dependent variables (Academic Motivation, Research Skills, and Academic Performance). This study used the following conceptual framework. The below conceptual framework shows the links between social media platforms and academic motivation, research skills and academic performance of the university students.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Results and Findings

Table 1

Type of the University Students

Types	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Public	293	58.1	58.1	58.1
Private	211	41.9	41.9	100.0
Total	504	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows that out of 504, 293 students, or 58.1%, belonged to public universities, while 211 students, or 41.9%, belonged to private universities involved in this research. These results discovered that students of public universities were higher in numbers as comparing to the students of private universities who involved in this research.

Table 2

Gender of the Students

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	217	43.1	43.1	43.1
Female	287	56.9	56.9	100.0
Total	504	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows that out of 504, students belonged to male gender were 217 or 43.1% and students belonged to female gender were 287 or 56.9% who participated in existing research. According to these outcomes, it is visible that most of the students were belonging to female gender as compared to male gender.

Table 3

Students' Degree Level

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
BS	314	62.3	62.3	62.3
MS/M.Phil.	128	25.4	25.4	87.7
PhD	62	12.3	12.3	100.0
Total	504	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 demonstrates that out of 504, students who were studying BS program were 314 or 62.3%, studying MS/MPhil were 128 or 25.4% and studying in PhD program were 62 or 12.3% who participated in this study. This

result revealed that students who were studying in BS programs were higher in numbers as compared to others who were studying in MS/MPhil and PhD programs.

Table 4

Relationship between Social Media Platforms and Students' Academic Motivation.

Variables		SMPs	Academic_ Motivation
SMPs	Pearson Correlation	1	.499**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	504	504
Academic_ Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.499**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	504	504

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The statistical outcomes show the correlational analysis that was performed to investigate the effect of social media platforms on students' academic motivation. According to the statistics in the table above, it is noticeable that social media platforms had a moderate positive relationship with students' academic motivation ($r = .499$, $p = .000 < .05$ & $.01$ level). Therefore, it has been revealed that when university students use social media platforms for academic purposes, their academic motivation might increase.

Table 5

Relationship between Social Media Platforms and Students' Research Skills

Variables		SMPs	Research_ Skills
SMPs	Pearson Correlation	1	.527**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	504	504
Research_ Skills	Pearson Correlation	.527**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	504	504

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above statistical outcomes show the correlational analysis that was performed to investigate the effect of social media platforms on students' research skills. According to the statistics in the table above, it is obvious that social media platforms had a high positive relationship with students' research skills ($r = .527$, $p = .000 < .05$ & $.01$ level). Therefore, it has been discovered that when university students use social media platforms for academic purposes, their research skills might increase.

Table 6

Relationship between Social Media Platforms and Students' Academic Performance

Variables		SMPs	Academic_ Performance
SMPs	Pearson Correlation	1	.502**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	504	504
Academic_ Performance	Pearson Correlation	.502**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	504	504

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above statistical outcomes show the correlational analysis that was performed to investigate the effect of social media platforms on students' research skills. According to the statistics in the table above, it is understandable that social media platforms had a high positive relationship with students' academic performance ($r = .502$, $p = .000 < .05$ & $.01$ level). Consequently, it has been exposed that when university students use social media platforms for academic purposes, their academic performance might increase.

Discussion on Findings

The existing research discovered that social media platforms had a moderate positive relationship with students' academic motivation, a high positive relationship with students' research skills, and a high positive relationship with students' academic performance. These results align with those of Tahir et al. (2024), who showed that social media platforms enable collaborative learning experiences that provide students at universities with easy access to a variety of academic resources, helping them to become more deeply immersed in their research and ultimately improving academic performance. This investigation also revealed a favorable correlation between students' research abilities and social media platforms. The present investigation is further supported by the findings of Hussain et al. (2023), who also shown that SNS can enhance undergraduate students' research abilities. Lastly, the findings of this study are consistent with those of Ramzan et al. (2023), who found that using social media for academic reasons helps to boost students' academic motivation. Additionally, the results of this study are consistent with those of a previous study by Mufassirin et al. (2025), which found that using social media platforms for academic purposes enhances learning outcomes and has a beneficial effect on students' academic performance.

Conclusions

The goal of the current investigation was to find out how social media platforms affect university students' academic performance, research abilities, and motivation. The results of this study showed that, when used only for academic reasons, social media plays a critical role in students' learning. This study found a moderate correlation between students' academic motivation and their use of social media. Additionally, this study found a strong favorable correlation between students' research abilities and academic achievement with social media platforms. According to this study, instructors at universities should encourage learners to utilize social media for both pleasure and learning purposes.

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