

Investigating the Impact of Social Media Usage on Academic Performance and Self-Esteem among University Students

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Abstract

This article examines how social media use influences Pakistani college students' educational success and vanity. Based on a 300-individual cross-sectional study, the findings display a sturdy inverse hyperlink among excessive social media use and educational success and vanity. The concept that immoderate social media use reasons mental suffering and educational disruptions is supported with the aid of using the reality that scholars who used social media greater regularly expressed decrease vanity and worse educational outcomes. The outcomes spotlight the need of virtual literacy tasks in faculty environments. There is dialogue at the implications for destiny study, legislators, and educators. The paper concludes that Pakistani university students' academic performance and self-esteem are negatively impacted by excessive social media use. To lessen these effects and use platforms for beneficial purposes, interventions that encourage digital literacy and conscious usage are crucial.

Key Words

Social Media Usage, Self-esteem, Academic Performance, University Students, Pakistan

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Introduction

Social media web websites like Facebook, Instagram, Tikor, and WhatsApp have turn out to be a crucial component of ordinary lifestyles with inside the virtual age, especially for university students. Overuse of those structures may be unfavorable despite the fact that they sell socializing, communication, and know-how sharing. An obsessive pressure to have interaction with virtual structures, regularly on the rate of different aspects of lifestyles, which include scholastic endeavors and mental well-being, is the hallmark of social media dependence (SMD).

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With an internet penetration of 39% in 2023 (Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, 2023), nearly 65% of Pakistani university college students use social media for greater than an hour each day (Tuck & Thompson, 2024). Ostic et al. (2021) and Safdar (2022) declare that this conduct is prompted via way of means of cultural dynamics in a collectivist society, in which strain from social comparisons and FOMO is improved via way of means of familial expectancies and community approval. Overuse has been related to worse self-esteem via mechanisms inclusive of social evaluation theory (Vogel et al., 2014) and worse normal instructional overall performance because of time displacement and distractions (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010).

Problem Statement

The trouble announcement emphasizes that even though social media allows teamwork, it regularly effects in procrastination, distractions, and bad self-perceptions, especially in Pakistan's annoying educational setting (UNESCO, 2012).

Research Question

The following research questions pertinent to the goal are addressed in this study:

1. How does Pakistani university students' use of social media affect their sense of self?
2. Is there a connection between poorer academic achievement and increased use of social media?

Hypothesis

Hypotheses tested include:

The following hypotheses have been tested:

1. Social media use and shallowness are negatively correlated.
2. Compared to decrease utilization, growing social media utilization is related to reduce shallowness.
3. Academic success, shallowness, and social media use are all negatively correlated.

Literature Review

Academic success and shallowness are extensively impacted with the aid of using social media use. Social contrast concept states that human beings check their cost with regards to idealized online personas, which regularly effects in detrimental self-perceptions (Vogel et al., 2014). For example, publicity to cautiously selected images on Instagram may lessen shallowness and frame picture satisfaction, especially in women (Fardouly et al., 2015). Constant publicity to FOMO exacerbates feelings of inadequacy (Przybylski et al., 2013; Tuck & Thompson, 2024).

Collectivist ideals in Pakistan, in which social approbation is incredibly valued, exacerbate those consequences. Cultural norms of modesty offer extra strain on girl students, making them prone to detrimental comparisons on social media web websites like Instagram (Ostic et al., 2021). According to studies, educational groups' use of WhatsApp promotes non-stop touch however detracts from teach (Safdar, 2022). Reduced educational consciousness has been related to TikTok utilization (Safdar, 2022).

Students regularly have decrease GPAs whilst social media use interferes with examine time. When human beings have interaction with many systems simultaneously, their interest is split, which hinders their capacity to concentrate, take part, and don't forget information. According to research carried out in Pakistan, young people in particularly related metropolitan regions usually showcase decrease ranges of shallowness.

There is a bad correlation among social media dependency and shallowness, consistent with each home and overseas research (Wilson et al., 2010). In collectivist societies like Pakistan, low shallowness agencies use systems extra to construct social capital, but they regularly revel in rejection anxiety (Steinfeld et al., 2008).

Academic development is negatively impacted via way of means of procrastination and distractibility (Rosen et al., 2013). However, planned software for collaboration can decorate outcomes (Veletsianos & Navarrete, 2012). In Pakistan, excessive utilization rates (e.g., 97% amongst clinical students) are related to insufficient examine consciousness.

Research gaps encompass cross-sectional designs, platform-unique effects, and a loss of consciousness on Pakistani college students (Gentile et al., 2017). This examine examines the effects in a Pakistani context to cope with them.

Theoretical Framework

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, (1986) serves because the theoretical foundation, highlighting the relationships among behavior (the use of social media), environment (on line systems), and private variables (shallowness). Academic motivation and self-efficacy are formed with the aid of using observational gaining knowledge of from idealized content. Furthermore, in keeping with social cognitive theory (SCT), man or woman elements like as character traits, demography, and help networks are essential in figuring out how social media impacts educational results and shallowness. It addresses the complicated connections among those factors and gives honest recommendation on how college students may make use of social media in a healthful manner to be triumphant academically (Bandura et al., 1986). Through humans looking others, SCT attracts interest to representatives who've measures, aspects, and repercussions.

Social media systems provide a mess of possibilities for observational gaining knowledge of due to the fact youngsters are continuously uncovered to the lives, achievements, and behaviors in their classmates and influencers. This come across can also additionally have each fine and terrible outcomes on their shallowness. The diploma to which humans consider their talents and accomplishments are same to or much less than the ones of others, that's particularly not unusual place on social media, may have an effect on shallowness, in keeping with Bandura et al., (1986). Students can also additionally increase low shallowness and bad self-critiques because of seeing idealized pics and posts that spotlight success and pleasure. Additionally, SCT highlights that a person's feeling of self-confidence is essentially decided with the aid of using their degree of self-efficacy, or the notion that they could be triumphant. Social media feedback and fine reinforcement can improve humans' self-efficacy and, in turn, their shallowness.

Methodology

Research Design and Sample

A quantitative method was employed in this cross-sectional investigation. 300 Pakistani university students between the ages of 18 and 30 (98.6% young adults) made up the sample; 56.6% of them were men and 3.3% were women. The majority of participants were middle-class (61.3%), single (68.0%), from nuclear households (59.3%), and urban (62.6%). There were 0% postgraduates and 56.0% graduates in terms of education. After obtaining informed consent, convenience sampling was used to collect data via questionnaires.

Instruments

- ▶ **Social Media Usage Scale (SMUS):** A 17-object scale that gauges how often positive actions (such posting and scrolling) occur. $\alpha = 0.91$ suggests reliability. The variety of rankings is 17–153 ($M = 6.8$, $SD = 16.6$).
- ▶ **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE):** 10 items assessing global self-worth (Rosenberg, 1965). Reliability: $\alpha = 0.88$. Scores range: 10–50 ($M = 35.4$, $SD = 7.8$).
- ▶ **Academic Performance Questionnaire (APQ):** 8 items evaluating engagement and grades. Reliability: $\alpha = 0.86$. Scores range: 8–40 ($M = 29.5$, $SD = 6.7$).

Procedure

Only till the university’s moral evaluation board gave its approval may want to the have a look at pass forward. By signing a consent shape outlining their rights and making certain their privacy, contributors consented to participate. In order to save you human beings from being identified, surveys have been dispensed in man or woman and every reaction sheet changed into classified with a randomly generated identity. All of the statistics changed into analyzed the use of SPSS (v.25), which produced precis facts and used correlation analysis, t-tests, and ANOVA to research institutions and organization differences.

Results

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Variables (N=300)

Variable	Mean	SD	Range
Social Media Usage	35.2	8.4	12–60
Self-Esteem	29.1	5.5	10–40
Academic Performance	30.5	6.2	8–40

Based on a pattern of three hundred participants, Table 1 shows the descriptive facts for the variables: instructional performance, shallowness, and social media utilization. Participants’ social media utilization ratings ranged from 12 to 60, with a median rating of $M = 35.2$ and a well-known deviation of $SD = \text{eight}$, indicating slight social media participation. The pattern had slight ranges of shallowness, as indicated through the common shallowness rating of $M = 2.1$, $SD = 5.5$, and variety of 10 to 0. Academic consequences have been in large part common, with a median of $M = 30.5$, $SD = 6.2$, and various eight to 0. Overall, relatively everyday styles may be visible withinside the distribution of ratings for all 3 variables.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Showing the Relationship between Social Media Usage and Self-esteem (N=300)

Scale	SMU	SE
SMU	-	
SE		-0.346**

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, SMU= Social Media Usage, SE= Self esteem

Table 2 shows the relationship between social media use and self-esteem. The results demonstrate a strong negative correlation between social media use and self-esteem.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Results of Independent Samples T-Test for Mean Differences in Responses of High Usage and Low Usage on Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE), and Academic Performance Questionnaire (APQ) (N=300)

Variable	High Usage (n=150) M (SD)	Low Usage (n=150) M (SD)	t	df	p	Cohen’s d
Social Media Usage	76.5 (15.0)	53.1 (14.2)	11.18	298	<0.001	1.59
Self-Esteem	33.4 (7.7)	36.7 (7.6)	3.00	298	0.003	0.35
Academic Performance	65.1 (12.2)	69.0 (11.9)	2.40	298	0.017	0.28

Students with high and low social media usage have significantly different academic performance and self-esteem, as Table 3 illustrates. Compared to students who used social media more frequently ($M = 33.5$), those who used it less frequently reported greater levels of self-esteem ($M = 36.8$). In a similar vein, low-usage kids performed better

academically ($M = 68.9$) than high-usage pupils ($M = 65.2$). These outcomes recommend that social media use amongst university college students is related to poorer educational success and decrease shallowness.

Discussion

Prior research (Vogel et al., 2014; Przybylski et al., 2013) shows that immoderate utilization of social media negatively influences shallowness thru FOMO and social comparisons. This is even worse in Pakistan by cultural constraints (Ostic et al., 2021)). Distractions and time displacement cause academic performance to diminish (Junco, 2012; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010).

The study's findings demonstrated a negative relationship between college students' use of social media and their perception of their own value. Ongoing publicity to idealized pics on social media can result in terrible social comparisons, in accordance to analyze from numerous nations.

Additionally, the use of social media has been related to poorer instructional achievement. As evidenced via way of means of their overall performance assessment ratings, college students who spend greater time on social media commonly do worse academically. This indicates that immoderate net use, specifically for non-instructional purposes, can result in procrastination, diversions, decreased look at time, and standard alienation from instructional work. Social media use at the same time as analyzing can impair attention and reminiscence retention, which has a terrible effect at the efficacy of learning. Ongoing publicity to idealized pics on social media can result in terrible social comparisons, in accordance to analyze from numerous nations. Feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and emotional soreness would possibly end result from those comparisons. In collectivist nations like Pakistan, in which social reputation and public photo are rather valued, substantial use of social media seems to have a specifically terrible effect on mental well-being.

The look at's conclusions uphold and increase upon vital Social Cognitive Theory tenets. The dynamic interaction among character characteristics, behavioral patterns, and environmental consequences is highlighted via way of means of Bandura's theory. Students watch, compare, and react to virtual pics of others on social media sites, which function robust social contexts. Their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are fashioned via way of means of those relationships. For instance, users' self-notion and goal-putting are encouraged via way of means of the manner likes, comments, and stocks perpetuate idealized pictures. The look at's findings emphasize the need of viewing

Implications for Future Research

Future research should focus on using longitudinal or experimental approaches since cross-sectional studies are unable to demonstrate the causal relationship between social media use, self-esteem, and academic outcomes. Examining how cultural elements impact students' experiences is equally crucial, particularly in Pakistan's collectivist culture. Particularly for female students, who may face particular social pressures online?

Limitation

Limitations include Cross-sectional design and self-report biases are among the limitations. Future studies should examine platform-specific impacts and employ longitudinal approaches.

Conclusion

Pakistani university students' academic performance and self-esteem are negatively impacted by excessive social media use. To lessen these effects and use platforms for beneficial purposes, interventions that encourage digital literacy and conscious usage are crucial. This study examined the relationship between social media use, self-

esteem, and academic performance among Pakistani university students within a collectivist cultural context. The findings clearly showed that higher levels of social media use were associated with lower self-esteem and weaker academic performance. Students who spent more time on social networking platforms reported reduced confidence in their self-worth and performed less well academically compared to those with lower usage levels. These results support the proposed hypotheses and are consistent with earlier national and international research conducted in similar areas.

The negative association between social media use and self-esteem appears to be closely linked to constant social comparison, fear of missing out, and exposure to idealized online images. In Pakistan, where social approval and community perception carry strong importance, these pressures may be more intense. Students often evaluate their achievements, appearance, and lifestyles against highly filtered representations of peers and influencers, which can lead to dissatisfaction and feelings of inadequacy. The study's results suggest that such patterns of comparison are not harmless and can gradually weaken students' sense of self.

Academic performance was also found to decline with increased social media use. Excessive engagement with platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok seems to distract students from their academic responsibilities. Time displacement, reduced concentration, and frequent interruptions during study hours contribute to poorer learning outcomes. Although social media can support academic collaboration when used purposefully, unregulated and excessive use appears to interfere with effective studying and academic focus.

The findings align with Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes the interaction between behavior, environment, and personal factors. Social media platforms function as powerful social environments where students observe, compare, and model behaviors. Feedback in the form of likes, comments, and shares shapes self-beliefs and motivation, influencing both confidence and academic engagement. When exposure is largely to idealized content, students' self-efficacy and academic motivation may be negatively affected.

In summary, the study highlights that while social media plays an important role in modern student life, its excessive use carries clear psychological and academic costs. The results underline the need for greater awareness among students, educators, and institutions regarding balanced and mindful social media use. Encouraging digital self-control, promoting positive online behaviors, and integrating guidance on healthy technology use within universities may help reduce the negative effects identified in this research, particularly within the Pakistani higher education context.

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