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EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES OF SAUDI STUDENTS - CASE STUDY: PRINCE SATTAM BIN ABDUL AZIZ UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Purpose: The objective of the research study is to investigate whether there is a positive impact of the use of social media on undergraduate students' academic performances and their social interpersonal skills in the Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University.

Design/methodology/approach: 64 samples were collected from full-time undergraduate students studying in Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University from different colleges including Community college, College of Business Administration, College of Education, College of Engineering and College of Pharmacy. The descriptive statistics analysis was used to analyze the demographic data while inferential statistics were used in testing the research hypotheses. The results obtained from the analyses were used to interpret the outcomes.

Findings: The empirical results reveal that the students enjoy meeting new friends online using social media rather than meeting in person and for this reason they spend a lot of time – addicted. It is also confirmed that the bad comments are passed easily through social media affecting other's sentiments and most of them strongly believe that all the information in social media is true and reliable and the rumors were spread easily in social media. Further, it is also confirmed that social media does not support the Learning of the students.

Practical Implications: The study confirms that the students exchange learning materials through social media and it helps them to update the developments in their college/university. The students believe that through Social media they have improved their communication skills and they can communicate with anyone at any time. It is also found that some of their teachers communicate with them and encourage them to use social media but for studying only.

Originality/value: The research work is of its first kind as it focuses on the impact of social media on the academic performances of the students studying in Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia, which has suggested effective means for effective implementation of social media strategy.

Keywords: Social Media Networks, Saudi Arabian Students, Academic Performance, Interpersonal skills, Social Media Addiction.

INTRODUCTION

Social Media has become one of the most important communication means in recent times towards the exchange of knowledge, data and the unknown information. Social media is a form of electronic communication through which people interact with each other. Social media has attracted millions of internet users, who have integrated the social networking sites (SNS) in their daily lives routines, as a powerful medium in enhancing the communication between the society on the whole. Social media has brought radical changes in society creating both positive and negative impacts. Any information whether good or bad can be easily spread over through social media. As Social Media Technology (SMT) is growing fast, as is not only restricted to net-based technology but also compatible with mobile technology, it convenes any user to complete his/her communication easily through their digital devices. It is confirmed that Twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram and Facebook as the most popular social media platforms (Alwagait, Shahzad, & Alim, 2015; Michikyan, Subrahmanyam, & Dennis, 2015).

Khan, Hatami, Sasidharan, and Al-Roshdi (2017) found that people are actively participating in one or the other social media platforms and reap benefits out of it. Baker (2009) advocated that the use of social networks could be an effective tool to motivate people to develop future bonding. SNS has become nodal points for the youth to convey their thoughts in unique ways with other like-minded people and considered as a place to share their artistic abilities (Boyd, 2007b). Through the so-called blogs of such networking sites, people get prior information about the institutions to which they are willing to join, etc.

Social Media has also totally changed students' way of learning and their studying style and the overall set-up. Students started using these sites as resources to obtain information and facilitate themselves towards their completing assessments, projects, and related academic work (El Khatib & Khan, 2017). University students make up the major proportion of the online networking community. In addition, given the popularity of social media, many professors have started to use social media for



enhancing communication with and among students in their classes, class discussions, and teamwork on projects to improve learning outcomes. Many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have even started using web technology in promoting education and have started implementing their assessments using such growing technologies. Hence, the level of understanding of the students is becoming high and their learning expectations also becoming high. This is triggering social media to become a catalyst in the field of education growth.

Early studies have proven the effect of rapid and heavy communication technology used by students on their academic performances (Ellore, Niranjan, & Brown, 2014; Junco, 2015; Lomi, Snijders, Steglich, & Torló, 2011; Mehmood & Taswir, 2013). However, there are mixed opinions on the effect of the impact of social media on the academic performances of the students at different levels.

Social media network sites can have a positive or negative impact on students' academic performance. Many argue on the risks involved in using SNS whereas it has its own benefits. They fear that the students' addiction to social media can negatively affect students' academic performances. Some researchers claim a little or no negative effects on students' academic performance if good multitasking is achieved by students. The rising impact of social media on the private and working lives of students has made researchers and educational institutions to study and rethink the concept and content of educational development in the digital age.

Therefore, our study aims to add better clarity to this research area by examining the relationship between the use of social media and Saudi students' academic performances. Thus, the prime objective of the research study is to investigate whether there is a positive impact of the use of social media on undergraduate students' academic performances and their social interpersonal skills in the Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University.

Although many research results pointed to a negative impact of social media usage on academic performance (Paul, Baker, & Cochran, 2012; Wentworth & Middleton, 2014).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Paul et al. (2012) suggested that online social networks could possibly be viewed as helpful educational technology if the more academic staff actually knew how to incorporate them into their curricula. Amin, Mansoor, Hussain, and Hashmat (2016) claimed that social media networking sites draw the attention of the students and increase their academic grade points. Mingle and Adams (2015) insisted that social media should be used for educational purposes but with proper monitoring and counseling as the chances of students becoming addicted so social media is high. Butler and Matook (2015) confirmed that social media affect the relationships of the people and the methods of their learning. Bankers also use social media sites to enhance customer service by means of building a relationship through Electronic Customer Relations Management depending upon the information reliability and responsiveness (Khan, Al-balushi, Algaithi, & Al-Shihi, 2017). Chretien, Farnan, Greysen, and Kind (2011) confirmed that internal medicine educators are using SNS and interacting with their trainees online. Allam and Elyas (2016) indicated that the majority of the academia believe strongly in the pedagogical values and benefits of using social media as an English language training tool in the Saudi context but they expressed reservations using in the classrooms.

Osharive (2015) propounded that students should be motivated to use social for educational purposes and the networking sites should expand folios for academic activities. Alsuraihi, Almaqati, Abughanim, and Jastaniah (2016) suggested the utilization of social media in education by developing intrinsic activities as it is beneficial. Utilizing social media tools in education sometimes can be very demanding and challenging for educators to assure effective learning (Yusuf, AL-Madah, & Alam, 2016). Paul et al. (2012) indicated that the students' academic performance is a function of devotion span, time management skills, student characteristics, and time spent on online social media. Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2015) insisted that students should be enthused to use handphones with internet facilities but with restricted timing to social media as it adversely affects their academic achievements.

Masters (2015) claimed that the students are becoming highly addicted to and intermediation is needed to control the same and also reported that YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter were the most used social media platforms (in their order of preference). Ali Aljabry et al. (2017) proved that the most common social media platform used was Facebook and social media had affected the academic performance of students negatively. Jameel et al. (2019) claimed that male students are spending more time on social media and WhatsApp and Facebook as their favorite platforms. El-Badawy and Hashem (2015) advocated that there exists no relationship between social media and the student's academic performance. But, Amadi and Ewa (2018) confirmed that the social media platforms had distracted the attention of the students from their studies resulting in negative performances. Rouis, Limayem, and Salehi-Sangari (2011a) indicated that extensive use of Facebook by students with extraverted personalities leading to poor academic performances. Hasnain, Nasreen, and Ijaz (2015) proved that social media has an inverse relationship with academic performance due to fading communication barriers and rising easy access in data. Halboub et al. (2016) found out that the majority of students are using their smartphones/computers for social networks on a



daily basis, and during lectures, laboratories, and clinics as well, resulting in negative performance and the only suggested remedy is to stop or reduce using social media.

Greysen, Kind, and Chretien (2010) confirmed that the rise of social media content created by internet users and hosted by popular sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Wikipedia, and blogs have brought several new hazards in medical education. Al-Tarawneh (2014) claimed that social media influences the students badly in the form of addiction, overloaded information, wastage of time, and physical isolation from society. A study using the Bergen Facebook addiction scale confirmed that health science students were highly addicted to social networking websites (Squmedia-ar, 2015). Boyd (2007a) claimed that the current generation youth are spending a great deal of time in SNS like MySpace, Facebook, and Bebo, to access public life. Social media use harming sleep quality, self-esteem, and mental health and affect academic performances in medical students (Al Suwayri, 2016). Griffiths (2013) opined that students may be compelled to retain their online connections leading to excessive usage of social media. Yet, time management is the factor that contributes to negative academic performance besides excessive social media use (Karpinski, Kirschner, Ozer, Mellott, & Ochwo, 2013).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

After going through the above literature review, and a well-defined questionnaire was prepared to collect the data on similar lines of research questionnaire used in Oman (El Khatib & Khan, 2017). 64 samples were collected from the students studying in various colleges of Prince Sattam bin Abdul Aziz University viz. Community college, College of Business Administration, College of Education, College of Engineering and College of Pharmacy. The collected data was compiled, tabulated and analyzed using SPSS. The descriptive statistics analysis was used to analyze the demographic data whereas inferential statistics were carried out in testing the research hypotheses. The results thus obtained were used to interpret the outcomes, and the suggestions were drawn.

FINDINGS

Table1: Reliability Analysis of the data

	N	%
Valid Cases	64	100.0
Excluded	0	0.0

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items				
.860	43 items				

The test for data reliability and internal consistency confirms that the value lies in between .70 & .93.

Table 2: Demographic details of the respondents

Characteristics		Frequency	%
Matianalita	Saudi	64	100.0
Nationality	Expatriate Male Female 18 - < 20 years 20 - < 23 years 23 - < 25 years Single Married Community College	0	0.0
Gender	Male	40	62.5
	Female	24	37.5
	18 – < 20 years	25	39.1
Age	20 - < 23 years	36	56.3
	23 – < 25 years	3	4.7
Marital Status	Single	64	100.0
Marital Status	Married	0	0.0
	Community College	30	46.9
	College of Business Administration	2	3.1
College	College of Education	8	12.5
	College of Engineering	8	12.5
	College of Pharmacy	16	25.0
	Level 1	16	25.0
Qualification Laval	Level 2	40	62.5
Qualification Level	Level 3	0	0.0
	Level 4	8	12.5
Employment Status	Working	9	14.1



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Source: Questionnaire

Table 3: Learning

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S value	Chi Square	P value
1	I use social media in the classroom to learn new information	1 1.6%	0 0.0%	8 12.5%	26 40.6%	29 45.3%	0.267		.000
2	I use social media to update my academic grades	0 0.0%	2 3.1%	19 29.7%	37 57.8%	6 9.4%	0.325	- - 36.875 -	
3	Social media helps me to update the developments in my college / university	2 3.1%	1 1.6%	3 4.7%	42 65.6%	16 25.0%	0.367		
4	My teacher encourages me to use social media to study	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	6 9.4%	39 60.9%	19 29.7%	0.337		



5	My classmates exchange learning materials through social media	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 10.9%	17 26.6%	40 62.5%	0.384
6	My learning gets distracted by the usage of social media	7 10.9%	7 10.9%	18 28.1%	27 42.2%	5 7.8%	0.250
7	My study schedule gets disrupted by the usage of social media	13 20.3%	21 32.8%	15 23.4%	10 15.6%	5 7.8%	0.215
8	I get to learn differently from diversified students through social media	4 6.3%	2 3.1%	23 35.9%	26 40.6%	9 14.1%	0.229

The above table shows that the p-value is less than 0.05. So the null hypothesis that 'there is no relationship between the learning of the students and the choices of the respondents' is rejected. i.e., it connotes that there is a significant relationship between the learning of the students and the choices of the respondents. Comparing the K-S values obtained from Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it is observed that 'My classmates exchange learning materials through social media' ranks first (0.384) followed by 'Social media helps me to update the developments in my college/university' (0.367) and 'My teacher encourages me to use social media to study (0.337).'

Table 4: Communication

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S Value	Chi Square	P value
1	I have improved my communication skills through Social media	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 6.3%	50 78.1%	10 15.6%	0.424		
2	My English become worse because of social media usage	36 56.3%	16 25.0%	3 4.7%	5 7.8%	4 6.3%	0.315	_	
3	I communicate easily with my classmates through social media	0 0.0%	1 1.6%	7 10.9%	25 39.1%	31 48.4%	0.297		
4	Through social media, I can communicate with anyone at any time	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 6.3%	22 34.4%	38 59.4%	0.370		
5	Most of my communication through social media is irrelevant to my studies	0 0.0%	13 20.3%	30 46.9%	15 23.4%	6 9.4%	0.270	_	
6	Some of my teachers communicate to me through social media	2 3.1%	5 7.8%	5 7.8%	38 59.4%	14 21.9%	0.359	26.125	.016
7	I communicate with my teachers through social media, but they do not respond	12 18.8%	18 28.1%	15 23.4%	17 26.6%	2 3.1%	0.188	-	
8	Communicating through Social media, I meet new people	16 25.0%	11 17.2%	5 7.8%	23 35.9%	9 14.1%	0.260		
9	I get to know many different cultures through Social media	0 0.0%	1 1.6%	8 12.5%	39 60.9%	16 25.0%	0.306	_	
10	Social media helps me to get information about new job opportunities	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	14 21.9%	39 60.9%	11 17.2%	0.311		



through people I communicate

The above table shows that the p-value is less than 0.05. So the null hypothesis that 'there is no relationship between the communication of the students and the choices of the respondents' is rejected. i.e., it connotes that there is a significant relationship between the communication of the students and the choices of the respondents. Comparing the K-S values obtained from Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it is observed that 'Through Social media, I have improved my communication skills' ranks first (0.424) followed by 'Through social media, I can communicate with anyone at any time' (0.370) and 'Some of my teachers communicate to me through social media (0.359).'

Table 5: Relationship

	*												
#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S value	Chi Square	P value				
1	Using Social media, I have improved my relationship with my classmates	1 1.6%	0 0.0%	11 17.2%	33 51.6%	19 29.7%	0.273						
2	Through Social media, I have improved academic relationship with my teachers	1 1.6%	5 7.8%	15 23.4%	19 29.7%	24 37.5%	0.222						
3	Social media has improved my relationships with my family and friends	2 3.1%	5 7.8%	13 20.3%	29 45.3%	15 23.4%	0.274						
4	I can access my course material by using social media tools	1 1.6%	1 1.6%	12 18.8%	39 60.9%	11 17.2%	0.331	30.000	.012				
5	Social media helps me to get knowledge about other students in different university and have a relationship with them	3 4.7%	0 0.0%	12 18.8%	39 60.9%	10 15.6%	0.344						
6	I trust the people whom I meet on social networking websites	13 20.3%	22 34.4%	23 35.9%	3 4.7%	3 4.7%	0.196						
7	I spend a lot of time looking at what other people have posted	5 7.8%	10 15.6%	26 40.6%	12 18.8%	11 17.2%	0.216	_					
8	Compared to meeting new friends in person, I enjoy more, meeting them online	3 4.7%	7 10.9%	17 26.6%	30 46.9%	7 10.9%	0.277						

The above table shows that the p-value is less than 0.05. So the null hypothesis that 'there is no relationship between the Relationship of the students and the choices of the respondents' is rejected. i.e., it connotes that there is a significant relationship between the Relationship of the students and the choices of the respondents. Comparing the K-S values obtained from Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it is observed that 'Social media helps me to get knowledge about other students in different university and have relationship with them' ranks first (0.344) followed by 'I can access my course material by using social media tools' (0.331) and 'Compared to meeting new friends in person, I enjoy more meeting them online (0.277).'

Table 6: Information reliability

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Chi Square	P value
1	I believe all information in social media is true and reliable	7 10.9%	12 18.8%	34 53.1%	9 14.1%	2 3.1%	48.031	.000
2	The quality of the information in social media	0 0.0%	1 1.6%	20 31.3%	29 45.3%	14 21.9%	25.875	.000



	is easily understandable							
3	I rely on social media information	8 12.5%	13 20.3%	20 31.3%	10 15.6%	13 20.3%	6.469	.167
4	The information from social media helps me to make better decisions	3 4.7%	15 23.4%	11 17.2%	16 25.0%	19 29.7%	11.938	.018
5	I use information from social media to solve complicated issues I face	0 0.0%	9 14.1%	22 34.4%	20 31.3%	13 20.3%	6.875	.076
6	Social media information is easily available to access at any point of time	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	16 25.0%	22 34.4%	26 40.6%	2.375	.305
7	Rumours are spread easily in social media	0 0.0%	1 1.6%	11 17.2%	33 51.6%	19 29.7%	34.250	.000
8	Bad comments are passed easily through social media affecting other's sentiments	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	10 15.6%	39 60.9%	15 23.4%	22.531	.000

The p-value for item numbers (3), (5) and (6) in the above table is greater than .05. So after eliminating those factors, we obtained the new table.7 as follows:

Table 7: Information reliability

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S value	Chi Square	P value
1	I believe all information in social media is true and reliable	7 10.9%	12 18.8%	34 53.1%	9 14.1%	2 3.1%	0.290		
2	The quality of the information in social media is easily understandable	0 0.0%	1 1.6%	20 31.3%	29 45.3%	14 21.9%	0.237	-	
4	The information from social media helps me to make better decisions	3 4.7%	15 23.4%	11 17.2%	16 25.0%	19 29.7%	0.195	27.250	.001
7	Rumours are spread easily in social media	0 0.0%	1 1.6%	11 17.2%	33 51.6%	19 29.7%	0.261		
8	Bad comments are passed easily through social media affecting other's sentiments	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	10 15.6%	39 60.9%	15 23.4%	0.315	-	

The above table shows that the p-value is less than 0.05. So the null hypothesis: "There is no relationship between the Information reliability of the students and the choices of the respondents" is rejected. i.e., it connotes that there is a significant relationship between the information reliability of the students and the choices of the respondents. Comparing the K-S values obtained from Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it is observed that 'Bad comments are passed easily through social media affecting other's sentiments' ranks first (0.315) followed by 'I believe all information in social media is true and reliable' (0,290) and 'Rumours are spread easily in social media (0,261).'

Table 8: Social Media Effects

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S	Chi	P
							value	Square	value



1	I learn a lot many things from others through social media	0 0.0%	1 1.6%	16 25.0%	23 35.9%	24 37.5%	0.237		
2	I gain the latest knowledge about information technology through social media	0 0.0%	3 4.7%	8 12.5%	29 45.3%	24 37.5%	0.253		
3	The success of my studies is based on social media	14 21.9%	2 3.1%	17 26.6%	19 29.7%	12 18.8%	0.201		
4	Social media has badly affected my curricular activities	11 17.2%	18 28.1%	10 15.6%	21 32.8%	4 6.3%	0.218		
5	Social media disturbs my state of mind	2 3.1%	21 32.8%	16 25.0%	21 32.8%	4 6.3%	0.211	43.844	.000
6	Curious to know the latest information in the social media	1 1.6%	8 12.5%	14 21.9%	32 50.0%	9 14.1%	0.297		
7	During exam time, I believe that someone will leak the exam paper in social media	8 12.5%	21 32.8%	10 15.6%	19 29.7%	6 9.4%	0.222		
8	Social media message tone diverts my attention from my work	2 3.1%	11 17.2%	18 28.1%	29 45.3%	4 6.3%	0.272		
9	Social media gives a proud feeling that I can use social media	1 1.6%	18 28.1%	23 35.9%	11 17.2%	11 17.2%	0.230		

The above table shows that the p-value is less than 0.05. So the null hypothesis: "There is no relationship between the Social Media Effects of the students and the choices of the respondents" is rejected. i.e., it connotes that there is a significant relationship between the Social Media effects of the students and the choices of the respondents. Comparing the K-S values obtained from Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it is observed that 'Curious to know the latest information through social media' ranks first (0.297) followed by 'Social media message tone diverts my attention from my work' (.,272) and 'I gain the latest knowledge about information technology through social media (0.253).'

Table 9: (a), (b), (c) & (d) Regression Variables Entered / Removed

Model	Variables Entered	Variables	Method
		Removed	
1	Social media effects,		Enter
	Information reliability,		
	Communication,		
	Relationship		

^a Dependent Variable: Learning

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error of the Estimate
1	.447	.200	.145	2.84603

^a Predictors: (constant), Information reliability, Social media effect, Communication, Relationship

ANOVA^a

^b All requested Variables entered.



Model	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	119.218	4	29.804	3.680	.010 ^b
Residual	477.892	59	8.100		
Total	597.109	63			

^aDependent Variable: Learning

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardi	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	В	Std.Error	Beta		
(constant)	18.558	3.639		5.099	.000
Communication	.055	.117	.067	0.473	.638
Relationship	.083	.108	.119	0.770	.445
Information reliability	.205	.217	.173	0.944	.349
Social Media Effects	.116	.107	.178	1.083	.283

^aDependent Variable: Learning

From the above table, it can be seen that the p-value for all the dependent variables is more than 0.05. i.e. Learning is not dependent on any of the independent variables. In other words, Communication through Social Media, Relationships earned through social media, Information reliability of Social Media and the Social media effects have no impact on the Learning. Thus, it is confirmed that Social Media does not support the Learning of the students.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

From the above, it is observed that students exchange learning materials through social media and it helps them to update the developments in their college/university. Their teachers also encourage them to use social media but to study. The students believe that through Social media they have improved their communication skills and they can communicate with anyone at any time. It is also found that some of their teachers communicate with them through social media.

Most of the students reported that social media help them to attain knowledge about other students in different universities and have a relationship with them and they can access their course materials by using social media tools.

Further, they reported that they enjoy meeting new friends online using social media rather than meeting in person and for this reason they spend a lot of time – addicted. It is also confirmed by most of the respondents that the bad comments are passed easily through social media affecting other's sentiments and most of them strongly believe that all the information in social media is true and reliable and they also agreed that rumors were spread easily in social media.

Also, through the regression analysis, it is confirmed that social media does not support the Learning of the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Students could have better control over social media use if and only if they have more self-regulation (Rouis, Limayem, & Salehi-Sangari, 2011b).

The following recommendations will guide to draw an effective social media strategy:

- 1. The stringent policy should be deployed in HEIs on the students' internet usage.
- 2. Excessive time spending on social media should be curtailed.
- 3. Educational programs on proper sleeping habits, social media hygiene, and recovery of weekend sleep debt should be considered (Al Suwayri, 2016).
- 4. Cyberbullying and pornography should not be permitted.
- 5. The education-related information only should be made available to the students.
- 6. There are dangerous communities that exist in Social Media sites targeting mainly the teens and adults as the students are liable to disclose their personal information which might harm them personally and hence they should be properly advised. (El Khatib & Khan, 2017).
- 7. Effective technical monitoring should be made while students browse these sites and their activities may be kept under surveillance.
- 8. Last but not least, parents should proactively involve in monitoring their children's activities.

^bPredictors: (constant), Information reliability, Social media effects, Communication, Relationship.



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