IMPLICATIONSOF SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS TECHNOLOGY IN INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES

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Abstract

Purpose
Social media has transformed and influenced communication, research and education in general through the vast variety of online tools which are available for communication.The objectives of the research study is to examine and analyze the influence of Social Media on the academic Performance of students and their social interpersonal skills.

Design/methodology/approach
195 samples were collected from full-time undergraduate students studying in the University from different faculties including business, engineering, law, English Studies and Language Studies. The descriptive statistics analysis was used to analyze the demographic data while inferential statistics was 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 get to learn through social media differently enabling them new information and are also able to communicate easily with others. The communication exchanged is irrelevant to studies and does not help them in any manner to improve their learning. It is confirmed that the Social Media effects do not support the Learning of the students and most of the students are addicted to social media.

Practical Implications
The study confirms that it is good means to approach the students through social media whichmight boost the education in an easier way.

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 Higher Educational Institutions.

Keywords: Social Media Networks; Students; Academic Performance; Interpersonal skills; Addiction.

Introduction

The Internet era has brought dramatic changes in the modern world towards theexchange of knowledge, data and the unknown information irrespective of their location. This has paved thewayfor the growing platform namely Social Media. Social Media which has emerged through social networking has become a powerful tool in enhancing the communication between the society on the whole. Social Media has made revolutionary changes in the society making both positive and negative impacts. Social media is nothing but a form of electronic communication which facilitates to interact with certain vested interests.It is a myth that social media a website. It is not just a website which provides you with some information,butanyone can interact with the same. Thisis used as a platform to create, share and exchange information between them and the specialty is that it is not restricted to desktop or laptop users only. Any user who generated an information can be exchanged with anyone else, anytime.The growing Social Media Technology (SMT) is net based technology which uses both web and mobile technologyand allows every user to manipulate a complete communication through their digital gadgets. There are lots ofsocial media platforms come into existence and to name a few, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp,and Instagram.Khan et al. (2017) found that people actively participate in all the social media platforms and reap benefit out of it. Baker (2009) advocated that the use of

social networks could be an effective tool to encourage the people to develop a future relationship. Social networking sitesprovide a space for the teens to express themselves in unique ways serving as a meeting place to interact with other like-mindedpeople and consideredas a showplaceto express their artistic and musical abilities (Boyd, 2007). The networking sites are even used to obtain prior information about the institutions to which they are willing to join through communicating in the blogs of such networks.

Social Media has also transmitted and enhanced the way of students' way of learning, the style of their studying and the entire scenario overall. Even the students started using these sites as resources to obtain information and facilitate themselves towards their completing assessments, projects,andrelated academic work. However, there aredifferent views from different scholarsconcerning the impact of social networks on the academic performances of the students at different levels. Studies have come out with different results stating that the students on social networks may have apositive or negative impact on their studies. Many argueon the risks involved in social networking whereas it has its benefits. Many academic institutionshave introduced web technology towards promoting education and started implementing their internal assessments using such growing technologies.Further, the level of understanding of the students is also becoming high and in turn their learning expectations becoming more. For this reason, every academician is trying to keep abreast of the growing technologies in the field of networking and the related usage as well. Thus growing technological advancement in the form of social media in this millennium will become a milestone in the field of education growth.

Review of Literature

Butler and Matook (2015) claimed that the social media systems affected the people the way they learn and their relationships. Public Organizations such as Banks also use social media platforms to adjudge the customer satisfaction through the growing technology of Electronic Customer Relations Management (ECRM) by means of information reliability and responsiveness (Khan et al., 2017a). Amin et al. (2016) found that the social media networking sites drawthe attention of students and enhances their academic Grade pointspositively.Khan et al. (2017b) confirmed that good communication services in the form of facilitation of social media in the University hostel might improve the academic performances of students in the University. Owusu-Acheau and Larson(2015) stated that students should be encouraged to use their mobile phones with internet facility but restricted by time to Social Networking Sites (SNS) as it badly affects their academic performances. Griffiths (2013) suggested that individuals may feel compelled to maintain their online social networks leading to using SNSs excessively viz. addiction to social networking such as video game playing, internet use, exercise, etc.Masters (2015) found that the rate of SNSaddiction among the medical students seems to be high and intervention is needed to curb the same,and it is also reported that the top SNS used among the students were YouTube, FaceBookand Twitter in the order of response.Study carried out by Sultan Qaboos University (SQUmedia-ar, 2015) on its health science students using Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale showed many were addicted to the use of social networking websites. ~~The study was, if prohibited from using the social networking site.~~Mingle and Adams (2015) recommended that social media usage for academic purposes needs counselling for addicted students and use of proper grammar usage.El-Badawy and Hashem (2015) claimed that there is no relationship between the social media and the academic performance of the students.Al-Tarawneh (2014) reported that the students using social networking sites had bad influences such as addiction, wastage of time, overloaded information, and physical isolation from the society.Jabe (2015) found that the SNS had distracted the students from their studies resulting negatively in their academic performances.Hasnain, Nasreen and Ijaz (2015) claimed that Social media has an inverse relationship with academic performance due to the diminishing communication barriers and growing data access. However, Osharive (2015) recommended that students should be encouraged to use social media platforms for educational purposes and social media networking sites should expand enhanced pages for academic activities while the students should be closely monitored by teachers and parents.

Research Methodology

A thorough literature review was conducted,and a well-organized questionnaire was prepared to collect the data. 195 samples were collected from the students studying in the University from different faculties including business, engineering, law, English Studies and Language Studies. The data collected was compiled, tabulated, checked with Cronbach alpha analysis and has also undergone various analyses using SPSS. 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,and the suggestions were based on the outcomes.

Findings

Table.1 Demographic details of the respondents

Characteristics		Frequency	%
Nationality	Omani	179	91.8
	Non-Omani	16	8.2
Gender	Male	38	19.5
	Female	157	80.5
Age	18 – < 20 years	17	8.7
	20 – < 23 years	132	67.7
	23 – <25 years	12	6.2
	25 years and above	34	17.4
Marital Status	Single	115	59.0
	Married	78	40.0
	Widow	2	1.0
Qualification Level	Level 1	8	4.1
	Level 2	145	74.4
	Level 3	18	9.2
	Level 4	24	12.3
Employment Status	Working	44	22.6
	Not working	151	77.4
Discipline	Business	153	61.0
	Engineering	8	3.2
	Computing & IT	61	24.3
GPA during Last Semester	<2	29	14.9
	2 – 3	102	52.3
	3 - 4	64	32.8
GPA during Last Year	<2	35	17.9
	2 – 3	73	37.4
	3 - 4	87	44.6
Increase in GPA	Yes. Increased	97	49.7

	No. Not Increased	54	27.7
	Remains the same	44	22.6
Social Media Used	Facebook	5	2.6
	Twitter	25	12.8
	Instagram	42	21.5
	Whatsapp	70	35.9
	All of the above	53	27.2
Social Media used for Educational Purpose	Facebook	9	4.6
	Twitter	29	14.9
	Instagram	52	26.7
	Whatsapp	61	31.3
	All of the above	44	22.6
Surfing Time on Social Media	Daily	67	34.4
	Weekly	17	8.7
	Monthly	24	12.3
	Sometimes	42	21.5
	Always	40	20.5
	Never	5	2.6
Daily Surfing Hours	< 1 hour	23	11.8
	1 – 2 hours	50	25.6
	2 – 4 hours	48	24.6
	> 4 hours	74	37.9

Source: Questionnaire

Table 2. Communication

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Chi Square	P value
1	Through Social media, I have improved my communication skills	44 22.6%	32 16.4%	31 15.9%	37 19.0%	51 26.2%	7.333	.119
2	My English got spoiled because of social media usage	15 7.7%	36 18.5%	49 25.1%	59 30.3%	36 18.5%	28.051	.000
3	I communicate easily with any one of myclassmates through social media	22 11.3%	22 11.3%	52 26.3%	65 33.3%	34 17.4%	37.128	.000

4	Through social media, I can communicate with anyone at any time	40 20.5%	33 16.9%	42 21.5%	30 15.4%	50 25.6%	6.359	.174
5	Most of the communication exchanged through social media is irrelevant to my studies	20 10.3%	38 19.5%	79 40.5%	40 20.5%	18 9.2%	61.641	.000
6	Some of my teachers communicate to me through social media	12 6.2%	62 31.8%	72 36.9%	37 19.0%	12 6.2%	78.974	.000
7	I communicate to my teachers through social media,but they do not respond	19 9.7%	62 31.8%	81 41.5%	20 10.3%	13 6.7%	95.641	.000
8	Communicating through Social media, I meet new people	18 9.2%	43 22.1%	58 29.7%	48 24.6%	28 14.4%	26.154	.000
9	I get knowledge about many different cultures by using Social media	24 12.3%	27 13.8%	52 26.7%	51 26.2%	41 21.0%	17.590	.001
10	Social media helps me to get information about new job opportunities through people I communicate	22 11.3%	28 14.4%	72 36.9%	32 16.4%	41 21.0%	39.795	.000

The p-value for item numbers (1) and (4) in the above table is greater than .05. So after eliminating those items, we obtained the table as follows:

Table 3. Communication (Revised)

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S Value	Chi Square	P value
2	My English got spoiled because of social media usage	15 7.7%	36 18.5%	49 25.1%	59 30.3%	36 18.5%	2.774		
3	I communicate easily with any one of myclassmates through social media	22 11.3%	22 11.3%	52 26.3%	65 33.3%	34 17.4%	2.970		
5	Most of the communication exchanged through social media is irrelevant to my studies	20 10.3%	38 19.5%	79 40.5%	40 20.5%	18 9.2%	2.881		
6	Some of my teachers communicate to me through social media	12 6.2%	62 31.8%	72 36.9%	37 19.0%	12 6.2%	2.757	88.692	.000
7	I communicate to my teachers through social media,but they do not respond	19 9.7%	62 31.8%	81 41.5%	20 10.3%	13 6.7%	3.100		
8	Communicating through Social media, I meet new people	18 9.2%	43 22.1%	58 29.7%	48 24.6%	28 14.4%	2.221		
9	I get knowledge about many different cultures by using Social media	24 12.3%	27 13.8%	52 26.7%	51 26.2%	41 21.0%	2.505		

| 10 | Social media helps me to get information about new job opportunities through people I communicate | 22 11.3% | 28 14.4% | 72 36.9% | 32 16.4% | 41 21.0% | 2.710 | | |

The above table shows that the p-value is less than 0.05. So the null hypothesis: "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 'I communicate with my teachers through social media, but they do not respond' ranks first followed by 'I communicate easily with any one of my classmates through social media' and 'Most of the communication exchanged through social media is irrelevant to my studies.'

Table 4. 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 classmate	36 28.5%	**45** 23.1%	29 14.9%	57 29.2%	28 14.4%	2.928		
2	Throw Social media, I have improved my academic relation with my teachers	15 7.7%	44 22.6%	77 39.5%	42 21.5%	17 8.7%	2.811		
3	Social networking websites have improved my relationships with my family and friends	19 9.7%	36 18.5%	65 33.3%	41 21.0%	34 17.4%	2.437		
4	I can access my course material by using social media tools	13 6.7%	35 17.9%	71 36.4%	52 26.7%	24 12.3%	2.563		
5	Social media helps me to get knowledge about other students in different university and have relationship with them	12 6.2%	38 19.5%	60 30.8%	64 32.8%	21 10.8%	2.797	122.308	.000
6	I trust the people whom I meet on social networking websites	31 15.9%	35 27.2%	68 34.9%	31 15.9%	12 6.2%	2.496		
7	I spend a lot of time looking at what other people have posted	27 13.9%	65 33.3%	52 26.7%	38 19.5%	13 6.7%	2.923		
8	Compared to meeting new friends in person, I enjoy more meeting them online	16 8.2%	48 24.6%	84 43.1%	22 11.3%	25 12.8%	3.408		

The above table shows that the p-value is less than 0.05. So the null hypothesis: "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 'Compared to meeting new friends in person, I enjoy more meeting them online' ranks first followed by 'Using Social media, I have improved my relationship with my classmate' and 'I spend a lot of time looking at what other people have posted.'

Table 5. 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	47 24.1%	**53** 27.2%	49 25.1%	28 14.4%	18 9.2%	2.642	163.210	.000
2	The quality of information in social media is clear and easy to understand	15 7.7%	47 24.1%	90 46.2%	32 16.4%	11 5.6%	3.223		
3	I rely on the social media information	15 7.7%	43 22.1%	81 41.5%	50 25.6%	6 3.1%	3.158		
4	The information from social media helps me to make better decisions	21 10.8%	26 13.3%	81 41.5%	59 30.3%	8 4.1%	3.420		
5	I use information from social media to solve many of my complicated issues I come across	15 7.7%	36 18.5%	75 38.5%	53 27.2%	16 8.2%	2.810		
6	Social media information is easily available to access at any time	8 4.1%	24 12.3%	84 43.1 %	54 27.7%	25 12.8%	3.144		
7	Rumours are spread easily in social media	6 3.1%	37 19.0%	98 50.3%	42 21.5%	12 6.2%	3.667		
8	Bad comments are passed easily through social media affecting others sentiments	18 9.2%	28 14.4%	83 42.6%	46 23.6%	20 10.3%	3.104		

The above table shows thatthe 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 'Rumours are spread easily in social media' ranks first followed by 'The information from social media helps me to make better decisions' and 'The quality of information in social media is clear and easy to understand.'

Table 6. Social Media Effects

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S value	Chi Square	P value
1	I learn a lot many things from othersthrough social media	46 23.6%	**30** 15.4%	54 27.7%	38 19.5%	27 13.8%	2.172	94.328	.000
2	I gain the latest knowledge about information technology through social media	28 14.4%	42 21.5%	59 30.3%	51 26.2%	15 7.7%	2.386		
3	Success of my studies is based on social media	17 8.7%	37 19.0%	79 40.5%	36 18.5%	26 13.3%	2.975		
4	Social media has badly affected my curricular	14 7.2%	33 16.9%	90 46.2%	45 23.1%	13 6.7%	3.324		

	activities						
5	Social media disturbs my state of mind	10 5.1%	34 17.4%	76 39.0%	43 22.1%	32 16.4%	2.986
6	Curious to know the latest information through social media	14 7.2%	47 24.1%	84 43.1%	32 16.4%	18 9.2%	3.208
7	During exam time, I believe that someone will leak the exam paper in social media	20 10.3%	49 25.1%	78 40.0%	43 22.1%	5 2.6%	3.087
8	Social media message tone diverts my attention from my work	15 7.7%	40 20.5%	76 39.0%	48 24.6%	16 8.2%	2.770
9	Social media gives a proud feeling that I can use social media	29 1.9%	46 23.6%	32 16.4%	66 33.8%	22 11.3%	3.178

The above table shows thatthe 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,itis observed that'Social media has badly affected my curricular activities' ranks first followed by 'Curious to know the latest information through social media' and'Social media gives a proud feeling that I can use social media.'

Table 7. Learning

#	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S value	Chi Square	P value
1	I use social media in the class room to learn new information	44 22.6%	50 25.6%	32 16.4%	49 25.1%	20 10.3%	2.729		
2	I use social media to update my academic Grades (GPA)	16 8.2%	48 24.6%	54 27.7%	51 26.2%	26 13.3%	2.373		
3	Social media helps me to update the developments in my college/ university	22 11.3%	54 16.4%	44 20.0%	51 27.7%	22 24.6%	2.848		
4	My teacher encourages me to use social media to study	24 12.3%	54 27.7%	44 22.6%	51 26.2%	48 11.3%	2.588		
5	My classmates exchange learning materials through social media	19 9.7%	48 24.6%	65 33.3%	48 24.6%	15 7.7%	2.393	80.769	.000
6	My learning gets disturbed by the usage of social media	18 9.2%	58 29.7%	61 31.3%	48 24.6%	10 5.1%	2.581		
7	My study schedule gets disrupted by the usage of social media	28 14.4%	53 27.2%	41 21.0%	51 26.2%	22 11.3%	2.605		
8	I get to learn differently from diversified students / classmates through social media	30 15.4%	36 18.5%	39 20.0%	76 39.0%	14 7.2%	3.436		

The above table shows thatthe p-value is less than 0.05. So the null hypothesis: "There is no relationship between the learning of the students and the choices of the respondents" isrejected. 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 'I get to learn differently from diversified students/classmates through social media' ranks first followed by 'Social media helps me to update the developments in my college/university' and 'I use social media in the classroom to learn new information.'

Table 8. (a), (b), (c) & (d) Regression

Variables Entered / Removed

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

[a] Dependent Variable: Learning
[b] All requested Variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.675	.455	.444	4.705

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

ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3516.405	4	879.101	36.707	.000[b]
Residual	4206.590	190	22.140		
Total	7722.995	194			

[a] Dependent Variable: Learning
[b] Predictors: (constant), Information reliability,Social media effects, Communication, Relationship.

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std.Error	Beta		
(constant)	2.160	1.918		1.126	.261
Communication	.434	.077	.0400	5.616	.000
Relationship	.102	.082	.103	1.239	.217
Information reliability	.249	.094	.203	2.660	.008
Social Media Effects	.096	.082	.086	1.180	.240

[a] Dependent Variable: Learning

From the above table, it can be seen that the p-value for Relationshipis .217and the p-value for Social Media Effect is .240 whicharemore than 0.05.

Therefore, eliminating these variables, the regression analysis is carried outagain, and we obtained the results as follows:

Table 9. (a), (b), (c) & (d) Regression

Variables Entered/Removed

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Information reliability, Relationship	…	Enter

[a] Dependent Variable: Learning
[b] All requested Variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.664 [a]	.441	.436	4.740

[a] Predictors: (constant),Information reliability, learning, relationship.

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ANOVA

Model	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3409.166	2	1704.583	75.868	.000[b]
Residual	4313.829	192	22.468		
Total	7722.995	194			

[a] Dependent Variable: Learning
[a] Predictors: (constant),Information reliability, Relationship.
.

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std.Error	Beta		
(constant)	3.230	1.755		1.840	.067
Relationship	.496	.072	.456	6.868	.000
Information reliability	.350	.082	.285	4.294	.000

[a] Dependent Variable: Impact of Social Media

From the above table No. 9 (a), (b), (c) & (d), we obtain the regression line as follows:

L = 3.230+ .496 R + .350Ir

Where R –Relationship

Ir – Information reliability

L – Learning

There is an association between the Learningand the other two variables viz. Relationship and Information Reliability. In other words, Relationship, and the Information Reliability makes an impact on the Learning of the students,and it is also clear that the Social Media does not support the Learning of the students.

Conclusion and Suggestions
From the above, it is observedthat students get to learn differently from diversified students/classmates through social media andSocial media helps them to update the developments in their college/university and the use of social media in the classroomenables them to learn new information. They cancommunicate to their teachers using social media. They also communicate easily with their classmate as well,but it is found that the most of the communication exchanged through social media is irrelevant to my studies. It does not help them in any manner to improve their learning.
Most of the students reported that theyenjoy meeting new friends using social media rather than meeting in person and for this reason they spend a lot of time. Further, they develop acuriosity for looking at what other people have posted in the social media leads them to waste their time and to make them addict so SNS.
It is also confirmed by most of the respondents that the rumorsare easily spread in social media. However, they reported that the information from social media helpsthem to make better decisions and the quality of information in social media is clear and easy to understand.
Through the regression analysis, it is confirmed that the Social Media effects do not support the Learning of the students.

Recommendations:
The following recommendations will help to develop a social media strategy:
1. A strong internet policy should be implemented in the Higher Educational Institutions for the students' internet usage. The educationally valuable information only might be accessible by the students for the purpose of curriculum and professional development.
2. Social Media sites are aiming to attract the teens and adults. There are dangerous communities prevailing in the net. So effective technical monitoring should exist while students browsethese sites.
3. During their study times, the entry to such sites can be restricted,and their activities may be kept under surveillance.
4. Some of the students are liable to disclose their personal information which might harm them personally and they should be properly advised.
5. Excessive time spending on social media should not be allowed.
6. Cyberbullying and pornography should not be permitted.
7. Last but not the least, HEIs should advise the parents to involve proactively in monitoring their children's activities as well.

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