



Barriers in seeking academic Information from Social Media Sites; Perception of University Students

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Abstract

The research purpose was to evaluate the effect of social media to support academic performance of the students. Objectives of this study were to measure the respondent's perception of using social media tools, and also to identify the barriers for seeking needed academic information using social networking sites. In two public sector universities of lower Punjab, Pakistan study was conducted. Respondents of the study were undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students of Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB), and Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) Multan. Data was collected through quantitative survey. The researcher developed a close-ended questionnaire after a comprehensive review of literature. The analysis of the data was statistically made through SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics used to measure frequency, mean and standard deviation. The finding of the study revealed that lack of trust in people as they feel social networking sites are risky to share their personal information were among the main barrier for seeking needed academic information from social networking sites. The finding of the study is helpful for the participating universities to design and implement trustworthy social networking platforms to promote learning in academia.

Keywords: Social media, academic performance, networking sites

1 Introduction

Internet is mostly used by peoples to connect with formal or informal purposes. The new tools for communication are social media. To use social media, it is not necessary to have advanced skills or experience, anyone can easily connect the social media through mobile and internet (Sudha & Kavitha, 2016).

Curtis (2013) reported statistics about social media that there are 10 lakh users of Facebook, 87 billion Flickr, 500 million Twitter, and 225 million LinkedIn among other platforms. Students extensively use social media because they had accessed the internet at home and in their colleges. Los Angeles university investigation found that 94% of intermediate students were using social sites (Subrahmanyum *et al.* 2008). Students generally use social media only for interaction with the social environment (Bercovici, 2010). Social media utilizes mobile, internet, web-based technology to farm highly interactive platforms through which a community or individual exchange, create, and discuss user-generated content (Kietzmann, 2012).

Social sites have its importance in students' life to communicate and share information. Such kinds of interactions are required for students to learn new things (Pardo, 2013). Heffner

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(2016) stated the use of SNSs could be a good thing to deal with student academic prevention, especially when the two students have the same problem; they connect one another. Social media provide the connection of students to discuss or share classwork or class problems. According to Gemmill and Peterson (2006), socializing through the media has become an essential part of adult life. The overall impact of social sites on adolescent is negative. Due to addiction of media platforms, students are generally ranked lower.

Mingle and Adam (2015) stated that students share their ideas, thoughts, and discussed exams notes on social media this involvement on social media enhance the respondents reading skills also harmful impact on poor grammar spelling.

SNSs draw student's attention towards activities which are time-wasting like the conversation about non-educational topics. Studies such as (Tariq *et al.* 2012; Junco, Heiberger & Looken 2011; Camilia *et al.* 2013; Garcia-Penalvo *et al.* 2012; Sampson *et al.* 2004) have explored the media impact on the students' educational performance. Oberst (2010) states that for the last ten years, dramatically online world has changed. They also state that thanks to the positive impact of social sites, all the peoples now exchange their opinions, educational content, videos, and pictures. Mazer *et al.* (2009) noted that social media was infiltrating the educational field. Social networks used not only students but also supervisor for various formal or informal reasons.

Helou (2012) stated that the student uses social networking sites for socializing activities. They also noted that 80% of the respondents feel that social sites positively influenced their academic life.

AL-Khalifa (2013) stated that many universities adopted social media around the world. It gradually becomes commonplace for university departments, employees, and students, where it primarily uses and assists as a tool for communication and to make a positive impact not only on individuals but also on higher education (HE) institutions. Social media was not only giving the information but also act for interaction, e.g., parents to teachers, teachers to a class, etc.

Jalal and Zaidieh (2012) reported that in education field, SNSs offer students with the opportunity to connect with class fellows, teachers to students, within and outside their institution.

Sillius *et al.* (2011) pointed out that social sites improve the leaning system, which encourages students to exchange ideas to express their views and make a small community. They allow them to create public or semi-public profiles within the linked system, tag content, such as unwanted items, comments on a status, send messages to a specific user or group of users, and can send friend requests within the system.

Frias and Montano (2012) emphasized that the idea of allowing a user to comment in an open-minded environment has a positive effect on motivating students to express their views on the content, resources, and opinions of the website. Veelo and Damen (2009) concluded that social media is activating tools that promote and support independent learning. A study conducted by Selwyn (2009) at the UK and Pempek & Yemolayea in the USA revealed that students used SNS to find lectures, seminar placements, and schedules.

1.1 Research Objective

1. To measure the student's perception of using social media tools among the participants of IUB and BZU Multan.
2. To identify the barriers for seeking needed academic information using SNSs among the respondents of IUB and BZU Multan.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What is the student's perception of the use of social media in learning?
2. What barriers did students face while seeking needed academic information through social networking sites?

2 Literature Review

According to Liu (2010), the social media tool has become commonplace. We can see that our students used them all the time. The development of modern technology strives to meet the needs of the people, especially the younger generation. The researcher examined the student's usage and their preference for using social media tools and the perception of social media groups. Data collected through an online survey. The finding of the study showed that the most popular social media tools are Facebook, Wikipedia, and YouTube among students. The researcher suggested effective planning of enhancing learning activities both in learning and teaching.

Aharony (2014) determined the use of Facebook as an information resource in both educational and professional environments. A survey was conducted based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) variables to measure usage and attitude towards Facebook. Some personality characteristics of LIS students and information professionals also measured, including personal innovativeness and enjoyment derived from the Big Five Model. Findings revealed that the usage frequency of Facebook among LIS students is higher as compared to LIS professionals.

Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) measured the effect of Facebook on student learning practice. The mixed-method used for data collection from 102 undergraduates or 117 graduate students. The results of this study showed that social media users increased day by day. Students used mostly Facebook for extracurricular activities. So, their GPAs level decreased that will positively or negatively affect the respondent's academics. The researcher further suggested that the research needs to examine the paid work or extra-curricular activities of Facebook users.

Alghamdi and Plunkett (2018) proved the impact of social networking sites and apps on their academic life (academic engagement and academic relationship) and also explored the perception of Saudi male and female postgraduates' students of Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah. A mixed-method used to collect the data. There were two campuses of this university, AL-Zahir campus for female and Al-Abdiyah campus for males. Six hundred and six students have participated in this study, 313 males and 293 females. Finding revealed that there was no significant difference in using social networking sites for study purposes among male and female students, and their use was equal among both genders, although the use of social networks for study purposes was slightly low but was positive.

Almobarraz (2016), in her study, determined the perception of attituded and experiences of undergraduates using YouTube as an information resource to support academics. It also examines the professor's YouTube course activities. A quantitative method used to collect the

data. Eighty-nine complete responses received out of 495 students of Imam university in Saudi Arabia. Findings revealed that students understand the importance of YouTube and its effect on their classroom activities. Students were aware of uploaded videos by the university and also know video sharing and classroom content on YouTube for their fellows and friends, which were helpful to enhance their knowledge. However, the professors do not seem to have a positive attitude towards using YouTube into course activities. In the future, there is a need to improve the professor's experiences and activities towards using YouTube, which will help them in maintain course activities for their students.

Yang and Brown (2015) observed that Facebook is conducive to balancing social connections, allowing them using these sites more, which has helped improve the social system in institutions. They involved more in Facebook conversations with peers on campus, resulting in community satisfaction with college life.

Selwyn (2009) stated that many universities now create profiles and groups on social networking sites such as Facebook, where students and teachers can interact, share resources, and voice of learning. Mazer *et al.* (2007) found that Facebook helped increase student teachers 'and students' interactions, thus boosting student motivation that impacts education and classroom climate.

Singh and Gill (2015) noted that 70% of respondents used social media about an hour daily, and Facebook was the popular social media app among all the respondents. This study found that "time-consuming" was major problem for accessing social media among 37% of respondents, and 29% of fear of misusing their personal information, 23 % lack of security and privacy, also 10% access not allowed by the university. The researcher suggested that an educational institution should create their account on social networking sites and customize these educational institutions.

Mohamed and Sumitha (2011), in her research work, found that the majority of students were familiar with social networking (SNS) and used these sites for academic purposes, share new ideas and social issues, and also friendly communication. They also identify that 39% of respondents have a fear of misuse of personal information, and 48% of users have a lack of security and privacy issue. The researcher suggested that higher institutions can provide training programs to educate students about the benefit and risks associated with social networking sites.

Hamade (2013) indicated that the majority of students accessed social media account many times a day. Facebook and Twitter were the most popular social networks among the respondents of Kuwait University, Kuwait. This study highlighted that social media had negatively affected the students' academic performance. 60% of respondents have study and work issues, and their use of time 58%. Neglecting study work and spending too much time were the two major drawbacks. A better understanding of the use of social networking sites in students need to be investigated.

Helou and Abraham (2014) reported a study that a new dimension of social networking sites helps individuals to communicate with old friends, share and collect new information and enhance other aspects of everyday life in their social consciousness. A preliminary survey conducted to collect the data to 30 undergraduate or postgraduate students of University Technology Malaysia. Results showed that most of the respondents feel that social networking sites have a positive impact on their academic performance, and its negative influence on learning was considerably low.

Al-Daihani (2010) conducted a research study at the two universities of Kuwait. A survey conducted to collect the data from 132 MLISC students of the Kuwait universities. The researcher stated that respondents knew about social applications and their use. They also found that the two major hurdles that students faced while using social media were lack of training and some inhibiting factors. The result of this study can be meaningfully helpful in better understanding the effect of social software applications on MLIS students. Others study is needed to gain a better understanding of social software is in LIS universities.

Fasae and Adegbilero-Iwari reported that the most of respondents use social sites on a daily basis. Facebook was the well-known social media among the respondents of Public university, Nigeria. The majority of science students considered that the use of social media was knowledgeable, while most of them consider the internet connection to be weak, the recovery of unwanted messages/pictures, and failure to address the critical issues encountered during social media use. This study highlighted the negativity and barriers of using social media, which was to distract the students from their study. The researcher suggested that the Government should ensure the continuous supply of electricity to educational institutions, and also teachers should engage students on the social media platform for educational purposes.

Autolomah and Onuoha (2011) surveyed the awareness and purpose of using social intelligence and the usage of networking sites in online social networks for librarians at the University Libraries, Nigeria. Study shows that 97% of respondents were aware of online social networking, and Facebook was the most effective and most used network among respondents. The researcher also found that lack of information about social networks, waste of time, security, and privacy issues were the main barrier to using these sites.

Luo (2010) claimed that social networking sites were the most popular place for students to socialize with peers and considered to be an active channel for establishing social networks among students. The result shows that lack of time and a large variety of choices were the main hinder the student's engagement with the SNSs.

3 Research Design

A quantitative measure recommended and widely used method in the social sciences. The most popular research design in a quantitative measure is a survey research design (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, this study adopted a survey research method for data collection.

In the survey research design, the most commonly used data collection tool is a questionnaire. In the present study, the researcher adopted a quantitative research design and employed a questionnaire as a research method to collect the data from respondents. The purpose of this study was to determine the utilization of social media as an information resource among university students to support their academics.

Best and Khan (2006) stated that "a population is any group of individuals who has one or more traits in common that are interesting to a researcher." The population of the present study comprised of undergraduates, graduates and postgraduates, students of IUB and BZU, Multan. Both universities are ranked and affiliated with Higher Education Commission (HEC).

The reasons for the selection of two university students were to measure and compare the utilization of social media among students to support their academics. The population of the study geographically situated in two more prominent cities of South Punjab. Convenience sampling was used to collect the data. The convenience sampling is suitable, especially when the population is enormous. It can be beneficial when the researcher has limited resources,

workforce, and time. The population comprised of male and female respondents from both Universities. The population detail is given in the following table.

Name of Participating Universities

Name of University	District Name
Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB)	Bahawalpur
Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU)	Multan

4 Results

4.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents

4.2 Respondents' Gender Distribution

Table 1 Shows that most of the respondents who participated in this study were females with a ratio of 295 (50.9%), while 285 (49.1%) respondents were males

Table 1
Gender Distribution of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	285	49.1%
Female	295	50.9%
Total	580	100.0%

4.2 Respondents' Age Distribution

Table 2 indicates that the majority of respondents 301 (51.9%) belonged to the age group 21 to 25 years, and only 58 (10.0%) were more than 30 years old.

Table 2
Age group of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
< 20 year	118	20.3%
21-25 years	301	51.9%
26-30 years	103	17.8%
>30 years	58	10.0%

4.3 Respondents' Education Level

Shows that the majority of the participants 218 (37.6%) were enrolled in undergraduates' programs, while only 153 (26.4%) enrolled in postgraduates.

Table 3
Education Level of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Undergraduate	218	37.6
Graduate	209	36.0
Postgraduate	153	26.4
Total	580	100.0%

4.4 Respondents' Faculty

Indicates that the majority of the respondents 204 (35.2%) belonged to the faculty of Education, while 41 (7.1%) respondents belonged to the Pharmacy.

Table 4
Faculty of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Arts	147	25.3%
Education	204	35.2%
Management Science	75	12.9%
Science	113	19.5%
Pharmacy	41	7.1%
Total	580	100.0%

4.5 Respondents Perception about Social Networking Sites

All the statements received a mean value around 3, showing that respondents were "slightly agree" about "social media tools make learning convenient" (M=3.42, SD=1.192), "social media brings many disadvantage and harm (such as wastage of time, harm to eyes & health)" (M=3.41, SD=1.249), "social media platforms could best utilize for learning" (M=3.40, SD=1.290), "social media offer a good platform to discuss about a class assignment with friends" (M=3.37, SD=1.153), "social media platforms could best utilize for discussion about teachers' lectures" (M=26, SD=1.135), "to seek latest information of university activities" (M=3.24, SD=1.254), "I feel more comfortable to put forward ideas through social media" (M=3.22, SD=1.148), "I feel more confident to express my opinion while using social media networks" (M=3.17, SD=1.118), "social media tools could improve discussion" (M=3.16, SD=1.155), "I use different social media account for learning" (M=3.15, SD=1.181), "social media tools are academically constructive" (M=3.08, SD=1.084), "social media platforms made learning interesting" (M=3.06, SD=1.352) and "social media tools are academically distracting" (M=2.80, SD=1.316).

Table 5
Descriptive Statistic Perception about Social Networking Sites

Rank	Statements	Mean	SD
1	Social media tools make learning convenient	3.42	1.192
2	Social media brings many disadvantage and harm (such as wastage of time, harm to eyes &health)	3.41	1.249
3	Social media platforms could best utilize for learning	3.40	1.290
4	Social media offer an excellent platform to discuss a class assignment with friends	3.37	1.153
5	Social media platforms could best utilize for discussion about teachers' lectures	3.26	1.351
6	To seek the latest information about university activities	3.24	1.254
7	I feel more comfortable to put forward ideas through social media	3.22	1.148
8	I feel more confident to express my opinion while using social media networks	3.17	1.118
9	Social media tools could improve the discussion	3.16	1.155
10	I use different social media account for learning	3.15	1.181
11	Social media tools are academically constructive	3.08	1.084
12	Social media platforms made learning interesting	3.06	1.352
13	Social media tools are academically distracting	2.80	1.316

Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Slightly Agree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

4.6 Problem in Using Social Networking Sites

All the statements received a mean value around 3, indicating that respondents were "slightly agree" about "lack of trust on people interaction through social media" (M=3.39, SD=1.199), "I feel risky to share personal information through social media" (M=3.34, SD=1.233), "I unable to spend more time with family due to social networking sites" (M=3.32, SD=1.198), "I feel irritated while continuously using social media" (M=3.30, SD=1.170), "I feel changes in my behavior from normal due to excessive usage of Social media" (M=3.28, SD=1.170), "doubt about the existence of relevant information" (M=3.24, SD=1.141), "flow of information is very fast through social networking sites" (M=3.23, SD=1.159), "I feel interaction through social media is wastage of time" (M=3.22, SD=1.212), lack of credibility of information resources available on social networking sites" (M=3.19, SD=1.113), "uncertainty about where to look for information" (M=3.17, SD=1.181), "I am unaware of the learning aspects of social

media I only use it for communication or group discussion" (M=3.14, SD=1.216), "poor Internet connectivity prevent me from learning through social sites" (M=3.13, SD=1.115), "lack of reliability of information resources available on social networking sites" (M=3.10, SD=1.213), "don't know how/where to start searching for answers"(M=3.09, SD=1.213), "I think I don't have enough proficiency in English to learn through social networking sites" (M=3.82, SD=1.397).

Table 6
Descriptive Statistic Problems in using Social Networking Sites

Rank	Statements	Mean	SD
1	Lack of trust in people interacted through social media	3.39	1.199
2	I feel risky to share personal information through social media	3.34	1.233
3	I unable to spend more time with family due to social networking sites	3.32	1.198
4	I feel irritated while continuously using social media	3.30	1.170
5	I feel changes in my behavior from normal due to excessive usage of Social media	3.28	1.170
6	Doubt about the existence of relevant data	3.24	1.141
7	The flow of information is very fast through social networking sites	3.23	1.159
8	I feel interaction through social media is wastage of time	3.22	1.212
9	Lack of credibility of information resources available on social networking sites	3.19	1.113
10	Uncertainty about where to look for information	3.17	1.181
11	I am unaware of the learning aspects of social media I only use it for communication or group discussion	3.14	1.216
12	Poor Internet connectivity prevent me from learning through social sites	3.13	1.115
13	Lack of reliability of information resources available on social networking sites	3.10	1.213
14	Do not know how/where to start searching for answers	3.09	1.213
15	I think I do not have enough proficiency in English to learn through social networking sites	2.82	1.397

Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Slightly Agree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

5 Conclusion

Respondents were admitted that Social media tools make learning convenient but social media also brings many disadvantage and harm (such as wastage of time, harm to eyes & health). The barrier students faced while using social networking sites for learning purpose is less proficiency in English language.

5.1 Discussion

This study showed that the lack of trust in people, poor connectivity and security issue is the main barrier of using social media channels among students. This result is compatible with the findings of Weber (2012) stated that SNSs are becoming more common among all types of users. They found some severe issues of data privacy, trust, and security arise in education that respondents faced.

In this study, the results also show that respondents feel the positive impact of using social networking sites for their academics. Because SNS has a verity of academic activities such as communicating with teachers, research supervisors, peers, and fellows for the dissuasion on a different topic of educational interest. Meanwhile, the negative impact of SNSs on students' academic performance is considerably low.

5.2 Recommendation

The researcher has made the following recommendations based on the conclusion;

1. The university should provide an IT instructor in campuses and departments to promote the computer skills for searching and acquiring the information through social media.
2. Students' advisors/supervisors should guide them for the use of social media in educational work because they are closer to students.
3. Institutions and teachers should consider the emphasis on improving the capacity of students in order to manage time and develop better study strategies.

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