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Review Article

Social Media: Bane or Boon for Students

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Abstract: The present era is known as the Networking era and social networking sites are one of the most widely used platforms offered by internet. During this era, young people especially students have taken keen interest in communication on these social networking sites. During past decade, a number of studies have been conducted on the effects of social media on the student's academic performance. In this study, the concise review of past studies focuses on the findings to know the exact effect of social media on students. From the results of different studies, it is concluded that effect of social media on students academic performance remains a controversial issue and hence, social media is described as a double edged sword (i.e. It has positive as well as negative effects), about which users especially students must be trained to be aware of its dangers and should be prudent in its utilization.

Keywords: **Social Networking Sites:** A forms of online platforms that allow users to create a public profile and interact with other users on the website. **Academic Performance:** It represents the performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of instructional environments, especially in schools, colleges and universities. **Mental Health:** It refers to the social, cognitive and emotional well-being of an individual.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of internet in 1990s has created a platform for millions of computers at numerous sites in all countries, belonging to thousands of institutions and other organizations to link up with one another. Now the world is enjoying the innovations in different technologies but the most influenced one is communication field which has led to the introduction of Social Networking Sites (SNSs). These Social Networking Sites allows the users to create a user profile and setup an account to create a digital identity of the user. It also allows the users to select other members of the site as friends (on face-book) or followers (on instagram and twitter) and most of all it allows it allows the users to communicate with one another. The evolution of these Social Networking Sites (SNSs) has led its usage as best medium of communication whereby two third (2/3) of the total internet population visits these Social Networking Sites which are commonly termed as SOCIAL MEDIA [1]. The innovation of social media has turned the dream of ´´global village`` into a reality wherein billions and billions of people communicate with one another through these social networking sites (SNSs).

Now this social media has become more than just a means of communication as it gives us ease in various aspects of life such as shopping, travelling, seeking new information, education and electronic messaging. Present generation (21st) discovered that social media can be used to connect with other people, whether for business or commercial purposes, make new friends, reawaken old friends and long lost relatives. In addition to this, some people have found social media as a means of entertainment and for others; it is the cheapest means to display their skills to the world. In simple words, social media has changed the ways of thinking, behaving and living of new generation up to the extent where it has become our significant other without whom our life will be like a fish without water.

Zephoria Inc [2], on Facebook, 1.79 billion users are on a monthly basis worldwide, 4.5 billion Likes are generated daily and 1.8 billion Loggins are experienced daily, thus creating a web inside a web. Now could you imagine the number of all students logging into these social media applications every day? The answer will be definitely in millions and millions of students. Millions of students Login to their social media accounts like , Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Tiktok, PubG etc as a part of their everyday routine.

As we know, none of the inventions in this world is completely one sided, i.e. There are always two sides of a same coin. Thus it is not surprising as it is the same case with social media, as it comes with positive as well as negative effects.

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Positive Effects of Social Media: Now a day's social media can be used for a wide range of viable activities by students like for information seeking, attending online conferences and workshops, enhancing bond between students and teachers, understanding abstract concepts by 3D animations and many more. Students academic life has transformed into a different style by the introduction of social media and large number of studies have affirmed that social media plays an important role on students in higher education. One such study was conducted by Wheeler and Yeomans [3], in the study, the results revealed four (4) major advantages of social media usage by students in higher education which include; enhancing relationships, improving learning motivation, offer personalized course material and developing collaborative abilities' is also observed that a greater percentage of students including PhD scholars commonly use social media to ameliorate their studies [4]. The size of friendship on social media has a significant impact on students' performance and factors like daily usage of social media in hours has no significant effect on the students' academic performance [5]. Also from the study of Muhammad Osama Shafiq and Falak Nazi [6], the results revealed an interesting fact that frequent use of Facebook and WhatsApp does not affect studies of students rather it enhances collaborative learning among university students. Moreover, Zahid Amin *et al.,* [7], conducted a study on ´´ Impact of Social Media on Students Academic Performance`` wherein results revealed that there is significant effect of social media on academic performance of students as it was evident from the results that there is a moderate positive correlation between students and Facebook. Also the study carried out by Jain *et al.,* [8], titled ´´ The Impact of Social Networking in Promoting Education`` revealed that social media has positive effect on students by chatting with other students, teachers and external sources to acquire knowledge. It is further buttressed from the study of Yunus and Salehi [9] that students gained more vocabulary, improved their writing skills and reduced their spelling mistakes through the use of social media. Finally the studies conducted by Arquero and Esteban [10] and Selwyn [11], whose conclusions were that social media undoubtedly generate new opportunities to engage students in higher education as they are remarkably effective at connecting people and facilitating the exchange of information.

Negative Effects of Social Media

The number of students using social media is surprisingly in millions and most of the students having been blamed various social media applications for their steady decrease in grades. Most of the users (students) of these social media apps complaint different health related problems because of the overuse over use of these social media sites. Some students blamed social media as the cause of emotional disturbance, some blamed as the cause of eating disorder and some have labeled it as the root cause of behavioral change. The students using social media Apps especially Facebook, instagram, whatsApp, Tiktok and PubG, spend increasing amount of their quality time which in turn negatively effects the students' academic performance and social behavior [12]. Also Ayvonne Kelly *et al.,* [13] carried out a study on ´´Social Media Use and Adolescents Mental Health `` to examine whether social media is associated with mental health. Findings of their study clearly revealed that there is a significant but negative relationship between social media use and mental health of students. This negative influence of social media on mental health directly affects their (students) academic achievements. Furthermore, Owusu M Achaew and Agath Gifty Larson [14], examined that social media usage had negatively affected the academic performance of the students. It has been also observed that use of social media contributes to lower academic performance, lower self-perception and less interest in college oriented careers [15]. Davies and Cranston [16], also highlighted some of the risks associated with social media which include criminal activities, such as identity theft and fake relations which are prevalent now a days, sexual harassment and unsuitable advertising. On the same direction O`Keefle and Clake Pearson [17], also mentioned cyber bullying , online harassment, Facebook depression and privacy concerns as some of the challenges associated with social network sites. Besides of these effects, other studies conducted by a number of scholars proved that social media can be detrimental to students' academic life if caution is not taken on time. For instance, the study conducted by Obi *et al.,* [18], titled ´´ The Need for Safety Consciousness among Youths on Social Networking Sites`` revealed that social media affects students use of English. Most of the user s(Students) use short-handwriting when chatting with friends and unconsciously get used to it, thereby replicating same mistakes during examinations. This may seem that these errors are minor challenges, but it is the matter of concern that the increasing rate at which these errors are replicated in education sector and if care is not taken now, our future generation may see it as a norm. Indeed a number of studies including the study of Kuppuswamy and Narayan [19], among others have revealed unequivocally that social media is a nuisance to students academic life. In their study they argued that social media distracts the attention and concentration of students toward learning and converts it towards non educational activities such as useless and unnecessary chatting.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study remains controversial as it is clear from the review of past studie

that the innovation of Social Media has negative as well as positive effects on students academic performance, sch as steady decrease in grades, distraction of attention in academic work, lack of privacy, bullying victimization, sexual harassment, wastage of their quality time and many more. But it (social media) also have unlimited benefits like online lectures, enhancing relations, reducing gap between teacher and student, keeping updated with all school activities, watching important lectures repeatedly, seeking new information, understanding abstract concepts, attending online conferences & workshops and much more. So undoubtedly, one can say that social media is and will remain an important tool in the field of education. It supports different forms of education like E-Learning and Distance education which have been widely patronized and facilitated to great extent through these social networking sites. Now acquiring information both locally and internationally from friends, lecturers or experts is no longer a struggle as it was in olden days. In the end it will not be a mistake to say that ´social media is a useful servant but a dangerous master` as it has been revealed from findings of different studies that despite the positive effects of social media on students academic performance, there are some cases of distraction of attention and addiction of social media which could have serious consequences on the academic achievement of students. Finally, Social Media can be described as a ´´Double Edged Sword`` about which users especially students must be aware about its dangers and should be prudent in its utilization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After understanding the dual nature of social media, the following recommendations are made;

1. Students should be made aware about the dual nature (positive & negativ effects) of social media on their academic achievements.
2. Students should be monitored by parents and teachers on how they use social media by checking their activity log, notifications and last seen status etc.
3. Teachers should encourage the students about the meaningful and fruitful ways of using social media.
4. Communication commissions of all countries and network providers should come up with different filtering information procedures that will prohibit the unwanted, unnecessary and sexual curiosity arising contents to reach students.
5. Students must minimize the time they spend on these social sites to avoid being addicted of unnecessary chatting and entertainment.
6. School, college and university authorities should also restrict access to certain social media sites that may be prone to distracting their attention during lectures.
7. Students should be trained to use social media judiciously to ensure that they will not become detrimental to their academics.
8. All academic institutions should create their own pages or groups on different social media sites to enhance academic performance.
9. The students should be trained to keep a balance between chit-chatting and academic activities.
10. School teachers and college lecturers and professors should ensure to adopt new strategies and using social media as a tool to improve the academic performance by channeling assignments and discussions on social media.

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