

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS

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Abstract:

The world today is like a global village. It has become an INFOBAHN. Each and every single person is connected with one another just by this vast network which is introduced by internet. Internet has made humans global citizens.

Marshall McLuhan said about internet that;

“ The new electronic independence recreates the world in the image of global village.”

There was a time when people were bound to share their thoughts, ideas, emotions, feelings and many more things with one another by long distances. But at present, just because of internet and social media, these barricades cannot stop the flow of information and knowledge across the world. Because this new technical world allows free sharing of thoughts and information among different people living in different areas of the world. Social media has taken part in almost all different types of online networking. It has made the teenagers more sophisticated and more civilized just by upgrading them, by social associations and even by specialized skills, so it is not wrong to call social media as a routine movement (**Horst H. 2014**).

As it is known that social networking sites are comparatively brand new spectacle and phenomenon, but still there are numerous probes investigating about the mental health and problems of students these problems and issues are still remain unsettled (**Igor Pantic 2014**).

Therefore, this specific research undergoes the impact of social media on the mental health issues of students that how and for how long they use social media and what changes has come in them.

❖ Statement of the problem

Researchers are inconclusive in their belief that whether social media is advantageous or not. **Rosen Cheerer and Carrier (2012)**, Coined the term ‘iDisorder’ to describe the negative relationship between social media usage and mental health. Granting all this, the positive effects of social media is being portrayed by **Miller 2016**. According to him, Internet has changed the life of human beings, plus point is that internet gives companionship and methods for accordance socialization. Some researchers and researches reveals that it has positive impact on the world on the other hand some researchers argues that no it negatively effects the world and youth.

So, the above discussion and all these arguments remain unresolved that's why this research highlights the aim to denote the extent to which social media usage and mental health co-relate or co-vary.

❖ Objective

The objective of the this research study is to investigate the social media effect on the mental health of students.

❖ Significance

The findings of this study will be helpful for the students and youth of the world to solve the controversy whether the social media use have positive effects or have negative effects on the mental health of them. It will also help the students to understand and recognize the causes of mental health problems. In addition to this, it will also help the students to measure the frequency or relationship between the social media usage and it's impact on the mental health. They will have clear instructions in this research about the drawbacks and the positive side of social media.

➤ Literature review

❖ What is Social Media?

Teenagers and youth of this present world is just like a new extraordinary generation who can use the latest technology differently. Teens are also called the explorer because they are exploring the world through the world of technology.

The definition of social media in the dictionary Merriam Webster is stated as;

“ The forms of electronic communication such as websites for social networking and microblogging through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and the other content such as videos”.

By now, the appearance, the whole look and the overall map of the world has been changed with the creation of **internet** in the world. **Vinton Cerf and Bob Kahn** they both are the Computer scientists and they are given the credit of creation of the internet which we are using in today's world. It has knock up new wonders and has set the path for globalization. Everyone is sharing online every sort of information, their experiences, videos, texts and almost everything to the whole world just by one click. So, **Social media** can simply be defined as the interaction of the people with one another through the means of social networking sites as well as through their applications. Social media sites include Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, YouTube, Pinterest etc.

❖ Use of Social Media

It is unquestionable that social media is marvelous and very popular throughout the world, but the question arises here that why do so much people use it? Why the whole world is addicted to social media? Recent **neuropsychological research** could hold one answer:

Self disclosure via social media is a form of self disclosure. The brain's intrinsic reward system works in a similar way to powerful main rewards like food and sex (**Tamir and Mitchell, 2012**).

❖ Social Media use on the mental health of students

✓ Positive factors on mental health

Social media use is an over increasing phenomena of this modern 21st century. According to **Pew Research 2018**, seven out of ten people in the United use social media to interact with friends, receive information and news and entertain themselves. According to a recent survey, young people utilize social media on purpose for a number of different reasons. Entertainment, identity building, social enhancement and maintaining interpersonal ties are just a few of the benefits (**Ifinedo 2016**). According to report by **Vishwanath 2008**, social networks, specially offline networks, also provides people to form and maintain social capital, which allows them to draw on materials such as information and social support from other network members. Such uses may hold promises to pay back for diminishing the face to face social interaction and economic, social and health outcomes resulting from it, (**Antoci, Sabitini and Sodini, 2015**). In other words, individuals who are members of social networks are more likely to have more information and knowledge about each and everything as opposed to those who do not have access to information, social support and knowledge. This, in return, is linked to a variety of positive social outcomes such as trust and reciprocity that engender better health, (**Ellison, Sterifield and Lampe 2007**, **Nabi, Prestin and So, 2013**, **Nieminen at., El 2013**). Social media has made individuals a quick thinker too because of eye and brain coordination, according to **Google** social media also helps in improving the typing, finger and other technology related skills. Social media is probably a useful tool which Practitioners used so that they may reach to the population which is unreachable to them and that they engage with them to bring awareness about mental health problems, issues, education, and also support to those who are suffering from severe mental health illnesses (**Naslund & Riefer, 2018**).

✓ Negative factors on mental health

An extensive body of research suggests that social media use is negatively associated with health related problems. For example, according to (**Shakya and Christakis, 2017**) a recent long term study found that social media such as Facebook uses generally negatively associated with well being. Moreover, according to **Choney (2012)**, believes that the use of technology such as Internet is one of the most important factors that can influence students positively or negatively.

It stated that parents and Guardians are worried that students now spend too much time on Facebook and other social media apps and do not have enough time to study. **Patel et. al, (2016)**, Pointed out that online networking is creating problem like uneasiness, sorrow and dietary issues. **William and Teasdale (2018)** concluded that individuals who use social media overly long, they may suffer mental health issues. **Ashford, (2017)** believes that the over use of social media may experience the individuals the feelings of social Isolation, anxiety, depression, jealousy, poor self-esteem, and different types of personality changes. Some individuals suffering from cognitive distortions when they start comparing their lives with the lives of others, which may lead to feelings of sadness and depression as well. Another **Research study in 2018** shows that overuse of social media increases the feeling of loneliness rather than decreasing this feeling and this research also states that through less usage or reducing the time duration of social media helps the individuals to overcome this feeling of loneliness and also their health improves. In addition to this, this research also states that the rate of cyberbullying and unhealthy relationships can also be increased because of social media. In the **study of 2019**, it is concluded that the rate of anxiety, depression, aggression, mental health and anti social problems is more in the teenagers who utilize their time more than **three hours** in a day, also, researchers concluded in the **study of 2021** that being sensitive in nature the suicidal rate among girls who started using social media from the age of 13 years is more than that of boys.

❖ **Social Media use globally**

Dataportal updates its massive global compendium of social media statistics on a regular basis, providing valuable insight into the world of social media. According to this study, more than half of the world's population (58.4%) now utilises social media; 4.62 billion individuals use social media globally; 424 million new users have joined in the previous 12 months; and the average daily time spent on social media is 2h 27m.

Global WebIndex research, which we cite in this article, demonstrates that, on a global scale, "Social media is used by 57.6% of the world's population. In October 2021, the average daily usage is 2 hours and 27 minutes."

These current numbers show that individuals sleep for between 7 and 8 hours per day, assuming that people sleep for between 7 and 8 hours each day.

❖ **Social Media use in Pakistan**

Pakistan is the 6th country which is suffering from over population. Its population is consist of 170 million citizens. In Pakistan, social media is also speedily flattering in the lives of human beings. A research by **Qadeer, (2016)** in which he proclaimed that there are total 10 crore users in Pakistan who use social media. Being patriarchal country, the male statistics of social media usage in Pakistan are found higher than females. **Shaheen (2007)**, in her research study stated that in Islamabad and Rawalpindi universities the students used social media in 3 November 2007 in awareness campaign. In that study it was concluded that social media usage has build up

the awareness level of students regarding, human rights, freedom of expression, importance of democracy. Results of the study also concluded that awareness through social media weakened dictatorial rule. Students were rightly aware of the political situation of Pakistan.

❖ Impact of social media on mental health of university students

(Shafique, Anwer and Bushra) exposed the social media usage of the students of Islamiya University of Bahawalpur. The findings of the study concluded that students were using social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Cite U Like, Blogger etc. The purpose of the students for using social media was to make social relationship, learning and information sharing method activities. While teens can use social media to connect and create friendships with others, they also confront cyberbullying, trolls, toxic comparisons, sleep deprivation, and less frequent face-to-face interactions. According to research by **(Mahmood, Jafree and Sohail, 2020)**, excessive usage of social media can divert social media addiction, which later leads to mental health problem. So, the upsides and downsides of social media impact on mental health will be conducted on the students of Okara university to explore what they think about social media and its relationship with mental health.

➤ Methodology

Research methodology will provide a descriptive detail account of the **methods** and **steps** regarding how the study will be conducted. Specifically, this section will focus on the **design** of the research paper that the researchers will use a **quantitative** approach towards assessing whether mental health providers are aware of impact of social media on mental health or not, **research instruments, participants** for data collection, **hypothesis**, and **data analysis**.

❖ Participants and Research instruments

The participants for the collection of data in this research study were taken randomly from the University of Okara. 50-55 students of the Okara University, random number of students from English department, random number of students from CS department, random number of students from Mass Media department, random number of students from IT department and random number of students from BBA and Microbiology department from the 3rd 4th 5th 6th and 7th semester of October 2021 to February 2022, were chosen. The reason of choosing these specific students was the deep relation of their degree with the topic of this very research. This **quantitative** survey subjected participants to close ended questions **(Questionnaire)** allowing them to contribute their thoughts and opinions about the relationship of social media and mental health whether it is co-relate or co-vary.

➤ Data Analysis

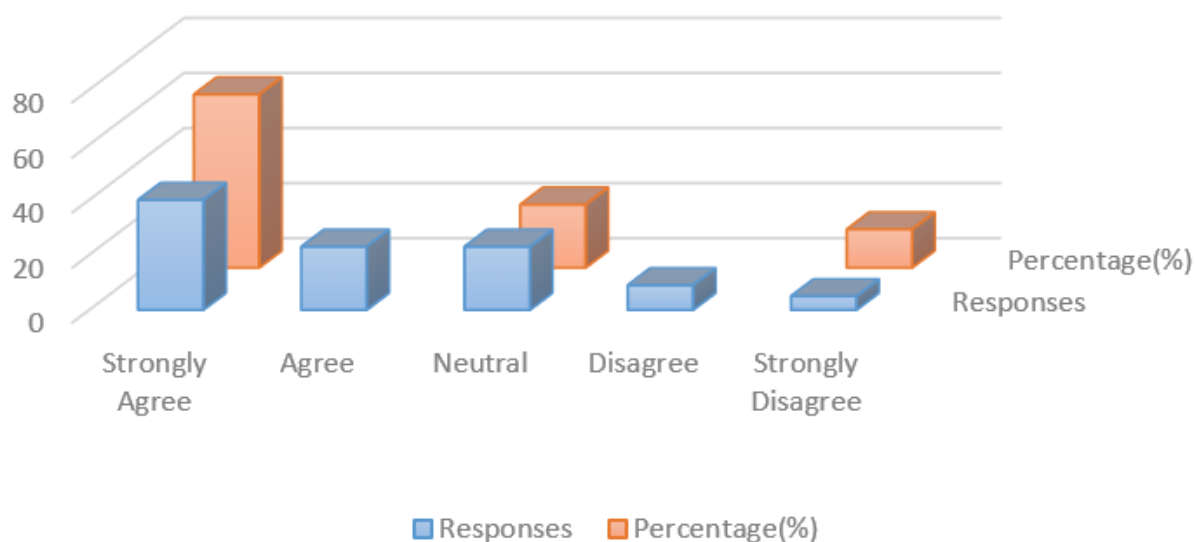
To determine students perceptions and experiences and being quantitative in nature researchers developed a survey for the collection of data from the University of Okara in the form of **5-point Likert Scale** questionnaire. The data was collected through Google forms in this study and questionnaire was divided into two parts. Two questions were the **Deciding** questions that either the respondent is the part of data collection or not and remaining 7 questions were for the students perceptions in exploring the impact of social media use on the mental health. This questionnaire encompassed close ended questions and check out (1) students awareness about the impact of social media on the mental health of them, (2) students belief about social media whether it positively effects the mental health (3) or negatively effects the mental health of them (4) and the use of social media should be minimized or not etc. The total number of respondents were 53, out of which total 25 students from **English department**, mainly 21 students from 7th semester and 4 students from 3rd semester, 9 students from **CS department** out of which 6 students from 3rd semester, 2 students from 7th semester and 1 student from 1st semester, and 5 students from the 5th semester of **BBA**, 5 students from 6th semester of **Microbiology** and 4 students from the 4th semester of **DOMS**. The total percentage of female students were **72%** and male students were of **28%**. All of them were the users of android phone and social media. All the data were analyzed in **MS Word** and **MS Excel** and was given a graphical representation for a better understanding of the reader.

Question Chart

Questions	S A	A	N	D	S D
Do you think social media has positive effect on the mental health of students?	9	1 2	2 1	6	5
Do you think social media has negative effect on the mental health of students?	1 4	8	1 6	9	6
Does social media helps the student in learning academic skills?	2 8	1 3	8	2	2
Does social media helps the student in relaxing their mind?	1 7	1 5	1 1	6	4
Does social media is the reason of increasing the anxiety level in students?	2 5	8	1 2	8	0
Do you think Social Media has made student more sophisticated and advanced?	2 4	1 9	6	3	1
Do you think social media use should be minimized?	2 0	1 4	1 5	2	2

Conclusion in Graphical form

Does social media effects the mental health?



The total percentage of the students who agreed with the question that does social media effects the mental health of the students was 63% and the percentage of the students who disagreed was 23% and neutral students percentage was 14%.

➤ **Key findings**

1. Major findings of this research showed that social media has both positive as well as has negative impact on the mental health of students.
2. Students can improve and enhance their skills and learnings.
3. Students can explore the world of today in their own way without the help of any instructor.
4. Moreover respondents believe that social media has made the students more sophisticated and even civilized.
5. Social media can facilitate the students with its new wonders.
6. Social media helps the individuals in giving awareness.
7. According to research, through the help of social media, students can entertain themselves in order to relax their mind.
8. But respondents also stated that social media affects negatively the mental health of students.
9. The over use of social media cause in increasing the anxiety and depression level in students as well.

10. Researchers also stated that students spend more time on social media and spend less time on their studies as a result their academic performance is also being disturbed.
11. According to the study, the suicidal rate among youth is also increasing.
12. Respondents also claimed that the use of social media should be minimized.

➤ **Conclusion**

This research study explored the perceptions and point of views of the students of University of Okara towards the use of social media and its impact on the mental health of the students. Quantitative research method was used to explore their perceptions and point of views. This study threw light on the question which was not resolved. The mystery was that is social media proving a useful creation for the youth of today's generation or it is a harmful for them. Different researchers concluded that social media is very useful creation. Furthermore, they claimed that, social media is one of the most exciting and fun ways to entertain themselves as well as it keeps you updated about current affairs. It enhances your knowledge and brain and ultimately you starts seeing the world differently. Despite all these, some researchers also highlighted the negative side of social media. Researchers proclaimed that the negative impacts of social media are more than that of its positive impacts. Researchers also concluded that drawbacks of social media can be controlled if individuals appropriately use all social media platforms and also by limiting the time duration of the use of social media. So to resolve this question that either social media positively effects the mental health of students or negatively effects the mental health of students, this specific research was concluded by the students of University of Okara. Students shared their perceptions in which few stated that social media positively effects the mental health of students, few stated may be and majority of the students claimed that social media negatively effects the mental health of students. So, keeping their point of views under consideration, this very research proved that **Yes** social media negatively effects the mental health rather than positively effects the mental health.

So, this research study is important because it can help the students as well as other individuals to look the positive and negative sides of social media before using it and being addicted to social media.

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