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Abstract: *Over the past two decades, the use of social media has increased rapidly, becoming a social norm around the world, including Pakistan. Social media platforms such as TikTok, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Facebook and Twitter provide opportunities for knowledge sharing and communication, their excessive use distracts students from academic activities, reduces focus on learning, and raises concerns about privacy and security. This research study examines the influence of social media on the academic performance of students at the Government Postgraduate College Timergara in Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The data were collected from 341 students of Government Postgraduate College, Timergara through a structured questionnaire by using a quantitative research design. The variables included social media influence and academic performance. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests in SPSS 21. The results indicate a significant association of social media with students' academic performance. The study concluded that although social media has the potential to transform, its excessive use negatively affects academic performance of students. Therefore, educational institutions should guide students towards the constructive use of social media for educational purposes.*

Introduction

Young people, including school, college and university students, constitute about 60% Pakistan's total population of 240 million (Badar et al, 2020). The estimated figures indicate that approximately 65 million young people fall within the 15–30 age group in Pakistan (Saud, 2022). Furthermore, Friedman, (2013) and Vuori, (2012) stated that social media is computer-mediated technology that promotes the development and exchange of ideas, awareness, career interests, information, and other forms of expression through online communities and different social networks. The phrase "social media" is frequently used in our daily life. It is a website that not only provides information, but also interacts with you while doing so. It is a collection of internet-based applications that enable the production and sharing of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Kauser et al., (2019) stated that It is easy to mix up social media and social news because journalists are frequently referred to as the media.

Furthermore, that social news site is likewise a social media platform. Kaplan & Haenlein, (2010) highlighted that social media combines web-based and mobile technologies to form highly interactive platforms where users can create, share, discuss, and modify content produced by themselves or others. Its widespread presence in modern society, it is clear that we are living in a new era of communication in the form of social media. Information technology is undergoing rapid innovation, which is being disseminated through multiple social media and networking platforms. Social media platforms such as TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Facebook offer modern social interaction patterns of communication, some of which are neither directed neither changeable (Sapountzi et al., 2018). Social media users typically use their smart phones, laptop or desktop computers to access social media services through the internet or other web-based technology, or they download apps that allow social media and social networks to work on smartphones i.e mobile devices or tablets (Shepherd et al., 2018).

Mayhew et al. (2018) stated that social media users usually establish highly collaborative platforms where student organizations can exchange ideas, discuss, and edit user-generated or previously published content as a result of their involvement with such services. Pivec et al. (2019) stated that social media users mostly use TikTok, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, LinkedIn, Viber, WeChat, Facebook, Twitter,, Wikia and What's App. On the other hand, information technology has developed gradually over time. According to Scholz et al. (2018), social networking is a social structure that represents a diverse context of social actors, including people, groups, and organizations, as well as their social interactions and communications. Social media and networking sites offer both positive and negative benefits to the community, just like any strong platform or innovative development (Collin et al., 2011). This technological advancements brought negative shifts in the in the discourse of surrounding society and culture (Alsaleh, 2024). The influence of social media also had a major impact on students as they grew up in the age of social media (Zhu & Chen, 2017).

Moreover, Raghavendra et al. (2018) stated that students are influenced by social networks and social media, which are gradually becoming a part of everyone's daily life. Whereas, Lee (2018) highlighted that social media users can view or read their friends online posts without interacting with them. While, Russell et al. (2016) stated that social networking and social media sites rely heavily on user-generated content, including comments, posts, video sharing, digital photos, and all online interaction data. Social media influences how students interact with other people, communities, and larger organizations, and these changes are at the core of innovative information technology fields (Kesim & Alabaş, 2024).

According to Intravia et al. (2019), one advantage of using social media is that it exposes the public to ideas, data, and programming at a young age, leading to further technological advancement and knowledge growth among students. Conversely, on the other hand, children's sadness has been exacerbated the extensive use of web-based social networking and social media, which has also radically transformed the social environment in which children grow and learn (Reddick et al., 2017). According to Singh (2018), social networking sites such as Twitter, WhatsApp Messenger and Facebook have also increased user behavior and communication. Over the past 20 years, social networking site usage has increased globally, turning entertainment into a social norm. Young people including students today use social media for many things, such as gathering information and engaging in daily activities (Thomas et al., 2017).

According to Chernysh, et al., (2020), the rise of social networking sites has been significantly shaped by the advent of internet services and various digital communication technologies. Internet technology has accelerated the development of communication techniques and exposed people to new means of

sharing information (Lin, 2014). In a similar vein, the widespread adoption of Android smartphones in recent years shows how rapidly this technology has expanded (Dutta et al., 2017). Additionally, internet gadgets and networks that may be accessed through laptops, PCs, and mobile phone internet packages provide people with internet capabilities right at their doorstep (Donner, 2015). However, Pakistan's internet use capacity has changed significantly since 3G and 4G mobile technology was introduced (Iqbal et al., 2020).

According to Jilani et al. (2015), the majority of Pakistani internet users are young people, especially university students. The majority of people use the internet for social, recreational, and academic purposes. Nonetheless, a sizable percentage of college students mostly use social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others for leisure (Hashemi et al., 2022). Users have access to an increasing number of social networking sites, and many websites are incorporating social elements (Shafawi, & Hassan, (2018). Nonetheless, the survey indicates that the most widely used social networking sites are Facebook and Twitter (Kwon et al., 2014).

According to Zimba,, & Gasparyan, (2021), two-thirds of the world's internet users also use social networking sites or other blogging platforms, and they devote roughly 10% of their internet time to social networking. After all, almost all students have signed up for at least one social networking site, and the younger generation is familiar with them. Since the majority of users of social networking sites are young people, it is uncertain whether these sites can negatively impact students' academic performance. Today, global networking sites have gained popularity and are seen as a modern communication method (Baumann et al., 2026).

Shafawi and Hassan, (2018) stated that social networking site use has detrimental consequences on students' academic performance. A recent study revealed by Waqas et al., (2016), which stated that, even during class lectures, most students frequently use social networking sites at a concerning rate. Academic achievement is often measured through tests, which are considered a major aim of any educational institution (Steinmayr et al., 2014). These educational institutions provide students with knowledge and skills. Academic performance is the outcome of education, enabling teachers, students and institutions to attain their goals simultaneously. However, academic progress and performance are best measured through periodic tests or continuous assessments but there is no single best method for measuring academic success (Waqas et al., 2016). Social media is intended to combine mobile and online technology to build highly interactive platforms for individuals and communities to share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content (Kietzmann et al., 2012).

People interact with social media by creating, sharing, exchanging, and commenting in various networks (Meikle, 2016). Social media is a collection of internet-based applications that operate on an ideological underpinning and enable the creation and distribution of user-generated content. Social media has emerged as a major route for chatting, with applications such as WhatsApp and snapchat. Mobile social media has grown in popularity, opening up additional browsing opportunities (Kausar et al., 2019).

Several studies have regularly focused on how much time children spend on social media to better understand how it affects their academic scores and overall health. The amount of time students spend on mobile social media sites provides a good perspective on how these time-consuming activities may be related to academic outcomes (Cardos et al., 2021). Hasnain et al. (2015), highlighted social media effect on college students' academic performance. Their findings raised concerns about the potential negative impact of excessive social media use on academic achievement. Moreover, Khan (2009) stated that social media users often perform poorly academically. Likewise, Englander et al. (2010) argue that social media has a negative impact on students' academic performance that far outweighs its benefits.

Internet addiction has led to an increase in internet use over the past few decades. These addicted prefer to use the Internet instead of spending less time on personal and professional commitments, which leads to lower academic achievement. Similarly, Karpinski (2009) found that social media users spent less time on their studies than non-users, resulting in poorer GPAs. It should also be noted that among the various unique distractions of each generation, social media is a prominent distraction for the current generation.

Zhu et al., (2015) stated that many parents have shown serious concerns about their inability to capture their children's attention, since they appear to have been engrossed in the captivating world of social media. While some young people mostly students are so socially awkward that they have cut themselves off from reality and created a world of illusion and fantasy for themselves. According to the alarming report of Sunday Observer that Pakistan's already struggling education system could be severely affected if the hazardous trend of social media network is allowed to continue. This may be a plausible explanation for why students are performing poorly in school these days. In delicate and well-organized settings like mosques, lecture halls and churches it is not uncommon to witness young people conversing. Moreover, Vuori, (2012) stated that some people are so involved that they keep talking while driving on the highway. The shift in attention from visible to invisible companions has resulted in the loss of important activities like studying, reading and writing (Kausar et al., 2019).

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the association between social media influence and students' academic performance in Tehsil Timergara, District Dir Lower. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 341 respondents. The questionnaires were administered in colleges through direct, face-to-face interaction with the participants. The respondents ranged from first-semester students to final-year students. A convenience sampling technique was used, as participation was based on the respondents' willingness to take part in the study. Efforts were made to ensure adequate representation of students from different departments and semesters at Government Postgraduate College Timergara. In total, 21 academic departments of the college were included in the research. Although several colleges exist in the area, this particular institution was selected due to its larger student population. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a value of 0.81 across the eleven questionnaire items, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The collected data were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS. Univariate analysis was conducted to summarize the data distribution, while chi-square analysis was used to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Data Analysis

In table 1, Frequencies and percentage distribution of respondents on the view about social media usage. The table shows that 308 (90.2%) of the respondent observe that social media distract them from studies, while 11 (6.6%) respondent had no idea about it, 22 (3.2%) respondent negate the above statement. The above result is supported by the study of Emerick et al. (2019) and Karpinski (2009) found that social media users spent less time on their studies than non-users, social media is a prominent distraction for the current generation from the studies. Furthermore, 190 (55.5%) of the respondent accept that they delay studying due to social media use, while 109 (31.9) of the opinion that they didn't delay studying due to social media use and 42 (12.4%) respondent had no knowledge. Koessmeier, C., & Büttner (2021) stated that students frequently choose to spend time on social media rather than focusing on their studies.

Moreover, 197 (57.8%) of the respondent showed that they have missed academic activities like classes

because of social media use, while 108 (31.7%) respondent didn't accept the previous statement and 36 (10.6%) respondent had no idea about it. This result supports the study of Alt (2017) and Kauser et al., (2019), which stated that the shift in attention from visible to invisible companions through social media has resulted in the loss of important activities like studying, reading and writing. In addition, 193 (56.5%) of the respondent consider that academic productivity and learning efficiency has decreased over time due to use of social media, while 101 (29.6%) respondent reject the former statement and 47 (14%) respondent had no information. This result supports the study of Boahene et al. (2019) and Reddick et al. (2013) which stated that children's sadness has been exacerbated the extensive use of web-based social networking and social media, which has also radically transformed the social environment in which children grow and learn.

Similarly 333 (97.6%) respondent were of the view that they use social media to complete academic work in collaboration with class fellows, while 5 (1.5%) of the respondent had no idea about the statement and 3 (1.1%) of the respondent negate the statement. The study of Rambe (2012) stated that students use social media to accomplish academic tasks. Moreover, 202 (59.4%) respondent were of the opinion that they prefer learning through social media rather than through lectures or books, while 104 (30.6%) of the respondent didn't accept it and 35 (10%) respondent had no knowledge about the former statement. The result supports the findings of Rambe (2012) and Griffiths et al. (2005) that the majority of people use the internet for social, recreational, and academic purposes.

In addition to 279 (81.8%) respondents stated that academic performance declines due to excessive use of social media, while 50 (14.5%) of the respondents negate the statement and 12 (3.7%) respondents had no idea. This result support the study of Ahmed and Qazi, (2011) stated that social networking site use has detrimental consequences on students' academic performance.

The majority of the respondent positively response to the statement that they feel difficulty concentrating in class due to excessive use of social media which are 314(92.1%) respondents, while 18 (5.3%) respondent negatively response to the former statement and 9 (2.6%) respondent had no knowledge. This result supports the findings of Waqas et al., (2016), which stated that, even during class lectures, most students frequently use social networking sites at a concerning rate. Furthermore, 269 (78.9%) respondent believe that there study is negatively affected by use of social media, while 38 (11.1%) respondent negate the statement and 34 (10%) respondent refuse to response. This result supports the study of Alsaleh, (2024) which stated that social networking sites negatively impact students' academic performance.

Moreover 113 (37.7%) respondent view that they don't confirm the accuracy of academic information obtained from social media before using it, while 128 (33.2%) accept the statement and 100 (29%) respondent had no idea. Kauser et al., (2019) studies also revealed that social media users don't confirm the accuracy of academic information obtained from social media before using it. Furthermore 244(71.5%) respondent were of the view that they feel anxious or irritable when you don't have access to social media, while 42 (16.1%) respondent had no knowledge and 55 (12.4%) respondent negate the statement.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of the respondent regarding usage of social media

Statements	Yes	No	Don't know
Does using social media distract you from your studies?	308(90.2%)	11(3.2%)	22(6.6%)
Did you delay studying due to social media use?	190(55.5%)	109(31.9%)	42(12.4)
Have you ever missed academic activities like classes because of social media use?	197(57.8%)	108(31.7%)	36(10.6%)
Do you consider that your academic productivity and learning efficiency has decreased over time due to use of social media	193(56.5%)	101(29.6%)	47 (14.0%)
Do you use social media to complete academic work in collaboration with class fellows?	333(97.6%)	5(1.3%)	3(1.1%)
Do you prefer learning through social media rather than through lectures or books?	202(59.4%)	104(30.6%)	35(10.0%)
Do you believe that academic performance declines due to excessive use of social media	279(81.8%)	50(14.5%)	12(3.7%)
Do you feel difficulty concentrating in class due to excessive use of social media?	314(92.1)	18(5.3%)	9(2.6%)
Do you think that study is negatively affected by use of social media?	269(78.9%)	38(11.1%)	34(10.0%)
Do you confirm the accuracy of academic information obtained from social media before using it?	113(33.2%)	128(37.7%)	100(29.0%)
Do you feel anxious or irritable when you don't have access to social media?	244(71.5%)	42(12.4%)	55(16.1%)

Association of social media influence and student academic performance

Table-2 provided the information on the relationship between social media use and academic performance. It shows the relationship between social media distract you from your studies. A significant ($P = 0.007$) relationship was detected between social media distract you from your studies with academic performance. The study further shows the relationship between student delays studying due to social media use with academic performance. A highly significant ($P = 0.000$) relationship detected between students delay studying due to social media use with academic performance. The study further revealed the relationships between you missed academic activities like classes because of social media use with academic performance. A highly significant ($P = 0.000$) relationship detected between you ever missed academic activities like classes because of social media use with academic performance. Similarly, the study further highlighted the relationship between academic productivity and learning efficiency has decreased over time due to use of social media with academic performance. A highly significant ($P = 0.000$) relationship detected between academic productivity and learning efficiency has decreased over time due to use of social media with academic performance.

Similarly, the study further highlighted the relationship social media to complete academic work in collaboration with class fellows with academic performance. A highly significant ($P = 0.000$) relationship detected between social media to complete academic work in collaboration with class fellows with s academic performance. The study further revealed the relationships between they prefer learning

through social media rather than through lectures or books with academic performance. A highly significant ($P = 0.000$) relationship detected between they prefer learning through social media rather than through lectures or books with academic performance.

The study further revealed the relationships academic performance declines due to excessive use of social media with student's academic performance. A highly significant ($P = 0.000$) relationship detected between academic performance declines due to use of social media with students' academic performance. Moreover it shows the relationship between the students feel difficulty in concentrating in class due to use of social media with students' academic performance. A highly significant ($P = 0.000$) relationship was detected between student feel difficulty over concentrating in class due to use of social media with students' academic performance. The study further shows the relationship study is negatively affected by use of social media with students' academic performance. A highly significant ($P = 0.000$) relationship detected between study is negatively affected by use of social media with academic performance. The study further revealed the relationships between students confirm the accuracy of academic information obtained from social media before using it with academic performance. A Highly significant ($P = 0.000$) relationships detected between students confirm the accuracy of academic information obtained from social media before using it with student academic performance. Similarly, the study further highlighted the relationship between students feel anxious or irritable when you don't have access to social media with academic performance. A highly significant ($P = 0.000$) relationship detected between students feel anxious or irritable when you don't have access to social media with student academic performance.

Table 2 Association of Student academic performance with Economic impacts

Statement of Question	Chi Square (χ^2)
Does using social media distract you from your studies?	$\chi^2= 14.182$ ($p=0.007$)
Did you delay studying due to social media use?	$\chi^2= 111.864$ ($p=0.000$)
Have you ever missed academic activities like classes because of social media use?	$\chi^2= 30.006$ ($p=0.000$)
Do you consider that your academic productivity and learning efficiency has decreased over time due to use of social media	$\chi^2= 40.858$ ($p=0.000$)
Do you use social media to complete academic work in collaboration with class fellows?	$\chi^2= 26.172$ ($p=0.000$)
Do you prefer learning through social media rather than through lectures or books?	$\chi^2= 33.659$ ($p=0.000$)
Do you believe that academic performance declines due to excessive use of social media?	$\chi^2= 24.188$ ($p=.000$)
Do you feel difficulty concentrating in class due to excessive use of social media?	$\chi^2= 80.7600$ ($p=0.000$)
Do you think that study is negatively affected by use of social media?	$\chi^2= 27.142$ ($p=0.000$)
Do you confirm the accuracy of academic information obtained from social media before using it	$\chi^2= 93.050$ ($p=0.000$)
Do you feel anxious or irritable when you don't have access to social media?	$\chi^2= 65.004$ ($p=0.000$)

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between social media use and students' academic performance in Government Postgraduate College Timergara, District Dir Lower. The findings reveal that social media has a significant influence on students' academic outcomes. While these platforms offer opportunities for communication, information sharing, and academic collaboration, their excessive and unregulated use negatively affects students' concentration, time management, and overall academic performance. The results of the chi-square analysis indicate a statistically significant association between use of social media and students' academic performance, suggesting that increased engagement with social networking sites may lead to reduced academic focus. Although social media has revolutionized communication and learning environments, its misuse can hinder educational attainment. Educational institutions should promote the constructive use of social media by organizing awareness programs and encouraging its academic use. Students should develop time management skills, while parental and institutional guidance, along with policy measures, should ensure responsible and balanced usage. Overall, the study concludes that social media is a powerful tool that can either support or undermine academic success, depending on how it is used by students.

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