A Qualitative Exploration of University Undergraduates’ Perspectives about the Effects of Social-Media on their Academic Performance

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Abstract

Although digital technologies are well integrated in higher education settings, however, despite of growing corpus of research on the outcomes of digital technologies, there is a dearth of evidence from the perspectives of university undergraduates about the impact of social media on their academic performance. This study was an attempt to bridge this gap in the existing body of knowledge by qualitatively measuring the perspectives of students about the effects of social media on their learning outcomes. Using critical theory of technology and case study method, this study explores the perspectives of students about the effects of social media on their learning performance. The findings showed that using of social media has a negative impact on academic performance of students. Social media restricted students to spend time for assignment preparation and its submission in time. Students spent time on social media in non-academic activities such as spending time with friends for entertainment at the cost of their studies. Students secured low academic grades because of spending time on social media. Many students reported about its negative impact on their health like, stress and physical exhaustion due to poor participation in outdoor games or sports. Instructors and administration are suggested to chalk out viable policies for the use of social media among students and its purposeful utilization.

Introduction

Today students at colleges and universities spend much time on social networking. They make new friends, freely express their opinions, and even take on new identities (Aljuboori, Fashakh & Bayat, 2020). Social media is commonly being used in learning environments to engage, collaborate, and learn with other people and peers. Students frequently use information technology in both their academic and personal lives. Since students are already familiar with the tools and settings, therefore, they use social media regularly than other technology apps (Arif, 2019; Steers, Moreno & Neighbors, 2016). According to social media researchers, since the last few decades, social technology has dramatically revolutionized the globe (Alahmar, 2016).

The term ‘communication’ is highly trendy nowadays. Despite geographical distances, technology has brought us together via numerous communication applications on the internet which has risen social media as one of the most common means for communication (Haddad, Macenski, Mosier-Mills, Hibara, Kester, Schneider & Liu, 2021). Social media is used by most people with careers of all kinds to produce, discuss, and exchange ideas and thoughts. This type of communication is referred to as "social media", which enables to interact and enhance transparency. Social media provides young people with fresh chances for communication and globalisation. The introduction of Myspace and WhatsApp has led to a surge in social networking's popularity in recent years. Facebook is utilised by 95% of undergraduate students and has over 900 million members worldwide (Kircaburun, Alhabash Tosuntaş & Griffiths, 2020; Eid & Al-Jabri, 2016). According to a recent survey, about ninety percent of teenagers in the developing world use internet, out of which more than 80 percent use it daily for interacting with peers (Chukwuere & Chukwuere, 2017).
Social Media

The term "social media" refers to a broad network of websites and software tools that let users interact, talk, and quickly exchange information with others. Additionally, users can produce, exchange, and discuss online material as well as share information such as images, videos, events, thoughts, and facts (Kwok, Leung, Poon & Fung, 2021). Social media has developed as a segment of online conversation, attracting a vast amount of content production, sharing, bookmarking, and networking activity. Politics, the environment, technology, and the entertainment industry are just a few of the areas where social media is rapidly changing current debate and setting trends and goals (Balakrishnan & Gan, 2016). Due to the rapid growth of smartphones, young people can now join social networks more easily through mobile apps. While many people use social media platforms to communicate with and keep in touch with their coworkers to interact with a variety of groups (Azizi, Soroush & Khatony, 2019).

The promotion of products and brands is another way that businesses use social media networks. This trend has affected people's daily lives and how they handle work, changing both. Finally, it can be said that using social media has a range of societal impacts, both good and bad (Kolhar, Kazi & Alameen, 2021). Due to the advancement of social media over the past ten years, young people are now able to exchange their ideas, emotions, personal information, images, and videos at a mind-boggling rate. Social networking websites are now being used by 73% of American teenagers (Lau, 2017).

As social media makes it easy and quick to access whatever information you need in a matter of seconds, students commonly use it for several objectives, including study and enjoyment. Now that higher education institutions have embraced social media, it provides a platform for students to communicate with their professors, other students, and other higher authorities (Mushtaq & Benraghda, 2018). During the past several years, social media websites have become more and more popular, opening new possibilities for youth in terms of local and international contact. When Facebook, Myspace, WhatsApp, and other social networking platforms were developed, social networking had a sharp increase in popularity between 2010 and 2020. For instance, only Facebook is utilised by 85% of college students worldwide, and it has over 500 million members and is continually growing (Raza, Qazi, Umer & Khan, 2020).

Social Media and Student Learning

Social media has become a global phenomenon. Many people in Pakistan frequently visit various social media applications (Raza et al, 2020). The usage of social media by students in the academic setting has significantly expanded during the last several years. For students, digital networks have surpassed all other socialising opportunities. For communication, students are becoming more interested in social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp, and Instagram (Hawi & Samaha, 2017). Students experience varied types and levels of repercussions as a result of their involvement. These networks are also utilised by them for the sharing of reading material, research projects, and academic experiences. As a result, in many respects, students now have support options other than the dreary
lectures and private academic sessions held by lecturers in traditional classrooms (Sahin, 2017; Abbas, Aman, Nurunnabi & Bano, 2019). According to Ahmad, Alvi and Ittefaq (2019) many students spend more time on social media for communicating with their friends and sharing information on social media platforms. They develop a reliance upon reviewing their own status after a few minutes throughout the day.

Although while social media interactions might enhance students' learning, it has been shown that integrating social media into academic courses poses difficulties. Teachers frequently struggle to help students utilise social media because they view it as a private affair and feel awkward disclosing details about how they use particular social media programmes. According to research, students may use social media in ways that run counter to the objectives of the course teacher even when it is being utilised for academic purposes. For instance, although some students are found to utilise social media heavily, others are less interested in using it for academic purposes (Salloum, Maqableh, Mhamdi, Al Kurdi & Shaalan, 2018). More than 90% of students in higher education utilise social media as a medium for social contact and other objectives, such as sending messages, exchanging class assignments with peers, sharing routines, and so on, according to studies about the present educational system. Also, studies demonstrate that students often spend thirty (30) minutes each day on social networking sites as part of their daily routine. This demonstrates how extensively kids are use these websites, which may benefit or harm their academic performance (Zhao, 2021).

Throughout the previous two decades, Pakistani university students' use of social media has dramatically expanded (Rafi, 2020). It provides a forum for forming connections with individuals outside of academic institutions. Because social media is becoming more and more popular, educators are unsure whether students' academic performance won't be impacted by how much time they spend on it, how they manage their study obligations, and how social media affects their academic growth (Abbas, Jiang, Miao & Naqvi, 2020). This study investigates undergraduate university students' perceptions on how social media affects their academic performance.

**Methodology**

A qualitative case study methodology was used to carry out this investigation. When it is necessary to thoroughly analyse all elements of a case by examining the points of view of people who were engaged in it or experienced it by close observation, a qualitative case study that is based on an interpretivist paradigm is utilised. This method aids in giving data that is deeper, more robust, and more thorough (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009).

**Participants**

The researchers targeted the students of different departments to collect diverse views. Hence, 14 boarding students were interviewed purposively, one each from Department of Education, Department of Software Engineering, Department of English, Department of political science, Department of economics,
Department of Law, Department of Zoology, Department of Biotechnology, Department of Pharmacy, Department of Sociology, Department of BBA, Department of Journalism and Mass communication, Department of Islamic study and Department of Chemistry at University of Malakand.

In this regard, a checklist was also distributed among the boarding students to know about the frequency of using social media on daily basis. The criteria of selection were based on the small checklist showing choice of students for spending time on social media ranging from (1), 20 percent, (2) 40 percent (3), 60 percent (4) 80 percent (5) 100 percent. Based on the data received through the checklist, only those top listed students were selected who spent more than 80 percent of their time on social media. Thus, 20 students were selected for interviews who mentioned to spend their maximum time on social media. Out of the 20 students 6 students declined due to personal reasons to participate in the study and 14 showed willingness for the interviews.

Measure

Data were collected by using a structured checklist and semi-structured interview guide. Individual interviews were used to explore students’ experiences and perspectives. The interview guide was developed and got validated based on experts’ feedback (David & Sutton, 2004). The questions in the semi-structured interviews were checked by three subject experts and based on their expert views, the questions were revised and refined as shown in Table 1 that are also the research questions for the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Guided Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>What are the purposes for the use of social media by university undergraduate students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>What are the effects of social media on the academic performance of university undergraduate students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>How much time students spend on social media as compared to reading books which affects their academics performance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>What are the effects of social media on students’ class-based assignments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>What are the effects of social media on students’ physical health and social activities?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection procedures

In order to gather diverse data from across the university, the researchers conducted interviews with boarding students from various departments conveniently. Boarding students were selected as they were open to participate and contact. Those who were the day scholars were not included as it was hard to contact them after busy university schedule on daily basis. Students were engaged in classes from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and no student was ready for the interview in day time, so the researcher conducted interviews in the evening after 4:00 pm. Before conducting interview, prior permission was obtained for
the date, time and place of the interview. As boarding house was convenient for the respondents, so
interviews were conducted there and recorded via mobile phone that were later on transcribed. The
transcribed interviews were shared with the students for their approval as per research ethics

Secondly, the students were engaged in classes from 9AM in the morning to 4PM in the evening, hence,
o no student was ready to give time for interviews during daytime. Even some students were enrolled in the
evening shifts which were excluded from the study sample. Therefore, before conducting the interviews,
prior permission was obtained about the date and place of the interviews. The interviews were mostly
conducted inside the hostel rooms with the students. The interviews were recorded on mobile recorder
and later transcribed with the help of research assistant. The transcribed interviews were later shown to
the students to get their approval as per research ethics. Each interview lasted for 35 to 50 minutes in a
relaxed atmosphere.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by using frequency and percentages to describe the degree of agreement and
disagreement among the respondents regarding the research questions. The qualitative data were
analyzed through content analysis method. In this regard, the qualitative interview data were initially
transcribed on data sheets for each interview separately. The transcriptions were carefully reviewed, read,
and reread to offer them as supporting documentation for the quantitative data gathered via structured
questions. The researcher was able to report the data’s evident or semantic interpretations. The researcher
also thoroughly questioned the implicit meanings, presumptions, and concepts that underlie what
respondents directly say in interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The research study’s reporting and
operation both adhered to ethical standards. Every effort was made to safeguard the confidentiality of
the research participants’ data by obtaining the appropriate approvals from the respondents before to
administering the checklist and performing the interviews, explaining the study’s aim and informing them
of its intent.

Demographic Information
Table 2
Respondents of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biotechnology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS &amp; IT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic study</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>07.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
Presentation of Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–20 Year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–22 Year</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22–24 Year</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 &amp; older</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As per Table 3a total of 11 respondents (78.57%) were Male and 3 respondents (21.42%) were Female; 2 respondents (14.28%) were between 18–20 years, 7 (50%) were between 20–22 years, and 5 (35.71%) were between 22–24 years and there were of age 25 and above.

### Results

#### Research Question 1

What are the effects of social media on academic performance of university undergraduate students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total respondent</th>
<th>Positively effect</th>
<th>Negatively effect</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>No effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4 (28.57%)</td>
<td>6 (42.85%)</td>
<td>3 (21.42%)</td>
<td>1 (7.14%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that 4 (28.57%) of the respondents responded that social media positively affects undergraduates’ academic performance, 6 (42.85%) of the respondents responded that social media had negative effects undergraduates’ academic performance. However, 3 (21.42%) of the respondents responded that social media had both positive and negative effects on undergraduates’ academic performance and 1 (7.14%) of the respondents responded that social media did not affect the undergraduates’ academic performance. Most respondents during the interview answered that using social media affects their academic performance negatively. One of the respondents from political science department mentioned that:

Those students who find time for social media show poor academic results in examination, because they give less time to their studies and more time to online chats with friends and entertainment

Another respondent from Software Engineering Department mentioned that:

“Using social media is like one sided traffic which subdue our mental potentials, which reduces our mental efficiency whether its learning, thinking, will power or power of
Watching and reading through social media has long lasting effects on our conscious which lead to lack of focus/concentration and interest”

Another respondent from English Department mentioned that:

“These platforms are addictive and as a student we get addicted to it and waste our time”.

Respondent from Department of Education mentioned that:

“When I am going to search something regarding my academic (topic, lecture, presentation etc.) there must accruing of irrelevant materials compelling by dragging towards that to search and see. Once enter toward that site leaving is difficult and thus whole time is wasted”.

So, based on data analysis, the researchers concluded that social media has negative effects on undergraduate students’ academic performance. Mostly undergraduate students waste their time on chatting and watching entertaining content.

Research Question 2

What is the purpose for which university undergraduate students use social media?

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of using social media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Respondent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows that 3 (21.42%) of the respondents responded that they use social media for academic purpose, 7 (50%) of the respondent’s stated that they used social media for non-academic purpose, 4 (28.57%) of the respondents responded that they use social media for both academic and non-academic purposes. Majority of the respondents during the interview answered that they use social media for non-academic purposes. One of the respondents from Sociology Department mentioned that:

“I use it for watching news and some entertainment”.

Another respondent from Pharmacy Department mentioned that:

“I use social media for news, for entertainment and to connect with my friend.

Furthermore, I am a freelancer, so social media provided me the best customer”.

One another respondent from Economics Department mentioned that:
I use it for Music and chatting.

Another respondent from Biotechnology Department mentioned that:

“Mostly I use social media to get aware of the world sometimes I also use it for online shopping”.

So, based on the data analysis the researcher concluded that mostly undergraduate students used it for watching news, entertainment, music and chatting at cost of academic tasks.

**Research Question 3**

How much time do you spend on social media and on reading books? How and to what extent it affects your learning and CGPA?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6</th>
<th>Time spend on social media and reading books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average time spend on social media daily</td>
<td>Average time spend on reading books daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Hours</td>
<td>2.2 Hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows that average time spend on social media daily is 5.4 hours while average time spend daily on reading books is 2.2 hours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7</th>
<th>Effect of social media time on CGPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total respondent</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1 (7.14%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 shows that 1 (7.14%) of the respondents responded that time spend on using social media affects their CGPA positively, 6 (42.85%) of the respondents responded that time spend on social media affects their CGPA.

Another respondent from Zoology Department that:

It affects our GPA in such a way that in normal days of classes we spend time on using social media and do not cover the lectures (course) and the whole work become bundle during exam days. In exam days the un-covered and due to incomplete study, the papers are not properly attempted and thus it affects our CGPA.

One another respondent from Journalism and Mass Communication Department mentioned that:

“The time spend on social media affect my Grade point because when I use it for the
purpose of entertainment”.

So, based on data analysis the researcher concluded that undergraduate students spend daily 5.4 hours on social media and 2.2 hours on reading books and the time spend on social media has negative effect on their CGPA because mostly undergraduate students waste their so much time on using social media instead of study.

Research Question 4

How and to what extent the time spending on using social media affect your class-based assignment? Elaborate

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total respondent</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>No effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>8 (57.14%)</td>
<td>3 (21.42%)</td>
<td>3 (21.42%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 shows that 8 (57.14%) of the respondents responded that using social media has positive effects on their assignment, 3 (21.42%) of the respondents responded that using social media has negative effects on their assignment and 3 (21.42%) of the respondents responded that using social media has no effect on their assignment. Majority of the respondents answered during interview that using social media has positive effects on their assignment. One of the respondents from computer science Department mentioned that:

“When the teachers assign some tasks to us so we can get help from the social media to complete it so due to social media we can complete our assignment on time”.

Another respondent from software Engineering Department said that:

Through social media (email, WhatsApp etc.) we can send or receive our assignment easily.

Another respondent from English Department said that:

“Due to social media, we do quality work we manage assignment differently and can ask the question at different angles.”

Some other respondents said that social media helps us in submission, writing and content collecting. Simply, in this case it helps us more positively. So, based on data analysis the researcher concluded that using social media has positive effect on assignment of undergraduate students.

Research Question 5

How and to what extent the use of social media affects your physical health and other physical activities? How? Give more detail
Table 9

**Effects of social media on physical health**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total respondent</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>No effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 shows that 14 (100%) of the respondents responded that using social media has negative effect on their health. Majority of the respondents answered that using social media has negative effects on health. One of the respondents from Department of Education answered that:

“It has a great effect on our health. When we use it for long time daily so our eyesight will be affected. Using mobile phones or any other tool emits some rays which is harmful for our health. It also has impact on our sleep. We use social media for the late night so our sleep will disturb due to it”.

Another respondent from Sociology Department said that:

“Social media use is negatively associated with mental health and contribute to increased risk of depression and anxiety symptoms.”

One another respondent from Zoology Department said that:

It has bad effect on health like headache and created eyesight problem for me.

Some other respondents said that it very badly affected my health. Overuse often causes anxiety, headache, tension, and I felt bored all the time after using, due to prolong use I have eye problem with headache and improper sleep accompanied with tiredness. So, based on data analysis the researcher concluded that using social media has negative effects on undergraduate students’ health. It may cause eyesight problem, headache, and depression and disturb their sleep.

Table 10

**Effect of using social media on physical activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total respondent</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>No effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 show that 14 (100%) of the respondents responded that using social media has negative effects on physical activities of undergraduate students. Based on the interviews, majority of the respondents said that using social media has negative effects on physical activities of undergraduate students. One of the respondents said Computer Science Department that:

“Now a day’s people have made social media an entertaining source and leave physical activities which is not good for our health too.”

Another respondent from Economics Department mentioned that:
“Due to social media, we cannot walk properly we cannot take part in games and other physical activities so our health will have affected.”

Some other respondents said that due to social media, he cannot go out with friend and cannot do exercise etc. It heavily affects his physical activities. It limits his physical activities. So, based on data analysis the researcher concluded that using social media has negative effects on physical activities of undergraduate students because students spend more of their time using social media and don’t take part in any game and leave their physical activities.

**Discussion**

The aim of this research study was to explore perspectives of university undergraduates about the effects of using social media on their academic performance. The analysis showed that social media did not positively contribute towards their academic performance. In view of majority, there was a mixed effect of social media on their academic performance. These findings are in line with the findings of previous research that students who use social media have no positive influence on their academic progress. They did not show progress in their studies and have poor results (Sutherland, Davis, Terton & Visser, 2018).

It was discovered through this study that students used social media for non-academic purpose like chatting and entertainment and so on. They did not use it for completing their assignments or course requirements. These findings received the support of Shana (2012), showing that students use social network mainly for making friends and chatting with friends. Less attention was found on the part of students towards their academic course preparation. This research study further showed that students allocated less time for course preparation and did not do their assigned classroom-based assignments. They also did not give time for reading and submission of assignments on time to their instructors. Due to this, they obtained poor grades or Cumulated Grade Point Average (CGPA) in the examination.

These findings revealed that the undergraduate university students spent daily 5.4 hours on social media and 2.2 hours on reading books and the time spend on social media has negative effect on their CGPA. These findings are in line with the findings of previous studies that students showed relatively low grades who spent more time on social media (Talaue, AlSaad, AlRushaidan, AlHugail & AlFahhad, 2018). In another study, it was revealed that students in Nigerian universities showed more interest in entertainment and spent much time on social media than on academic tasks assigned by teachers (Olowu & Seri 2012). Thus, it clear that the university youth gave more importance to social media at the cost of their studies.

This research study showed that the students could not give proper attention towards preparation and timely submission of their class-based assignments due to giving more time to social media. They gave less time for class preparation and other academic matters and focused on social media only which affected their academic progress as well as physical health. Earlier studies revealed that students faced stress feelings and boredom because of spending more time on social media. Another study showed that Facebook had a negative impact on academic results of students. The students reported burning eyes,
disturbed sleep and headaches which were widely discussed problems reported by the students due to excessive social media use (Simsek, Elciyar & Kizilhan, 2019). From the above findings it becomes clear that social media had negative effects on physical activities of undergraduate students as well. This finding was also in line with the findings of previous research that the most crucial factor that prevents young people from physical activity participation was digitalization and association with social networking (Sayadan & Dulek, 2019).

**Conclusion**

This study concludes that use of social media has strong negative effects on academic performance of university undergraduates. The students failed to manage preparing and submitting their assigned class based assignments in time to their teachers. This could be because on social media young people spend time with friends in chatting and exchange of non-academic materials. It is also concluded that there is a negative correlation between social media engagement of students and their academic results. Due to being over engaged mostly with social media, they hardly find time for the preparation of their course related assignments that negatively affects their performance in examination as well. Such students show poor academic results and performance. It was found that students reported physical issues as outcomes and consequences of being much involved in social media all the time. It is suggested that teachers and parents should monitor their children and set time schedule for study and use of social media.

For students it is suggested that they can get help from social media while doing their research/project or assignment. Social media is an interactive platform for university students to join different learning groups/online classes which are easily available on social media. However, they shouldn’t involve themselves in doing such activities on social media which can negatively affect their academic achievements. Social Media should be used for refreshment or obtaining some information but for a limited time to avoid its effects on physical health and other important social activities. For this purpose, the students may install or activate different positive digital applications in their mobiles to get more benefits and avoid wastage of time on social media.

**Implications of the study**

This study provides highly significant evidences about the negative effects of social media on academic performance such as results, preparation of assignments, poor time management and poor physical health of undergraduate university students. These findings may be used by teachers, instructors and administration as an important data for chalking out policies for bringing about improvement not only in the curriculum dynamics of higher education but also to guide the university students and teachers in the teaching and learning process. The findings may also provide good evidence as a policy input as in the wake of recent health and social pandemics, the educational institutions are seemed to be shifting rapidly to technology-based education.
Declarations

Authors’ Contributions:

Conceptualization, I.A. and F.D.; methodology, I.A. and J.A.; software, I.A.; validation, F.D. and J.A.; writing original draft preparation, I.A. and F.D.; writing-review and editing J.A.

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