



RESEARCH PAPER

**The Demographic differences in Perception of University Students
towards the Use of Social Networking Sites as a smart e-learning
System**

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ABSTRACT

The current research was done to study the demographic difference in the perception of university students towards social networking sites (SNS) as a smart e-learning system for improving academic grades, participation in politics, influence on language, and the global approach of students. It is a quantitative research design with the survey as a method. A convenient sample of 465 students with an unequal number of males and females was gathered from leading universities in Lahore. A self-generated questionnaire was used for data collection. The outcomes of the present study showed that the practice of SNS by men and women students was different from each other reflecting their different roles but positively believed that SNS affects their grades in university. Besides that, the age of students also played a role in increasing the use of SNS. The study has its importance in terms of guidance and knowledge of precautionary measures the students must have to take while using these SNSs.

Keywords: Academic Ratings, Language, Perception, Social Networking Sites, Socio-Demographic Difference

Introduction

The trend of people has now been shifted from information to technology, which is one of the most important and fastest commodities we can think of in the twenty-first century (Tapscott & Williams, 2006). Therefore, online interactive innovation is a coordination exercise that aimed at providing training to develop state progress in the institutional sector for students and faculty. Currently, these sites try to facilitate educational, social, and political improvement for all those who accessed them (Zhuravskaya, Petrova & Enikolopov, 2020). Soon after the emergence of the invention of online network, it was being used for educational purposes like online learning. The rapid expansion of novelty, mainly on the web, has supplemented e-learning agendas that have incredible implications for users and it is remarkable for communication between various people and in the assimilation of information (Awodile et al., 2009).

Today students in their contemporary classrooms bring these technologies and practice them to achieve their day-to-day academic targets. Students who desire to consume these SNSs in the teaching space occasionally used them for other activities, to access Face book, Tick tock, and Instagram, without the knowledge of their teachers and parents. The fundamental part of a student's life is now the social networking and its importance shouldn't be neglected due to its utility in information, teaching, entertainment, and communiqué, etc. Mainstream of people now realized the importance of social networks. This is a great technological progress, but it is also dangerous and harmful effects for societal roots as

besides beneficial effects, it also damages the social behavior of people. The students did plenty of useful work or ventures at educational institutes while using these social media sites. As per the words of Angrist et al. (2011) and Kling et al. (2007), countless approaches that make schools more effective (by focusing on competition between scholars and instructive institutes) repeatedly detach students from their peer's public networks. Social assistance agendas also disengage kids from their buddies and household societal settings. The expenses for these distractions are generally overlooked by policymakers; though Nelson and Debacker (2008) stressed those community-level groups are so essential for students to improve their marks and entire development.

It is deemed significant to understand the characteristics of the Social network sites user by specifying the growing range of SNS consumers. There exists a difference in the socio-demographic perception of people who are using these SNS sites. According to Smith (2014), the older age group used more SNSs; statistics showed that more than 60% of the consumers are within the age range of 50 to 64 years and above 45% within the age group of more than 60 yrs.

This investigation was done to do an exploration of the public influence of media sites on the overall insight of students. The key variable used in this study was the influence of SNSs on students' marks, political participation, influence on language, and its use to see upcoming successes undertaken by scholars. This research was conducted to inspect the difference in media usage on a gender-based level and it was accomplished in the socio-cultural setting of Lahore, Pakistan.

Literature Review

In one of the studies conducted at four Nigerian colleges, 100 undergraduate students were chosen and questioned about SNSs utilization (Muraina, Adeleke, Rahman, 2015). The sampled respondents did not use SNSs for education. It was seen that the maximum time was used by respondents on these sites, 40 percent on Face book, twenty percent on Whatsapp, and less time on Skype as only fourteen percent. According to Lederer (2012), people used some other internet sites such as MySpace, Twitter, Bingo, Firefox, and public bookmarks usually for a shorter duration.

In another study by Elhuda and Dimetry (2014) with 275 graduate students as respondents and it was seen that they spent 93.1 percent of their time on Facebook and other internet sites. The outcomes likewise specify that 97.6 percent of males practice Facebook and other internet sites more than 91.1 percent of women while for other sites such as Skype 61 percent, 59 percent on WhatsApp, and fifty-six percent on Yahoo. Facebook and WhatsApp are used more during weekends. Frequently, these internet sites are practiced by about 86.7 percent of people to join peers and relatives, seventy-six percent for the news, 69.9 percent to connect with friends, and just to visit the site as 53.9 percent. 57.8 percent of respondents wanted to lessen the use of the internet; eighty-one percent of participants just wanted to see what occurred online.

The results were obtained in many empirical data about the consumption of social networks and grades in educational institutions. According to Paul et al. (2012) in one of their survey on undergrad students to quantity time on social sites, found a statistically significant inverse link between time spent by students on social sites and their academic results. It was seen that their attention was greatly influenced by the length of time the student utilized these social sites. More the time they for education, the lesser they will spend time on SNSs. However, no relationship was recognized between students' marks and time consumed on social sites (Ahmed and Qazi, 2011; Azizi, Soroush, &Khatony, 2019). Badri et al. (2017) also showed no correlation between the use of social network areas and student results.

Tham and Ahmed (2011) investigated how students used internet sites on a per-gender basis and deliberated that women devote more time to these sites than their male

counterparts. It was also observed that people spent less time on these sites as they grew older. Ahmad, Alvi, and Ittefaq (2019) found a positive connection between social media websites and political participation. Their results showed that people used these sites to update themselves on what is happening in politics, community issues, and facts about the public in society. They concluded that the use of SNSs to obtain information exerts a significant and constructive influence on the activities of individuals involved in public and political actions. It was endorsed by Park et al. (2009) that the SNSs play an important role in serving youth involved in community and politics.

Kaya and Bicen (2016) in one of their study that was carried out to learn about how the social behavior of students; is influenced by the awareness of social media and found out that the student perception of the advantages to connect with these sites; comprises of the ability of students to share ideas and information with a maximum number of people, enhance their collaboration with other scholars to get the main mild stone of any research project, it helps to advance students level of interaction with the public, and recognize in a better way the problems of people in the community.

In one of the study by Terzi et al. (2019), who found that internet sites have altered the way for individuals, as well as academia with how to communicate, interact, or socialize through their learning processes in educational institutions. It was investigated by Chartrand's (2012), that students who lacked in their ability to communicate in English, internet has helped them a lot in enhancing their English language communication skills. Likewise the learning styles of students, it is argued here that they partially established the extent and way in which these students used these internet sites. On the other hand, Devmane and Rana (2013) focused on the effects of SNSs, including Facebook, that help to build the English vocabulary of students. Furthermore, social media has proven effective in the development of language construction arenas, as proposed by Chartrand (2012).

Another study by Alsaif et al. (2017) found that when students were asked whether or not they believed there was a privacy problem related to the use of SNSs, 70.9% of students agreed that their privacy did suffer but 28.5 percent of students disagreed with it. According to the study by Isik (2013), faculty members believe that there is privacy issues associated with the use of media sites. Similarly, the findings of Devmane and Rana (2013) pointed to several privacy and security issues while using the social Medias. According to the study, a high proportion of students (70%) used unsecured accounts with public access to allow anyone to view their profile and personal information.

Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant inverse relationship between length of time spent on SNS and the academic grades of the students.
2. There will be a negative correlation between age and the use of SNS.
3. There would be significant gender variances in the practice of SNS.
4. There will be a noteworthy link between SNSs and the language of the students.
5. There will be a significant difference between SNSs and involvement of students in politics.

Material and Methods

The current research was a quantitative cross-sectional design and was held in the educational institutions of area of Lahore. Fieldwork took place between August and September. The sample size was (N=465), 273 males and 192 females within age brackets between 15 to 35, and all were students with a normal age of 23.7 and SD of 4.9. The respondents were selected conveniently by researchers from lecture rooms of Punjab

University, Civil Lines College, and LCWU and briefed the students about the objectives of the research; the close ended questionnaire was filled with them. The students were approached personally by researchers after seeking permission from the universities and college authorities. The students gave their informed consent and their privacy and anonymity was maintained and was allowed to quit research at any time in case as they did not want to continue. The data were gathered by a questionnaire that was self-constructed after doing a pilot study and with the help of literature review. The questionnaire contained a list of statements related to SNSs usage; students completed the survey within 15-20 min. The data was subsequently entered and analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20. Statistical test like t-test, correlation coefficient and One-way ANOVA were used to analyze data. Some variables have been displayed in charts.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Demographics of the Respondents

| Gender | N | Percentage |
|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Male | 273 | 58 |
| Female | 192 | 42 |
| Institutions | | |
| Punjab University | 200 | 43 |
| Civil line College | 173 | 37.2 |
| LCWU | 92 | 19.8 |
| Age of Participants | | |
| 15-20 | 123 | 26.5 |
| 21-25 | 192 | 41.3 |
| 26-30 | 108 | 23.2 |
| 31-35 | 42 | 9.0 |
| Educational Status | | |
| Graduations | 282 | 60.7 |
| Intermediate | 183 | 39.3 |

The educational level of students was (282) 60.7 percent as graduates and (183) 39.3 percent as an undergrad. The maximum number of respondents for this study were male 58.7 percent (n=273), and 41.3 percent female (n=192). Most of the students 41.3% were between the ages of 21 and 25, 26.5% within age brackets 15-20 yrs. Majority of the respondents 43% belonged to Punjab University, 37.2% from Civil line College and 19.8% from Lahore college for women university Lahore.

Participants were asked if they used social sites or social media. Facts can be initiated as under

Table 2
Distributing SNS users

| Social networking websites. | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Facebook | 177 | 38.1 |
| Twitter | 57 | 12.3 |
| WhatsApp | 111 | 23.9 |
| Skype | 60 | 12.9 |
| Viber | 42 | 9.0 |
| Other | 18 | 3.9 |
| Total | 465 | 100.0 |

Mainstream of students about 38.1 percent of the participants used Facebook, with 12.9 percent opting for Skype, lesser than 3.9 percent consumed other social apps, 23.9% of the respondents used WhatsApp, 12.3% of the respondents used Twitter and 9% of the respondents used Viber.

Table 3
Visit to social networking sites

| e Networking | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|
| Visited | 71 % |
| Not visited | 29% |

The majority (71.0%) of respondents visited e-networking sites, while only 29.0 percent did not visit SNSs.

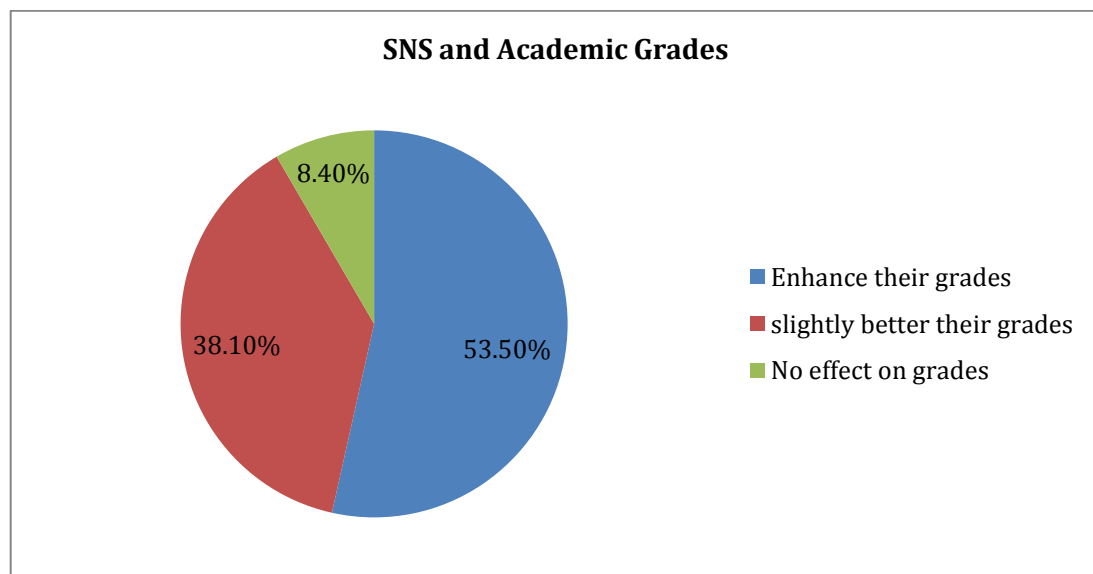


Figure 2: SNSs and Academic Performance

As per figure 2, bulk of participants 53.5 percent supposed that social network sites helped to enhance their good grades in studies, just 38.1% of the students held that SNSs helped to slightly better their grades and 8.4% of the respondents denied that these social sites has any effect on their academic grades.

Table 4
To test association between academic performance and length of time used on SNSs, Pearson correlation was used

| Variable | 1 | 2 |
|-------------------|-----------|---|
| 1 Academic Grades | 1 | - |
| 2 SNSs use | -.0.097** | - |

** $p < .01$.

The findings showed an inverse linkage between academic performance of students and length of time used on SNSs at $r = -.0.097$, $n = 465$, $p < .01$. It specifies that students when spent more time on SNS their educational outcomes are poorer and when they spent less time on SNSs, they attained good marks.

Table 5
To test association between academic performance and length of time used on SNSs,
Pearson correlation was used.

| Variable | 1 | 2 |
|------------|---------|---|
| 1 Age | 1 | - |
| 2 SNSs use | -.120** | - |

** $p < .005$.

According to the hypothesis, there will be a negative correlation between age and the use of SNS, a significant inverse link was visible between age and SNS ($r = -120$, $p < 0.001$) indicating that if a person grew older, then use of SNSs decreased with age, or if age is lower, then students used more SNSs.

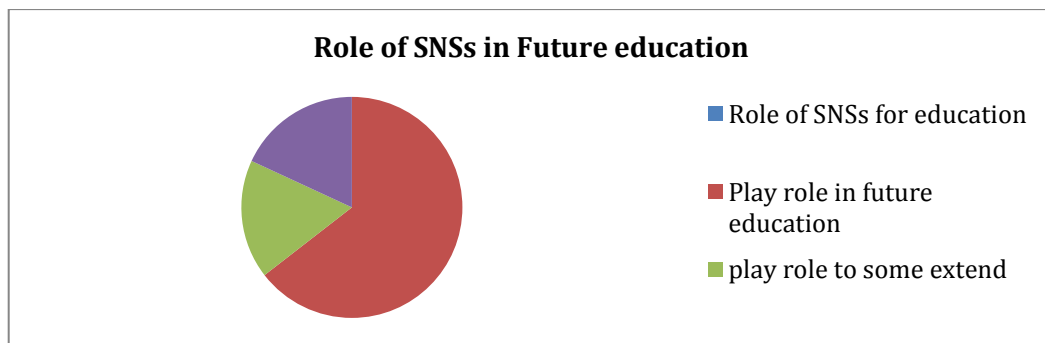


Figure 2: SNSs and Future Education

To explore how students see the role of SNSs it will play in future on education. A large number (64.5%) of participants stated that websites will play role in education to a great extent, 17.4 percent of people did not recognize the role of SNS in education, while 18.1% of the respondents said that the public websites to part its part in the educational future is weakening.

Table 6
Effectiveness of SNSs for activities related to politics.

| Helpful in political actions. | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Yes | 384 | 82.6 |
| No | 81 | 17.4 |
| Total | 465 | 100.0 |

When respondents were asked to share their opinion over the involvement of SNSs in activities related to politics, 82.6% of respondents said that these sites were important to them to get acquainted with politics, and only 17, 4% of respondents said that SNSs do not benefit them from activities in politics. But the bivariate test for this inquiry remained as insignificant.

Also, the reasons to utilize social networking were explored and enlisted as below:

Table 7
Why consume social network places

| Why consumes SNS. | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Learn about other experiences. | 75 | 16.1 |
| Contact with old friends | 99 | 21.3 |
| Meet some new friends. | 75 | 16.1 |
| Contact with current friends | 60 | 12.9 |
| Fun-seeking | 90 | 19.4 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Sharing pictures about education | 66 | 14.2 |
| Total | 465 | 100.0 |

A large number of participants about 42.6 percent stated that when SNS were used, they achieved less marks in their exams, while 33.5 percent of participants answered that they got good marks with the use of SNSs, while 24 percent remained neutral.

Further, a difference based on gender over the utilization of social media was also explored and the results showed as under

Table 8
Difference based on gender over the usage of SNSs

| Cause | Male | Female | Total |
|---------------------------------|------|--------|-------|
| To use the experience of others | 57 | 18 | 75 |
| Interaction with old peers | 57 | 42 | 99 |
| Search for new buddy | 45 | 30 | 75 |
| In touch with existing friends | 33 | 27 | 60 |
| For enjoyment | 45 | 45 | 90 |
| Educational images | 36 | 30 | 66 |
| Total | 273 | 192 | 465 |

In the above table, it was seen that the utmost described usage of social media sites by men to use the experience of others around them and develop communication with older peer groups and that the slightest stated usage listed to be in touch with a current friend. While for women, the maximum recorded usage was for enjoyment use but the slightest stated use was to practice other people's experiences.

Table 9
The t-test was used to test the gender difference and use of SNSs.

| Variable | Boys | | Girls | | <i>t</i> (<i>df</i>) | <i>P</i> | 95% CI | | <i>Cohen's d</i> |
|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | | | <i>LL</i> | <i>UL</i> | |
| SNSs | 1.36 | 0.48 | 1.50 | 0.50 | -2.98(463) | .001 | -0.064 | -0.216 | 0.35 |

* $p < .05$

But the results for the hypothesis also indicate an insignificant gender difference in the use of the SNS as a whole. However, there were significant differences between men and women regarding the effect of SNSs. Women with a mean of 1.50 and standard Deviation of 0.50 are more prevalent than men with a mean of 1.36, *SD* as 0.48, $t = -2.98$ (463), $p < 0.01$.

Table 10
To test association between use of SNSs and language, Pearson correlation was used

| Variable | 1 | 2 |
|----------------------|---------|---|
| 1 Effect on Language | 1 | - |
| 2 SNSs use | 0.206** | - |

** $p < .005$.

The social media has a significant relationship between social networking sites and the language of the students. Results indicated that language has a connection with the usage of SNSs at the significance level of 0.01. ($r = 0.206$, $n = 465$, ** $p = 0.01$)

Within the cross-sectional investigation, the majority of the participants were 21 to 25 years of age (41.30%), with most using Face book accounting for 38.1 percent. It was described in one of the research that Face book appeared to be the most used site by people at 71 percent (Hussain & Others, 2015). Also, it was reported by the 71 percent of participants that they made contact with other people by using social networking apps. Ridings and Gefen

(2004) study supported it by reporting that people joined e contacts because of many social motives. As a sample of this study was all students so they were asked if when they joined social sites, it affected their grades in school. It was interesting to note that the majority of them replied negatively over it; a small group replied that it did affect their studies grades.

Also, the study revealed a significant negative correlation between age and SNSs usage. The outcome was supported by Badri et al. (2017) who said that a greater number of social site users are within the age bracket of 18 to 25 and that SNSs use declines with age. Tham and Ahmed (2011) also found that with increasing age, people used SNS for a shorter time.

Most of our participants felt that future education will be remodeled because of social media sites and that its role will increase over time. It is also consistent with the findings of one of the studies that supported that consumption of social media sites is growing further useful for students, but then more caution has to be adopted in its use as it caused more interference and stress among youth (Gikas & Grant, 2013). The insight of the respondents will be strengthened by the utilization of some learning plans and distance learning, which is a novel procedure in the existing educational system (Negussie & Ketema, 2014).

Furthermore, sampled respondents believed that SNSs are valuable for politics-based moves. This conclusion is reinforced in 2016 by Chan in one of his studies that in a short span, the activities related to politics have been greatly enriched by the management of social network sites so that people belong to politics can best use them for unrestricted publicity, for the election strategies, persuasion, fund-raiser, and so on. There is also a negative impact because one sees assassinations of characters and gossiping starts rapidly on social sites and even there are allegations of maneuvering of voting outcomes via e-sites. Ahmad, Alvi, and Ittefaq (2019) also concluded that social network site assists individuals in developing constructive political influence.

When asked why they use the SNSs, most of our participants said they use them to socialize, i.e. reaching out to childhood and existing friends and to search for future buddies; for entertainment purposes besides using the experiences of others. One of the empirical studies believed that though making friends is the chief reason to get connected on social sites it was least addressed reasons by the respondents, first was to exchange information, and just 8.7 percent of respondents consumed social media sites for entertainment while 19.4 percent used them for interacting with friends (Ridings & Gefen, 2004). Captivatingly, no one used social networking for education support, nonetheless one unique aspect or finding was the utilization of SNSs to exchange educational images with each other. This outcome was strengthened by the study conducted in 2011 by Mazman and Usluel, they enlisted 4 causes to consume social networking sites, it aids in supporting current interactions, building new relationships, use for academic engagements, and some definite agenda.

The result of a significant connection between SNSs usage and the language (grammar and spelling) of students, this outcome was in line with Derakshan and Hasanabbasi (2015) they supported the use of Facebook by students for communiqué, transmitting notes, and linguistic services. Lin et al. (2016) also supported this outcome as SNSs give consumers the view to generate evidence to share with others. But as SNSs has both negative and positive point, giving access to communication but on the other hand destroy the student's use of grammar and spelling because students used abbreviations often, short sentences, and spelling mistakes while texting such as OMG, Lols, MA, etc, OMG for O my God, MA for Masha Allah.

Gender-specific use of the SNS appeared to differ. For women, the most widespread use of SNS was for fun purposes, while for men it was based on the experience of others, which was the least used for women. For men, the least reported motive was to reach out to existing friends. One of the researchers endorsed this result by showing a difference in the

usage of social media based on gender (Mazman &Usluel, 2011). Such observation also reproduces the societal situation in our regional world. Here men have no restriction to roam around to meet present peer groups and for entertainment, they less opt for SNSs. While women on the order hand, did not have the maximum mobility to move out of the houses, so they used SNS for these reasons. Besides, it is a common feature in our society that females frequently and openly express their difficulties with women therefore, they want to practice social network sites to share experiences while on the other hand, men of our community generally did not share out things with others in absence of support clusters so they didn't rely on these sites to address this issue. As well, differences based on gender were seen in how social media affected participants. Females believe it has more influence over males.

Conclusion

The basic building blocks of our lives are social media sites and smart applications. This is a prerequisite for us today; it creates both optimistic and pessimistic approaches for our teenagers. Most people care about such apps besides scholars. The urgency for SNSs utilization was observed for education and cognizance, but maintaining a check and balance on minors is a must because these SNSs will ruin their personality and their results due to lack of guidance. This investigation is no exception to limitations in the case of a sample from an urban area; school students have to be included in subsequent research.

Recommendations

There should be an age check for the practice of diverse social media apps being enforced by the government. Parents should check the online activities of their children besides providing direction in their usage so that they correctly practice these apps to filtrate bad contents that are harmful to their bodily and psychological health. It should be made mandatory for all to have information and guidance about these sites. Schools and universities should conduct workshops, seminars, and tutorials for students to use these sites in a better and healthy way, even teaching the applications of SNSs as a subject. Currently, the abuse of the SNS is widely testified on the platform of law-breaking and judiciary, students must consume these sites with safety, care, and supervision to guard their discretion and profiles against various hacking or bullying attacks. Guidance and training have to be furnished to them to tackle cyber invasion situations. Students must also attain and know the terms of reference for these social media sites to which they contacted.

Limitations

It's a cross sectional study research design and limited to a sample of 465 students that cannot be generalized to the whole population. Keeping in view of that data was collected from universities, it was hard to find students who were willing to fill the forms. Some of the participants also left the forms unfilled. The researcher in future can investigate this study with larger sample and qualitative research design or mixed method. This study maybe conducted as longitudinal in future as well. In future, the researcher can conduct this study in different universities in various cities from all over the country with different variables

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