

Effects of Social Media on Interpersonal Relationships of Youth: A Survey on the Perceptions of Students of University of Balochistan

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Abstract

In today's technological world, social media has an important role to play in our lives. It is widely used by different ages of people for various purposes. As it has multiple benefits, likewise it has plethora of disadvantages. In Pakistan, in today's age and time, youth actively use social media sites. The usage of social media has deeply influenced the youth of our era in so many ways. Predominantly, it has affected the interpersonal relationships of youth miserably. The following study has been conducted to know that how and what ways social media is leaving its effects on the interpersonal relationships of young generation. The questionnaire interview method has been applied to draw results of the generated questions. It is figured out that social media has great influence on the interpersonal relationships of the youth, mainly with their family members, friends and relatives. The results reveal that the face to face interaction has reduced to a great extent. The research helps to gauge the emerging implications of social media usage on the interpersonal relationships of youth.

Keywords: Social Media, Interpersonal Relationship, Youth, University of Balochistan

Introduction

Era of information has descended on every corner of the world. The prediction of Canadian professor, philosopher and public intellectual Marshall McLuhan that the world will become a global village has almost turned into reality. Technological revolution has changed the modes of communication. It has become faster and more efficient. Because of the social media and the internet, people belonging to distinct backgrounds, cultures and countries can effectively be in touch, free from limitations and barriers of the geographic locations. Billions of people interact with each other on daily basis in this virtual world. Among these active users of social media, youth makes the greatest number who spend hours are spent on social media sites.

Social Media sites are now the number one use for the Internet, and the ratio of usage is increasing greatly after every passing day (Qualman, 2009). As an estimate in 2018, there were 2.65 billion people using social media in the world and the number is increasing drastically every passing month, it is estimated the number will increase to almost 3.1 billion in 2021(Clement, 2019).

Among these billions of users of social media users Pakistan also makes a good number. People here are actively penetrating in social media, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter. In Pakistan the usage of social media has increased in the recent years. With the introduction of 3G/4G services, the internet users have doubled. Nearly 55.51 million Pakistani use internet (Haque, 2016). The following table shows the number of social networks users in Pakistan.

Table: 1 Social Media Stats Pakistan (Oct 2018- Oct 2019)

Date	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	Pinterest	Instagram	Reddit	Tumblr	Google+	LinkedIn	Vkontakte	Other
2018-10	90.02	2.68	4.55	1.36	0.77	0.2	0.21	0.1	0.06	0.06	0
2018-11	86.79	3.51	5.64	1.77	1.44	0.4	0.16	0.17	0.07	0.04	0.01
2018-12	86.06	4.21	5.08	2	1.45	0.7	0.15	0.24	0.07	0.03	0.01
2019-01	83.08	5.42	4.09	2.73	3.23	1.02	0.13	0.18	0.07	0.04	0.01
2019-02	87.96	4.73	2.05	2.59	2	0.37	0.12	0.11	0.06	0.02	0
2019-03	86.26	4.98	2.43	3.21	2.34	0.46	0.12	0.08	0.07	0.04	0
2019-04	88.75	4.13	2.02	2.66	1.86	0.41	0.07	0.01	0.04	0.04	0.01
2019-05	88.07	4.33	2.07	2.82	2.28	0.26	0.1	0	0.05	0.04	0
2019-06	88.67	4.03	1.87	3.23	1.98	0.09	0.05	0.01	0.04	0.02	0
2019-07	90.12	3.52	1.67	2.9	1.58	0.08	0.05	0	0.04	0.04	0.01
2019-08	89.47	3.65	1.89	3.31	1.47	0.05	0.07	0	0.04	0.05	0
2019-09	92.07	2.54	1.46	2.46	1.34	0.03	0.03	0	0.02	0.03	0
2019-10	91.67	3.9	1.17	1.84	1.35	0.02	0.02	0	0.02	0.03	0

Source: <https://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/all/pakistan>

The easy access to internet has made it possible for the people to be connected to social media. Among these millions of internet users nearly 10 million users are connected to Facebook. More than half of this number is college and university going students (Nasir, 2013). As many as 155,000 are using twitter (Naizi, 2015). There are billions of penetrations on these social media sites in a day. The increasing penetrations show that the people are giving more time to social media which is reducing their face to face interactions with their close ones. Being active users of new media and constituting the largest number, the youth are the most active participants in this virtual world. Several studies on the effects of social media have been conducted, but there has been a very less focus on the effects of social media on the interpersonal relationships of young generation. One more point is that the studies which have been conducted are mostly of having the perspective of western society and there is a great need of conducting researches on such topics in developing countries like Pakistan. The current study purely aims to dig out the actual effects of the excessive use of social media on the interpersonal relations of youth in University of Balochistan, Quetta (UoB).

The problem of the study

In the recent years, the social media usage has overwhelmingly increased in Pakistan, particularly youth being the most active users and spending too much time. The increasing activity on social media has reduced the face to face interactions of the youth. They spend most of their time by being busy with their smart phones while penetrating on social media sites. This study attempts to investigate the negative impacts of social media usage on youth's interpersonal relationships.

Significance of the study

There have been very few studies regarding the usage of social media and its impact on the interpersonal relationships of youth in Pakistan. The new developments in this study will help us to distinguish the negative aspect of social media on the relationships. This study can be used as an example to do further research in this area.

Objectives of the study

- To investigate whether social media is affecting the interpersonal relationships of youth or not
- To find out that face to face interaction is decreasing among the youth due to excessive social media usage

Hypothesis

H.1 Excessive social media usage is largely affecting the interpersonal relationships of youth.

Limitations and Delimitations

The study has focused the effects of the social media usage only on youth. The study does not investigate other problems that might arise with social media usage. It limits itself to the experiences of 50 students of University of Balochistan in Quetta who are using social media on daily basis.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is the base through which all knowledge is constructed for a research study. It provides support to the rationale of the research, the significance and questions of the research. In simple words, it is the base of the research. The theoretical framework helps in doing the analysis of our research thesis (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

Attitude change theory:

The means of communication are changing significantly in this technological era. The changing channels of communication are leaving multiple types of implications on the attitudes and behaviors of people. The attitude change theory of media explains that how people's attitudes are shaped, designed, formed and changed and how those attitudes play any role in influencing behavior. The social media has influenced the attitudes of the people in numerous ways. The attitudes of youth are changing significantly because of the excessive usage of social media. Therefore, this study makes attitude change theory as its theoretical framework to find out changing attitudes of the youth in their interpersonal relationships, particularly with their family, friends and relatives.

Literature Review

Several Studies have been conducted on human relationships. Man can have a number of relations with fellow beings. Raeff and Quiroz (2000) believe that human beings learn interpersonal relationships through cultural norms, values and belief. Relationships can take birth with anyone. It can be between a man and woman who work in same organization. This relationship can be with the members of family, relatives, the parent's relationships with his or her children. Also relationships can emerge between the members of group who have certain links with one another. The relationships do not have any simple definition and limitations. It varies from people to people. Some relationships very intimate and close some are at superficial level.

Khan (2010) says that Pakistan's culture has developed from an agricultural society. In these sort of countries, patriarchal family system exists. People are distinguished from the names of their fathers. Here male members are the symbols of power and authority. Religious leaders, parents, teachers and etc. act as the masters in this society. Daughter, wife, son, common people and young always accept the decisions of their elders.

Evidence depict that the new media, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and etc. have been affecting and influencing the lives and relationships of millions of Pankistanis (Haq, 2012). Though the social media has grown drastically in the country, sad to mention that there is lack of scientific evidence which is necessary for the concerned authorities to take steps to eliminate new and complex arising issues of the society. The proper research over the effects of social media can help us to minimize its negative impact and increase the benefits of social media which has grown into an undeniable reality in this modern world.

Developing countries like Pakistan are facing multi-faceted and multi-dimensional problems because of the introduction of new technology since a large number of population is uneducated who do not know pros and cons of this technology.

The effects and impact of social media has been gauged in many ways. There have been a number of studies on the interpersonal relations and their changing dimensions while coming into contact with social media. A good number of them believe that psychological factors are the reasons that determine how young people interact with social media and how they develop various traits after coming into contact with this. The virtual world has become greatly part of socialization of youth. These interactions define how they maintain group, and family relations (Baltaretu & Balaban, 2010).

In these days, relationships in online media and social activities are largely being discussed (Neuman & Robinson, 2001). Studies in Malaysia show that students have developed very strong bonds with Facebook where they are developing various traits which were previously unknown (Sofiahetal, 2011). Results show that those people become attached to online sources have significantly reduced their communication. They mostly spend their time in loneliness (Kraut, 1998).

The more we spend time with internet, particularly in the context of new media, the more we become addicted. This addiction has disturbed and badly affected other social activities of individuals throughout the world (Zhang & Amos, 2008).

A study by Aghazamani (2010) depicts obviously that traditional patterns are changing at a large scale. Those people who use Facebook have been greatly influenced by usage of this site. They

have developed some other traits when compared to their previous relationships with their near ones.

Methodology

Survey method of research has been used to find out answers of the research questions. It is a quantitative research which utilized questionnaire to gather the information. Berger (2000) believes that survey research is used because it costs less, and information can be gathered easily. In this study, selected students of University of Balochistan belonging to different departments were given questionnaires to fill. The ages of students were from 17 to 24. 50 students at the university were selected to respond the questionnaire of purposive sampling. The male and female equally participated as respondents in the study. The students, who were using any sort of social media, participated as respondents.

Population:

Population is a collection of individuals/objects that have some common characteristics. Dixon and Marry (1975) defined population as: The individuals or the objects that have things or characteristics in common, constitute the population or universe. There is infrequently enough time and money to collect information from the people. The actual focus needs to be the representative sample of that particular population. The population of this study is Balochistan University students.

Sample size:

Sample is a selection of the overall population that represents the whole. Sample helps in gaining information about the problem of the entire population. It contains a group of persons that is selected from the population as the representation of whole. Totally 50 students from Balochistan University were selected as respondents. The sample size reflects the effects of social media usage on interpersonal relationships.

Sampling Technique:

Sampling is the process of choosing enough individuals from entire population randomly. Convenient sampling approach was utilized to carry out this study. The researcher gathered information from the target group. Through this sampling, the researcher believes the target group are convenient to give actual information about the study. The researcher distributed the questionnaire equally between both genders, male and female. For this purpose, different departments were selected, and sample size was distributed accordingly.

Tools of data collection:

This research is quantitative in nature and the researchers collected the required data of this study through questionnaire.

Questionnaire:

Questionnaires were distributed among the student which consisted of different types of questions such as close ended questions and Likert scale questions. The close-ended questions and Likert scale questions produced quantitative results (percentages and frequencies).

Data Analysis:

The data was analyzed and processed to extract findings by using appropriate statistical methods to draw conclusion. Data analysis is the process to draw inferences with regard to the information.

The collected data was analyzed thoroughly and systematically through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Percentage:

A percentage frequency distribution is used to bring the data to specify the percentage of observations of data that exist for each data point or grouping of data points. The formula is applied to figure out the percentage. $P = F/N * 100$ Where P= Percentage F= Frequency

Result and Discussion

The data was analyzed through Statistical Package For the Social Sciences (SPSS). The gathered and collected data of the study are systematically presented in the below given tables. The masses who cannot comprehend the numerical data in the table, the percentage pattern will surely become easy for them to the findings of the research properly.

Table-1: Preference over the use of social media

1. Which social media network do you use often?	Social Media network	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
	Facebook	26	52.0
	Twitter	2	4.0
	Instagram	0	0.0
	You Tube	6	12.0
	Whats app	16	32.0
	Total	50	100.0

The data shown in table-1 gives general information about the respondents. Sample size was 50. The questionnaires were distributed equally between both genders; 25 to male and 25 female. The table-2 gives patterns of social media usage that which social media youth use. 52.0 % of respondents say they use Facebook. 4.0 % of the students use Twitter, while Instagram is used by none of the students. 12.0 % of the respondents prefer You Tube and 32.0 use Whats app.

Table-2: Frequency of the usage of social media

2. How much time do you spend on social media?	Time	Number of students	Percentage (%)
	Less than two hours	14	28.0
	2-3 hours	18	36.0
	3-4 hours	12	24.0
	4 to 6 hours	6	12.0
	More than 6 hours	0	0.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table-3: Frequency distribution of the respondents regarding social media as part of their lives

Social media has become part of my life?	Degree	Number of students	Percentage (%)
	Strongly Agree	10	20.0
	Agree	24	48.0
	Neutral	6	12.0
	Disagree	8	16.0
	Strongly Disagree	2	4.0
	Total	50	100.0

The table-3 shows the frequency of students using social media. 28.0 % of the students spend less than two hours while 36.0 % of the students give 2-3 hours to social media. Additionally, 24.0 % spend 3-4 hours on the screens. Only 12.0 % of the respondents use social media for nearly 4 to 6 hours.

The table-4 depicts the number of students taking social media as part of their lives. It indicates that 48.0 % agree with this. 12.0 % of them have remained neutral. 16.0 % of them disagree and just 4.0% of them strongly disagree with the statement.

Table-4: Frequency distribution of the respondents giving priority to messages and posts over talking to family

While I am sitting with my family, I give priority to messages and posts which appear on the wall of my social media ID than talking to them?	Degree	Number of students	Percentage (%)
	Strongly Agree	6	12.0
	Agree	18	36.0
	Neutral	8	16.0
	Disagree	14	28.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	8.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table-5: Frequency distribution of the respondents complaining of their friends while using social media.

My close ones often complain that I neglect them while I am busy with social media?	Degree	Number of students	Percentage (%)
	Strongly Agree	7	14.0
	Agree	21	42.0
	Neutral	6	12.0

	Disagree	12	24.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	8.0
	Total	50	100.0

The table-5 shows the data that how many of the students give priority to social media while they are sitting with family members. The majority 36.0 % of the respondents agree with this fact. On the other hand, 12.0 strongly agree while 16.0 % preferred remaining neutral. Also a good majority 28.0 % disagreed on this point and 8.0 % strongly disagreed with this fact.

The selected youth of Balochistan University were asked to provide their point of view whether their close ones complain if they are busy with social media, 42.0 % agreed and 14.0 % strongly agreed. In contrast 24.0 % disagreed and 8.0 % strongly disagreed. 12.0 % preferred to be neutral. The results indicate that most of family members do complain when one of their family members is using social media.

Table-6: Number of respondents who prefer using social media than visiting a relative, reading a book, playing sports or joining library.

	Degree	Number of students	Percentage (%)
I prefer using social media than visiting a relative, reading a book, playing sports or joining a library?	Strongly Agree	2	4.0
	Agree	18	36.0
	Neutral	8	16.0
	Disagree	14	28.0
	Strongly Disagree	8	16.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table-7: Frequency distribution of the respondents regarding their reducing face to face interaction

	Degree	Number of students	Percentage (%)
My excessive social media usage has reduced my face to face interactions?	Strongly Agree	0	0.0
	Agree	26	52.0
	Neutral	6	12.0
	Disagree	14	28.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	8.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table-7 describes the data over the habits of respondents that have been affected because of social media usage, such as meeting relatives, reading books, playing sports or joining library. It was noticed that 36.0 % of the respondents agree and 36.0 % of the students strongly agree with the

statement. Other 16.0 % did not give their opinion by remaining neutral. Conversely, 28.0 % of the students disagreed followed by another 16.0 % strongly disagreeing.

The table-8 demonstrates the reduction of the face to face to interaction of the respondents due to usage of social media. 52.0 % of the students agree while 12.0 strongly agree. 28.0 % of the students disagreed and just 8.0 % strongly disagreed. 12.0 % remained neutral.

Table-8: Number of respondents giving time to social media instead of talking to family members and relatives.

I often use social media instead of talking to family members and relatives?	Degree	Number of students	Percentage (%)
	Strongly Agree	4	8.0
	Agree	22	44.0
	Neutral	8	16.0
	Disagree	12	24.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	8.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table-9: Frequency distribution of the respondents being in touch with relatives on social media than face to face communication.

I prefer to be in touch with relatives on social media than face to face communication?	Degree	Number of students	Percentage (%)
	Strongly Agree	4	8.0
	Agree	14	28.0
	Neutral	14	28.0
	Disagree	18	36.0
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
	Total	50	100.0

In the table-9 respondents were posed about using social media instead of talking to family members and relatives. 44.0 % of the students agreed and 8.0 % strongly agreed. On the other hand, 24.0 % disagreed and 8.0 % strongly disagreed while 16.0 % remained neutral.

Table-10 is the description of the students being in touch with relatives on social media rather than face to face communication. 28.0 % of them agreed on the point and 8.0 % strongly agreed. A good majority 28.0 % remained silent. In contrast, 36.0 % disagreed and no on strongly disagreed on this statement.

I get irritated when someone talks to me	Degree	Number of students	Percentage (%)
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while I am using social media?	Strongly Agree	2	4.0
	Agree	22	44.0
	Neutral	10	20.0
	Disagree	14	28.0
	Strongly Disagree	2	4.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table-10: Frequency distribution of the respondents getting irritated while someone talks to them while they are using social media.

Table-11: Frequency distribution of the respondents believing that social media has affected his/her interpersonal relationships.

I believe social media has affected my interpersonal relationships?	Degree	Number of students	Percentage (%)
	Strongly Agree	4	8.0
	Agree	26	52.0
	Neutral	6	12.0
	Disagree	12	24.0
	Strongly Disagree	2	4.0
	Total	50	100.0

On the point that whether respondent get irritated while someone talks to them when they are using social media, 44.0 % of them agreed and 4.0 % strongly agreed. In contrast, 28.0 % disagreed and 4.0 % strongly disagreed. 20.0 % of the respondent stayed neutral.

The table-12 gives us information about the opinions of respondents that social media has affected their interpersonal relationships or not. 52.0 % of the students agreed on this point and 8.0 strongly agreed. 12.0 % remained neutral while 24.0 % disagreed and 4.0 % strongly disagreed that their interpersonal relationships are being affected.

Table-12: Number of respondents accepting that they have to reduce social media usage if they want better interpersonal relationships.

I believe I have to reduce social media usage if I want better interpersonal relationships?	Degree	Number of students	Percentage (%)
	Strongly Agree	3	6.0
	Agree	30	60.0
	Neutral	3	6.0
	Disagree	7	14.0
	Strongly Disagree	7	14.0
	Total	50	100.0

The respondents were asked whether they have to reduce social media usage if they want better interpersonal relationships, a 60.0 % majority agreed and another 6.0 % strongly agreed. 6.0 % of the respondent remained neutral. 14.0 % of the respondents disagreed while another 14.0 % strongly disagreed on the point of reducing social media usage if one wants better interpersonal relationships.

Major Findings & Conclusion

Major findings

- 48.0 percent of the youth that responded to the questions, agreed that social media has become part of their lives.
- 36.0 percent of the respondents were of the view that they give priority to posts and messages which appear on the walls of their social media accounts than talking to family members.
- 42.0 percent of the respondents in UOB agreed that their close ones often complain that they neglect them when they are busy with social media.
- 36.0 percent of the respondents agreed that they prefer using social media than visiting a relative, reading a book, playing sports or joining a library
- 52.0 percent of the respondents agreed that social media usage has reduced their face to face interactions
- 44.0 percent of the respondents agreed that they often use social media instead of talking to family members and relatives
- 44.0 percent of the respondents agreed that they get irritated when someone talks to them while they are using social media
- 52.0 percent of the respondents agreed that social media has affected their interpersonal relationships
- 60.0 percent of the respondents agreed that they have to reduce social media usage if they want better interpersonal relationships

Conclusion

From the comprehensive study that has been discussed thoroughly, it can be inferred that social media is largely affecting the interpersonal relationships of the youths. Be it face to face communication or interaction with family members and relatives all have been disturbed because of the increasing trend of spending most of the time in virtual world. It was also noted that youth believe their previous life style has been changed as they don't do the previous activities, such as joining a library and visiting a relative or friend. It was also found that the usage of social media has affected their moods. The family members also feel that they don't get enough time from them as they often complain to them. The youth also believe that they have to reduce the social media usage if they want to shape better relationship and understanding with their family members, relatives and peer groups. Overall study gives us the impression that interpersonal relationships of the youth are being affected because of the use of social media.

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