

The Effects of Social Media on Reading Habits

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The study aimed to conduct a quantitative inquiry to understand the effects of social media on the reading habits of the students. The study explored the social media usage patterns and statistically analyzed the effects of social media on reading habits by applying descriptive and inferential statistics. A structured questionnaire was developed by analyzing the related literature and reliability test (Cronbach alpha) testifies that data collection instrument was stable enough to measure the phenomenon. Data collected from a sample of 430 students. The findings of the study revealed the positive effects of social media on reading habits. However, distraction during the time of the study noted as the adverse effect. There was a significant difference of opinion among males and females opinion in terms of certain effects. The study mentioned that Facebook, WhatsApp, Google+ and YouTube were used daily by the students. Most of the students were using social media technologies through cell phone. The study has theoretical implications for researchers and practical implications for academia, teachers, policy institutions, and higher education institutions.

Keywords: Social Networking, Web 2.0, Media Distraction, Facebook, Pakistan, Punjab University.

INTRODUCTION

Social media defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p.



61). Social media encompass a wide array of technological applications that enable the user to create, manage, and share contents, post comments and engage in discussions anywhere around the world in real time. The prevalent use of social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram has grabbed the attention of people all over the world. The splendid growth in social media applications and increased adoption of the applications by people around the world during the last few years have revolutionized how people communicate and share information. Social media influenced the lifestyle of an individual, revolutionized communication, collaboration, and creativity. It has many options and facilities on the same channel for the user, such as texting, images sharing, audio, and video sharing, fast publishing, linking with all over the world and with other social media applications. The people use different social networking sites and are a member of these sites considered it trend and style of today. The young adults particularly students have embraced the social media very fast. The social media have positive as well as negative effects on the reading habits of students.

Reading has been a great source of information and knowledge at all the times and in all ages. Reading is one of the oldest cultures for human progress in society. The ability to read and write is highly valued and essential for social, cultural and economic advancement. The regular and systematic reading develops the cognitive ability and improves communication skills. Reading habit is the most fundamental skill that is necessary for the success not only for academic purpose but for all walks of life.

Reading is the mental process of securing and reacting to an author's message represented by written or printed symbols. To read one must recognize words, know the meaning of words, understand the ideas expressed by authors, since the mood and tone of selection, evaluate the accuracy of the ideas and learned use or apply them (Pawar, 2007).

Reading helps to grasp the primary and essential details what author try to convey and persuade them. Reading is not limited to the activity of reading as it is the process of learning and perceiving knowledge from written words. Reading develops the cognitive abilities. The cognitive means the intellectual powers of understanding. "Reading involves meta cognition. Meta cognition is a higher order of cognition, where an individual can use the constructed knowledge in mind to evaluate and categorize the new information because information enters the mind in random order" (Govindsamy, 2006). When we read, cognitive skills are used to

understand, interpret and evaluate the information from written words for productive use. Cognitive abilities develop an interest in the individual and force the individual to know about unknown things.

"Reading habit is behavior which makes an individual to read a book for knowledge or entertainment or just to pass the time" (Sherly, 2011) and it is an essential element for the development of personality and intellectual capacities of people. In addition to personal and mental developments, reading is access to social, economic and civic lifestyles (Bano, 2011).

Reading habit is an active ability based on the constructing meaning and gaining information from written text. Reading habit enhances the competencies of comprehension and increases vocabulary. Reading habit increases intellectual skills helps in producing ideas and evokes them to think. Regular reading enhances creativity as it develops the imagination, increases our interest and provides information from all around the world.

Statement of the Problem

The use of social media is extensively increasing worldwide, and the same phenomenon exist in Pakistan. University students are the dominant segment of the population of social media users. The use of social media is affecting the students reading habits, and they spend much time chatting with friends instead of reading (Shehu & Shehu, 2014). The primary purpose of this study is to expand the previous research and to explore the effects of social media on the reading habits of students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) has changed the reading habits of individuals. These new devices of technology have become time killing machines and eliminate reading habits. ICTs, particularly online technological tools, have become part of a traditional reading culture (Olszak, 2015). Loan (2009) considered the new technology like TV, radio, cell phones, computer, and the internet have reduced the time for reading. However, Olszak (2005) saw the integration of ICTs, particularly online technological tools, in traditional reading culture as a sign of progress in different areas of education. Moreover, it is necessary to use ICTs in schools for the enhancement and development of reading.

Cell phones are vital tools for accessing social networking sites (Hussain, Loan, & Yaseen, 2017). However, in Pakistani study conducted in a small city (Shabir et al., 2014) reported that the majority of students used social media in computer



labs. Different studies noted positive effects of social media on reading habits. Social networking sites used to gain knowledge, promote social political and environmental awareness, share information (Hussain, Loan, & Yaseen, 2017), and to connect with friends and family (Chander& Singh, 2017; Hussain, Loan, &Yaseen, 2017; Madge et al., 2009; Shabir et. al, 2014; Shehu & Shehu, 2014), educational and self-learning purposes (Chander& Singh, 2017; Khan, 2012) WhatsApp, notably, beneficial to keep in touch with friends and relatives especially who live far from their homes. Influence of friends was the primary reason for the use of social media (Khan, 2012). The respondents of another study of Pakistani origin, (Shabir et al., 2014) agreed that social media were useful for socio-political awareness, knowing about job openings, publishing articles, and enhance language proficiency and communication skills. A British study of undergraduate students (Madge et al., 2009) supported that Facebook was used for social reasons and not for formal teaching purposes although it was sometimes used informally for learning purpose.

Junco, Heiberger, and Loken (2011) found through an experimental study that Twitter increases the student's engagement that may cause for higher grade point averages (GPA). The faculty and students were highly engaged in the learning process through communication and connection on Twitter. Many studies (Junco et al., 2011; Madge et al., 2009; Olutola et al., 2016) reported that positive use of social media improved the reading habits and academic performance of students. On the other hand, Shabir et al. (2014) and Lubis et al. (2012) found that there was no significant relationship between the use of social media and academic performance.

The studies also reported the negative effects of social media use on reading habits and academic performance of students. Students spent a vast amount of time in checking social networking sites and make friends which can be detrimental to their performance and reading habits (Wang, Chen, & Liang, 2011). Social media is highly addictive in nature and youth seems stuck with their cell phones instead of studying (Bhatt & Arshad, 2016). Social media use causes distraction in the classrooms (Sharma & Shukla, 2016; Shehu & Shehu, 2014; Wang, Chen, & Liang, 2011; Yeboah & Ewur, 2014) and adversely affect the concentration in lectures and study. Similarly, Chander and Singh (2017) and Shabir et al. (2014) mentioned the misuse of personal information and breach of privacy are key drawbacks of social media.

Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) noted that social media users spend fewer hours studying than non-users. They noted that Facebook users studied 1-5 hours



per week while non-users studied 11-15 hours per week. Yeboah and Ewur (2014) reported that WhatsApp used for chatting with friends instead of academic purpose in the majority of cases. Chats on social media were also spoiling the grammar and sentences construction skills of students (Sharma & Shukla, 2016; Yeboah & Ewur, 2014). These two studies conducted in Africa and Asia and thus developing countries or non-native English-speaking countries have this negative effect.

Research Questions

The study addresses the following research question:

1. What are the patterns of students' reading habits?
2. What are the reasons for using social media among the students?
3. What is the frequency of use of social media?
4. What are the means of accessing social media?
5. How students perceive the use of social media effects on their reading habits?
6. Is there any difference of opinion between male and female students about social media effects on reading habits?

METHODOLOGY

The study opted for quantitative research design, and questionnaire-based survey method was used to collect data. The choice of research design has opted for the basis of the methodological dimensions of the already conducted research on similar topics in which structured questionnaire was used to study the phenomenon. The structured questionnaire was developed by reviewing the relevant literature.

The population of this study consisted of 43000 students of the University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. The University is the oldest and the largest University in the country having five campuses, 13 faculties include more than 73 departments and approximately 43000 on-campus students. The sample size online calculated as 381 by using sample size calculator available on <https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/calculating-sample-size/>. The convenient sampling technique was used because it was tough to get the list of the whole population that is prerequisite for applying any probability-based sampling technique. The calculated sample size of 381 was increased to 430 to minimize the biases non-random technique. Thus, the study conducted on a sample of 430 students. However, the researchers decided to collect data from the students using the Punjab University Library. The decision to collect data from the users of Punjab University Library was on the basis of strong

understanding of the researchers that developing country like Pakistan where the education system is a textbook based, the library users were the appropriate sample units to include in the study.

Specific measures were taken to address the reliability and validity of the research instrument. Cronbach alpha value of responses calculated on the questions where statements given to rank on Likert type scale. The Cronbach alpha value of a frequency of use of social media tools was .708 while Cronbach alpha value of 24 statements about the effects of social media use on reading habits was .836. These values confirm that the instrument was stable enough to measure the phenomenon. The pilot testing conducted before the data collected from the sample to check the validity of the questionnaire. The questionnaires distributed among ten students in Main Library of Punjab University. Based on the pilot-testing feedback minor changes were made in the final tool. Specifically, a few statements edited addressed the effects of social media on reading habits. The data collected for the pilot testing did not consider for the study. The study collected data from 430 students. However, 27 not properly filled questionnaires were discarded. Data were organized and analyzed through IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to draw inferences from the data.

Demographic Information

The demographic information includes gender, age and education level of the respondents (Table 1). The ratio of male and female respondents was almost equal. Among the respondents 74.4% belonged to 21-25 years of age group. In terms of academic programs, 45% of the respondents were the students of four-year bachelor degree program followed by 39% of masters, and 16% MPhil/Ph.D. programs.

Table 1
Respondents Demographics (N=403)

Attributes	Freq.	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	197	48.9%
Female	206	51.1%
<i>Age (Years)</i>		
16 – 20	66	16.4%
21-25	301	74.4%

Attributes	Freq.	Percentage
26-30	30	7.4%
31-35	4	1.0%
35 and above	2	0.5%
<i>Education Program</i>		
BS	181	44.9%
Masters	158	39.2%
MPhil	54	13.4%
PhD	9	2.2%

The Patterns of Students' Reading Habits

Six statements were given to assess the patterns of reading habits of the respondents. The findings (Table 2) shows that 40.7% of the respondents read-only for preparing tests/exams assignments, 37.5% read to enhance the knowledge, 24.1% read other reading material to get more information on the topic taught in classes, 22.3% of respondents read textbooks or recommended course material, 12.7% read for recreation, and 6.7% go through books after every lesson in class.

Table 2

The Patterns of Students' Reading Habits (N=403)

Statements	Freq. (%)
I read only for test/exams/assignments	164 (40.7 %)
I read to enhance my knowledge	151 (37.5 %)
I try to read other reading materials to get more information on the topic taught in class.	97 (24.1 %)
I read textbooks/recommended course material only.	90 (22.3 %)
I read for recreation.	51 (12.7 %)
I go through my books after every lesson.	27 (6.7 %)

Reasons for Using Social Media among the Students

The findings presented in Table 3 revealed the reasons of using social media. The findings revealed that 42.9% respondents used social media to share world or surrounding information of general nature, 36.7% of respondents used social media to share and exchange academic information.

Table 3

Reasons for Using Social Media among the Students (N=403)

Statements	Freq. (%)
Share world/surrounding information of general nature	173 (42.9 %)
To share and exchange academic information / material	149 (36.7 %)
Chatting with friends	133 (33 %)
Photo sharing	67 (16.6 %)
To communicate with teachers.	40 (9.9 %)
To create groups of like-minded individuals.	31 (7.7 %)

Frequency of Use of Social Media

The findings revealed the use frequency of different social media applications (Table 4). It was found that most of the respondents (63%) used Facebook and WhatsApp several times a day. Moreover, the mean values of WhatsApp, Facebook, Google+, and YouTube revealed that the respondents used the technologies at least once a day. Other tools used occasionally.

Table 4

Frequency of Use of Social Media (N=403)

Social Media Tools	Rarely	Occasionally	Once a week	Once a day	Several times a day	Mean	St. Dev.
Facebook	29	34	12	65	253	3.90	1.373
WhatsApp	29	34	12	65	253	4.22	1.281
YouTube	56	48	62	121	104	3.43	1.374
Twitter	192	41	28	32	28	1.95	1.368
Instagram	154	36	27	41	50	2.30	1.565
Flickr	210	34	15	17	8	1.52	1.028
Google+	79	37	28	59	153	3.48	1.630
LinkedIn	198	39	28	13	13	1.64	1.110

Note: 1=Rarely; 2=Occasionally; 3=Once a week; 4=Once a day; 5=Several times a week.

Frequency of Use of Social Media Based on Gender

Independent sample t-Test was used to find the difference in the use of social media between males and females (Table 5). There is a significant difference between the options of males and females in terms of the use of Facebook,

WhatsApp, Twitter, and Flickr. The mean score of males in terms of Facebook (Male=3.98, Female=3.83), Twitter (Male=2.27, Female=1.65) and Flickr (Male=1.61, Female=1.454) are higher than females. It reveals that the use of these three technologies is higher among the males in comparison with females. However, the use of WhatsApp is higher among females (Mean=4.38) than males (Mean=4.05).

Table 5

Frequency of Use of Social Media by Gender (N=403)

Social Media Tools	Mean		T	Sig.
	Male	Female		
Facebook	3.98	3.83	1.139	.016
Whatsapp	4.05	4.38	-2.534	.009
YouTube	3.59	3.29	2.202	.192
Twitter	2.27	1.65	4.114	.000
Instagram	2.41	2.20	1.162	.410
Flickr	1.61	1.45	1.281	.010
Google+	3.59	3.38	1.190	.495
LinkedIn	1.72	1.57	1.166	.185

Means of Accessing Social Media

Table 6 revealed that majority of the respondents (71.5%) accessed the social networking sites through cell phones and 37.5% respondents accessed social media through personal computers. Among the respondents, 19.4% used university labs or libraries, 0.2% used cyber cafes for accessing social networking sites. Moreover, 19.1% used all the tools through cell phones, personal computer, university labs library, and cyber cafes.

Table 6

Means of Accessing Social Media (N=403)

Access to Social Media	Freq. (%)
Cell phone	288 (71.50 %)
Personal computer	151 (37.50 %)
University lab/library	78 (19.40 %)
Cyber cafes	1 (0.20 %)
All of the above	77 (19.10 %)

Perceived Effects of Social Media on Reading Habits of Students

The mean score was used to assess the effects of social media on reading habits of the students by presenting 24 statements, out of these 24 statements, 14 were about positive effects, and ten were about the negative effects of social media on reading habits. The mean score (Table 7) revealed that respondents showed agreement with 14 statements. In these 14 statements, 13 related to positive effects of social media on reading habits while one statement (*I am easily distracted by using social media when it is time to study*; Mean=3.80) was about negative effects. In terms of positive effects, the respondents agreed that *social media increase socialization that facilitates in study* (Mean=3.81), *information on social media is easy to search and use* (Mean=3.80), *social media help to keep updated with study-related projects/assignments* (Mean=3.77), *provide virtual access to information* (Mean=3.77), *effective tool for exchange of reading material* (Mean=3.75), *enable sharing reading material with the friends* (Mean=3.71), *facilitate to get reading material speedily* (Mean=3.68), *helps to remain updated with academic matters* (Mean=3.66), *offer ease in getting reading material* (Mean=3.64), *enhance capabilities to read on screen* (Mean=3.61), *provide opportunity of collaborative reading* (Mean=3.57), and *social media help to exchange ideas immediately in group study* (Mean=3.51). The mean score of remaining ten statements, mainly about the harmful effects of social media, fall in the category of neither agree nor disagree.

Table 7

Perceived Effects of Social Media on Reading Habits of Students (N=403)

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
Social media increase socialization with friends that facilitate in study	3.81	2.153
Information on social media is easy to search and use	3.80	1.099
I am easily distracted by using social media when it is time to study	3.80	1.224
Social media keep me updated with study-related projects/assignments	3.77	1.020
By virtue of social media, I read much useful information	3.77	1.067
Social media provide virtual access to information	3.77	1.032
Social media can be an effective tool for exchange of reading	3.75	1.055



Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
material		
Social media enable me to share reading material with the friends	3.71	1.089
Social media facilitate me to get my reading material speedily	3.68	1.097
Social media keep me updated about my academic matters	3.66	1.086
Social media enable me to get my reading material with ease	3.64	1.089
Social media enhanced my capabilities to read on screen	3.61	1.225
Social media provide an opportunity for collaborative reading	3.57	1.045
Social media help to exchange my ideas immediately in group study	3.51	1.155
Because of the use of social media, my reading habits have been reduced	3.46	1.199
Social media enable me to communicate with my teachers without time lag in study related issues	3.45	1.133
The use of social media decreases in-depth study	3.36	1.156
I may post/respond while I am doing homework	3.36	1.155
Social media is an addiction that harms my reading habits	3.34	1.208
Use of social media procrastinates my assignments	3.32	1.056
Social media negatively affect my reading habits	3.21	1.214
By using social media, I cannot concentrate on reading	3.09	1.224
Because of downloading and watching videos/music, I do not find time to read	3.00	1.242
By using social media late night, make me late in class	2.92	1.336

Note: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree

Perceived Effects of Social Media on Reading Habits of Students by Level of Education

Effects of social media on reading habits of students on the basis level of education was analyzed through analysis of variance (ANOVA). It was found that there is no statistically significant difference of means exist in all statements excluding one statement "*The use of social media decreases in depth-study*" relevant to effects of social media as shown. The students of BS program (mean score = 3.50) showed more agreement to this statement (Table 8).

Table 8

Perceived Effects of social media on the reading habits of students by level of education

Statements	Mean			F	Sig.
	BS	Master	MPhil/PhD		
I am easily distracted by using social media when it is time to study	3.87	3.77	3.75	.391	.677
I may post/ respond while I am doing homework	3.34	3.34	3.48	.373	.689
By using social media late night, make me late in class	2.99	2.84	2.94	.560	.572
Social media provide an opportunity for collaborative reading	3.52	3.65	3.51	.733	.481
Social media increase socialization contacts with friends that facilitate in study	3.83	3.81	3.75	.039	.962
Social media provide virtual access to information	3.75	3.75	3.87	.398	.672
Because of downloading and watching videos/music, I do not find time to read	2.94	3.14	2.87	1.535	.217
Social media help to exchange my ideas my ideas in group study immediately	3.40	3.57	3.70	1.905	.150
Because of social media, I cannot concentrate on reading	3.13	3.06	3.06	.134	.875
The use of social media decreases in depth-study	3.50	3.18	3.41	3.212	.041*
Social media can be an effective tool for exchange of reading material	3.75	3.74	3.78	.029	.971



Statements	Mean			F	Sig.
	BS	Master	MPhil/PhD		
Use of social media procrastinates my assignments	3.35	3.29	3.32	.148	.863
Because of the use of social media, my reading habits have been reduced	3.43	3.57	3.32	1.152	.317
Information on social media is easy to search and use	3.75	3.90	3.73	.980	.376
Social media enable me to get my reading material with ease	3.64	3.65	3.63	.011	.989
Social media facilitates me to get my reading material speedily	3.62	3.78	3.59	1.178	.309
Social media enable me to share reading material with the friends	3.64	3.81	3.68	1.111	.330
Social media enables me to keep me updated with study-related projects/assignments	3.67	3.84	3.90	1.674	.189
Social media enable me to communicate with my teachers without time lag in study related issues	3.44	3.46	3.43	.024	.977
Social media negatively affect my reading habits	3.28	3.16	3.10	.705	.495
Social media is an addiction that harms my reading habits	3.39	3.29	3.30	.329	.720
Social media keep me updated about my academic matters	3.66	3.68	3.62	.064	.938
By virtue of social media, I read much useful information	3.78	3.69	3.90	.959	.384

Statements	Mean			F	Sig.
	BS	Master	MPhil/PhD		
Social media enhanced my capabilities to read on screen	3.67	3.54	3.60	.497	.609

*Results significant at .05 level.

Difference of Opinion between Male and Female Students about Social Media effects on Reading Habits

The independent sample t-test was applied to investigate the effects of social media on reading habits with respect to gender. The analysis (Table 9) revealed that there was a significant difference in the perceptions of respondents based on gender in 12 out of 24 statements. The females showed higher agreement with the statements: *use of social media provide virtual access to information* (male=3.66, female=3.87); *information on social media is easy to search and use* (male=3.64, female=3.96); *social media keep me updated with study related projects/assignments* (male=3.64, female=3.90); *by virtue of social media, I read much useful information* (male=3.64, female=3.88); *social media can be an effective tool for exchange of reading material* (male=3.62, female=3.87); *social media enabled me to share reading material with friends* (male=3.58, female=3.84); *social media keep me updated about my academic matters* (male=3.54, female=3.78); *social media facilitate me to get my reading material speedily* (male=3.48, female=3.87); *social media enabled me to get my reading material with ease* (male=3.48, female=3.83); *social media provide opportunity of collaborative reading* (male=3.38, female=3.74); *social media enabled me to communicate with my teachers without time lag in study related issues* (male=3.26, female=3.62); and *social media help to exchange my ideas in group study immediately* (male=3.17, female=3.84).

Table 9

Difference of Opinion between Male and Female Students about Social Media effects on Reading Habits (N=403)

Statements	\bar{x}		T	Sig.
	Male	Female		
I am easily distracted by using social media when it is time to study	3.72	3.88	-1.295	.197
Social media provide virtual access	3.66	3.87	-2.041	.042*



Statements	\bar{x}		T	Sig.
	Male	Female		
to information				
Social media increase socialization with friends that facilitate in the study	3.64	3.97	-1.523	.136
Information on social media is easy to search and use.	3.64	3.96	-2.965	.003*
Social media keep me updated with study-related projects/ assignments	3.64	3.90	-2.509	.013*
By virtue of social media, I read much useful information	3.64	3.88	-2.257	.025*
Social media can be an effective tool for exchange of reading material	3.62	3.87	-2.435	.016*
Social media enable me to share reading material with the friends	3.58	3.84	-2.421	.016*
Social media keep me updated about my academic matters	3.54	3.78	-2.261	.025*
Because of the use of Social media, my reading time has been reduced	3.49	3.44	.381	.704
Social media enhanced my capabilities to read on screen	3.49	3.72	-1.845	.066
Social media facilitate me to get my reading material speedily	3.48	3.87	-3.685	.000*
Use of social media enabled me to get my reading material with ease	3.44	3.83	-3.729	.000*
Social media provide an opportunity for collaborative reading	3.38	3.74	-3.525	.001*
Social media is an addiction that harms my reading habits	3.37	3.32	.415	.679
The use of social media decreases in-depth study	3.35	3.38	-.290	.772
Social media negatively affect my reading habits	3.27	3.15	1.062	.289
I may post/respond while I am	3.26	3.45	-1.587	.113



Statements	\bar{x}		T	Sig.
	Male	Female		
doing homework				
Social media enable me to communicate with my teachers without time lag in study related issues	3.26	3.62	-3.203	.001*
By using social media, I cannot concentrate on reading.	3.23	2.97	2.161	0.31
Use of social media procrastinates my assignments	3.20	3.44	2.234	0.26
Social media help to exchange my ideas in group study immediately.	3.17	3.84	-6.046	.000*
By using social media late night, make me late in class	3.05	2.80	-1.920	.056
Because of downloading and watching videos/music, I do not find time to read.	2.92	3.09	1.364	.173

Note: * results are significant at .05 level.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the respondents read mainly for the preparation of tests/exams/assignments and knowledge enhancement. Social media technologies are used to share information of general nature, academic information/material, and chatting with friends. These reasons mentioned by more than one-third of respondents. Among the respondents, 33% respondents used social media for chatting with friends which is less than the study investigated by Shehu and Shehu (2014) which was 60%.

The respondents (16.6%) used social media for photo sharing which is less than the study conducted by Shehu and Shehu (2014) which was 15%. The 9.9% respondents used social media to communicate with teachers which is more than the study conducted by Shehu and Shehu (2014) which was 5.5% but less than the study conducted by Chander and Singh (2017) which was 14.34%. The 8.7% of respondents used social media for other purposes. The 7.7% of respondents used social media to create groups of like-minded people which is less than the study conducted by Shehu and Shehu (2014) which was 15%.



In terms of social media tools used, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google+ were popular among the respondents, and they use these tools once a day at least. However, 60% of respondents were using Facebook and WhatsApp several times a day. The similar result about Facebook use was also reported by Khan and Rafiq (2018) in Pakistan. The use of Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr was higher among the males while WhatsApp was used significantly higher by females.

The findings revealed that that majority of respondents with the frequency of 71.5% access the social networking sites through cell phones and personal computers. Similar results observed by Shehu and Shehu (2014).

The study presented 24 statements about the perceived effects of social media on reading habits to the respondents; 14 were about positive effects, and ten were about adverse effects. The findings exposed that the respondents perceived the effects of social media on reading habits positively. They were agreed that social media technologies help in socialization that ultimately facilitate in their study, and help them to remain updated with study-related projects/assignments, enhance their capabilities to read on screen, provided opportunity of collaborative reading, enables them to exchange reading material speedily and efficiently, and support them to exchange ideas immediately in group study. Moreover, they also consented that the technologies provide virtual access to information, information on social media is easy to search and use and help to provide updated academic matters. The negative effect that respondents agreed was a distraction at the time of the study. Based on the findings, we may conclude that the social media technologies have has positive effects on the students reading habits. However, there is a need to address the distraction aspect of the social media applications that may be overcome by training the students. The positive perceptions of the respondents about the effects of social media call for policymakers, academia and curriculum designers to integrate social media technologies in the academics and campus life of the students.

Moreover, there were significant differences of perceptions among males and females in 12 out of 24 statements. These all 12 statements are related to positive effects. Thus, we may infer that the females have more positive perceptions towards the social media than males. A further study may be initiated to identify the reasons for the difference of perceptions. Moreover, no significance was noted in terms of degree programs of the respondents.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight both positive and negative aspects of social media on the reading habits of students. The positive effects are that the use of social media increases the socialization that facilitate the students in their study and they find information on social media accessible to search and use. However, the negative aspect is that students are distracted by the use of social media at the time of their study. There are significant effects of social media on male and female students. The female students are more agreeable than male students that the use of social media facilitate reading by providing information with easily and speedily. The technologies also provide collaborative learning environment to students. On the basis of the study's findings, it is suggested that the University should launch mobile applications to engage students in reading and other academic activities. Also, orientation programs about social media usage may be introduced the University to highlight the positive aspects of social media and to promote reading culture among the students.

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