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# Beyond Likes and Shares: Analyzing Social Media's Impact on Socio-Psychological Behavior of University Students of Lahore, Pakistan

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim of the Study:** The aim is to explore how media usage impacts students' academic achievement, social conduct, and emotional health. Furthermore, the goal is to pinpoint potential approaches to minimize unfavorable consequences while optimizing positive ones

**Methodology:** The impact of consuming media on students' socio-psychological behavior was examined using a cross-sectional quantitative study methodology. 200 undergraduate students from universities between the ages of 18 and 25 were recruited utilizing a convenient sample technique from Punjab University and Lahore College for Women University in Lahore, Pakistan. By using scale of Social Networking Sites Usage & Needs (SNSUN), which has good reliability (=.922), Ali, Danaee, and Firdaus created a self-constructed scale (2020).

**Findings:** The study investigated the associations between student conduct and well-being on social media. The data were examined with Pearson correlation testing. The findings revealed a substantial correlation between uses of social media on respondents' social behavior, language use, privacy, and health. However, there was no conclusive connection between using social media and academic success. To study at the disparities in social media usage based on socioeconomic status an independent sample t-test was conducted

**Conclusion:** The socio-psychological behaviors of students were dramatically affected by their usage of social media. WhatsApp was favored for social interactions, although media consumption did not significantly affect academic performance. But social behavior and media use, as well as student language and media use, were found to be significantly correlated. The use of media does not appear to be influenced by socioeconomic position. In order to fully comprehend the effects of social media and design effective utilization strategies the study emphasizes and suggests the need for additional research.

**Keywords:** Media, Academic Achievement, Attitudes, Mental Well-being.

1

## Introduction

The term "social media" lacked a precise definition for a long time. When a single electronic platform appeared, it greatly expanded people's ability to connect, be in control, and be transparent users. Shared content encourages conversations, and anyone with a social network account can reply to any post. Social network is "the act of interaction," whereas social media is a means of reaching a large audience (Hartshorn, 2010). With the accessibility of an online account, anyone has the ability to interact with and exchange ideas with other social media users. A forum for two-way contact between people is provided by social media. Networking sites are the term used to describe these social media platforms (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). According to Reale et al. (2018) claim that an important development in research is to evaluate study results in the context of the social impact that evidence-based decisions have on a number of sectors, ultimately enhancing people's quality of life. Social media is capable, focused, fast, and wide-reaching. It is in charge of establishing societal trends and agendas on topics ranging from politics and the environment to technology, the entertainment sector, and other organizations (Asur and Huberman, 2010) primarily in a big way to the innovative use of social media, young people may now exchange thoughts, feelings, personal information, pictures and videos, images, and other types of content at an astounding rate, which has profoundly transformed the online world over the preceding ten years (Oberst, 2010Just a handful of the countless social media platforms include Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, are among those LinkedIn, a professional  site Google+, Flickr, Snapchat to date, Vine, and Tumblr. Any of these websites can be used to interact with people online and establish social relationships (Ali, 2017).

Social media refers to the communication, connection, and sharing of photographs and videos on websites like Facebook, Blogs, Twitter, Myspace, and LinkedIn. However, social media is cited in this study as being used by users of the internet to communicate, interact, and share ideas, photos, and videos through platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Skype, MySpace, and Yahoo Messenger (Martn, 2008). Primarily young individuals, teenagers, and minors have used these platforms as a means of connecting with their friends, exchanging information, and transforming adapting, adjusting, or completely reinventing their personalities and actions to demonstrate their social circles (Boyd, 2007). Some of the advantages of social media include socializing, keeping in touch with close friends and family, exchanging helpful information on social media platforms, and finding online support through websites which support students in a way that may not be present in more traditional relationships (Gibbons, 2017). Social media users can communicate with other people. College students can express themselves through social media by posting status updates, links, videos, and photographs. Social media makes it possible to keep up with regular updates on other people's families, friends, classmates, acquaintances, etc. (Smocket et al., 2011).

What impacts do gender, age, and pattern of social media use have on university students' perceptions of social media's influence on their socio-psychological behavior, How have these beliefs evolved throughout time?

## Literature Review

Social media has ingrained itself into our daily lives, and numerous studies have been done on the effects it has on all facets of society. The effects of social media on people's communication styles, sense of self, interpersonal relationships, and mental health are among the major research fields. Social media can impact a person's self-esteem in both good and bad ways, according to studies. Social media, on the one hand, gives people a platform for self-expression and enables them to project a positive self-image to others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). On the other hand, being exposed to others' seemingly ideal lives on social media can cause poor self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014). Social media has altered how people connect and interact with one another in terms of communication. It has made it feasible to maintain relationships with those who are far away and makes communication faster and easier (Christofides et al., 2009). Social media has been criticized for fostering the emergence of a

more superficial and impersonal form of communication as well as the decline of engagement in person (Turkle, 2011). Media has the power to both strengthen and forge new ties in terms of interpersonal connections (Walther, 1996). However, because technology offers opportunities for cyberbullying, infidelity, and the dissemination of false information, it can also lead to the dissolution of partnerships (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). Sordé-Mart T (2020) looked into the social media's significance in getting individual identify about societal improvements. The study's findings demonstrated that social media significantly affects individuals' interests. Another study by Maqableh (2015) found no association between social media use and academic performance of undergraduate level students at the University of Jordan. Mbodila (2014) found that social media can be a beneficial tool for student collaboration and knowledge, but university's e-learning system limited its use. On the other hand, Hamadein (2013) found that 60% of students neglected academic responsibilities due to excessive social media use. Naizabekov (2012) found that social media leads to procrastination and a negative approach to studying, while Tarek (2015) found no significant correlation between social media use and academic performance. Oyeboade (2017) found socio-economic position to have a substantial impact on social media usage among undergraduates. Abbas (2019) found that social media has a more negative effect on student behavior in Pakistan. Hardy (2018) found social media beneficial for forming connections. According to Siddiqui and Singh (2016), social media has both constructive and negative implications for learners. According to Suhail and Bargees (2006), social media has both productive and adverse impacts. Liu (2010) found students used social media primarily for social engagement, with less than 10% using it for academic purposes. Shahjahan (2014) found social media improved social skills for teens, while Hashim (2016) found improved connectivity and knowledge sharing. Terzi (2019) found that social media changed student communication and interaction. According to Chartrand (2012), internet usage is useful for language learning. Social media is useful for vocabulary development and the development of languages, according to Sim and Pop (2014).

## Theoretical Framework

Bandura and Walters (1963) established social learning theory (SLT; 1969, 1973, 1977a, 1986) as offering a comprehensive account for both positive and negative behavioral consequences. It incorporates both cognitive and behavioral strategies and a diversity of learning and transformation theory and practice. It combines the cognition-focused approach with the behavioral perspective, which early behaviorists (such Miller and Dollard, 1941; Skinner, 1938, 1953) favored as being more constrained. Cognitive learning is based on the idea that psychological factors have an impact on behavior. In addition to psychological and cognitive variables, SLT claims that environmental factors also have an effect on behavior. SLT therefore assumes that the emergence of particular behaviors is influenced by a synthesis of psychological and environmental factors. The significance for tracking and modeling what others do, how they think, as well as emotions is heavily emphasized in SLT. According to the Social Learning Theory, people learn through focusing on close scrutiny to the actions and results of others. This idea holds that when it comes to media and education, the media serves as an example that students can imitate and learn from. For instance, students may be more likely to engage in a positive activity like donating if they watch a movie where the character does so. On the other hand, if a student watches a movie where a character engages in a negative behavior, such as cheating, they may be more likely to imitate that behavior as well. As a result, depending on the content they are exposed to, the impact of media on youngsters can be encouraging or unacceptable. If media depicts positive behaviors, it can serve as a positive influence on students' behavior and attitudes. It can, however, negatively affect learners if media portrays inappropriate conduct. Social Learning Theory highlights the role of media as a model for behavior, and underscores the importance of considering the content of media when evaluating its impact on students.
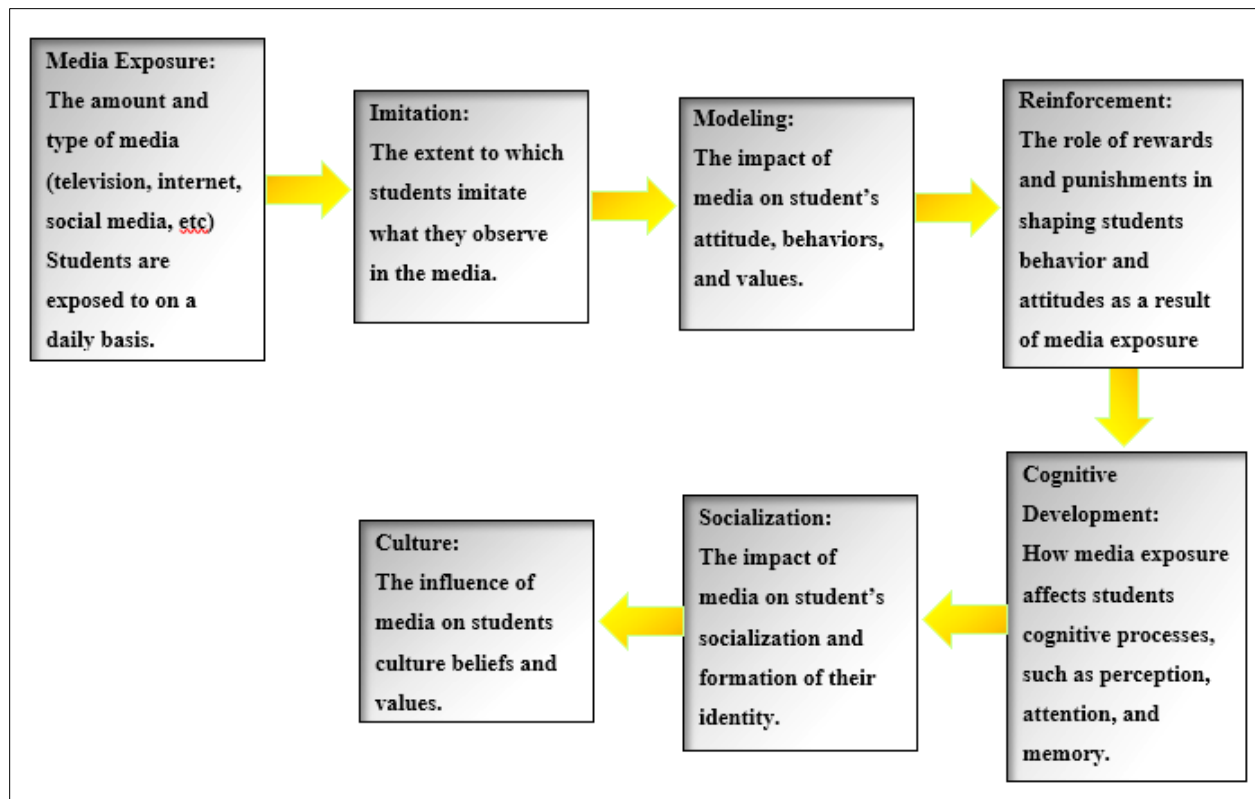
Media Exposure: The amount and type of media (television, internet, social media, etc) Students are exposed to on a daily basis. → Imitation: The extent to which students imitate what they observe in the media. → Modeling: The impact of media on student's attitude, behaviors, and values. → Reinforcement: The role of rewards and punishments in shaping students behavior and attitudes as a result of media exposure ↓ Cognitive Development: How media exposure affects students cognitive processes, such as perception, attention, and memory. → Socialization: The impact of media on student's socialization and formation of their identity. → Culture: The influence of media on students culture beliefs and values.

Figure 1: *Social Learning Process (Bandura and Walters, 1963)*

## *Significance of the Study*

Understanding how the media affects students' socio-psychological wellbeing is essential since the media significantly shapes their views, attitudes, and beliefs. Students are exposed to a variety of information and amusement thanks to the spread of technology and easy access to media, as well as to potentially dangerous material. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how media affects students and how that influences their overall development, mental health, and academic performance. Identifying the relationship can help policymakers and educators take the proper action to lessen any negative effects and maximize the good potential of media for the benefit of youths. Ultimately, a deeper understanding of the influence of media on students will help ensure that future generations are equipped with the skills and resilience to navigate the digital world in a healthy and productive manner.

## Hypotheses

• It is likely that there will be a significant correlation between students' social behavior and their use of social media.

• There will be a significant correlation between respondents' usage of social media and their academic accomplishment.

• There is a significant correlation between the student's language and the social media.

• There will be a significant association between the participants' privacy and social media use.

• Participant socioeconomic status and social media usage will differ significantly.

• There will be a strong correlation between the student's health and social media.

**Methodology/ Research Design**

In order to determine how social media use affects male and female undergraduate students at Lahore College for Women University and Punjab University Lahore in Pakistan, the current study used a cross-sectional quantitative methodology. 200 participants between the ages of 18 and 25 were enrolled in the study using a convenient sampling technique. 100 male students from Punjab University and 100 female students from Lahore College for Women University were separated into two groups of 100 participants each. The study concentrated on the use of social media as an independent variable and how it affected dependent factors like social behavior, academic achievement, language use, privacy, and health. The study used a self-constructed scale to gather data on these variables, with good reliability as indicated by Cronbach's alpha values. The results of this study can help promote strategies for minimizing any negative impacts and shed light on the potential implications of social media use on students' academic and personal lives.

*Instrument Used (Tool for Data Collection)*

A scale self-created, modified based on the Social Networking Sites Usage & Needs Scale (SNSUN) created by Ali, Danaee, and Firdaus (2020) was used to gather data for this study. With an alpha value of.922, the SNSUN scale has showed high reliability. The impact of media consumption on many socio-psychological factors, such as social conduct, academic performance, language, privacy, and health, was evaluated in this study using a self-developed scale. To measure media usage, a 7-item scale with a 4-point Likert scale and a.660 alpha was used. With an alpha of.692, the social conduct measure contained six items with ratings on a 5-point Likert scale. Seven items on the academic performance scale with a 5-point Likert scale and an alpha of.595 were included. A 5-point Likert scale with an alpha of.618 was used to score the 5 items on the impact on language scale. A 5-point Likert scale with an alpha of.618 was used to rate 5 items on the influence on health and privacy scale. Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the scale's reliability, and the results show that it is reliable. The self-constructed scale allowed the researchers to gather data on the specific variables of interest and measure the impact of media usage on different aspects of student life.

*Analysis*

The researchers used statistical analysis to explore the relationship between the usage of media and various socio-psychological variables. The t-test was used to analyze gender differences and family structure's impact on media usage. One-way ANOVA was used to determine the differences in media usage based on participants' age. Finally, the researchers used Pearson correlation coefficient to analyze the relationship between media usage and academic performance, social behavior, language, privacy, and health. This rigorous statistical analysis enabled the researchers to draw meaningful conclusions about the impact of media usage on students' socio-psychological behavior, while also controlling for potential confounding variables.

**Results**

The study found contrary to the initial hypothesis, the study's findings indicated that there was no significant correlation between academic success and social media use (r=.379, n=200, p=.63). Nevertheless, the study discovered a strong correlation between social behavior and social media use, with those who utilized social media displaying more social behavior (r=0.391, n=200, **p 0.01). A significant association between language proficiency and social media use was also discovered by the study (r=0.206, n=200, **p 0.01), as well as between privacy and social media use (r=.268, n=200, **p 0.01) and between health and social media use (r=.399, n=200, **p 0.01). The findings imply that while social media use does not appear to significantly affect academic achievement, it may have a favorable impact on social behavior, language proficiency, privacy, and health.

Table 1: *Person correlation with academic performance, social behavior, language, privacy and health*

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.Usage of media | ___ | | | | | |
| 2.Social behaviours | .39** | ____ | | | | |
| 3.Academic performance | .06 | .34** | ____ | | | |
| 4. Language | .30** | .50** | .40** | _____ | | |
| 5. Health | .40** | .60** | .30** | .42** | _____ | |
| 6.Privacy | .30** | .50** | .50** | .41** | .73** | _____ |

*Note. **p<.01*

Table 2: *Independent sample t test displaying the difference in usage of media across gender (N=200)*

| | Men (n=100) | | Women (n=100) | | | | 95% Cl | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | M | SD | M | SD | t(200) | p | LL UL | | Cohen's |
| Usage of media | 13.5 | 3.40 | 14.4 | 3.36 | -392.8 | .92 | -1.88 0.03 | | 0.26 |

Table 3: *Independent sample t-test displaying the difference in usage of media across family structure (N=200)*

| | Nuclear (n=104) | | Joint (n=96) | | | | 95% Cl | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | M | SD | M | SD | t(200) | p | LL UL | | Cohen's |
| Usage of media | 13.8 | 3.33 | 14.4 | 3.49 | -141.6 | .62* | -1.29 0.61 | | 0.175 |

The following results of the above table showed that there is no significant difference of usage of social media on gender of the respondent's. Results indicated as compared to males (M=13.5, SD=3.40) and females (M=14.4, SD=3.36), (t=-3.92.8, P= .92).

Table 4: *One-way ANOVA for the difference in usage of media across social classes*

| Outcome | df | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social class | 2 | 2.774 | 1.387 | .118 | .88* |

As stated by the results of one-way analysis of the difference of the alteration in the social class is non-significant. [F (2,197) =.118, *P=.88].

**Usage of Media (%)**
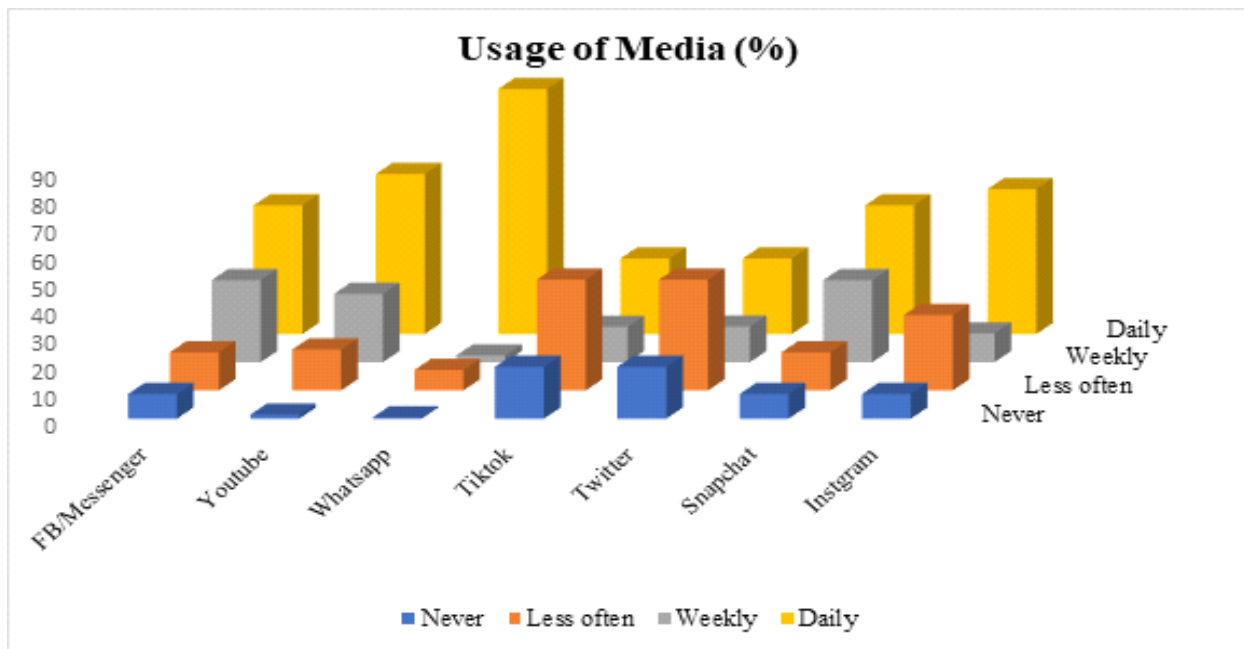
The illustration compares all of the social media platforms that the students used. A majority of the students regularly used Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp. The study's conclusions back up the claim that there is no significant relationship between social media use and academic success. However, there is a significant relationship between student social behavior and the use of social media, as well as between language and the use of social media, privacy and the usage of social media, age and the usage of social media, and health and the usage of social media. The literature, which demonstrates that social media can have both positive and negative effects on kids' social behavior, language competence, privacy, and health, supports these findings. Age has a substantial impact on social media usage, although socioeconomic level and gender have less of an impact.

## Discussion

This study attempted to better understand how university students in Lahore, Pakistan, used social media and expressed socio-psychological behavior. Researchers initially anticipated of uncovering a significant correlation between using social media and academic success. The findings, however, did not support this theory, which is according to work by Lau (2017) and El-Badawy and Hashem (2015). The study's findings and earlier research by Shahjahan (2014) and Hashim (2016) both validated the researchers' prediction that social behavior and social media use would be significantly correlated. The third hypothesis, which was supported by the results and previous studies by Derakshan and Hasanabbasi (2015) and Lin et al. (2016), predicted that there would be a strong correlation between social media use and language proficiency. The findings from prior research by Alsaif (2016) and Siddiqui and Singh (2017) both validated the fourth hypothesis, which predicted that there would be a strong correlation between students' use of social media and their privacy. The findings supported the fifth hypothesis, which anticipated that participants' socioeconomic level would have a significant impact on how they used social media. Contrary to Oyeboade (2017)'s findings, the results did not show any statistically significant changes based on gender or family structure. Finally, the findings and previous research conducted by Griffiths (2015) and Khalid (2017) supported the researchers' expectation that social media use and student health would be significantly correlated. These results suggest that social media can raise health awareness and enable interaction with people who have similar health concerns.

## Conclusion

According to the findings, the results show that social media significantly affects the socio-psychological patterns of undergraduates. According to the research, social media use is associated significantly with a number of social goals, such as education, keeping in touch with loved ones, and fostering connections. The study claims that students use social media more for socializing than for academic purposes, suggesting that they actively use it to meet their social needs. Additionally, the study shows a connection between language use and social media use given that students may communicate differently online than they would in formal contexts. Surprisingly, the researchers found that students' socioeconomic status had no impact on how they used social media. The study highlights the possible advantages of social media for undergraduates, including improved learning, connections with others, and personal development through various forms of engagement. The study's drawbacks, including its small sample size and geographic scope, must be taken into account. The researchers recommend that future studies widen their scope to look into how social media affects a wider spectrum of colleges and communities. They also advise using qualitative or mixed methods and other sampling techniques to more thoroughly investigate how social media affects young people.

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