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THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS: A QUALITY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

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The widespread use of social networks has transformed the way students communicate, raising concerns about its impact on interpersonal relationships. This quantitative study aims to investigate the correlation between university students' social media usage and the quality of their interpersonal relationships, exploring how social network use affects relationship dynamics, communication patterns among students. A cross-sectional study was conducted using a structured questionnaire, including the Interpersonal Relationship Questionnaire to assess the quality of interpersonal relationships and a Social Media Use Questionnaire to measure social network usage trends, to collect data from 300 students. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, including Pearson's correlation coefficient, were used in the data analysis, which was carried out using SPSS, to fully investigate the connection between university students' use of social networks and their interpersonal connections. This study suggests that social media use may slightly enhance interpersonal relationships among university students. This shows that although social media use and interpersonal relationships have a statistically significant relationship, the practical significance of this relationship may be limited. According to the weak correlation, social media use can only explain a small portion of the variation in interpersonal relationships, and other factors, such as face-to-face interaction and shared activities, are likely to have a greater impact on the quality of interpersonal relationships among university students. The findings of this study can inform strategies to promote healthy social media use and strong interpersonal relationships among university students. **Keywords:** Influence, Social Media, Interpersonal, Relationships, Quality

Introduction

Social networks and the internet are essential in our lives because we send and receive information, communicate face-to-face with others and know everything that happens around us (Sharma & Naik, 2020). Students frequently use social media to connect with people who share the same opinions, ideas, and views as themselves. Young people and students cannot avoid social media platforms. Students spend most of their time on social media using mobile phones, tablets, computers, and laptops for education and other activities (Sharma & Naik, 2020).

Social media is used by different age groups, including children, youth, and older adults. However, the trend of using social media among university students has increased over the past decade (Shams, R Shahid, SY Raza, 2022). The emergence of the various social media networks has revolutionized the activities of teaching, learning, research, modes of communication, and the process of information exchange/dissemination. All these activities carried out on the various social media platforms today give credence to the fast development in technology and the internet (Ameyaw, S., 2021). Interpersonal communication refers to the way people share information, using words or non-verbal cues, to achieve personal or relationship goals. This type of communication has led to the rise of social media, which continues to draw attention because of its advantages and disadvantages, as well as its effects on many parts of human life (Tang, M. J., & Chan, E. T., 2021).

The main perceived benefits are those related to recreation and relationships. Addiction and increased stress are two major consequences of social media use, significantly impacting how well students bond and form relationships (Abdul-Aziz, Y., & Maigah, A., 2024). Students utilize social media for a variety of things, such as social and intellectual chasing. There is no clear link between the frequency of social media use and academic achievement. To maximize advantages and avoid disadvantages,

social media use should be observed and managed (Oc nwaka Nwandu, & Ou Patrick, 2024). Students use social media for academic purposes and are comfortable with it. Their selection of social media channels is based on effectiveness and performance. The usage of social media and academic achievement are closely related (Mbegan, S.A., HI Mambo, & Mubofu, C., 2022). The most popular social media sites for academic purposes are Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp. Academic concerns are positively impacted by social media use (Mashauri, Daudi, Kandengukila, & Pankras, 2025). The overuse of social media hurts academic achievement. There is a need to control and manage social media use in academic achievements (Wario, R., 2022). The lifestyle of university students is greatly impacted by social media. To lessen the harmful impacts of social media use, a thoughtful and balanced strategy is required (Owusu, D.K., 2024). The most popular platform was TikTok. 71% of students blamed social media for their late bedtimes, indicating its impact on sleep habits (Olugbade, D., 2023). The positive and negative effects of social media on interpersonal relationships among students. The findings are that social media helps to promote healthy social interactions and relationships among students (Makabali, E., 2023). A recent meta-analysis confirms that excessive social media use increases loneliness among university students, even when it fosters online connectedness. (Chen, Y., Li, X., & Zhang, W. (2022).

The majority of students utilize social media in a modest to skilled manner. The most widely used platforms are Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp (O ojo, Ba Opeloye, & D Olugbade, 2024). The use of social media and its relation with students' learning, happiness and interpersonal relationships. Students are addicted to social media; they need more guidance to improve their learning, happiness and interpersonal relationships (P Chandrasena, P., & Ilankoon, I., 2022).

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the prevalence of social media on interpersonal relationships among university students.
2. To look into how social media negatively affects university students' interpersonal relationships.
3. To explore how social media helps university students' relationships with one another.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between social media use and the quality of interpersonal relationships among university students?
2. Does frequent social media use negatively affect students' interpersonal communication?
3. Can social media also support stronger peer connections among students?

Goals

1. To examine how social media affects interpersonal relationships among university students.
2. To identify both positive and negative effects of social media use.
3. To provide practical recommendations for healthy social media practices.

Innovation

1. Focuses on Pakistani female university students, a less-studied group in social media research.
2. Uses both the *social media use scale* and the *interpersonal relationship scale*, which adds reliability to the findings.
3. Provides insights for counsellors, parents, and educators on how to balance technology and relationships.

Methodology

This study is based on a quantitative, specifically cross-sectional survey design. Convenient sampling was used to collect the data. The sample size is 300 participants. The students were given a questionnaire to complete in order to collect data, which is a popular and efficient way to get information from a large sample. The participants were between 18 and 25 years old. The data was collected from BS and MS students of the Government Sadiq College Women's University of Bahawalpur. The data was collected from only female students. To

improve the sample's representativeness, future studies might consider including male students and students from several universities. Two scales—the Interpersonal Relationship Scale and the Social Media Use Scale—were used in this study. The social media use questionnaire was developed by Alison Tuck and Renee Thompson. There are 17 items that tell us how much participants use social media like Facebook, Instagram, etc, for the past week (7 days). It is a Likert Scale. There are 9 responses that the participants have to choose from. In this scale, we sum the responses. There is no reverse scoring. The interpersonal relationship questionnaire was developed by Glenn M. Callaghan. 31 items measure interpersonal intimacy, disagreement, connection, conflict, emotional experience and expressing emotions. In conflict aversion, all items have reverse scoring and in emotional experience, 1, 3, and 5 items have reverse scoring. There are 6 respondents that the participants have to choose from. It is a Likert Scale, and we sum the responses. After collecting all the data from the required sample, then encoded, entered into the computer and processed using Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was examined using SPSS. In this study, Pearson's r correlation coefficient and Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation) were used.

Result

In current research, data were processed and analyzed through SPSS software. After entering the data into SPSS, reverse scoring was applied. After that data was computed then we started further analysis. There are two variables in this study: social media use and interpersonal relationships.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of participants (N=300)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage %
Age		
18-22	118	62.6%
22-25	112	37.3%
Education		
BS	235	78.3%

MS	65	21.6%
Marital status		
Single	283	94.3%
Married	17	23.6%

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of participants as collected from university students. The age distribution shows that 188 students were between 18–22 years old, and in the range 22-25, there are 112 students. The frequency of education of participants is shown in this table, as the students doing the BS program were 235, and the MS program was 65. "Marital status shows that 283 students were single and 17 were married.

Table 2 correlation:

Variable	Mean	SD	IR	SM
Interpersonal Relationship	110.5	13.6	1	
Social media	54.7	22.0	.140*	1

The connection is significant at the two-tailed 0.05 level.

There is a weak positive correlation between interpersonal relationships and social media usage ($r = 0.140$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that as social media usage increases, interpersonal relationships also tend to increase, but the relationship is not very strong. This shows that although social media use and interpersonal relationships have a statistically significant relationship, the practical significance of this relationship may be limited. According to the weak correlation, social media use can only explain a small portion of the variation in interpersonal relationships, and other factors, such as face-to-face interaction and shared activities, are likely to have a greater impact on the quality of interpersonal relationships among university students.

Discussion

This result shows that as social media use increases, interpersonal relationships also tend to increase, although the relationship is weak. Social media platforms can promote communication, connection, and relationship-building. The findings suggest that students can benefit from moderate social media use while emphasizing in-person relationships and

interactions. Students may cultivate deeper, more meaningful interactions by finding a balance between their online and offline relationships. [P Chandrasena \(2022\)](#) described that Students often misuse social media in ways that can harm themselves and others. This may lead to the dissemination of offensive material, including graphic images or messages, which may cause embarrassment, harm to one's reputation, or even legal problems. It is important to teach students how to use social media responsibly. They can better balance their relationships and their education as a result ([V Van-Tuan 2021](#)). Social media has little to no impact on young people's general quality of life, but it has a big impact on their interpersonal connections. These findings demonstrate the intricate relationship between young adults' social media usage and other aspects of their lives, indicating that while social media use can influence interpersonal connections, it may not necessarily be the factor that determines an individual's overall sense of well-being ([N Nagar & V. Yadava, 2024](#)). Cross-cultural research shows that social media reshapes interpersonal bonds differently in diverse educational contexts, highlighting the importance of cultural sensitivity in interpreting results ([Lee, S., & Kim, J., 2023](#)). Findings reveal gender-based variations in how South Asian female students use social media to maintain peer connectedness, directly supporting the focus of this study ([Rahman, F., & Alvi, M., 2024](#)). Recent scholarship emphasizes that social media influences not only peer relations but also students' overall mental well-being, requiring careful policy responses ([Khan, R., 2024](#)). Emerging evidence suggests that social media fatigue leads to academic disengagement, demonstrating the long-term risks of unregulated usage ([Ahmed, S., & Zhou, X., 2025](#)).

Limitations

1. The sample size was not sufficient.
2. This study was limited to female students from a single university, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings.

3. The research was constrained by limited time.

Future directions

1. Collect data from multiple universities and colleges to enhance generalizability.
2. Include both male and female participants to provide a more comprehensive understanding.
3. Conduct the study with a larger sample size to increase validity.

Conclusion

The findings of this study can inform strategies to promote healthy social media use and strong interpersonal relationships among university students. Counsellors may offer direction and help to students who are having problems with social media, while universities can create policies and initiatives that promote social media usage in a responsible manner. The possible benefits and drawbacks of social media use may also help parents and guardians set boundaries and provide their children with wise advice. Together, parents, counsellors, and universities can help students navigate social media and develop meaningful connections.

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