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Social Media Usage and Social Isolation Among Pakistani Youth: A Survey-Based Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, social media plays a key role in how individuals live day to day - shaping how young people connect, build bonds, even pass their time. Despite bringing people together despite the distances, many researches prove that overusing mediated interaction might be connected with experiencing loneliness. In this paper, the connection between the use of social media and social isolation among youth at the University of Sargodha will be analyzed. A quantitative methodology with the use of survey was utilized, and the Uses and Gratifications Framework, media dependency theory, as well as Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) were employed to interpret the processes of perceiving relational cues among young users. Data from 200 participants aged 15-30 were collected with the help of Likert scale survey distributed by snowball sampling. The findings revealed a moderate, but positive correlation between social media usage and social isolation showing the presence of a statistically significant connection.

Introduction

This is age of electronics, 20th century bring great inventions like public use of internet, a lot of social platforms like Facebook, Instagram, twitter

and Snapchat are popular if talking about younger generation. Youngsters are almost addict of social media of being up to date and status conscious to follow trends and fashion this also create complex and depression of being wealthy to buy luxuries.



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Now these days' people are totally Dependent on Social Media to upgrading their status, manage their living patterns and also getting in touch who are living across the sea. Social Media also introduced a new market place for business also providing great exposure to outer world. Social networking is a great innovation but also there is some hazards that provides negative side as well (Anderson & McCullough, 2013).

“Social media is an important way to stay in touch with friends or connect with new ones, but there is a down side too”. Spending too much time on social media may cause negative effects on audience (Zavaleta, Samuel & Mills 2017). The current study will be focusing primarily on the harms of social media in terms of socially isolating youth., it is important to recognize that there are numerous positive aspects associated with social media usage. As it has the quality to fulfill almost all kinds of needs of audience whether they are entertainment related, information, social interaction. This quality of social media increase dependency of audience on the media and lead them towards socially isolated behavior. This may lead to social isolation and have great impact on the overall structure and pattern of society (Burrow & Rainone, 2017). The purpose of the study is to investigate that whether the use of social media by Pakistani youth is leading them towards social isolation. How much time they spend with their family, friends or loved ones and how much time they spend on surfing internet and using social media sites.

Now, the claim is not that social media lead youth to rapidly start isolating themselves. Researcher wants to explaore that social media feasibly has the effect of making isolation tendencies worse.

In addition, we have been hearing a lot about social isolation & “isolation outbreak” in the past few years, as research stated both its cause and effects. Mainy reasons behind this pshycological/ societal issue, but one main reason that cause is our addiction on screens, and mainly on social media. “A new study of Pittsburgh and west virginia university finds that social media use or at least negative experience on social media draw a connection between tenderness of social isolation”. And this study was almost same. The team questioned undergraduates about their social media use, the types of involvement they had with

it and their intellectual health in this study of course, feelings of social isolation were of interest. Two variables were associated in a dose-dependent way: for every 10% rise in harmful experience on social media, there was a 13% upturn in social isolation. For progressive exposure, there was no such connection. Yet again the authors propose that it's a two-way path negative social media connections may make one more likely to isolate, and that existing feelings of isolation could also lead a person to use social media more and/or perceive more negative experience on it.

1.1 Can Social Media Fuel Isolation in Young Generation?

The purpose of raising this question is not that social media causes teens suddenly start isolating themselves. Researcher wants to explore that SM possibly has effect of making isolation tendencies worse.

Young adults are not very social due to social media heavy usage was associated with feelings of social isolation a study finds but results are surprising Primark et al, 2019).

Its social media, so aren't people going to be more social and connected “Brain Primack and his previous research on “connecting social media use and depression” in youngsters wasn't Terribly surprising these new results seemed counterintuitive”. The issue is that while having in-person social relationships is highly linked to wellbeing, it's unclear what occurs when those ties take place digitally. 1787 U.S. adults between the ages of 19 and 32 were polled by Primack and his colleagues regarding their use of social media outside of work. This study also urges “social isolation by asking question” such as how frequently they experienced exclusion.? (in this type of surveys researchers ask questions that how much they spend time through this they find out results), This study cannot determine the exact cause. It's possible that individuals use social media heavily when they feel socially isolated in an effort to feel less lonely and put voluntarily isolating themselves.

1.2 Relationship between Social Media and Social Isolation.

There are several points that defines isolation but we add one more thing to explain in depth is

loneliness. Loneliness is that when you are surrounding with people but feeling absent among them, on the other hand isolation is, having limited social connections and few interactions with these people (Holt- lunstad et al. 2015; Holwerda et al., 2014). Peplau and Perlman (1982) Social isolation is defined as the absence of contact within one's social network as well as the avoidance or withdrawal from particular social circumstances, both of which lead to a lack of social contacts. Lack of social contacts they haven't get any social support so that social isolation is objective measure. So contacts are increased due to SM but decreased support from established significant contacts, also some studies suggested that due heavy usage of social media caused in less domestic communication also in additional commotion as well. Individual that feel increasing level of isolation tend to devote more time on social media (Kim, LARose and Peng, 2009). Its means that one who feel more confident to maintain relationship on social media rather than real life.

Excessive use of SM will lead to health issues change in behavior, some of addict to smoking etc. On the other hand, SM also used to cure isolation among senior citizens by guiding them establish new relationships (Khosravi, Rezvani & wiewivera, 2016). Gotten, Anderson and McCullogh 2013) suggested SM to certain grown-ups by helping them to create new relationships to passage the gap produced by their social isolation. Totally cut off from SM haven't good outcome it will leads to vvoluntary social isolation (Seifert & Schelling 2108).

Due to contradictory literature correlated to age effects on social isolation and SM use, this study may have some aims. Aim of the study will examine the association of SM role played in promotion of social isolation among youngsters also examine whether age is substantial predictor of these results as well their education and activities.

Literature Review

The speed of the Internet has meaningfully impacted how people receive the information. It combines the speed of transmission with the inside-out inclusion of papers to provide the ideal hub for news and weather information. Indeed, despite the media power of the internet, email is

still the most popular way to use the internet. Many people who use the Internet at work, school, and home just use it to send and receive mail. Not just friends and coworkers receive email. On the internet, you may find email addresses everywhere you look. This has made communication between outsiders easier than ever before. One of the more well-known activities on the Internet is talking because users can have international conversations with anyone. Presentation of virtual entertainment organizing locales has worked with correspondence. These are websites where users can create a profile and connect it to others to create a clear personal network.

Various advantages and worldwide utilization of social media(SM) have made it an integral part of the lives of the people groups. The effect of social media in an exaggerated view of individuals and dispersing data and erroneous information regarding COVID-19 pandemic is important. WhatsApp (WA), Facebook (FB), Twitter (TW), and Instagram (Ing) are the most famously and generally utilized SM stages around the world. SM is a significant platform and a wellspring of opportune data about critical issues and wellbeing perils, yet it isn't dependable all of the time. The data given by numerous SM stages is conniving and it is difficult to separate between the bits of gossip and realities (Rizwan et al., 2021). The psychological wellness sufferings because of the COVID-19 are generally noticed. Alarm, stress, frailty, and stress have emitted because of the boundless lockdown. Due to the COVID-19, people in Pakistan have been left alone at home, and this self-disconnection has put them under pressure both physically and mentally. Moreover, many people are living in appalling conditions and have lost their jobs. The majority of people in Pakistan are terrified as a result of the pandemic, and clinical staff now has more duty (Juszczyk, 2015).

Covid illness 2019 pandemic has made a ton of bedlam and shifted the vast majority of the economies of the nations around the world. Also, the apprehension about the COVID-19 is prompting self-destruction seen in India and Pakistan. Normally, the psychological well-being emergency in Pakistan will turn into an extreme issue that continues even after the COVID-19. Accordingly, it is basic to take on compelling

endeavours to address problems with mental health. Mental difficulties and stress have been connected to common mental issues like tension and gloom in the various districts of the world. The record of Pakistan in psychological well-being isn't remarkable, while more than 50 million individuals are assessed to be impacted by Mental health messes. They are dealt with by just 500 specialists with a patient-to-therapist proportion of 1 to 100,000. Moreover, nobody behaving patiently, everybody is in hurry and hyper due to spending time on social media. Accessive use of social media affects behavior and people are bound to their rooms, no social gatherings, no bound with parents, no moral values because of social media parenting. There is cause and effect relationship in our topic with problem and various theories are correlate with this in deferent aspects many researchers have done marvelous work. Here we are discussing and exploring literature in this field under different section like how social media work positively and negatively in deferent sections on our youth. In which sectors/areas social media is crucial to get updated and in touch with outer world.

2.2 Social Isolation, Loneliness and Health among Youth

Recent researchers have continued to investigate social media issues and "Risky Internet Use" and inferred that they are linked to a few mental factors, such as sadness, social isolation, alexithymia (described as the inability of the mind to manage emotions, which is accompanied by a diminished capacity to recognize and convey emotions), and powerlessness (Youssef et al., 2020). The expression "Social media Use" was familiar by a few innovators to portray social media or PC compulsion or neurotic consumption of the social media. It is mainly defined by the person's inability to regulate their use of social media. Notwithstanding, the idea of "social media Internet Use" has evolved over the course of recent years. Early Internet users would browse static pages to analyse facts or perhaps even send messages. The Internet has now evolved into a thread that displays the texture of our lives thanks to the emergence of social media platforms. Customers spend as much time online as they do offline and use it to communicate with people from all over the world. According to Davis et al. using a mental social model to focus on the

unhelpful perceptions of problematic internet use. In his structure, the researcher has discussed a client's increased helplessness in the face of psychosocial problems and psychopathological disorders like despair, social discomfort, material dependency, and depression as a result of problematic internet use.

2.8 Increased Use of Smartphones and Social Media Networking

Past studies have proven that the spending over a few hours out of each week utilizing electronic media is associated adversely with self-announced bliss, life fulfilment and self-assurance, though time spent on onscreen exercises (interpersonal interactions, physical activity, print media, academic work, stern authorities, and employment) strongly correlated with mental health, among adolescents (Kim & Kim, 2021). Other observational examinations have connected spending over 2 hours every day on interpersonal interaction locales and individual electronic gadgets with high paces of sociality and burdensome side effects among young adult young ladies, even though adolescents who supported elevated degrees of up close and personal mingling were usually safeguarded against the pessimistic results of a lot of time online.

Youth do progressively connect online as opposed to facing to face, and cell phones can meddle even with up close and personal communications through the thing has been named "thumbing": taking care of one's telephone when within the sight of others (Abi-Jaoude et al., 2020). A new experimental field concentrating on utilizing experience testing in 304 members showed that even the simple presence of telephones on a table caused members who were arbitrarily appointed to that condition to feel more occupied and have lower satisfaction during social cooperation contrasted with the individuals who were randomized with putting their telephone away. Phone use was additionally found to anticipate interruption, which thus anticipated more prominent weariness and more terrible by and large mood.

Theoretical Framework

A theory is a commonly recognized natural law or explanation. A theory is the most trustworthy type

of knowledge in science. It is logically expressed and supported by strong evidence. The link between theory and research is complex. Theories create hypotheses that can be validated or rejected through study, with the outcomes potentially strengthening the theory. Research findings may also raise questions on a hypothesis, leading to its rejection or revision.

SIPT (Social Information Processing Theory)

Social information processing theory provides insight into the methods used to process information and how it is disseminated, perceived by the audience and how this information changes the perception of the audience. Social information processing theory explains how individuals use computer-mediated communication to develop interpersonal impressions and to advance relational communication over time online. Even if the SIPT does not overtly assume that cultural factors are important elements of any Computer mediated Communication (CMC) interaction, it is crucial to understand. The power of SIPT is to promote communicative behavior between individuals, which is valued by the culture of another. Social information processing therefore has the potential to support the development of confidence amongst virtual team members, the establishment of cohesion and the emphasis on cross-communication within international working groups. The theory focuses on how

communicators adapt to the absence of nonverbal signals when using a medium that is normally restricted to textual symbols. In this study, SIPT helps us to comprehend how information is amplified through multiple media outlets and how it affects young people's perceptions in Pakistan. It also helps to understand the Structure and patterns of fake news networks because for the solving of any problem we must first understand the structure then solve the problem. So by using theory we can clearly understand the structure of social media information its amplification and finally its effect on the perception and attitude development of youth in Pakistan.

Research Methodology

The study utilizes a quantitative approach, incorporating correlation analysis. Random sampling approach is used to gather data at a specific point in time. The study targets the respondents majorly the youth who used the social media. Data is collected by the questionnaire distribution to the youth of university students majorly. More than two hundred respondent's participation this study.

Data Analysis

Below is the Table (1) which shows the qualification of the respondents. Graduates and the post graduate's students participate in this study.

Table 1: Qualification and Frequency of Social Media Use

Qualification	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Total
Graduate	0	4	86	90
Postgraduate	4	13	93	110
Total	4	17	179	200

Table 2 shows average daily usage duration over the preceding seven days. The largest group, 109 of 200 respondents (54.5 percent), reported using social media for five to seven hours per day, and a further 82 respondents (41 percent) reported three

to five hours daily. Only 9 respondents in total (4.5 percent) reported less than three hours of daily use. This pattern was most pronounced among the 21-25 and 26-30 age groups, who together accounted for the bulk of high-intensity (5-7 hour) users.

Table 2: *Age and Average Daily Social Media Usage (Past 7 Days)*

Age	<1 hr	1-3 hrs	3-5 hrs	5-7 hrs	Total
16-20	1	0	8	24	33
21-25	0	2	28	56	86
26-30	1	5	43	24	73
Above 30	0	0	3	5	8
Total	2	7	82	109	200

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation between social media usage intensity and self-reported social isolation scores. The analysis returned a correlation coefficient of .144, significant at the .041 level (two-tailed), indicating a statistically significant but weak positive relationship: as

social media usage increases, self-reported isolation increases only slightly. Given that the coefficient explains roughly 2 percent of the variance in isolation scores, the relationship, while real, is modest and should not be interpreted as evidence that social media use is a primary driver of isolation among the surveyed population.

Table 3: *Correlation Between Social Media Usage and Social Isolation*

		Isolation	Social Media Usage
Isolation	Pearson Correlation	1	.144
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.041
	N	200	200
Social Media Usage	Pearson Correlation	.144	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	
	N	200	200

Discussion

Most people in the study logged on every day, especially younger users regardless of schooling level. Five to seven hours each day saw more than fifty percent online, pointing to deep integration into routine life. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat now form part of everyday habits for many young individuals, earlier studies also suggest (Perrin, 2015). Yet even with frequent access, time spent did not strongly link to feelings of being alone - only a slight connection appeared ($r = .144$). Because of this small statistical tie, saying too much screen

time causes loneliness may miss key nuances. Heavy engagement does not clearly lead to emotional separation, at least based on personal reports.

Peering at Social Information Processing Theory, the faint link makes sense if we see isolation not as tied to how long someone uses a site, but to how rich and mutual their exchanges are. According to SIPT, endlessly skimming feeds or sending shallow messages - even many times over - is unlikely to build bonds like back-and-forth dialogue does, regardless of total hours online. That difference might clarify why heavier use barely predicts loneliness: it's not how much

people engage, but the nature of that engagement, something the current dataset doesn't let us confirm.

This limitation matters. Given that the original survey focused on overall usage and user intent instead of exchange depth or mutual interaction online, the results fall short of proving the SIPT explanation holds true; they merely indicate it might explain why frequent use does not clearly link to loneliness. Other studies show similar trends: In work by Primack et al. (2019), those under thirty spending over two hours each day on sites such as Instagram, Facebook, or Snapchat were more likely to report feelings of disconnection compared to occasional users - yet the authors pointed out causality remains unclear, because people already experiencing isolation might seek out digital spaces for belonging, rather than screen time creating the sense of being alone.

Looking at everything, social media's role in isolating young people in Pakistan seems more like one piece of a larger puzzle instead of the main driver. The impact changes noticeably based

on why someone uses these platforms and how they interact through them - details current data hints at but doesn't fully show

Conclusion

This Research study highlight the Role of social media promoting social isolation among youngsters, despite these limitations, it is worth noting that higher Social Media Usage was strongly and independently associated with higher social isolation in a representative sample of Sargodha University students. Positive Social Media experiences do not correlate with lesser social isolation, while negative Social Media practices correlate with greater social isolation. These findings support the concept of negativity bias, which states that humans tend to give more weight to negative entities than positive ones. Our results are positive so social media has great role in promoting social isolation but it totally depends on its use. However, its negative effects cannot be ignored. The findings thus supported the concept that social media is responsible for making people more isolated.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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