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**EXPLORING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF FACEBOOK
USAGE AMONG PAKISTANI YOUTH**

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of social media applications, such as Facebook, has become enormously popular and accessible to Pakistan's youth. The popularity of Facebook as a social media application among young people has raised concerns about its impact on their overall psychological health. Using social media increases the risk of multiple psychological effects that are associated with mental health, particularly among young people. This research explored the psychological effects of the Facebook application among University students, by using the Uses and Gratification theory. This study used a survey approach to examine the psychological effects of the Facebook social media application on university students. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample of 400 respondents, with male and female participants represented equally. Findings reveal that 100% of students use smartphones for social media daily, with 78% of students spending over three hours daily. According to the analysis, more than 65% of respondents use smartphones for activities like calling, chatting, finding information, and entertainment. According to an exclusive data analysis, Facebook is found to contribute to various types of psychological issues in youth, with 45.3% reporting stress, 40% anxiety, and 42.3% self-harm tendencies. Over 45% of students believe Facebook negatively affects youth mental health, causing loneliness, stress,

depression, and anxiety. It is concluded that Facebook is one of the most popular applications among university students and has significant psychological effects like loneliness, stress, depression, and anxiety.

Keywords: Social Media, Youth, Facebook, Purpose, Psychological effects, Uses and Gratification

Introduction

Social media has played a tremendous role in our lives and daily routines, completely transforming how we interact, spread news, and even view the world around us. Facebook has one of the most massive user bases, so its prevalence causes serious damage to the mental health of its users. In this research, we explore the emotional well-being of Pakistani Youth and build a better understanding on the grounds how Facebook affects the mental health, behavior, and social interaction of young people.

When Facebook was established back in 2004, it stood as the mainstay and a large number of users from all over the world joined its platform in no time. Facebook has been quite popular in Pakistan, a platform not only used as a social and entertainment medium but to keep one updated with current scenarios. Despite its many advantages, Facebook can potentially cause harm to those who are more prone to its ill effects, especially the youth, which is why their risks should not be underestimated. Creating a web-based and mobile interactive environment that allows people to discuss, share, and modify user-generated content Has been identified as the core feature of social media (Hermkens, 2011). The heavy use of social media and smartphones comes at a cost: according to a study of young users, the more time spent on the Internet and with their mobile phones, the dumber they are (Kuznekoff and Titsworth 2013). TikTok is a primary entertainment app on social media. It is user-friendly and provides an opportunity to identify individual capabilities and competencies of users (Joseph, 2019). Besides entertainment, TikTok has also offered people the creative stage to showcase their talent and earn money. Facebook has become part and parcel of every other human life. Users from different age groups utilize this platform for communication, information, and entertainment.

Research Rationale:

In the world of social applications, Facebook comes at the top of the list. In the present times of the digital age, the use of social media has risen exponentially among young people. Amid the heap of social media applications, Facebook turned into the most conspicuous for people. Given the ubiquity of Facebook and

concerns about its impact on young people's well-being and mental health, it is important to understand mechanisms that underlie the social networking site used by youth. The aim of this research is to explore how Facebook is being used amongst young people and the subsequent psychological impact, providing insight into the context of Facebook use in the domain of social media research.

Problem Statement

Facebook's widespread use among young people as a social media platform has sparked worries about how it may affect their mental health. Even with Facebook's immense popularity, there is still a lack of knowledge about how young people use it, why they use it, and any possible psychological effects it might have. The purpose of this study is to close this gap by examining how youth use Facebook and its goals as well as its psychological effects.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions are formulated:

1. How do Pakistani youth use Facebook as a social media platform?
2. What are the primary purposes of Facebook usage among Pakistani youth?
3. What are the psychological effects of Facebook usage on Pakistani youth?

Theoretical Framework

Social Media Integration Theory Model (SMIT)

The Social Media Integration Theory Model seems to be a very important theory in the study of media that is most applied in current research. In this model, social media like Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Chaton formed the hub of interactive social media that has been the focus of this theory. According to SMIT, all those applications have revolutionized the conventional styles of communication, making them into some modern forms of interpersonal communication.

Transformation of Communication; SMIT apparently postulates that the platform of social media has sufficiently and dramatically changed the landscape of communication. Traditional media mainly acted as a one-way avenue in which information was supposed to flow from the sender to the receiver with, in many cases, little interaction. Social media allows for two-way information exchange, a platform in which people can interact, share, and actively join conversations. This shift is from just being an information consumer to becoming an active dialoguer.

Paradigm Shift in Communication; The theory postulates that this is far from just an evolution but, rather, a paradigm shift in the practice of communication. This intrinsic interactivity of social media has formed a new dynamic where users are at once consumers and creators of content. This dual role confirms the richness of interpersonal communication in a more immediate, personalized, and engaging way. For SMIT, what this paradigm shift means is a shift from the hierarchical dissemination of information to democratic and participative dissimulation.

Research and Social Implications

For those studying and acting out the role of media and communication, there is an instant need to understand SMIT. It provides a fundamental structure through which analyses of the impact of social media on interactions within society and the flow of information can be conducted. Moreover, it points out the change in public discourse and the lead functions that social media have been playing toward the formulation of public opinion and conduct. In the ever-changing world of social media, the insight contributed by SMIT will always be integral to the quest for understanding complexities in modern-day communication. The Uses and Gratification Theory of communication, introduced by Katz and Blumler in the 1970s, posits that individuals use media to satisfy their various needs. This theory is particularly relevant to the current research study, as it explains why youth engage with social media platforms for entertainment and information purposes. According to this media effect theory, the motivations behind media consumption are directly linked to the fulfillment of personal desires and requirements.

Hypotheses of the Study

(H1): It is more likely that youth frequently use Facebook, in their routine life.

(H2): It is more likely that youth use Facebook primarily for entertainment purposes.

(H3): It is more likely that Facebook psychologically affects its users.

Significance of the Study

Social media is one of the strong tools of communication, meeting all the criteria to share ideas, thoughts, and feelings with your friends and family. It aids in uploading music, video, and audio without any restrictions. Among the different social media applications, Facebook is one of the most famous and well-known. People, particularly youths, use this application for various

purposes, including sharing audio and video content, which helps them showcase and develop their talents. Even though many research studies have been carried out about social media and their respective applications, not many have addressed the psychological impact of Facebook on the behavioral abilities of young people. The current research study aims to examine and explore the psychological impact of Facebook on the behavior of young individuals. The importance of this study, therefore, becomes especially conspicuous against its context and timing.

Literature Review

Literature is a way of getting information and guiding the researcher towards their research objectives, each milestone marking progress. Social media usage is a common activity and habit among individuals of all ages, including teenagers and adults. This study is on a crucial topic related to social media platforms like Facebook and its psychological impact on user behavior. A lot of studies have been done on the use and effects of social media and its applications on user behavior, but only a few have focused on the Facebook platform.

Studies by Davila et al. (2009) show a new kind of sadness tied to too much time on social media, starting in teens and younger kids. This often leads to typical sad feelings. Another research by Barnes (2006) points out the dangers of using social media. Young people often hop on these sites without really knowing how they work or the dangers of sharing too much about themselves. This can put their private life at risk.

A study by Joseph B. Bayer et al. (2020) shows that using social media a lot can make people pull away from their families, friends, and others. Neira and Barber in 2014 found that social media affects men and women differently, hurting women but helping men. Additionally, a study by Betul Kels et al. (2019) pointed out that young folks using social media a lot may face mental health problems, like stress, sadness, and worry. McCrae (2018) suggests that schools should start programs to teach young people how to deal with mental health issues from using social media.

In Canada, a study by Tsitsika et al. (2014) highlights the positive association between social media use and anxiety and depression, noting that social media use for more than two hours can lead to psychological problems. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2017) reported that 10% to 20% of children and young people worldwide suffer from mental illness, and more than 50% of these cases manifest between the ages of 14 and 18 (Kessler et al., 2007

Kim). -Cohen et al., 2003). According to Sampasa-Kanunga and Lewis (2015), adolescents who spend more than two hours per day on social media are more likely to develop psychological problems. Furthermore, another study conducted in different European countries supports these findings, showing a significant association between heavy social media use and increased levels of anxiety and depression (Tsitsika et al., 2014).

Three wonderful studies carried out globally have highlighted the dependency to social media and its psychological consequences on youngsters. A look at Thailand by way of Hanprathet et al. (2015) determined a correlation between addiction to Facebook and depression. Similarly, research carried out in China with the aid of Li et al. (2017) verified a statistically enormous dating between social media dependence and depression. These findings underscore the worldwide impact of social media addiction on the intellectual health of young people.

Research Methodology

Research Design

To fulfill the aims of this investigation and explore the proposed hypotheses, the survey method was employed in the form of a quantitative research method to explore the psychological effects of Facebook usage among Pakistani youth. The quantitative methodology allows for accurate validation, precise measurements, and statistical analysis of the results obtained.

Population

The population of this study is the students of NUML Islamabad both male and female was the population of this specific research study.

Sample and Sample Size

The sample size was 400 students, of NUML Islamabad. The researcher distributed questionnaires to 400 students on campus, A purposive sampling technique is used in this specific research work to collect data. For this procedure a questionnaire was distributed to male and female students equally in quantity with the help of the facilitator also requested to each respondent to fill and return within a time period.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 Demographic Characteristic of the respondents

CATEGORIE S	VALUES	RESPONSES	%AGE	CF%
Gender				

	Male	200	50	200
	Female	200	50	400
Discipline				
	Science	152	38	152
	Social Science	248	62	400
Age (Years)				
	18 to less than 20	84	21	84
	20 to less than 22	143	35.8	227
	22 to less than 24	115	28.8	342
	More than 24	58	14.5	400

Table 1 results show that 62% of the respondents study social sciences and 38% study scientific disciplines. In terms of age, the result shows that more than 35% of the respondents are between 20 and 22 years of age, followed by more than 28% from 22 to 24. Another 21% of the respondents are between 18 and up to 20, and 14% are over 24 years of age.

Table 2 Frequency of Using Facebook

CATEGORIES	VALUES	RESPONSES	%AGE	CF%
Facebook	don't know	122	30.5	122
	rarely	129	32.3	251
	frequently	95	23.8	346
	very frequently	54	13.5	400
Facebook Using Time	night	212	53	212
	evening	112	28	324
	afternoon	57	14.3	381
	morning	19	4.8	19
Facebook Purpose	any others	103	25.8	103
	information	33	8.3	136
	education	38	9.5	174
	entertainment	226	56.5	400

Table 2 provides details of the frequency, preferred time of day, and main purposes of Facebook use among Pakistani youth. In terms of frequency, over 32% respondent reply that they rarely use Facebook. More than 30% of respondents responded that they did not know how often they used the platform. More than 23% replied that they use Facebook frequently, and more than 13% said they use it very frequently. This means that although a large proportion of respondents do not use Facebook frequently or are

unsure about using it, a large number interact with the platform frequently regarding the preferred time of day to use Facebook, more than 53% of the respondents preferred to use Facebook at night. Another 28% are more active on Facebook in the evening. More than 14% of people use Facebook during the day, and about 4.8% prefer to use Facebook in the morning. This distribution indicates a preference for use in the evening and at night, which may be related to the availability and daily activities of the respondents.

In terms of the purpose of using Facebook, more than 56% of the respondents use Facebook primarily for entertainment. Another 25.8% use Facebook for a variety of other unspecified purposes. More than 9% of respondents use Facebook for educational purposes, while 8.3% use it primarily for information gathering. This indicates that the main reason for using Facebook among the respondents is entertainment, followed by other unspecified purposes, education and information

Table 3 Purpose of Using Facebook

CATEGORIES	VALUES	RESPONSES	%AGE	CF%
Uploading Videos				
	rarely	294	73.5	294
	frequently	80	20	374
	very frequently	26	6.5	400
Uploading Audios				
	rarely	310	77.5	310
	frequently	58	14.5	368
	very frequently	32	8	400
Uploading Pictures				
	rarely	291	72.7	291
	frequently	81	20.3	272
	very frequently	28	7	400
Live Videos				
	rarely	299	74.7	299
	frequently	66	16.5	365
	very frequently	35	8.8	400

Table 3 expressed the usage patterns of the Facebook social media application users for uploading various types of content. There were 73% of the respondents who rarely used Facebook to upload videos and showed a low level of engagement in the creation of video content among the majority. On the other hand, 20% of the survey participants frequently use Facebook for video uploading, and more than 6% do this very frequently, demonstrating a smaller but still noteworthy group of active video content creators. It also shows that, over 77% of the respondents rarely upload audio content on Facebook. This could imply that very few, compared to video uploads, are uploading audio. However, frequently and very frequently responses that upload audio were more than 14% and 8%, respectively, indicating that there is a large minority through which the site gets its audio uploads. In the case of picture uploads, over 72 percent never or rarely upload pictures through Facebook. At the same time, more than 20 percent frequently upload pictures, and around 7 percent very frequently do so by sharing visual content. In a way, what this data suggests is that while most are not actively sharing pictures, there is a sizeable proportion of users who are very prolific in sharing visual media on Facebook. Most of the respondents, according to the summary responses shown in Table 3, upload videos, audio, or pictures on Facebook. However, there are visible subgroups of the user base within which these activities are quite frequent or very frequent, thus revealing variable usage patterns and relativizing the question of the degree of engagement with these types of media content of the platform.

Table 4 Psychological Effects of Facebook Social Media Application

Stress

Response	Count	Percentage	CF%
Strongly Disagree	45	11.3%	45
Disagree	83	20.8%	128
To Some Extent	91	22.8%	219
Agree	106	26.5%	325
Strongly Agree	75	18.8%	400

Loneliness

Response	Count	Percentage	CF%
Strongly Disagree	39	9.8%	39
Disagree	98	24.5%	137
To Some Extent	83	20.8%	220
Agree	108	27%	328
Strongly Agree	72	18%	400

Anxiety

Response	Count	Percentage	CF %
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Strongly Disagree	34	8.5%	34
Disagree	117	29.3%	151
To Some Extent	88	22%	239
Agree	100	25%	339
Strongly Agree	61	15.3%	400

Self-Harm

Response	Count	Percentage	CF %
Strongly Disagree	33	8.3%	34
Disagree	110	27.5%	143
To Some Extent	88	22%	231
Agree	86	21.5%	317
Strongly Agree	83	20.8%	400

Total Respondents: 400

According to the results in terms of stress, the results show that 26.5% agree that Facebook contributes to their stress levels, while 22.8% agree to some extent. This means that almost half of the respondents recognize some form of stress associated with using Facebook. Meanwhile, 20.8% disagree, indicating that a large proportion of users are not stressed by the platform. Additionally, 18.8% strongly agreed that Facebook causes stress, reinforcing the idea that the platform can be very stressful for some users. In contrast, 11.3% strongly disagree, reflecting a minority who feel that Facebook does not affect them in terms of stress.

Discussion

The results of this research demonstrate a number of key observations regarding the psychological implications of Facebook use in Pakistani youth.

Entertainment vs. Mental Health

Although Facebook is largely employed for fun (56.5%), excessive use of it is associated with serious psychological conditions like stress (45.3%), anxiety (40.3%), and loneliness (45%). Interestingly, 53% of the students utilized Facebook during night time, potentially interfering with sleep and worsening mental health issues. This is in line with international research that underscores the negative consequences of excessive use of social media on sleep quality and emotional well-being (Tsitsika et al., 2014; Hanprathet et al., 2015).

Content Creation and Psychological Influence

There is a small but serious subset of students who are content creators, and 20% of them routinely post videos, while 14.5% post audio. This active action can cause high pressure to succeed and obtain constant validation, ultimately leading to pressure and

stress and anxiety. Alternatively, the greatest number of students (73.5% hardly ever post videos) are receivers, which will cause feelings of inadequacy or FOMO. This dualism of functions—consumer and producer—highlights the intricacy of the psychological effect of social media as described by the Social Media Integration Theory Model (SMIT).

Gender and Discipline Differences

While this study did not explicitly analyze gender or discipline-based differences, future research could explore whether psychological effects vary across these demographics. For instance, studies have shown that women are more likely to experience negative psychological effects from social media (Neira & Barber, 2014), and similar trends may exist among Pakistani youth.

Cultural Context

In Pakistan, where family and social approval are much respected, Facebook's effects on mental health and self-esteem could be more significant. The need to show the "perfect" life on Facebook can further enhance feelings of inadequacy, especially in already struggling young people, who may be dealing with social pressures and academic stress.

Comparison with Global Studies

These findings are in accordance with international literature, including Thai (Hanprathet et al., 2015) and Chinese research (Li et al., 2017), which establish a strong correlation between social media exposure and psychological ailments like depression and anxiety. Of particular concern, though, is the high percentage of participants claiming self-harm behavior (42.3%) and the importance of further researching this. It emphasizes the immediate need for specifically targeted mental health interventions in Pakistan.

Loneliness Regarding loneliness, 27% agreed that Facebook makes them feel lonely, while 20.8% somewhat agreed. This means that nearly half of users believe that Facebook contributes to their sense of isolation. However, 24.5% disagree, suggesting that Facebook does not increase feelings of loneliness for a large number of users. Additionally, 18% strongly agree that Facebook creates a sense of loneliness, while 9.8% strongly disagree, pointing to differences in users' experiences of loneliness and social media use

Anxiety

Anxiety-related responses show that 29.3% of respondents disagreed that Facebook causes anxiety, the highest percentage of disagreement among all psychological topics examined but 25% agreed that Facebook causes anxiety and 22% agreed to some extent, meaning that almost half of them Facebook uses In to add that they care about a connection, 15.3% strongly agreed that Facebook causes anxiety, while 8.5 % did not agree at all. This means that although many users experience anxiety due to Facebook, a large proportion experience anxiety.

Self-Harm

In terms of suicide, the survey shows that 27.5% disagree that Facebook is responsible for self-harm, which is a large proportion of respondents but 22% agree to some extent and 21.5% totally agree, which shows that nearly half of Facebook use and suicide You see the connection. Additionally, 20.8% strongly agreed that Facebook can lead to self-harm, indicating that users are highly concerned. Meanwhile, 8.3% strongly disagree, suggesting that Facebook doesn't have this negative effect for a subset of users. These findings highlight the diverse experiences and perceptions of Facebook users regarding its psychological impact. The data underscores that while a substantial number of users experience negative psychological effects such as stress, loneliness, anxiety, and self-harm, there is also a significant portion who do not perceive these issues. This diversity in user experiences points to the complexity of social media's impact on mental health, influenced by various factors such as individual differences, usage patterns, and personal circumstances.

Conclusion

Data analysis shows that more than 35% of participants are aged 20 to 22 subject to data tabulation. 37% of those surveyed responded they use Facebook a lot, most of them use it at night (53%). 56% of those surveyed also use Facebook for fun. 73.5% of those polled don't post videos on Facebook. 77.5% of respondents said they rarely upload audio and 72% rarely upload photos on the site. 45.3% of people think that Facebook makes them stressed. 33% don't think Facebook is lonely, but over 40% think it is anxiety. 42.3% of those surveyed also admit that Facebook can cause self-harm. students use their smartphones at different times of the day and night. This confirms the initial hypothesis that smartphones are more likely to be used frequently by students in their everyday lives. Journalists are more likely to use Facebook for entertainment, which supports our second hypothesis.

Facebook has a lot of psychological effects on users, loneliness, anxiety, and stress. Third, facebook has a bigger impact on its users, as indicated by more than 45% of students.

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