Full Length Research Paper

Deciphering the social costs of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) for university students

Ishfaq Ahmed* and Tehmina Fiaz Qazi

Hailey College of Commerce, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

This study describes the impact of social networking sites (SNSs) on the studying habits of students; as such, multistage sampling technique was used for data collection. In the first stage, six universities (four public and two private universities) were selected as samples on simple random sampling basis, from which 1000 students were selected as the sample of the study using cluster sampling technique. Four main clusters/faculties, that is, Management Sciences/Business, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Engineering, from each university were selected for data collection. It was decided that the minimum number of faculties present for data collection should be two to make a university eligible for selection as a sample. A questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. Out of the samples, 73% responded back. The fact explored is that despite the use of social networking sites, students can balance their time between studies and their usage of these sites, and can sustain good studying habits to maintain their academic performance. Hence, usage of these networking tools does not adversely affect the studying habits of the student users.

Key words: Internet, social networking sites (SNSs), students, academic performance, studying habits, Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Human life has seen enormous revolutions since its evolution. If a person belonging to the 18th century is given birth to again and he is given a task to see the changes that human life has seen, such a person would surely not accept that he is in the same world. The changes that were witnessed in the world since the last century have changed the world drastically. If we search for cornerstone for all the changes, the main source that everyone would agree upon is change in technology. Technology has changed the world rapidly from what it had been before. Out of various technological changes, the most valuable and dynamic is evolution of the internet. Internet has not only changed the professional life of humans, but has also changed the human personal and social life with the advent of the internet. Now, internet has become a part of one's life today. It has surrounded our lives so rapidly that it is beyond the imagination of human mind. No one can imagine that a network developed for U.S military in 1969 (Nethistory.info)

would become a tool to browse information, music, movies and games on almost every topic of the world that a man can even think of. It has become the best medium to explore the vast wealth of knowledge, used as an entertainment medium to link oneself with others in all parts of the world, and many other purposes that can be of one's imagination. Out of the most benefits one can get from the use of the internet, the most significant are that of communication benefits. Significance of the internet as a communication and connection tool is beyond description. Today, two-third of the world's internet population visit social networking or blogging sites, accounting for almost 10% of all internet time (Blog.nielsen.com), and 42% of internet users are registered on at least one social networking site (Socialadblog.com).

Social networking sites are a web provision where millions of people can join together to form an online community and hence, millions of communities form a social network to share knowledge, information and even culture (Nethistory.info). The idea of social networking originated in 1995 and gave birth to an early social network called Classmates. This was created to keep

---

*Corresponding author. E-mail: ishfakahmed@gmail.com.

students in connection even after leaving the school or class (Classmates.com). In 1997, another SNS "SixDegree.com" was released and then this development carried on with the emergence of other social networking sites, such as: Cyworld (2001), Friendster (2002), Skyblog (2002), Orkut (2004), Myspace (2005), Yahoo 360 (2005), Twitter (2006) and Facebook (2006) (Social networking sites and its positive effects).

Face book being the latest of all the sites that have emerged has been the biggest and most successful of all social networking sites. While going in the foundation stones of Facebook, early steps were taken in 2003 when Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, created a site called "Facemash" while he was a student at Harvard's School. When the school's administration noticed it, they immediately shut it down because of privacy breaching charge against him. After they dropped charges, Mark Zuckerberg recreated the "The Facebook" in February 2004. In 2005, it was named "Facebook" by dropping "The" from its URL (www.webhostingreport.com); and now Facebook is a social networking website with more than 500 million active users in July 2010. Numbers of its users are increasing tremendously over time, that is, 100 million users in August 26, 2008 and 500 million users in July 21, 2010. Moreover, it had 153% growth during the past year (Blog.Facebook.com).

While looking at the outcomes or returns these sites are offering, social networking sites have made the life a connection and network. Presently, we are linked with the whole world through one site, in that we can now share what we want to. At the moment, these sites have converted the world from a global village to a social global village or a social globe. We can communicate with others while sitting in our room and look for their networks. These sites have offered enormous benefits personally, professionally and socially as well. However, having only benefit for the society is an unrealistic thing to imagine no matter what. Same is the case with these networking sites. Along with offering countless benefits, these sites are also having some social evils as well. These sites are increasing the links and networks beyond the boundaries. Although these are positive, they have reduced the bonds of relations. The most important strength of users that is getting strength day by day is student class. These are the individuals who are always looking for new links and relations. This age group is increasing its time on the networks and relations, and they are deviating from their core aims of being good students. It has been observed that students spend more time on these sites on the cost of their studies and academic performance.

This tremendously increasing rate of users is an alarming situation for academicians, researchers, parents and students as well. Percentage of adult internet users (18 to 29 years) who use any SNS was 16% in September, 2005, while it was 86% in May, 2010 (www.marketingcharts.com). In Pakistan, like other parts of the world, users of these networking sites are increasing tremendously. Among the Asia's top ten internet countries, Pakistan ranked 7th with 17.5 million internet users (Internet users in Pakistan hit 17.5 million mark) and 50% internet users use online social networks (www.pewglobal.org). These students, like other students, spend much time on these sites rather than spending that time on their academic activities. Consequently, they might suffer academically or in their studying habits. So, this is the area that requires attention from researchers. This study is aimed to fill that gap. This research specifically targets the Pakistani students and targets the impact of using social networking sites and academic performance and studying habits of students. This study will be a value addition to the body of knowledge as it is an "unexplored area" in Pakistan. Therefore, exploring this would provide a profound insight on impacts of social networking sites in this regard.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The world has seen many changes due to rapid changes in technology. Out of the technological changes, evolution of the internet is the most significant of all. Internet usage has change the way the world interacts, acts and performs various tasks. It has changed human social, personal and professional life drastically. There has been a debate over incidences of abuse on the internet and it takes a more serious form when it is about teenagers. Even the alarming rate of such incidents is promoting regulations for internet use among teenagers. Students are of the most influenced class of all users of internet.

Students are considered as the social capital/asset for a nation, and the type of social capital a nation possesses is heavily dependent upon the youths of a nation (Pasek et al., 2006). Shah et al. (2001) found that informative use of internet has a positive relation with indicators of social capital, while recreational use has negative impact on social capital. Oskouei (2010) found that informative use of technology not only increases productivity of students, but also teachers who are building and reshaping the social asset/capital. Students are the social asset for the nation on the whole. Coleman and James (1988) defined social capital as the resources accumulated by using the direct relationships of people. Students contribute to prosperity of their institute and ultimately have an influence on the economy as well. It is practically constructive to measure all those activities that have positive or negative influence on the students and their academic performance. Tuckman (1975) while considering the determinants of student academic performance concluded that apparent demonstration of knowledge, understanding, skills, concepts, and ideas can be labelled as performance and their grades are the

outcomes of their performance. While considering the factors affecting the academic performance of students, internet and technology is considered as one of the important variables. As noted by Shah et al. (2001), positive use of internet has a positive effect on students, while recreational use has a negative impact. Similarly, Oskouei (2010) found that internet is not only beneficial for students but equally important for teachers to create and disseminate knowledge. So internet application can be of practical importance and can be used for educational institutions. The contemporary use of internet is seen in the shape of social networking sites (SNSs) that are widely and rapidly accepted through out the world.

The first official social networking web site was Classmates.com which was founded in 1995. This was created to keep students in connection even after leaving the school or class (classmates.com). In 1997, another SNS "SixDegree.com" was released and then this development carried on with the emergence of Cyworld (2001), Friendster (2002), Skyblog (2002), Orkut (2004), Myspace (2005), Yahoo 360 (2005), Twitter (2006) and Facebook (2006) (Social networking sites and its positive effects).

There are over 100 social networking sites available online with millions of users. Facebook has 500 million members; MySpace.com (130 million members); Linkedin.com (75 million members); Friendster.com (90 million members); Stumbleupon.com (over 10 million users); Orkut.com (membership of 100 million); Classmates.com (50 million members); Meetup.com (2 million members); Xanga.com (27 million members); Care2.com (Over 9 million members) and Ryze.com (500, 000 members).

Other social networking sites include: Bebo, BlackPlanet.com, Flickr.com, Reunion.com, aSmallWorld, Bebo, BlackPlanet.com, Blue Dot, Bolt, Broadcaster.com, Buzznet, CarDomain, Consumating, Couchsurfing, Cyworld, Dandelife, DeadJournal, DontStayIn, Doostang, Ecademy, eSPIN, Faceparty, Flickr, Flirtomatic, Fotki, Friends Reunited, Gaia Online, Geni.com, GoPets, Graduates.com, Grono.net, Hyves, imeem, Infield Parking, IRC-Galleria, iWiW, Joga, Bonito, Last.fm, LibraryThing, LiveJournal, LunarStorm, MEETin, MiGente.com, Mixi, MOG, Multiply, My Opera Community, myYearbook, Netlog, Nexopia, OUTeverywhere, Passado, Piczo, Playahead, ProfileHeaven, Pownce, RateItAll, Reunion.com, Searchles, Sconex, Shelfari, Soundpedia, Sportsvite, Studivz, TagWorld, TakingITGlobal, The Doll Palace, The Student Center, Threadless, TravBuddy.com, Travellerspoint, Tribe.net, Vampire Freaks, Vox, WAYN, WebBiographies, Windows Live Spaces, Woophy, XING, Xuqa, Yelp, Zaadz and Zooomr (www.selfgrowth.com).

Two-third of the world's internet population visit social networking or blogging sites, accounting for almost 10% of all internet time (blog.nielsen.com) and 65% of internet usage (www.socialadblog.com). "Social networking sites,

which allow users to build or be part of online communities, account for 44% of the America's internet traffic" reported by a consulting firm, Juxt Consult Research and Consulting Pvt. Ltd (www.livemint.com). More than 145 million people worldwide logged onto at least one of the 20 most-visited social networking web sites (www.scribd.com). The study of 1,200 students found that 96% use social-networking sites and 81% visit a social-networking web site at least once a week (www.scribd.com).

Facebook is one of the most widely used SNS. It has more than 500 million active users in July 2010. In September 2005, Facebook started on its high school version by taking advantage of its popularity among students. The number of its users is increasing tremendously over time, that is, 100 million users in August 26, 2008 to 500 million users in July 21, 2010. However, it had 153% growth during the past year (blog.Facebook.com). Facebook has become an obsession for young people, in that they try to sign in their Facebook account as soon as they get connected to internet. Zuckerberg (2009) found that Facebook users accounted for 16% of 14 to 22 years old in 2006 and 40% among that same population in 2008. Other social networking sites, including Friendster.com (about 50%), Orkut (about 41%) and Bebo.com (about 32%) have particularly demonstrated strong growth (Social Networking Explodes Worldwide, Facebook User Base up to 153%). Twitter is now attracting 190 million visitors per month and generating 65 million tweets a day (techcrunch.com). Despite many social networking sites before Orkut and many more coming into the fray later on, the reign of Orkut was not threatened by good and obvious reasons. However, Orkut has remained a favourite for more than 650,000 users, worldwide (ezinearticles.com).

Impact of SNS on students

Using SNS and its various impacts have been a topic of great discussion among various researchers throughout the world. Numerous studies have been conducted to see the positive and negative impact of these sites on its users. These findings strengthen both the positive as well as negative views about these sites.

Many researchers have identified various costs associated with the usage of SNSs. For instance, Cassidy (2006) found that social networking sites were used for competition to know the number of friends one can acquire and how quickly he can accumulate them, and ultimately how many friends they share. The number of users is multiplying each day considerably, so a number of these students spend their valuable time on this activity rather than on their study activities. These studying habits are associated with the academic performance or grades a student gets. As Thomas et al. (1987) clearly

depicted that the grade-related differences among students are correlated with the study activities of a student, Suhail and Bargees (2006) proclaimed that many problems of educational, interpersonal, physical and psychological nature can occur due to excessive internet usage. According to Karpinski (2009), collegiate grade point averages (CGPA) and Facebook use have negative correlation, that is, 3.0 to 3.5 for users versus 3.5 to 4.0 for non-users. Even 79% of Facebook members did not suppose that their GPA was associated to their networking habits. Miami CBS affiliate declared that Facebook usage may yield lower grades (CBS4, 2009). However, it was proclaimed by www.myfoxdfw.com that Facebook deteriorates grades.

Wilson (2009) discussed that academic research has validated the nagging suspicions of many such students that Facebook is having a detrimental effect on their university results. Another related coverage was made by Khan (2009) that students using Facebook show poor performance in exams. Internet usage has a negative and momentous impact on academic performance, and the destructive usage of the internet outweighs the productive dimensions (Englander et al., 2010). The striking and pathological boost in internet usage has produced internet addiction in its users. Nalwa and Anand (2003) found that addicted users setback their jobs to use internet, experienced with sleep loss. Hence, they waste their precious time ignoring the important jobs including academic responsibilities. Kirschner and Karpinski (2009) found that Facebook users had lower GPAs and they spent lesser hours per week for their studies than the nonusers.

Karpinski (2009) said that every generation has its own distraction, but the study thinks Facebook is a unique phenomenon, in that Facebook affects the grade point average (GPA) of the students adversely. A research was conducted at the American Educational Research Association. On its annual conference (21st centuryscholar.org) in San Diego, California (2009), it was declared that students who are users of internet social networking sites had lower grades because they study less.

Baroness Greenfield, director of the Royal Institution, said, "Internet-obsessed children are losing the ability to concentrate and communicate away from the screen". This leads to lower performance in academics (leaderswedeserve.wordpress.com). Dr. Himanshu Tyagi, a psychiatrist at West London Mental Health Trust, proposed that teenagers start living their lives vigorously online and in this way they value their own "real" lives less, which include education (www.telegraph.co.uk). Tim Pychyl, Associate Professor of Psychology at Carleton University, emphasized on more destructive dimensions of social networking sites, and argued that using Facebook can lead to distraction and procrastination (www.psychologytoday.com). Banquil and Burce (2009) proposed that social networking sites directly causes the gradual drop of grades of students. Boogart and Robert

(2006) proposed that usage of social networking sites, for instance Facebook, has brought negative implications on students' academic performance, such as lowered GPA. Similar findings were given by Grabmeier (2009) when he found that the students who sign up for the SNSs had lower GPA as compared to non-users.

Along with the academic effects of usage of SNSs, there has been a debate over incidences of abuse on the internet and it takes more serious form when it is about teenagers. Even the alarming rate of such incidences is prompting regulations for internet use among teenagers. Mattingly et al. (2010) proposed that the issues of privacy, identity protection, and e-professionalism are also to be considered while using these sites; but Sengupta and Chaudhuri (2010) found that there is no association between SNSs memberships and online abuse of teenagers.

There are also some arguments in favor of using more internet as they proposed that greater use of internet has a positive impact on students' academic performance. Linda et al. (2006) found that children using internet more got higher scores on reading skills' tests and also had higher GPA than the children using internet less. Ellison et al. (2007) suggested that Facebook usage may help people cure some psychological problems such as low self-esteem and low life-satisfaction.

Roblyer et al. (2010) explained that SNSs are a brilliant source of interaction between students and faculty members. Shah et al. (2001) emphasize on types of internet use. They proposed that informational use of internet has a positive association with the indicators of social capital while social-recreational use of internet has a negative association with the civic indicators (civic engagement, interpersonal trust, and life contentment) of social capital. Pasek et al. (2006) suggested that a site-specific culture is induced by a particular website that can either positively affect the building of social capital or negatively hinder the social capital building. They further found no positive correlation between the use of Facebook and lower grades of the students, rather they found Facebook to be more commonly used among students having higher grades. They concluded that there was no difference in the academic performance among users and non-users of Facebook.

Kolek and Saunders (2008) concluded that there is no association between Facebook usage and GPA of students. Kubey et al. (2001) found that the greater use of synchronous communication applications, such as chat rooms and SNSs are correlated with internet dependency and impairment of academic performance. Becoming a part of a particular community is the core functionality that a user draws from a SNS. To examine whether this functionality affects the student to complete his degree or not, Lovitts and Nelson (2000) proposed that the successful completion of Ph.D. is highly correlated with a strong integration of students into their departments' social and professional life. Keeping in view the contrasting findings of the researchers in the foregoing, this study

Table 1. Personal information of respondents.

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Age	17-22	603	83.05
	23-28	113	15.56
	29-34	5	0.06
	35-40	5	0.06
Gender	Male	463	63.8
	Female	263	36.2
Degree	Bachelors	282	38.8
	Masters	423	58.3
	M. Phil	21	2.9
Type of Institute	Private	126	17.35
	Public	600	82.65
Discipline	Social sciences	160	22.0
	Management sciences	312	43.0
	Natural sciences	105	14.5
	Engineering	149	20.5
Year of degree	1st	237	32.6
	2nd	204	28.1
	3rd	142	19.6
	Final year	143	19.7

explores the effects of SNS' usage on studying habits of university students in Pakistan.

METHODOLOGY

The study is purely designed to study the impact of these social networking sites on the students. Students are one of the most rapidly increasing users of these sites and they have the highest customer segment.

Another rationale for selection of this segment is that in Pakistan, 37% of the total population having both the highest literacy rate and users of internet also belong to this portion of the population. One thousand students from different universities of Pakistan were selected for this study. This selection was done using multistage sampling technique. In the first step of sampling, simple random sampling technique was used, through which 6 universities (4 from the public sector and 2 from the private sector) were selected. In the second stage of sampling, these universities were divided into clusters, and each cluster has four faculties, that is, Faculty of Business, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Faculty of Engineering. In the last stage, simple random sampling was again used when personally administered questionnaires were used for data collection in those universities. A total of one thousand questionnaires were distributed out of which 730 questionnaires were received back, which were complete in all sense. Most parts of the questionnaires were taken from the research work of Raizada et al. (2009) and Banquil et al. (2009).

As the questionnaire was customized according to the needs of the research, reliability of the questionnaire was required to be

found as 0.762, which was a quite acceptable value that makes the questionnaire worth using. The data collected from these questionnaires were then analyzed using SPSS 17.0.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Table 1 shows various demographic factors of respondents of the study. The findings show that most of the respondents belonged to the age group of 17 to 22 years (83% of the respondents). So, this study shows the results considering this portion of the sample. While considering the gender of the respondents, majority of the respondents were male (63.8%) and the rest were female (36.2%). Both the genders represent a good strength, so findings can be attributed to both sub categories. While looking at the latest/last degree of the respondents, majority of the respondents were students of Master degree (58.3%), the second most important strength was 38.8% which was represented by students who were studying at Bachelor level. Only 3% of the students were representing the students who were students of post graduate level/M.Phil. Most of the respondents were from the public sector universities (82%). When respondents were divided with respect to their discipline, the major portion was represented by Management Sciences with 43%, Social Sciences with 22%, Engineering

Table 2. Internet and SNS usage.

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Time spent on leisure activities (h)	1-3	317	43.7
	4-6	269	37.1
	7-9	70	9.6
	> 9	70	9.6
Mostly involved leisure activity	Sports	98	13.5
	Internet	347	47.8
	TV	171	23.6
	Others	110	15.2
Extent of internet usage	Seldom	135	18.6
	Once in a while	102	14.0
	Weekly	131	18.0
	Almost everyday	358	49.3
No. of hours spent on internet	1-3	519	71.5
	4-6	153	21.1
	7-9	29	4.0
	> 9	25	3.4
Basic purpose of internet usage	Chitchat	141	19.4
	Educational purpose	284	39.1
	SNS	109	15.0
	Informational use	192	26.4
SNS usage	Yes	492	67.7
	No	235	32.3

22%, Engineering with 20.5% and Natural Sciences with 14.5% of the total respondents. Majority of the respondents were in the first year of their degree (32.6%), 28% were in their second year of degree, while students who were in their third year and final year of degree represented 19.6 and 19.7%, respectively.

Table 2 shows various aspects regarding SNS usage. When students were asked about the time spent on leisure activities, majority of the respondents (43.7%) were spending 1 to 3 h for leisure activities and 37% were spending 4 to 6 h on leisure activities on daily basis. Very small numbers of students were spending 7 to 9 h, or above 9 h on leisure activities, that is, 9.6% each. Students were also asked about the leisure activity they like the most. The most attractive leisure activity in which students involve themselves is the use of internet, as 47.8% of the respondents mentioned that they use internet as leisure activity, while sports and watching TV were used by 13.6 and 23.6% of the respondents. However, 15.2% of the respondents were using any other medium used for leisure activity other then internet, TV or sports. Students were found to be involved in leisure activities on regular basis, as the findings of Table 2 also

show the extent of internet usage. Almost half of the respondents (49.3%) claimed that they use internet on regular or daily basis; but the students who use internet weekly, seldom or once in a while were collectively half of the representatives. So this claim strengthens the view that there is rapid increase in the number of users of internet in Pakistan, and students are one of the regular customers who use internet in Pakistan. Similarly, this claim strengthens the view given in the upper question that internet is the most commonly used median for leisure activities.

When students were asked about the amount of time spent for internet, the maximum number of users (71.3%) mentioned that they spent 1 to 3 h on the internet. These findings are quite consistent with the findings where maximum respondents claimed that they spend 1 to 3 h for leisure activities. However, the mostly adopted and used medium for leisure activities is the internet. Only 21% of the respondents reported that they used internet for 4 to 6 h a day, while 7.4% reported that they used internet for 7 to 9 h or above. While asking students about the basic purpose of internet usage, the findings gave an interesting direction as majority of the respondents

Table 3. SNSs activities and extent of involvement.

Variable		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
No. of social networking sites used	1	194	38.8
	2	189	38.0
	3	51	10.3
	≥4	64	12.9
Most visited social networking Site	Facebook	455	91.3
	Twitter	17	3.4
	Orkut	11	2.2
	Others	15	3.0
Time spent on social networking sites (h)	1-3	375	75.3
	4-6	97	19.5
	7-9	14	2.8
	> 9	12	2.4
Purpose of using social networking sites	Being connected to friends	366	73.5
	Join educational communities	68	13.7
	Find employment	35	7.0
	Others	29	5.8
Addiction to social networking sites	Disagree	240	48.1
	Indifferent	120	24.1
	Agree	138	27.8
Costs of SNS usage	Privacy threats	109	21.9
	Time wastage	340	68.3
	Emotional disturbance	49	9.8

respondents were using internet for other than educational purpose, that is, chitchat (19.4%), to connect SNS (15%), and for informational use (26.4%). Students who were using internet for educational or learning purpose were only 39.1%. These claims further strengthen the view that students' usage of the internet is the most adopted media for leisure activities and it is not primarily used for educational purpose. When the respondents were asked whether or not they were using SNS along with internet, majority of the respondents (67.7%) were found to have been on these sites, but only 32.3% were non-users of social networking sites.

Table 3 shows the extent of SNS usage among students. When students were asked about the number of social networking sites they visit, it was found that majority of the students were restricting themselves to using only one or two social networking sites, that is, 38.8 and 38%, respectively. Very few students were using 3 or above 3 sites (10.3 and 12.9%, respectively). So students were inclined towards one or two sites of social net-working. The next question that was asked was about the preferable SNS. It was observed that 91.3% of the respondents mentioned that they use Facebook as the

first medium of social networking links, so this finding strengthens the claim that Facebook is the most liked and most rapidly growing social networking site among students. Very few students were observed to be using any other social networking sites, that is, Twitter, Orkut or any other (3.4, 2.2 and 3% respectively). So it can be claimed that the favourite social networking site for Pakistani students is Facebook. Since they are more attracted towards its usage, they will prefer to use Facebook as a leisure activity than any other site or medium of leisure activities, as students use internet and social networking sites for leisure activities. Students were again asked for the time spent on SNS. The finding was found to be consistent with the view that was established from the findings of Table 2, where students claimed that they spent 1 to 3 h for leisure activities, and their favourite medium of leisure activities was the internet. Again, majority of the respondents showed that they spent 1 to 3 h on the internet and they use it for non-academic activities rather than for studies. Nonetheless, 75.3% of the respondents were spending 1 to 3 h on these sites, and very few of them were using social net-working sites from 4 to 6 h, 7 to 9 h or above 9 h (19.5,

Table 4. Academic costs of SNSs.

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
No. of hours spent on studies	1-3	391	64.7
	4-6	165	27.3
	7-9	32	5.3
	More Than 9	16	2.6
Extent of studies	Daily	251	41.6
	Weekly	212	35.1
	Monthly	25	4.1
	Near exams	116	19.0
Doing assignments	Immediately	109	18.0
	Before deadline	262	43.4
	Just before deadline	214	35.4
	After deadline	19	3.1
Preference of SNS over studies	Disagree	337	55.8
	Indifferent	141	23.2
	Agree	126	20.7
Distraction from studies	Disagree	258	42.7
	Indifferent	168	27.8
	Agree	178	29.5
Enjoy time spent on studies	Disagree	122	20.2
	Indifferent	166	27.5
	Agree	316	52.2
Love for learning	Disagree	87	14.4
	Indifferent	135	22.4
	Agree	382	63.2
Balance time between studies and SNS usage	Disagree	109	18.0
	Indifferent	104	17.2
	Agree	391	64.6

2.8 and 2.4%, respectively).

As the findings of Tables 2 and 3 suggest that the most significant use of internet is leisure activities or activities other than academic purpose, it was observed that the respondents use internet for social networking. Also, it was observed in these tables that students were asked about the purpose of using SNS, majority of the respondents (73.5%) were using social networking sites for social connection or interaction with friends, while very few of them were using these sites for educational communications (13.7%), which strengthens the view that internet and social networking sites are purely used for non-academic purpose. Table 3 also presents students' responses toward the effects of these sites on them. It was observed that 51.9% of the respondents either

agreed or were indifferent that they were addicted to these sites, while 48% of the respondents disagreed that they were addicted to these sites. Afterwards, students were about the social costs of these sites. Majority of the students (68.3%) agreed that it is mere wastage of time, 21.9% agreed that it is the privacy threat and only 9.8% showed that it as a result of emotional disturbance. Table 4 shows the impact of SNS usage on students' studying habits. Students were asked about the time they spend on social networking sites. Majority of the students (64.7%) responded that they spend 1 to 3 h on using social networking sites. These findings are consistent with those which show that students use internet for 1 to 3 h a day; moreover, the most widely usage of internet is social networking sites. This result also shows that students

use internet as a source of leisure activity via the use of SNS. Nonetheless, 27.3% of the respondents claimed that they are using these sites for 4 to 6 h a day; but the students who use these sites 7 h a day or above are only 7.9%.

When students were asked about what the extent of their studies is, 41.6% of the respondents answered that they are regular in their studies and that they perform their academic tasks on daily basis, while 35.1% of the respondents claimed that they study on weekly basis, but only 23.1% responded that they study monthly or close to exams. So this table shows that students are managing their studies as well, along with using these sites on regular basis. So there is no significant effect on the studying habits of the students.

However, different results were observed when students were asked regarding the assignments and study tasks they were assigned. Majority of the students were completing their study tasks before deadline or just before deadline (43.4 and 35.4%, respectively), but very few students (18%) were performing their study tasks immediately after assignments of their tasks, and only 3.1% of the respondents were not fulfilling their tasks within the given time.

Students were also asked whether or not they prefer these sites over their studies if they were given the opportunity and time to do so. Most of the students (55.8%) were not willing with the statement, as they were found to spend their time for studies rather than using these sites.

These findings contradict with those given in Table 1 in which it was found that students like to spend most of their time on leisure activities. 43.9% of the respondents either agreed or were indifferent with the statement. Another query was whether or not these sites create any sort of distraction from students' studies? Findings showed that 42.7% of the respondents were found not to have any sort of distraction from their studies due to the use of these sites, but 57.3% of the respondents were either willing or indifferent that these sites have any impact in shaping the distraction from their studies. Students were also asked to respond to their feeling for the studies and learning.

The result shows that majority of the students enjoy spending their time on studying and they love to learn (52.2 and 63.2%, respectively). Findings also show that very few of the students do not enjoy spending their time on studying or have the eagerness to learn. So, findings give the direction that students like to spend their time on leisure activities (Table 1), but they also love to and are eager to learn (Table 3). On the basis of these findings, the next question that was asked was whether or not students are able to balance their time between studies and the use of these social networking sites.

Here, findings are interesting as 64.6% of the respondents were confident that they can balance their time between studies and the time spent on SNS, while only 18% were not able to balance their time between studies and the use of these sites. Moreover, only 17.2% were not indifferent.

So, it can be eventually concluded that there is no significant relation between SNS usage and students' studies. These findings are quite consistent with those of Sengupta and Chaudhuri (2010), Pasek et al. (2006) and Kolek and Saunders (2008).

Conclusion

The findings of this study give interesting results as students are able to maintain their studies and there is no significant effect of using social networking sites on the studying habits of the students. Students were found to be more inclined towards leisure activities and the most attractive leisure activity for students is the internet. Results also suggest that the wide use of the internet is SNS. The study reveals that students use these sites for non-academic activities rather than for academic activities. So it can be claimed that students are more inclined towards non-academic activities, that is, internet or SNS. As such, excessive usage of SNS might affect their studying habits. Conversely, the actual results give a different direction, in that students were found not to be disturbed by these sites, rather they were able to perform their tasks appropriately, and they were meeting their study tasks within stipulated time. When inquiry was made to further identify why excessive usage of these sites did not affect students' studying habits, it was found that they were capable enough to manage things and were able to balance the things in the best befitting manner. Similar results were found by Sengupta and Chaudhuri (2010) where they showed that SNS usage did not have a significant effect on the students. Pasek et al. (2006) also found that there is no positive relation between the use of Facebook and lower grades of the students; rather they found Facebook to be more commonly used among students having higher grades. In addition, Kolek and Saunders (2008) concluded that there is no association between Facebook usage and GPA of students.

CONTRIBUTION AND FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

According to Nielsen Research Company, the global time spent on social networking sites is increasing at a rate of 82% per year. It has been a sizzling issue whether internet and SNS' usage is a rich source of interaction and up-to-date information for the students or if the darker aspects of this usage outweigh its benefits. This study will add value to the existing body of knowledge; moreover, as it is an "unexplored area" in Pakistan, it would provide a profound insight on impacts of social networking sites in this regard. This research would give

an insight of the status of usage of social networking sites and their perceived impact on the studying habits of students. Findings of this study have much importance for academicians, practitioners and parents, as these are all stakeholders and have direct interest in students. This study reveals that students are using social networking sites for non-academic purpose, but still, they are managing their studies and educational tasks. There should be proper arrangement made for proper use of these sites. For this purpose, mentoring should be done and students should be trained for the positive outcomes of using these sites. This in return would offer greater returns in shaping more learning and improved academic performance.

REFERENCES

Adler PS, Kwon ?? (2002). Social Capital: Prospects for a New Concept. Acad. Manage.Rev., 27(1): 17. Boogart V, Robert M (2006). Uncovering the social impacts of Facebook on a college campus. Master's thesis, Department of Counselling and Educational Psychology, Kansas State Uniyersity.

Cassidy J (2006). Me media: How hanging out on the Internet became big Business. New Yorker, 82(13): 50. Retrieved on September 15, 2010, form http://www.articlesbase.com/internet-articles/history-of-social-networking-websites-1908457.html#ixzz0zbn7JVdd.

CBS4 (2009). Study finds Facebook usage may yield lower grades. Retrieved on September 15, 2010 from
http://cbs4.com/local/Facebook.college.grades.2.984408.html.

Classmates.com. Retrieved on September 18, 2010, from http://www.socialnetworkingwatch.com/classmateswatchcom/

Coleman JS (1988). Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. Amer. J. of Soc., 94, 95-120.Costolo: twitter now has 190 million users tweeting 65 million times a day. Retrieved on September 18, 2010, from http://techcrunch.com/2010/06/08/twitter-190-million-users/

Does Facebook affect your grades. Retrieved on September 17, 2010, from http://21stcenturyscholar.org/2009/05/12/does-Facebook-affect-your-grades/

Does social networking rot the brain? Retrieved on September 20, 2010, from http://leaderswedeserve.wordpress.com/2009/02/

Ellison NB, Steinfeld C, Lampe C (2007). The benefits of Facebook 'friends': Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. J. Comput. Mediated Commun., 12(4): Retrieved on September, 2010, from http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue4/ellison.html.

Englander F, Terregrossa RA, Wang Z (2010). Educ. Rev., 62(1): 85 - 96.

Facebook and Academic Performance. Retrieved on September, 2010, from http://www.tehranpi.net/2010/04/Facebook-and-academic performance/ under your organization's agreement with Elsevier.

Facebook and MySpace generation cannot form relationships. Retrieved on September 21, 2010, from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/3357741/Facebook-and MySpace-generation-cannot-form-relationships.html

Global Publics Embrace Social Networking. Retrieved on September 19, 2010, from http://pewglobal.org/2010/12/15/global-publics-embrace-social-networking/

Grabmeier J (2009). Study finds link between Facebook use, lower grades in college. Ohio State University, Retrieved on September 24, 2010, from http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/Facebookusers.htm. How to tell if you're an Internet addict. Problematic Internet Use, Internet Procrastination and Flow. Retreived on September, 2010, from http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/dont-elay/200903/problematic- internet-use-internet-procrastination-and-flow retrieved on Sept 29, 2010.

Internet Users in Pakistan hit 17.5 Million Mark. Retrieved on September, 2010, from http://propakistani.pk/2009/01/24/internet-users-in-pakistan-hit-175-million-mark/

Internet world stats Retrieved on November 12, 2010, from http://www.pcworld.com/article/159471/the_evolution_of_the_internet.html

Jackson LA, Eye AV, Biocca FA, Barbatsis G, Zhao Y, Fitzgerald HE (2006). Does Home Internet Use Influence the Academic Performance of Low-Income Children? Dev. Psychol., 42(3): 429-435.

Karpinski AC (2009). A description of Facebook use and academic performance among undergraduate and graduate students. Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, California.

Khan U (2009). Facebook students underachieve in exams. Daily Telegraph. Retrieved on October 12, 2010, from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/5145243/Facebook-students-underachieve-in-exams.html.

Kolek EA, Saunders D (2008). Online disclosure: An empirical examination of undergraduate Facebook profiles. NAPSA J., 45(1): 1–25.

Kubey RW, Lavin MJ, Barrows JR (2001). Internet use and collegiate academic performance decrements: Early findings. J. Comm., 51(2): 366–382.

Lovitts BE, Nelson C (2000). The hidden crisis in graduate education: Attrition from Ph.D. programs. Acad. Online (November–December). Retrieved on September 23, 2010, from http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2000/ND/Feat/lovi.html

Zuckerberg M (2009). "200 million strong" Facebook Blog. Retrieved on Nov 15, 2010, from http://www.blog.Facebook.com/blog.php?post=72353897130.

Mattingly TJ, Cain J, Fink JL (2010).Pharmacists on Facebook: Online Social Networking and the Profession. J. Am. Pharm. Assoc., 50(3): 424-427.

MyFox Dallas Fort Worth. 2009. Facebook hurts grades. Retrieved on September 27, 2010, from http://www.myfoxdfw.com/dpp/news/tech/Study_Facebook_Hurts_Grades

Nalwa K, Anand AP (2003). Cyber Psychol. Behav., 6(6): 653-656.

Nielsen: Global time spent on social networking sites…………..Retrieved on September 14, 2010, from http://www.sfnblog.com/industry_trends/2010/01/nielsen_global_time_spent_on_social_netw.php

Pasek J, Kenski K, Romer D, Jamieson KH (2006). America's youth and community engagement: How use of mass media is related to civic activity and political awareness among 14 to 22 year olds. Comm. Res., 33(3): 115–135.

Pasek J, More E, Romer D (????). Realizing the social Internet? Offline social networking meets online civic engagement. J. Inform. Technol. Pol.

Putnam RD (2000). Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Raizada R, Vinayak T, Srivastav G, Garg S, Mehrotra S, Chandak S (2009). The effects of social networking sites on personal lives of people. Retrieved on September 29, 2010, from http://www.scribd.com/doc/13653301/The-Effect-of-Social-Networking-Sites

Reason behind success of Orkut. Retrieved on September 30, 2010, from http://ezinearticles.com/?Reason-Behind-Success-of-Orkut&id=3009965

Roblyer MD, McDaniel M, Webb M, Herman J, Witty JV (2010). Findings on Facebook in higher education: A comparison of college faculty and student uses and perceptions of social networking sites.http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6W4X-4YNT4F1-1&_user=10&_coverDate=06%2F30%2F2010&_alid=1478514704&_rdoc=9&_fmt=full&_orig=search&_origin=search&_cdi=6554&_sort=r&_st=13&_docanchor=&view=c&_ct=8165&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=a209ba9e552003193a5b2d9092eaafa6&searchtype=a The Int. &High. Edu. 13(3): 134-140.

Sengupta A, Chaudhuri A (2010). Are social networking sites a source of online harassment for teens? Evidence from survey data. Child. Youth Ser. Rev., doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.09.011

Shah DV, Kwak N, Holbert RL (2001). 'Connecting' and 'disconnecting' with civic life: Patterns of Internet use and the production of social

capital. Pol. Comm. 18: 141–162.

Socialadblog.com. Retrieved on September 30, 2010, from http://www.socialadblog.com/2008/05/worldwide-internet-users-vs-social.html/

Social network advertising. Retrieved on September 30, 2010, from http://www.socialadblog.com/search?updated-min=2008-01

Social Networking Explodes Worldwide. Retrieved on September 30, 2010, from http://www.marketingcharts.com/interactive/social-networking-explodes-worldwide-Facebook-user-base-up-153-5625/

Social Networking's New Global Footprint. Retrieved on September 30, 2010, from http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/global/social-networking-new-global-footprint/

Social networking opportunities worldwide. Retrieved on September 30, 2010, from http://www.Facebook.com/pages/Social-Networking-Opportunities-Worldwide/170127060612

Social networking sites affect one's Academic Performance. Retrieved on September 28, 2010, from http://www.scribd.com/doc/28919575/SOCIAL-NETWORKING-SITES-AFFECT-ONE%E2%80%99S-ACADEMIC-PERFORMANCE-ADVERSELY

Social networking sites and its positive effects. Retrieved on September, 2010, from http://forum.apcs.vn/showthread.php?p=11138

Social networking sites say building strong user base will finally pay off. Retrieved on September, 2010, from http://www.livemint.com/2007/11/12232415/Social-networking-sites-say-bu.html retrieved on Sept. 29, 2010.

Suhail K. & Bargees Z. (2006). Cyber Psychol. Behav., 9(3): 297-307.

The beginnings of the internet. Retrieved on September 29, 2010, from http://www.nethistory.info/History%20of%20the%20Internet/beginnings.html

The effects of social networking sites on personal lives of people. Nielsen/Net Ratings according to INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY Posted 12/26/2007. Retrieved on September 30, 2010, from http://www.scribd.com/doc/13653301/The-Effect-of-Social-Networking-Sites

The Facebook blog. Retrieved on September 30, 2010, from http://blog.Facebook.com/blog.php?post=409753352130

The history of Facebook. Retrieved on September 30, 2010, from http://www.webhostingreport.com/learn/Facebook.html

The percentage of adult internet users. Retrieved on September 30, 2010, from http://www.marketingcharts.com/direct/older-adults-double-socnet-use-14056/pew-older-social-networking-use-august-2010jpg/

http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V98-513F8MM-3&_user=10&_coverDate=09%2F25%2F2010&_alid=1478514704&_rdoc=1&_fmt=full&_orig=search&_origin=search&_cdi=5892&_sort=r&_st=13&_docanchor=&view=c&_ct=8165&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=e8df387dd5ed889bfecf4aa1f303e670&searchtype=a

Thomas JW, Iventosch L, Rohwer WD (1987). Relationships among student characteristics, study activities, and achievement as a function of course characteristics. Cont. Educ. Psychol. 12(4): 344-364.

Tuckman HP (1975). Teacher Effectiveness and Student Performance. J. Econ. Educ. 7(1): 34-39.

What are the most important social networking websites? Retrieved on September, 2010, from http://www.selfgrowth.com/socialnetworkingwebsites.html.

Wilson L (2009). Facebook fixation harms student grades. The Australian. Retrieved from http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,24897,25325762-12332,00.html.