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# The Effects of Social Media on the Undergraduate Students' Academic Performances

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## Abstract

Social Media are growing rapidly among the young generation all over the world. University age students widely engaged using Social Media. So, they will affect students personal and professional live. Thus, this study is designed to find out the positive and negative effects of social media on the academic performances of students in Alberoni University of Afghanistan. As quantitative approach was adapted to collect the relevant data of study, a number of 371 survey questionnaires were administered among the undergraduates in nine faculties of Alberoni University. Subsequently, SPSS software was applied to analyze the relevant data of the study. It was concluded that in despite of public views concerning the misuse of social media among students in the society, most of the students were interested to use social media positively for their educations. The positive impacts of social media among the undergraduates appeared to be higher as compared to negative impacts. However, results of ANOVA showed that there are no statistically significant differences between positive and negative impact of social media and students' academic achievements. Educators and students can use social media as informational and communicational tools to ease and improve learning process.

Key words: Social Media, Academic performances, Undergraduates

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## **I. Introduction**

The internet is more than just a means of searching information. People have revealed that the Internet can be used to connect with other people for business or commercial purposes, to make new friends, or to bring back old friends and long lost relatives. The latest example of new communication technology usually used by students is social media, also known as Social Networking Sites. The emergence of social media simplified the process, because they do not call for advanced internet knowledge or experience and are made up of a wide array of different formats and topics. This means that anyone can connect through social media (Sudha and Kavitha, 2016).

The use of social media is being rapidly rising during last few years. It is not only being used by the working people but also there is heavy increase in the use of social media by the students or education society (Raut and Patil, 2016). With such broad acceptance, there is no surprise that social media have affected the way people live and socialize. Social Networking Sites such as Facebook is one of the latest examples of communication technologies that have been widely-adopted by students and, subsequently, have the potential to become a valuable resource to support their educational communications and collaborations with faculty. Social media are mostly used by students to communicate and exchange ideas with lecturers specifically in western contexts (Sudha and Kavitha, 2016). Hasnain, Nasreen and Ijaz (2015) stated that the development of technology and increase in internet usage, social media has become a part of our daily lives. If social media is used in a positive way, it can help students and youth to get knowledge that can be used to improve their academic performances.

Furthermore, Neal (2012) stated that the term social media relates to the many easy-to use services that anybody can use to interact with other people online such as Facebook, YouTube, Blog, Twitter and so on and so forth. Therefore, using social media easy and simple services, enable us to create online presence very easily as signing up for Facebook and Twitter account, subsequently create our own content on the web within minutes. Besides that, academic achievement is the ability of student to study and remember facts and being able to communicate his/her knowledge orally or in written form even in an examination condition (Kpolovie, Joe and Okoto, 2014).

Accordingly, the current study is supposed to be useful, since it is a new in Afghanistan, among undergraduates in Alberoni University. Because in an academic environment, beside traditional resources, students also need a new informational technology such as social media. As said by Sudha and Kavitha (2016) social network sites have attracted considerable attention among scholars and educators due to the increasing popularity among students and the potential effect on academic performance. However, the previous studies, which were conducted in other countries belong to their countries which have many educational, environmental, religious differences with Afghanistan. Thus, this study conducted the research objectives and questions as follows:

### **1.1 Research objectives**

1. To assess the positive effects of social media on the students' academic performances.
2. To assess the negative effects of social media on the students' academic performances.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

1. What are the positive effects of social media on the academic performances of students?
2. What are the negative effects of social media on the academic performances of students?

### **1.3 Research Hypothesis**

1. There are no significant differences concerning the positive effects of social media on the academic performances of students.
2. There are no significant differences concerning the negative effects of social media on the academic performances of students.

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

This study can be a good academic source for researchers, especially in Afghanistan, where there is more probably no such literature. This research will be as a trusted academic source and pave the way for scholars, lecturers and students to know the effects of social media, and the effects on the undergraduates' academic performances. It will raise the awareness of the people about either positive and negative impacts of social media on the academic performances of students in Afghanistan society. It will also encourage students to use social media beneficially as effective communication tools as well as educational media to improve their knowledge and skills.

### **1.5 Limitation of the study**

The results of the current study are limited to the Alberoni University students of Afghanistan, who are studying in the nine faculties of Medical, Engineering, Political Sciences, Journalism, Islamic Law, Language and Literature, Education, Economic and agriculture. It is just limited to find the positive and negative impact of social media on the undergraduates' academic performances.

## **II. Literature Review**

There are many studies performed about the positive and negative effects of social media on the students' academic performances. For example, Heffner (2016) alleged that the use of social media can be a good outlet to deal with academic frustrations, especially if the students are in contact with another student that is having the same problem. Social media lets students to get connected with other students, which can be very useful because it will allow them to discuss class matters via social media. Additionally, Adam Mahamat (2014) tried to obtain students' perceptions of how their use of social networking sites influences their academic performances. The researchers performed a preliminary survey of a group of

Malaysian university students. It was found that the majority of respondents agreed that social networking sites have a positive impact on their academic performances.

Menseh and Nizam (2016) described that social networking have a meaningful effect on the students' academic performances. They also pointed out about the abnormal use of social media platforms by students. The study suggested it is useful that universities and colleges in Malaysia educate their students to use these platforms positively for educational purposes which will ultimately result in a positive impact on their academic performance. Jha, Jaipuria, Jha, and Sinha (2016) asserted that students more probably affected by social media. To some extent, it absolutely affects the lives of college students counting the grades. They added that social media is attractive as it gives college students another world to make friends, also provides a good way to release pressure. It was also noted that an approach is required to balance the relationship between social media and academic study. Consequently, college students should think more about the balancing of social media and academics.

Additionally, the findings of an investigation conducted by Eke, Omekwu and Odoh (2014) among undergraduates in Nigeria showed that there are some benefits come from using social media, which encourages virtual meeting with co-research scholar; self-esteem and well-being; Research and learning; strengthening interpersonal relationship; read and write web skills etc. It was also noted that students use social media to communicate with friends, viewing movies, for discussing national issues like politics, economy and religious matters, and for academic purposes. Mingle and Adams (2015) stated that there are some students experienced improvement in their reading skills as a consequence of participation and involving social media. Also, respondents shared ideas, discussed and shared examination questions among themselves on social media.

All the same, Mingle and Adams (2015) asserted that majority of respondents experienced negative effects i.e. poor grammar and spelling, late submission of assignment, less study time and poor academic performance because of too much use of social media networks. Moreover, addiction toward using social media among students was high. Eke, Omekwu and Odoh (2014) described some dangers associated with social networking sites such as E-crime, Internet addiction, laziness, standard crime like, fraud, murder, kidnapping; immoral act like, pornography, prostitution, cyber-bullying where identified.

In addition, the outcomes of a survey performed by Roblyer, McDaniel, Herman and Witty (2010) showed that faculty and students differ somewhat in their current and anticipated uses of social media such as Facebook. It was noted that there is a significant difference between the perceived role of this tool as social, rather than educational. Students look like much more open to the idea of using Facebook instructionally than do faculty. Sudha and Kavitha, (2016) also stated that most of the faculty members believed that social media have a negative effect on the students' academic performances compared with positive effects, due to lack of awareness among the students and faculty members about the appropriate usage of social media topics of educational interest. In the meantime, the positive effects of social media on their academic performances appeared to be significantly low.

Moreover, Heffner and Tara (2016) conducted a study among undergraduates at Rowan University of the USA. The study results described that social media do not have a positive effect on the students' academic achievements. Because the student GPA decreased as much as they were engaged in social media. The study suggested the undergraduate students should manage and monitor their time spent using social media such as Facebook. In another study, Mushtaq (2015) discovered social media as a factor in the lacking of habits of reading newspaper among students and it may cause them to lose much advantageous information consist of the newspaper.

Furthermore, Wang, Chen and Liang (2011) alleged that social networking is absolutely affecting students' effectiveness as well as their grades. Therefore, educators need to be worried about these problems and attempt to find better ways to solve these problems. Though, framed within an academic context, the concepts outlined here can be used to investigate the use of communication technology not only at school, but also at home, workplace, and many other settings, and for a diversity of different viewers like teenagers, young adults, the elderly, or families.

### **III. Methodology**

The quantitative research design was chosen as the main and substantial method of the study. In a quantitative method, the researcher collects, analyses and interprets different kinds of numerical data obtained from a large population (Teddlie and Tashakori, 2009).

#### **3.1 Participants**

The respondents of the study were undergraduates of Alberoni University. These respondents were randomly selected from nine faculties of Medical, Engineering, Political sciences, Journalism, Islamic law, Language and literature, Education, Economic and Agriculture. There are more than 7000 students studying in Alberoni University form all over the country. From among them, 371 students randomly were chosen as the subjects of quantitative data.

#### **3.2 Instruments and data analyses**

A survey questionnaire was designed as the instruments of the study. The questionnaire items include 16 Lickert scale questions. The items of the questionnaire were adapted from the previous study questionnaires such as Sudha and Kavitha (2016) performed their study among the undergraduates at Salem University of the USA. In addition, the SPSS software, specifically, descriptive tests and One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed to analyse the survey data.

#### **3.3 Respondents profile**

The demographic part of questionnaire consists of three items, which are gender, ages and education years of the respondents. Following explains demographic information of respondents.

### 3.3.1 Gender of respondents

Table 3.1 shows the gender of the participants. From the 371 participants took part in the study, majority 236 (63.6%) of them were male, while 135 (36.4%) were female. It shows the superiority of male students in the university than the females.

**Table 3.1: Gender of respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
Male	236	63.6
Female	135	36.4
Total	371	100.0

### 3.3.2 Ages of respondents

Table 3.2 shows that majority (50.4%) of the students are 18-20 years, and 169 (45.6%) students are 21-25 years. The largest groups of students 187 (50.4%) comprised of those in the age groups of 18- 20 years. The smallest groups of respondents 15 (4%) are 25 and above years.

**Table 3.2: Ages of respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
18- 20	187	50.4
21-25	169	45.5
25-above	15	4
Total	371	100.0

### 3.3.3 Studying year of respondents

Table 3.3 depicts education years of respondents. According to the table, from 371 respondents, 115 (31.0%) were first-year students and 114 (30.7%) were fourth-year students. In addition, 87 (23.5%) were third-year students, while 55 (14.8%) were second-year students.

**Table 3.3: Studying years of respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
First year	115	31.0
Second year	55	14.8
Third year	87	23.5
Forth year	114	30.7
Total	371	100.0

### 3.3.4 Academic achievements of students

Table 3.4 shows that most of (36.7%) students said that their academic achievements are very good, while least of (33.4%) of them marked their academic achievements medium. Slightly above twenty-two percent described their academic achievements excellent, while (33.4%) described their academic achievements good.

**Table 3.4: Academic Achievement of Students**

	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	82	22.1
Very good	136	36.7
Good	124	33.4
Medium	29	7.8
Total	371	100.0

## IV. Findings

The results of the study come from the survey questionnaires which were distributed among 371 participants in the nine faculties of Alberoni University. Each questionnaire consists of demographic information and questions related to the positive and negative effects of social media on the students' academic performances. In addition, questionnaire has 13 Lickert Scale items. Each item, for instance, consists of "Too much, A lot, Medium, Less, Very less and Never". The scales range from 1 to 6, as for too much was given (6), while for Never was assigned (1), and for the rest of scales within two above scales, given values were 4, 3, and 2. Moreover in order to check the reliability of questionnaire, all questions were entered into the (SPSS) Social Science Statistical Package. The Cronbach's Alpha of all items was .756, which shows a reliable questionnaire.

### 4.1 Positive effects of social media on the academic performances of students

Students were asked about the positive effects of social media on their academic performances. Table 4.1 shows the mean and standard deviation for each questionnaire item. Item 1 relating to the usefulness of social media for university students in terms of being effective communication tools got highest mean scores ( $M=4.83$ ,  $SD=1.21$ ). Also, item 4 concerning the benefit of social media for students to get lecturers and faculty members announcements got second mean score ( $M=4.80$ ,  $SD=1.38$ ). These results illustrate that the most of students use social media beneficially as to get notices of respective faculties and communicate effectively with each other. Item 5 about the discussing of assignments with friends obtained third mean scores ( $M=4.64$ ,  $SD=1.39$ ). It will also cause positive effects on the students' academic achievements. Item 7 concerning the easiness of social media in academic activities of students got fourth mean scores ( $M=4.55$ ,  $SD=1.41$ ). While, item 3 regarding appointments with other experts obtained lowest mean scores ( $M=3.98$ ,  $SD=1.54$ ). These findings imply the usefulness of social media in the students' studies. Subsequently, it will help them to get academic achievements.



**Table 4.1:** Positive effect of social media on the academic performances of students

	<b>Positive effect of Social Media</b>	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	The usage of social media is useful in higher educational institutions, because they are an effective communication application.	4.83	1.21
2.	Group discussions can be arranged with the experts using social media.	4.47	1.40
3.	An appointment can be fixed with other subject experts through social media.	3.98	1.54
4.	social media site are helpful for the students' studies because students can receive announcements from lecturers and faculty.	4.80	1.38
5.	The social media help in the students' studies because the students can discuss their assignments with friends.	4.64	1.39
6.	Using social media improves the interaction with classmates, lecturers and other subject experts	4.42	1.39
7.	social media facilitate the academic activities and coordinate with others.	4.55	1.41

\* In the above table, mean scores ranged from highest to lowest. The highest mean score ( $M=4.83$ ) shows that the students are highly involved in this item rather than others while the lowest mean score ( $M=3.98$ ) indicates that the students are less involved in the item.

In order to evaluate the effect of social media on the students' academic performances, the following hypothesis is generated:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There are no significant differences concerning the positive effects of Social Media on the students' academic performances.

A one-way between-group analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the impact of social media on the students' academic performances. Participants were divided into four groups according to their academic achievements (Group 1: Excellent; Group 2: Very good; Group 3: Good and group 4 Medium). There was not statistically significant difference at the  $p>0.05$  level for four each groups. Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups was quite small. According to the test's result, the mean scores for Group 1 ( $M=4.51$ ,  $SD=.97$ ) was not significantly different from Group 3 ( $M=4.48$ ,  $SD=.96$ ). Also Group ( $M=4.45$ ,  $SD=.86$ ) did not differed significantly from Group 4 ( $M=4.61$ ,  $SD=.90$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. It implies the insignificant effects of social media on the students' academic achievements. However, this finding might be because of majority of students' academic achievements are very good.

**Table 4,2:** Descriptive results of social media positive effects on students the academic achievements

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Excellent	82	4.51	.97	.10	4.29	4.72	1.00	6.00
Very good	136	4.55	.86	.07	4.40	4.70	2.14	6.00
Good	124	4.48	.96	.08	4.31	4.65	1.00	6.00
Medium	29	4.6	.90	.16	4.27	4.95	2.71	6.00

#### 4.2 Negative effects of Social Media on academic performances of students

In order to find the negative effects of social media on the academic performances of students, 6 items were created in the questionnaire. As depicted in table 4.2; item 3 relating to the addiction of students to social media, which affects academic performances of students obtained highest mean scores ( $M=4.96$ ,  $SD=1.66$ ). It can be inferred that the extreme use of social media may negatively affect academic performances of students. In addition, item 4 concerning the losing of study concentration while being informed that it is possible to play online games through social media got second mean scores ( $M=4.02$ ,  $SD=1.63$ ). This finding also means that being affected to social media and playing online games is a concern for students and it may cause negative effects. Item 2 about the wasting of time and money also get third mean scores ( $M=3.85$ ,  $SD=1.70$ ). It illustrates that the most of students believed extreme use of social media is a waste of time and money. While item 6 regarding the phrase that the "social media are personal and social and cannot be used for education" got lowest mean score ( $M=3.27$ ,  $SD=1.83$ ). It also describes that very less amount of students does not use social media for education; while most of them believed that the social media are useful for their studies. So, it will cause students to improve their academic performances. As item 5 ( $M=3.73$ ,  $SD=1.54$ ) indicates that a lesser amount of students' academic performances decreased, while their grades were compared before-and-after involving in social media.

**Table 4.3:** Negative effect of social media on the academic performance of students

	<b>Negative effects of Social media</b>	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	These social media influence the academic performance of students negatively, because they distract from the students studies.	3.95	1.67
2.	Using social media require spending money and are wastage of time and by this way it will affect the students' academic life.	3.85	1.70
3.	Addiction to social media is problematic issue that affects the students' academic life.	4.96	1.66
4.	I find it hard concentrating on study knowing that student can play online games and visit these sites just by logging into them.	4.02	1.63
5.	I compare the students' grades before the students become engaged into these social media and after the student became involved. I see a drop in my academic performance.	3.73	1.54
6.	SNSs are personal/ social-can't be used for education.	3.27	1.83

For comparing mean differences between negative effect of social media and academic achievements, the following hypothesis emerged:

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There are no significant differences concerning the negative effects of Social Media on the students' academic performances.

A one-way between-group analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the negative impact of social media on the students' academic performances. Participants were divided into four groups according to their academic achievements (Group 1: Excellent; Group 2: Very good; Group 3: Good and group 4 Medium). There was not statistically significant difference at the  $p > 0.05$  level for four each groups. Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups was quite small. According to the test's result, the mean scores for Group 1 ( $M=3.78$ ,  $SD=1.19$ ) was not significantly different from Group 3 ( $M=3.72$ ,  $SD=1.15$ ). Also Group 2 ( $M=3.83$ ,  $SD= 1.17$ ) did not differed significantly from Group 4 ( $M=3.94$ ,  $SD= 1.10$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The results imply that social media do not have negative effects of the academic achievements of students.

**Table 4,4:** Descriptive results of social media positive effects on students the academic achievements

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Excellent	82	3.78	1.19	.13	3.52	4.04	1.00	6.00
Very good	136	3.83	1.17	.10	3.63	4.03	1.00	6.00
Good	124	3.72	1.15	.10	3.52	3.93	1.00	6.00
Medium	29	3.94	1.10	.20	3.52	4.36	1.67	5.83

## V. Discussions

This study was designed to evaluate the positive and negative effects of social media on the academic performances of students. The results of descriptive analysis illustrated that most of the students believed that social media are very useful tools in their studies. Accordingly, that can help them to boost university related activities. The respondents described social media as educational tools in their studies. So, it is expected that social media positively affect students' academic performances. The results interestingly describe that undergraduates in Alberoni University mostly inclined to use social media in a good manner; that is to improve their knowledge and information. Additionally, social media may enable students to communicate effectively with their peers to solve their classes' problems, as they described social media as effective tools used for communication. Also students use social media to get their respective lecturers and faculty members' announcements. Then, social media enable them to be in touch with classmates and friends in order to improve their communication skills (Benraghda and Radzuan, 2018) and receive lecturers, faculty and university announcements which are much more important for them. Raut and Patil (2016) also stated the use of social media has been made a positive impact on the society. It enables users to communicate with each other, to create, revise and share new forms of textual, visual and audio content. It has a vital effect on our live as it helps us a lot in every field of life such as the political, economic and educational fields.

The findings of the current study regarding the inclination of students toward using social media positively are in alignment with Sudha and Kavitha's (2016) study carried out among the university students in the USA. The study outcomes asserted that a lot of faculty members' believed that social networking sites are helpful for the students' studies because they can discuss their assignments with each other. However, the study described that the positive impacts of social networking sites on their academic performances is appeared to be considerably low.

However, the results of ANOVA showed no statistically significant differences concerning the positive effect of social media on the academic performances of students. This might be because most of participants rated their academic achievements very good. Also there were no respondents that have weak academic achievements. So majority of them believed that social media have positive effect on their academic achievements. Moreover, Adam Mahamat (2014) disclosed that majority of university students in Malaysia agreed that social networking sites have a positive impact on the students' academic performances.

This study also found that the negative impact of social media on the academic performances of students are not as much as compared with their positive effects since most of the respondents described social media advantageous and beneficial tools in their learning process. Though, students believed the extreme use of social media affect their study process as well as it is waste of time and money. Accordingly, this result implies that much more use of social media may waste their money and time, subsequently cause students to lose concentration on their studies. So, it is suggested that in order to save money and time avoid using social media extremely.

The findings of the present study regarding to lack of interest toward negative issues are opposite to previous research findings. Sudha and Kavitha (2016) found that most of the faculty members realised that the students are involved in the use of social media for socializing activities moderately than for academic purposes. Their study results also described that the majority of faculty members believed that addiction to social networking sites are a problematic issue which affects the students' academic performances. Moreover, most of the faculty members realised that social networking sites had negative impacts on the students' academic performances compared with positive impacts, due to lack of awareness among students and faculty members for appropriate use of social networking sites and topics related to educational interest. Also, Heffner and Tara (2016) discovered that social media has negative effects on the students' academic performances.

However, the results of the present study about the positive use of social media by students' may be significant and unique. Because, in general, public has negative image of social media on their mind and believe that the much more interest of students towards internet and social media i.e. Facebook are not useful and affect their academic performances negatively. But findings of the current study showed that social media are not affecting the students' academic performances negatively, instead they bring information, knowledge, news and views of world and home to their palm of hand. Similarly, Valenzuela, Park and Kee (2008) asserted that there are positive relationships between intensity of Facebook use and students' life satisfaction, social trust, civic engagement, and political participation. However, they believed that their results should ease the concerns of those who fear that Facebook has often negative effects on young adults; the positive and significant associations between Facebook variables and social capital were small, suggesting that online social networks are not the most effective solution for youth disengagement from civic duty and democracy.

Moreover, there was no statistically significant difference concerning the negative effects of social media on the students' academic performance. From this result it can be inferred that

social media do not affect students' academic achievements negatively. Therefore, social media will put a meaningful and positive impacts on the students' achievements. That is also helpful for them in terms of developing general and professional abilities through using social media. As Heffner and Tara (2016) stated that social media might be very useful when it comes to academic issues, i.e. discussion boards among classmate and Facebook page for school programs. However, an opposite finding revealed by Wang, Chen and Liang (2011). They stated that social media has negative effects on the students' academic performance. The students' proficiencies and grades were affected through using social media. The study suggests instructors to find better ways to solve this problem.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Overall, social media appeared to be a very useful tool for students in their lessons as they use them to improve their learning process i.e. to communicate effectively with each other, receive university-related issues and get other necessary information. In other words, social media seemed to be modern tools of learning for undergraduates in Afghanistan. However, their negative effects seemed to be very poor as compared to their positive effects as they described that too much use of social media as a concern, which wastes their time and money. It is suggested that the lecturers, faculties and others social media users, especially Facebook pages owners, disseminate advantageous issues which help students in terms of enhancing their knowledge and information. In addition, no differences were found between students' academic achievements and their positive and negative social media use.

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