

# The Role of Social Media on Reshaping Social Behaviors of Youth: A Case Study of Gujrat (Pakistan)

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## Abstract

*The aim of the present research was to investigate the relationship between social media usage and its impact on the social behavior of youth. We surveyed 16 young adults and their parents (mother or father), totaling 32 survey forms. From correlation analysis, it is revealed that the correlation factor is 0.765 between time spent on social media and its negative impact on the social behavior of youth, which is very significant. Moreover, from the descriptive analysis, it is concluded that the positive impact of social media usage on youth's social behavior is 37% on a low level, 56% on a moderate level, and 6% on a high level. According to parents, the positive impact of social media usage on youth's social behavior is 44% on a low level, 44% on a moderate level, and 12% on a high level. These findings provide information to parents, policymakers, government, and non-government organizations regarding social media's impact on the social behavior of youth.*

**Keywords:** Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Social Behavior of Youth, Parents of Youth.

## Introduction

Social media is a modern type of media that has many characteristics and features. The most exciting thing about social media is that it provides many facilities on the same channel, like communicating, texting, image sharing, audio and video sharing, publishing, and connecting with all over the world. It is very important for all ages of people because it is the cheapest access to all. Its usage is increasing day by day at a high rate all over the world. Social media has become intrusive and unavoidable these days, thus impacting the social and cultural foundation of our society. It has revolutionized the way we communicate, interact and socialize. Youth are the most abundant users of social media. Recent studies find that youth spend a magnificent portion of their daily lives using social media. Some common examples of social media are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, instagram, Etc. The question that emerges is about the effects of social media usage on different aspects of the lives of youth. The University of Rome surveyed 50,000 people in Italy and concluded that social media have a negative impact on individuals. Individuals using Facebook or other social media sites are at a greater risk of suffering from hate speech. It is also revealed

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that online users spoil in aggressive or aggressive behavior, and this offensive and aggressive behavior leads to social distrust (Tilak, 2021).

One of the dangers of social media is cyberbullying. It occurs when a person uses sites like Facebook to adopt threatening behavior towards someone during a discussion or sends threatening messages. Psychological experts warn that social media sites can have emotional implications for kids who are already suffering from low self-esteem or confidence. Such children may judge their success by the number of friends they have on Facebook or if they are included in a specific group of people. It may lead to further diminishing of their confidence. Other common concerns include physical inactivity, exposure to negative ideas and bad company, unproductivity, distraction, introversion, and mental dullness.

For this purpose, we conducted our research to find out the impacts of social media on the social behavior of youth. The highlights of the research will help parents and teachers determine the rules of social media usage in the daily lives of youth. Section 2 covers the literature review, section 3 includes the proposed methodology and data collection steps, section 4 covers the deduced findings, and section 5 provides the conclusion.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Our research has the following objectives:

- To measure the moderate and high levels of impact on social behavior by usage of social media
- To measure the relationship between youth's perspectives that time spent on social media has a positive or negative impact on their social behavior
- To measure the relationship between parent's perspectives that time spent on social media has a positive or negative impact on the social behavior of youth

### **Limitations**

This study is conducted in the district of Gujrat, limiting only 16 young adults and their 16 parents. The provided survey forms were close-ended, so there is a possibility that the youth were not able to express their feelings truly or may have hidden, and the submitted forms are biased.

### **Hypotheses**

We made four hypotheses to conduct this research, as listed below:

**H1.** There is a positive correlation between youth's perspective that social media have a positive or negative overall impact on the social behavior of youth.

**H2.** There is a negative correlation between parents' perspectives that social media have a positive or negative overall impact on the social behavior of youth.

**H3.** There is a positive relationship between the time spent on social media and its negative impact on social behavior from the youth's perspective.

**H4.** There is a negative relationship between the time spent on social media and its positive impact on social behavior from the parent's perspective.

### **Literature Review**

This section covers the previous research that discussed the usage of social media and its impact on the social behavior of youth. Hashim et al. conducted a study and investigated differences and similarities between King Abdulaziz University (KAU) arts and science students' perceptions of social media's impact on social behavior. Data was collected using a survey during the academic year 2013-2014. The sample size was 2605 male and female students of different ages, and it was

presented that arts students are heavier users of social media compared to science students. The findings supported the advantages of social media use on students' social behavior and did not indicate any obvious disadvantages. Differentiating factors include that the science students exhibited interest in respecting the opinions of others, and the arts students were more into freedom of expression (Hashim, 2016). Akubugwo et al. examined the academic relevance, possible effects on social behavior, and academic progress of postgraduate students who are great users of social media. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection, involving questionnaire administration and oral interviews. Eighteen questions with Likert model responses in a questionnaire were physically administered to 120 randomly selected postgraduate students who have social media accounts.

In contrast, six other students were interviewed differently face to face, and their responses were recorded. The obtained data were analyzed using a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), and results revealed that many students use social media, especially Facebook and that they spend an increasing amount of quality time on these networks. The findings of this study suggest that social media could negatively impact students' social behavior and academic progress and that a timed-off software should be installed to control its use by students (Akubugwo, 2013).

Flannery et al. conducted a study to look for the impact of social media on youth. His study revealed that 93% of youth used the internet, and the use of the internet caused electronic aggression, self-harm, depression, bullying, and suicide (Flannery, 2015). Njoroge et al. conducted a study on selected students of Kenya University to look at the impact of social media on youth behavior change. They concluded that technology has a powerful positive impact on students (Njoroge, 2013). Shabir et al. discussed that youth interest shifted speedily from electronic media like television and radio to social media. This craze of social media has a great impact on society as it affects the living styles of all, especially youth (Shabir, 2014). Rouse et al. defined social media as it is the collection of online communications channels dedicated to interaction, sharing, and collaboration (Rouse, 2015). Lenhart et al. wisely researched the use of social media and the use of mobile internet among teens and young adults.

The findings revealed that 73% of teens now use social networking, which is a big increase in the usage of social networking. Further, it revealed that Twitter is the most used by teens. 62% of teens used Twitter and mostly used Twitter for political awareness. The author also reported that the usage of cell phones ratio is high at age 17 at 83% (Lenhart 2010).

## **Methodology**

The present study was a correlational study aimed at investigating the relationship between the usage of social media and its impact on the social behavior of youth.

## **Population**

The target population of the present study was youth of different age groups who used social media between 14 and 23 years old. The target population is also the parents of the sampled youth.

## **Sampling Technique**

A sample of 16 students and 16 parents (either mother or father) is selected using a convenient sampling technique.

## **Categories of Construction**

In this study, two categories of construction were made.

1. Youth
2. Parents of youth

We took demographical variables and questions related to positive and negative impacts on the social behavior of youth caused by the usage of social media.

### Theoretical Framework

This study uses social learning theory, which highlights the importance of observing, modeling, and then imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. It tells that behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning (McLeod, 2011). We applied this theory to observe that children pay attention to people/characters in the surroundings where they spend most of their time and encode their behavior. At a later time, they may imitate the behavior they have observed.

### Data Collection

The study was conducted to measure the relationship between the usage of social media and its impact on the social behavior of youth. The participants were informed that their identities will be kept confidential. Instructions were given to the participants that they should read each item of the questionnaire carefully and choose only one option that is more suitable according to their opinion. Respondents filled out the questionnaire in three sections. Firstly, they filled in demographic variables, and then two sections were filled in, asking about the negative impact on social behavior and the positive impact on the social behavior of youth. Each section contained questions that were divided into different categories. After data collection, data was analyzed by using SPSS (statistical package for social sciences).

### Results

The results of the conducted research measure the impact of social media on the social behavior of youth. The data collected by youth and their parents with demographics is presented in the table form here. Table 1 provides information about the age, education, gender, social media applications being used, time spent on social media, language to process social media apps/sites, and details about personal or guest accounts.

**Table 1: Frequency and percentage of the demographic variables of youth (n=16).**

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Education	Middle	1	6
	Metric	6	37
	Intermediate	6	37
	Above Intermediate	3	18
Age	14	1	6
	16	2	12
	17	1	6
	18	1	6
	19	5	31
	20	4	25
	21	1	6
	23	1	6

Gender	Male	5	31
	Female	11	69
Social media apps	Whatsapp	3	19
	Facebook	9	56
	Instagram	4	25
Time spent on social media	< 2 hours	6	37
	2- 5 hours	6	37
	5- 10 hours	4	25
Language	English	11	69
	English + Urdu	5	31
Personal Account	Yes	16	100
	No	0	0

As indicated in Table 1, the sample consisted of 16 participants. There were more boys (42%) than girls (58%), and mainly participants were admitted in metric and intermediate 37%, and 37% respectively. The age groups revealed that most participants lie at the age of 19 years, making a total of 31%. Moreover, the use of social media apps mostly talks about Facebook, which is 56%, compared to WhatsApp usage, which is 19%, and Instagram usage is 25%. It also reveals that time spent on social media is equally likely for less than 2 hours and between 2 to 5 hours (37%). Moreover, the participants of the current research used the English language while using social media platforms on their accounts.

**Table 2: Frequency and percentage of the demographics of the parents of the youth (n=16)**

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Education	Metric	2	12
	Intermediate	6	37
	Bachelors	5	31
	Masters	3	18
Age	45	4	25
	50	6	37
	55	4	25
	60	2	12
Gender	Male	7	44
	Female	9	56
Social media apps	Whatsapp	5	31
	Facebook	9	56
	Instagram	2	12
Time spent on social media	< 2 hours	4	25
	2- 5 hours	6	37
	5- 10 hours	6	37
Language	English	11	69
	English + Urdu	5	31
Personal Account	Yes	16	100
	No	0	0
Educate about use of social media	Yes	8	50
	No	8	50

Table 2 shows that there were more mothers (56%) than fathers (44%) who filled in the survey for their kids, and the education-wise concentration of parents lies at intermediate 37% and bachelor 31%. The age group of parents was mostly around 50 years, contributing to 37% of the parents' population. This table shows that according to parents, more children were using Facebook (69%) than WhatsApp (31%) than Instagram (12%). This order is different than the forms filled by youth. As far as time spent on social media is concerned, according to parents, the most time spent was between 2 to 5 hours and 5 to 10 hours, both providing 37%. Moreover, the youth participants mostly use the English language, and 100% use their accounts. The survey also inferred that 50% of parents properly educate their children about the usage of social media.

**Table 3: Normality Test**

Variable	Mean $\bar{x}$	Skewness SE	Kurtosis SE	Sig. P
Youth	1.524	-0.487 (.564)	-0.422 (1.091)	0.575
Parents	2.49	-0.647 (.564)	-1.085 (1.091)	0.017

Table 3 shows that as the sample of the present study was 16, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test was used. The significant value of the Shapiro-wilk student scale was greater than 0.05 (0.575), so the data was normal. For parents n=16 again, and the sig. The value of the Shapiro-wilk parent's scale was less than 0.05 (.017), so the data was not normal.

**Table 4: Categorizing “Low”, “Moderate” and “High” levels on impact of social media in social behavior of youth from youth's perspective**

Variables	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)
Positive impact	37	56	6
Negative impact	13	62	25
Overall impact	25	75	0

Table 4 indicates that according to youth, the positive impact of usage of social media on the social behavior of youth on a low level is 37%, on a moderate level is 56%, and on a high level is 6%. The negative impact of usage of social media on the social behavior of youth at a low level is 13%, on a moderate level is 62%, and on a high level is 25%. The results also revealed that the overall impact of usage of social media on the social behavior of youth is 75% on a moderate level from the youth's perspective; thus, we accept our H1.

**Table 5: Categorizing “Low”, “Moderate” and “High” levels on impact of social media in social behavior of youth from parents' perspective**

Variables	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)
Positive impact	44	44	12
Negative impact	75	6	19
Overall impact	87	13	0

Table 5 indicates that according to parents, the positive impact of usage of social media on the social behavior of youth at a low level is 44%, on a moderate level is 44%, and on a high level is 12%. The negative impact of usage of social media on the social behavior of youth at a low level is 75%, on a moderate level is 6%, and on a high level is 19%. The results also revealed that the



overall impact of usage of social media on social behavior on a moderate level is 13% from parents' perspective; thus, we accept our H2.

**Table 6: Correlation of impact of social media usage on social behavior from youth and parents' perspective**

	Youth perspective	P -value
<b>Parents perspective</b>	.699(**)	.003

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

Table 6 shows that there is positive correlation (.003) between youth's perspective that social media have impact on social behavior and parent's perspective that social media have impact on social behavior.

**Table 7: Correlation of time spent on social media and positive or negative impact on social behavior in youth from youth's perspective**

	Time spent	P -value
<b>Positive impact</b>	-0.145	.593
<b>Negative impact</b>	0.81	.765

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

Table 7 shows that there is a negative relationship (.593) between the time spent on social media and its positive impact on the social behavior of youth. Moreover, results revealed that there is an insignificant relationship (.765) between time spent on social media and the negative impact of social media usage on social behavior from the youth's perspective; thus, we accept our H3.

**Table 8: Correlation of time spent on media and its positive or negative impact on social behavior in youth from parents' perspective**

	Time spent	P -value
<b>Positive impact</b>	-0.269	.314
<b>Negative impact</b>	-0.497	.050

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

Table 8 shows that there is a negative insignificant relationship (.314) between the time spent on social media and its positive impact on the social behavior of youth from parents' perspective; thus, we accept our H4. Moreover, the results revealed that there is a negative relationship (.050) between time spent on social media and its negative impact on the social behavior of youth from parents' perspective.

## Conclusion

Our research work concludes that the increasing trend of usage of social media apps in youth has a negative and positive impact on the social behavior of youth. It is studied in great detail by collecting a survey from the youth and their parents to fill the information for youth to provide useful conclusions to the parents, teachers, and policymakers. This research can further be enhanced in the direction of limiting the use of certain social apps in the daily life of youth and providing a useful impact on the social behavior of youth.

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