

The Effects of Social Networks on Pakistani Students

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Abstract

In the present world of technology, Internet plays a vital role in student's life. Students use the internet facility for different purposes i.e., communication, preparation, acquiring knowledge, entertainment etc. In this research, our task is to find the impact of social networks on student's physical and psychological health. We also find that how social networks impact the academics of students. Lastly, we discuss how youngsters got compromised by their personal and private data. In the end, we figured out that the excessive use of social networks effect the students' physical and psychological health negatively. Social Networking Platforms have a positive impact on their academics. A number of students have been harassed and their personal data has been misused due to lack of knowledge about security and privacy policies. Therefore, we suggested that social media should be taught as a subject or at a workshop/seminar for the awareness of cybercrimes and the policies (security and privacy both).

Keywords: Social networking sites (SNS); Social media; Academics; Health; Awareness; Privacy; Security policies

Introduction

In this era of technology, Internet plays a dynamic role in almost every field of life. Through internet, users can communicate with each other using different platforms. Students use this facility for communication, preparing different projects, assignment and presentations. There are different platforms for different purposes. For formal communication users usually use Gmail, Yahoo mail or Hotmail. For casual talks or sharing different kind of stuff users prefer Facebook, twitter or Instagram. For contacting someone urgently users avail the facility of WhatsApp. For online streaming users use YouTube. And for online games, users go to miniclip or blizzard entertainment.

Social media is a concept based on a platform for the people around the world to discuss their issues and opinions and exchange information. And social networking sites (SNS) are basically those tools that allows the people to exchange information, ideas, images, videos and much more through a specific network. Few examples of SNS are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blizzard Entertainment, WhatsApp etc. SNS provide its users a facility to create their own profile with their own list of users. With this list of users, the person can connect at that specific platform and that platform offers different features like chatting, blogging, audio and video calling, mobile connectivity and video and photo sharing.

Facebook provides its users to make their own profile. Besides this, the users can create a page or group, which can be used for marketing purpose or educational purpose etc. Facebook also provides different facilities like; blocking, following, posting, commenting, liking, sharing, messaging and audio/video calls. Using twitter, a user can make an account and then can avail the facility of tweeting, retweeting, messaging and adding other users as followers.

Instagram users post pictures to let their followers know what is happening around them. The followers can like comment and share the posts. You Tube is a platform where users make channels and then upload videos. The viewers watch the videos and can report, dislike, like, comment and share the video on other social platforms. The users can search any video by its name as well. Gamers who use online gaming platforms avail the facility of multiplayer gaming mode and besides that they can chat with each other. In this paper we will review the past literature available to understand the role of social media in student's life and then we will find out the positive and negative impacts of social networking platforms on student's physical and psychological health and also how it affects the student's academics in Pakistan.

Literature Review

According to O'Keeffe GS and Clarke-Pearson K [1], social media impacted more in negative side. It includes accessing inappropriate contents without understanding the privacy policies. They also said that after the introduction of social media, there is more online harassment and cyberbullying.

Ahn J [2] while doing research presented a theory known as "Signaling Theory". According to her theory, an individual while trying to make himself/herself popular adds so many unknown users as his/her friend, and this is how an individual compromises their own trust and privacy.

Rideout V [3] said that the youth is spending more time on social media just for entertainment purpose. She told that an American child on average spends 7-8 hours a day, just for entertainment and usually multi-task between different social networks they use.

Pardo A [4] has made an effort to explain social media's importance in student's life. He said that such platforms allow students to communicate with each other for sharing information and teachers as well. Pardo states that such kind of interactions are necessary for people to learn new things.

Cain J and Chretien K [5] introduced a new term "interprofessional education". It is defined as when different individuals come together on a single platform to share knowledge which leads to improved and better understanding as they are learning from each other's experiences.

El-Badawy TA and Hashem Y [6] in their research concluded that social media has no relationship with student's academic performance. And there is no impact (positive or negative) on student's academic routine.

According to Tariq W and Mehboob M [7], social media is ruining the future and carrier of students. It distracts students from their

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studies. Further on, they analyzed the data collected from a survey that there is a very large number of users using social media with multiple IDs (real and fake one). Lastly they said that in Pakistan there are no such laws for social networking sites to be followed.

Kalia G [8] in her research paper concluded that the students should be engaged on a social platform with each other to learn better and more. Teachers should help kids to understand 'what social media is?' and its fair use. Finally she said that social media is an entertainment world but it can also be used for educative and professional purposes.

Shahjahan ATM and Chisty KU [9] came to the conclusion that the overall effect of social media on teenagers is negative. Because of addiction to social platforms, students usually get low grades. Parents are not aware of their children's social accounts and their policies, which affect them later on. The teenagers lack confidence and try to avoid face-to-face communications.

Siddiqui S and Singh T [10] discussed both the positive and negative aspects of social media. Students can make a group of their class on any social platform where they can discuss and express themselves. They can share useful information by using that specific platform. They can explore the opportunities for their future. But it also distracts students from their academics. Teenagers are not completely aware of the terms and policies and that social platform. And they misuse it by creating fake accounts for fun purposes and later on get addicted to it.

Khurana N [11] discovered that in India 66% of the youth uses social platforms for at least 2 hours a day. He also discovered that a very large number of youngsters have been victimized by cyber-crimes. And finally he concluded that it all happens just because of not understanding the terms and conditions properly.

Zeitel-Bank N [12] in her paper summarized that social platforms provide us the opportunity to share a local news and make it a global one. But if one business firm spread a fake news about his rival, it hardly takes minutes to damage the company's reputation and shares. And same is the scene in politics, one viral video can have a huge impact on you individually and distributed as well.

Mingle J and Adams M [13] came to the conclusion that besides the positive impact of social media on student's academics, it is dangerous in many ways. It distracts students from their studies and students get addicted to social networks unconsciously because of its extremely user-friendly interface. And it later on affects the grades of students.

Wang Q, et al. [14] conducted a survey in which they found out that Facebook is the most popular social platform. Students spent vast hours checking social media posts. Students use social platforms during their classes, using their cell phones. 90% of the students use social networks for entertainment purposes only. It affects the efficiencies and their grades as well. Social platforms distract students from their academics because of its attractive and user-friendly interface.

Abdulahi A, et al. [15] did a research on the negative effects of social networking platforms. They found out that students also use social platforms on their cell phones during the lectures. The fact that students miss their lectures leads them to low grades in academics. Slowly, social networking sites also lead them to get addicted to it, and then users use it day and night. This affects the student's health. In hope of getting more friends, users usually share their own personal data, which later on can be misused and they compromise their privacy and security.

Li Y [16] in his research concluded that social networking platform itself is a mass-oriented, social and value-neutral. Their value depends upon the user's application. There is much messy, mixed, false and

untrue information on social platforms, which cannot fully meet the demands of students in China. It also adds risks for students with regards to their privacy and security.

Chanchalor S, et al. [17] had done a detailed quantitative research regarding the effects of online gaming on the health effects of online gamers. The symptom of drowsiness and dizziness was the first disorder, then insomnia, annoyance, pain in the occipital bone or back. The least symptom was avoidance of their social contacts. They also concluded that students who played violent games decreased on EQ, sympathy, responsibility, decision making and good relationship. And those students who play less violent games have no positive effect on EQ.

Fu-Yun Y and Yu-Hsin L [18] worked on using social media (Facebook) as a teaching and learning tool for in-class Q&A activities.

They performed a survey and after data analysis, four features were identified: enhanced social interaction, more focused learning, more amiable classroom environment and deepened thinking about the awareness of the complexity of the study topic.

Leelathakul N and Chaioah K [19] studied the effects of using Facebook as an educational tool for students to acquire knowledge. They explored the correlation between different Facebook activities and student's performances in classes. They concluded that Facebook is good for students as a learning tool and they also said that an individual activity aspect is not linearly correlated with students' result.

De Silva E and De Silva EC [20] in their research discussed the importance of multidisciplinary approach in online classrooms, and to create a learner-centered environment for the students for their clear focus on what they are going to learn, why they are learning and what competencies are expected. They also concluded that with multidisciplinary approach student will be able to identify pragmatic solutions to common problems through interaction, interconnection and integration with other fields.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to understand the difference between social media and social networking sites. Then we will discuss its impact on students' academics, physical health, psychological health and security and privacy issues. Finally we will present our recommendations after discussing the results and conclusions.

Results and Discussion

We have arranged a survey, in which we asked the respondents different questions regarding social networking sites and its upshots. Our targeted audience was mostly students aged between 16-26. Our total responses were 100.

After getting the data from survey, we statistically analyzed all the questions with respect to their variance, standard deviation, mean, standard error and satisfaction rate.

Lastly, we took the average of all the values for referencing in our paper. The values are given below:

Variance: 6.18

Standard deviation = σ : 1.50

Mean = \bar{x} or μ : 3.06

Standard error: 0.15

Satisfaction rate: 56.38

Popular social platform

When we ask the students that which platforms they use? They told us that, in the present world of technology everyone uses some kind of social network for some purpose. Few of us use social networks for acquiring knowledge, some people use for making new friends around the globe, few of us use to make themselves updated regarding the events occurred in the classes like assignment or presentations etc. Some of the students use social platforms for entertainment purpose. 33% of the students use Facebook, 23% use WhatsApp, 21% use YouTube, 12% Instagram, 9% Twitter and 2% other social platforms i.e., snapchat and Imo (Figure 1).

Purpose of using social networks

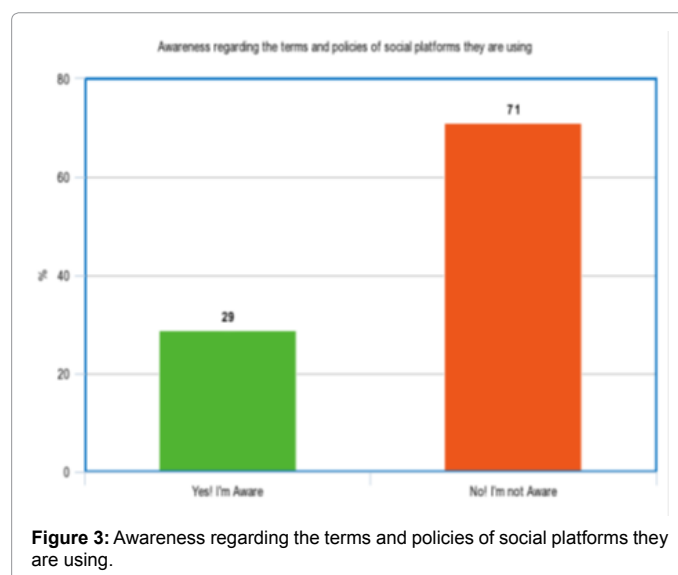
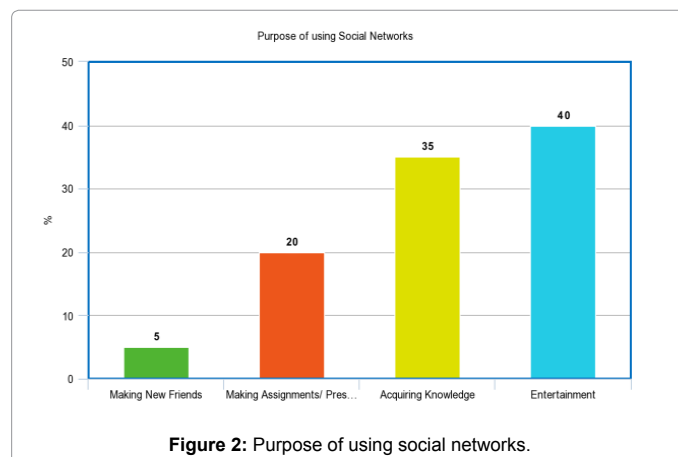
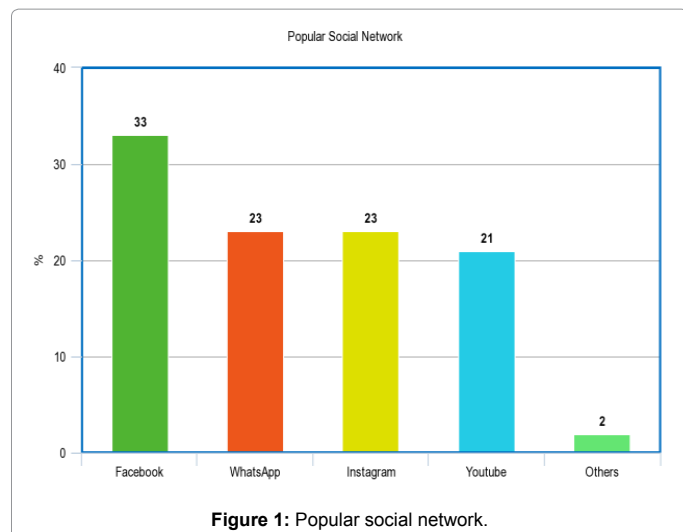
Students use social networks for many reasons, like online gaming, chatting with their friends, watching movies/videos, making new friends, learning something new, doing assignment etc. According to our survey, 40% of the student use the social networking platforms for entertainment purposes, which further includes online gaming, chatting, watching online videos etc. 35% use social networking platforms for educative purposes. It includes watching online tutorials regarding their courses, reading online material etc. 20% students use social platforms to keep themselves updated regarding the current activities in their classes. Like presentation updates, assignment and its deadlines etc. Only 5% students are interested in making new friends around the globe. The purpose of these students is to learn their culture and if they have any scope in different countries for jobs or further education (Figure 2).

Awareness about the terms and policies

When the students were asked that are you aware of the terms and policies of the network/platform you are using, 71% of the students refused that they are not aware of the terms and policies of the social networks they are using. 29% students agreed that they understand the terms and policies of the social networking platforms they are using (Figure 3).

Impact of social networking platforms on academics

73% of the responses quoted that social networking platforms play a positive role in our academics. Social platforms have a positive impact on our studies during the exams as well. Just 27% have the negative opinion. They think that social platforms usually distracts us from



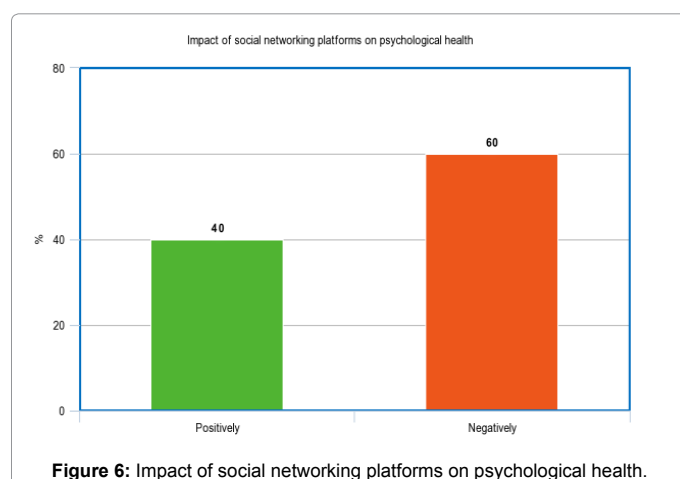
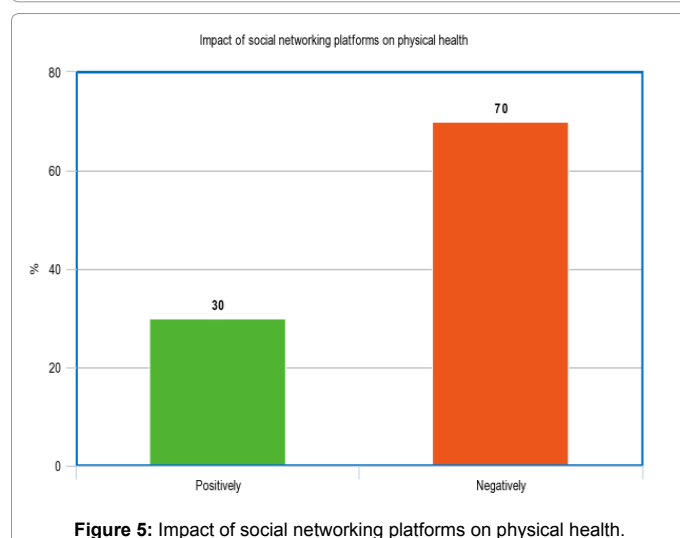
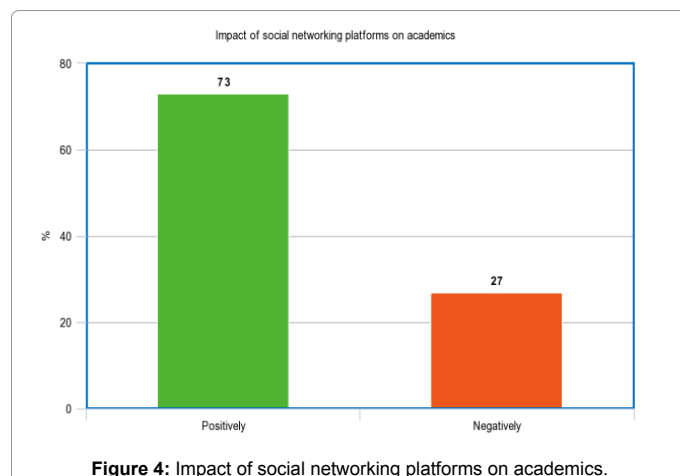
our studies, especially during exams (Figure 4). 60% think that SNS play a negative role, when we talk about the psychological health of students. They think that online gamers are the people who are affected negatively by the extreme use of SNS. For other users, whenever any platform becomes an addiction, it will affect their psychology in a negative way (Figure 5).

Impact of social networking platforms on physical health

According to 70% of our respondents, SNS has a negative impact on their physical health. They think that once you get addicted to any social platform, then it will affect your time and physical health negatively. 30% said that it has a positive impact on their physical health. They think that if we use social platforms in a balanced way, then it will not affect your physical health negatively (Figure 6).

How to spread awareness regarding social networks

When the students were asked about the ways or techniques to spread awareness regarding different aspects/ dimensions of Social Media and Social Networking Platforms. 24% of the students thought that it should be taught as a subject in schools or colleges. 33% suggested that in a workshop, the students should be taught different dimensions of social media and also make them understand the security and privacy policies. 43% advised that during a seminar at different schools, colleges



and universities, the positive and negative aspects of using SNS should be discussed. By doing this, we can also spread awareness regarding different issues related to social networks.

Impact of social networking platforms on psychological health

According to 40% of our respondents, SNS have a positive impact on students' psychological health (Figure 7).

Cybercrimes

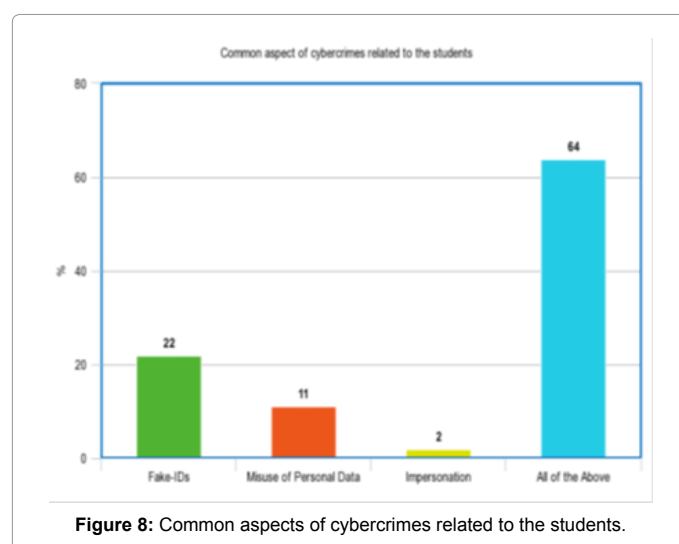
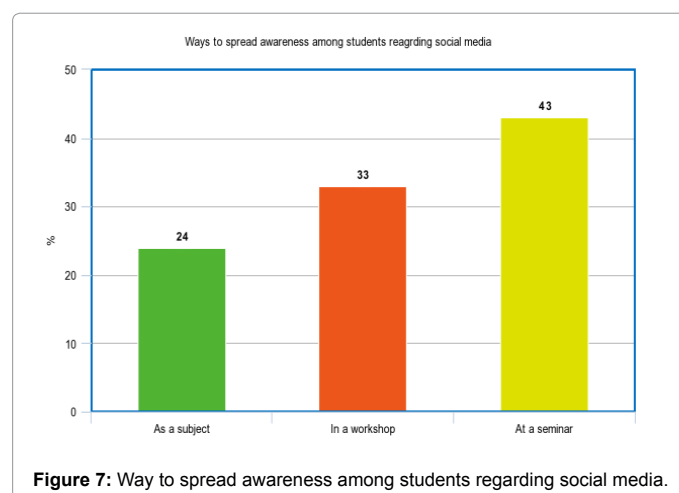
During the survey, we asked the students about the cybercrimes. They told us that we have heard people doing different illegal activities, like misuse of someone's personal data, using fake-ids and impersonation. 22% agrees that they have seen fake-ids on different social networks. 11% agreed that sometimes data has been misused for different purposes as well as for illegal activities. Only 2% mentioned the crime 'impersonation'. 64% respondents told us that all the crimes are present in today's world (Figure 8).

Awareness to cybercrimes

Regarding the above question about the cybercrimes, we asked the students about any kind of exposure to any cybercrime. 89% answered the question negatively. Just 11% responded positively (Figure 9). After understanding the analyzed data from the survey, we understand the purpose of the students to use SNS. Secondly, we also got to know about the unawareness regarding different dimensions of using social platforms. Lastly, we concluded that the new generation is indifferent to cybercrimes. Students who spend more time on social platforms are trying to get more socialized and because of this, they get addicted to a social platform, which slowly affects their health.

Future Work

In my opinion, the current research work lays down reasonably



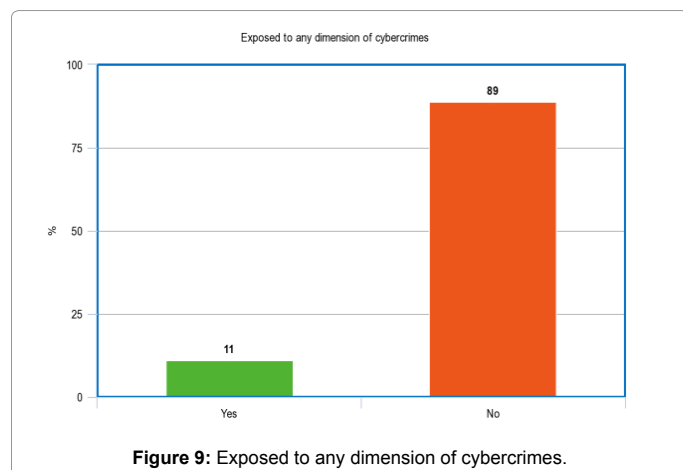


Figure 9: Exposed to any dimension of cybercrimes.

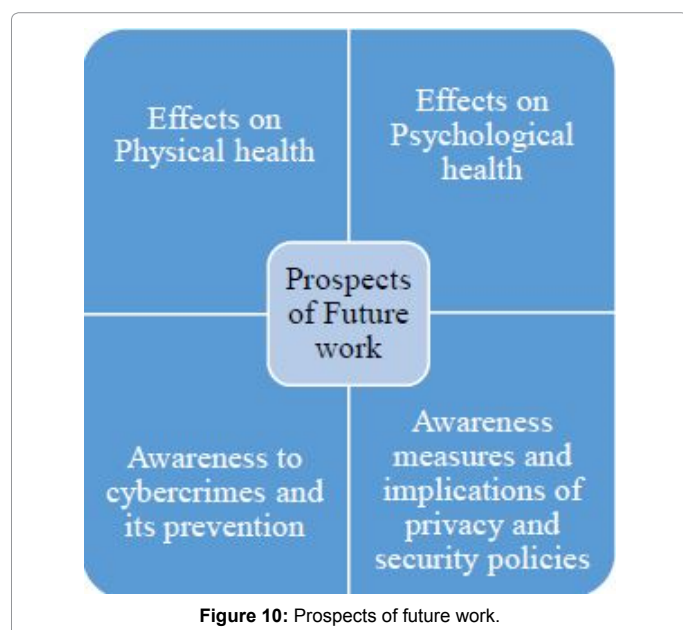


Figure 10: Prospects of future work.

good foundations for the futuristic research work particularly in the dimensions as shown in the figure given below (Figure 10).

Conclusion

In the end we will discuss the concluded facts, which we discovered from reviewing the past literature and by doing the survey through a questionnaire. At the end we will give certain suggestions to be followed to make the students' health and life safer. First thing we discovered was that in Pakistan, every student is using some kind of platform for socializing as well as for academic and educational purposes. Most of the students have accounts on Facebook and use YouTube for different purposes. If the students use these platforms in a balanced way, it will not harm their health. Secondly, we found out that there is a huge number of users who are unaware of the terms and policies of the social networks they are using. Most of the time, the users download the applications on their mobile phones and they without reading the terms and conditions press OK/Allow button to download their desired applications. Understanding the terms and policies of any platform is very much important. It can affect someone's security and privacy negatively. Thirdly, we came to the conclusion that social networks plays a positive role in students' academic activities.

Especially using Facebook, classmates make a group and share the lectures, presentations, assignments on that group. During exams, they share important questions etc. it helps the whole class to know and to understand the issues or problems in detail. The next thing we discovered was that using social platforms for entertainment purposes has a negative impact on students' physical health. Those users who plays online games and those who are addict to any social platform become physically sick. Different kinds of symptoms have been observed like dizziness, drowsiness, insomnia, annoyance and pain in the occipital bone of back. In some cases, they become so unsocial in their real lives that they ignore meeting face to face with their friends and family. We also got to know that excessive use of social platforms or playing online games for a longer duration also affect your psychological health negatively. We found out that students who spent more than five hours surfing on different social platforms and playing online games are affected by psychological health issues like stress, mood disorder, anxiety disorder etc. We figured out that there is a large number of social networks users who are actually not aware of the terms and policies of the platform, they are using. It can further lead them being victimized by cyber experts, as well as they also face problems with their personal data being misused in different ways. We concluded that this generation is a quite indifferent to cybercrimes. They are not interested in what kind of crimes are going on around them. Their posts contain violent material and they feel happy when other users react to their posts. Everyone is aware of different kinds of cybercrimes like fake Ids, fake news, libel, misuse of personal stuff and impersonation. But most of the time students do not take such things seriously. Lastly, we discovered that "Social Media" is as deep as an ocean. Therefore it should be taught properly whether as a subject or through seminars or workshops. It is imperative to spread awareness regarding different dimensions of social media. Some of them are given below:

- Pros and cons of using social platforms.
- Proper and legal use of social networks.
- Understanding the terms and policies of different social networks.
- How to keep your account secure and safe?

Recommendations

- After discussing the results and giving the conclusion, we recommend the following things to be noted and acted upon to have a better and safer future:
- Age limit: There should be age limit to the users of different social platforms.
- Parental guidance and check: Parents should have a little check on their kids as well as guide them, so that they use such platforms in a proper manner to avoid the imbalance in their physical and psychological health.
- General awareness: The awareness should be spread around, to understand the social networks properly.
- Teaching social media: Social Media should be taught as a subject or during a workshop or at a seminar.
- Awareness regarding cybercrimes: students should learn how to secure their accounts from different cyber-attacks and what to do if they get victimized.
- Awareness regarding terms and policies: Students should also learn and understand the terms and policies of all the social platforms they have been signed up.

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