IMPACT OF FACEBOOK ON THE TRENDS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Abdul Malik Abbasi[1], Ajab Ali Lashari[2], Hatesh Kumar[3], Saher Khan[4], Kiran Rathore[5]

Abstract

This paper aims to explore the impact of social website Facebook on academics and trends of lifestyle of the university students. It is one of the most popular social websites because it is used by a great number of students around the world. The study was conducted to explore the effects of social website on its users. It was hypothesized that the use of Facebook is a source of entertainment and medium of connecting students. There are some risks of Facebook exploitation in terms of its privacy, data security and its negative use which can affect students' social life. The samplings were collected from the public sector university. There were total forty-six (N= 46) students. Twenty-three (n=23) were female coupled with 23 (n=23) male students of age group 18-25 years. Likert Scale was used for quantifying the results. However, the questionnaire was developed with open-ended and closed-ended queries/statements. The bar charts were developed through illustration of percentage. MS Excel program was used to further quantify the data. The findings of the study reveal that most of the Facebook users utilize it for communication, information, fun, and to be social globally. The study recommends that students should critically analyses the images, requests for friendship and videos before they accept them. They should count on only reliable sources of information rather than relying on every post they receive. They should keep balance between the use of social media, academics, and physical social world. However, excessive use of Facebook may affect academics and bring deleterious results.

Introduction

Facebook has become one of the most popular social websites, where, young minds devote a lot time and energy. The students use Facebook for many reasons, however, its impact on students is unpredictable. Though, many students use these social sites to connect and share information with one another but some researchers (Ellison, Steinfeld & Lampe, 2007; Valenzuela, Park & Kee, 2008; Pasek, More & Romer, 2018) claim that these social network sites have drastic effects on academic performance and on the personality traits. However, some researchers believe that it also depends on the users as to what and how they use it. Therefore, the study needed to discover the effects of social network sites in specific context. Basically, Facebook offers platform where students share information, pictures, and videos to express opinions. Thus, Facebook users might become dependent and use it too often. Hugarti (2007) expresses though it has some negative impacts referencing to cybercrimes, yet it is used by them frequently all over the world. Additionally, the author hypothesizes that it also greatly affects the students' behavior, attitude and way of thinking. The students employ a lot of time using it and they even ignore their family members. Above and beyond its benefits, it also wastes time a lot and the issue of secure information constantly remains question as Zuckerberg (2009) articulates explicitly that he wants to make the platform where information could be shared and controlled simultaneously. The main purpose of this analysis was to highlight the points and questions why people particularly students use Facebook, which feature of Facebook attracts to its operators, the effects of Facebook on their life, its merits and demerits. This study will overview the students' views about its privacy setting that how secure they feel while sharing personal information, pictures and to quantify how much time they spend on Facebook.

Objectives

To find out the main purpose of using Facebook.
To investigate the effects of Facebook on students' life.
To explore the cyber-crime as committed on Facebook.

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[1] Associate Professor of English, Department of Allied Subjects, Sindh Madresstul Islam University, Karachi
[2] Lecturer in Education, Department of Education, Sindh Madresstul Islam University, Karachi
[3] Lecturer in English, Department of Allied Subjects, Sindh Madresstul Islam University, Karachi
[4] Student of Computer Science Department, Sindh Madresstul Islam University, Karachi
[5] Student of Computer Science Department, Sindh Madresstul Islam University, Karachi

Literature Review

Nowadays students are exposed to state of the art modern technology in personal and academic capacity. Unlike electronic gadgets i.e., laptops, tablets and cell phones are used to access online social networks (Cassidy, Griffin, Manolovitz, Shen, & Turney, 2011). Millions of people particularly students use social network sites like Facebook, Twitter and Myspace to stay connected with one another. Facebook is the most popular website these days. It was revealed in a survey conducted on 3000 students in USA that 90 % students use Facebook and 37% of them use Twitter for connecting and sharing information with one another (Dahlstrom, De Boor, Grunwald, & Vockley, 2011). Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, (2009) claims that students use Facebook at least 30 minutes every day to connect with one another. Facebook has influenced nearly every sphere of life of students. In this context, another study was conducted to explore various aspects of Facebook. Junco (2011) compares Facebook usage and students' involvement. The study revealed that students who spent more time on Facebook were more involved in co-curricular activities and had its positive impact. In addition, Junco (2012) also measured frequency of using Facebook, time consumed by students in preparing for class and its impact on overall grades and GPAs. It was established with the help of linear regression that students' overall grades and GPA were highly affected due to time consumption on Facebook. In addition, Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) also found the negative relationship between academic performance of students and Facebook users. They found negative relationship and claimed that Facebook users possess lower GPA as compared to non-users of Facebook. Moreover, a few researchers also investigated the impact of social sites on different genders. Like, Haq & Chand (2012) also maintain that academic performance of male students as compared to female students has adversely been affected by using Facebook.

On the contrary, Anas (2013) claims that Facebook increases the multitasking abilities of students, but it also affects the academic performance as the more time is consumed, the more students are affected. Marche (2012) argues that social media provides the place where individuals can control social life in their own manner. Thus, students have become more dependent on Facebook, therefore, it becomes websites to control. In addition to whichever benefits of connecting and shaping the social life are, there is constantly the risk of safety. Turkle (2011) argues "Alone together: why we expect more from technology and less from each other". Younger generation uses social media network to be connected with students but at all times looks for safety whether the information is safe or not. Online safety and security of new generation becomes risky in case they share sensitive information. Additionally, the frequent use of internet and social network websites made students dependent on internet usage. The excessive use of social network sites causes health and behavior problems which is also known as internet addiction. The internet addiction or psychological dependency ultimately results in excessive use of social sites (Kandell, 1998; Grifths, 2000). However, Young (1998) claims that it is not the internet which makes users addictive, but the interactive nature of social sites makes them addictive.

In early 2000s, the web based sites were made personal as social network sites to share personal information with one another. The websites were developed where individuals could make their profile as a public or semipublic within a restricted territory to stay connected with them and see one another status. The primary purpose of social network websites is to be social, and the rules sites vary greatly. In this day and age, millions of students use social network sites regularly to stay in touch with others. Today, one of the most popular social sites is Facebook. People use Facebook at least 30 minutes in a day (Pempek et al., 2009). It is informative, interactive, and most convenient social site of this era. Initially, it was created by Mark Zukerberg and his fellows to connect students of Harvard University and the college students (Zeevi, 2013). The World Wide Web has been transformed and its primary function has been transformed from information provider to social networking. The users do not only receive information, but they are highly involved in producing information (Bruns, 2008).

Hypotheses

H1. Facebook is a source of entertainment and a medium of connecting students.
H2. There are some risks of Facebook use in terms of its privacy & Data Security.
H3. Negative use of Facebook can affect students' social life.

Research Questions

Q1. Do students consider Facebook to be a good source of information?
Q2. Are there any risks of Facebook use with reference to Privacy & Data Security?
Q3. Does negative use of Facebook affect students' social life?

Methodology
The study has been conducted at Sindh Madressatul Islam University, Karachi. The sample size of the study is N= 46 students who are regular users of Facebook. The data have been quantified though percentage using MS Excel. Good care has been taken while constructing questionnaire and collecting the data. The questionnaire is based on Likert Scale and there are 41 items. Eleven top questions were selected in terms of discussing graphic results, however, all 41 items have been examined. The options in questionnaire are 'Strongly Disagree' = 1, 'Moderately Disagree' =2, 'Slightly Disagree'=3, 'Slightly Agree'=4, 'Moderately Agree'= 5, 'Strongly Agree'=6'. While there were other options i.e., 'Important', 'Very Important', Unimportant, Moderate important, Of Little Important, and 'Yes'- 'No' options. The questionnaires were open-ended and closed ended. The students willingly participated in the study which meets the criteria of ethical considerations of research. The number of male participants were *n= 23* and female were *n=23* students between 18 to 25 age group. The questionnaires were administered amongst the participating subjects.

Data Analysis
The responses of the students have been illustrated through percentage with bar chart graphs. The subjects were asked in response to the statement that how much amount of time they spend per day on Facebook. Fig. 1 illustrates 35% male respondents spend (0>1) hours, 26% spends (2-4) hours, 4% spends (5-8) hours and 35% respondents responded that there is no specified time of using it. Female 26% students spends (0>1) hours, 30% spends (2-4) hours, no one spends (5-8) hours and 43% said that there is no specified time of using it. Overall subjects 61% spends (0>1) hours, 57% spends (2-4) hours, 4% spends (5-8) hours and 78% said that there is no specified time of using it. Therefore, most users do not have specific time of using Facebook they just use it whenever they have time.
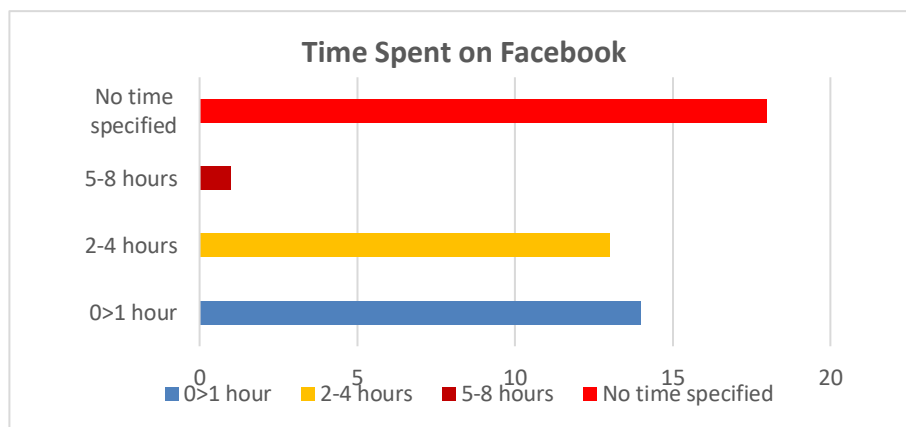

Figure 1. Illustrates the responses across male & female subjects

In response to the statement, why they use Facebook. Fig. 2 illustrates 29% respondents use it for communicating with friends, 27% use it just for the sake of fun, 10% for being social, 8% use for other preferences, 8% use just for time pass 7% for playing games, 6% for sharing and posting links and 5% use for getting information. The statistical results indicate that majority of the respondents use it for communication purpose and for the sake of fun.
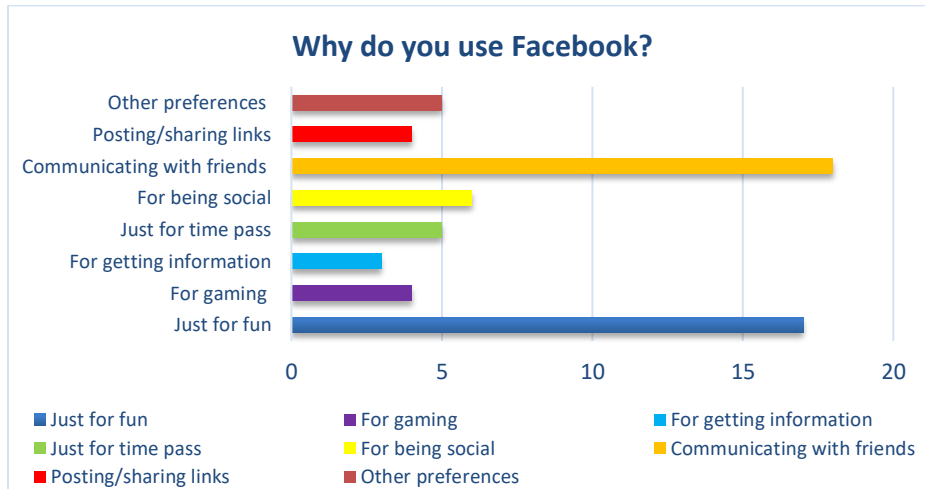
Figure 2. Illustrates the responses across male & female subjects

In response to the statement what role does Facebook play in one's everyday life. Fig. 3 illustrates that 9% it plays important role, 16% responded it plays very important role, 23% responded that it is unimportant, 19% responded that it has moderate importance and 33% said it has little importance. This indicates that majority agrees with the statement that Facebook has little importance.
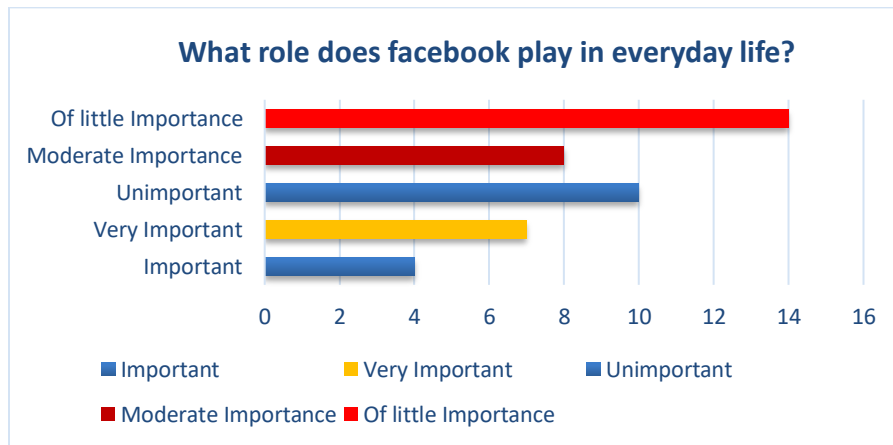

Figure 3. Illustrates overall responses across male & female subjects

In response to the statement: Do you feel secure while sharing your pictures and information: Fig. 4 illustrates that 28% of the respondents feel secure while uploading their pictures and 72% do not feel safe while sharing their pictures. This indicates that majority of users do not feel security threat to post on Facebook.
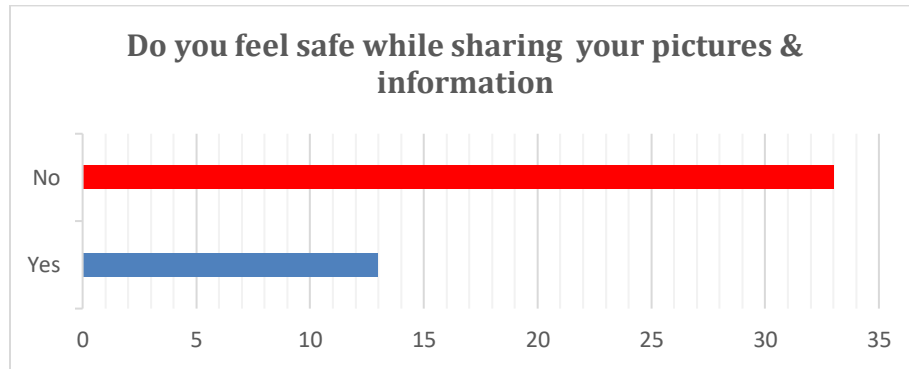
Do you feel safe while sharing your pictures & information

Figure 4. Illustrates overall responses across male & female subjects

In response to the statement Facebook is a good source of information: Fig. 5 illustrates that 59% agree, 9% strongly agree, 24% were neutral, 4% disagree and 4% strongly disagree. The majority feels that Facebook is a good source of information.
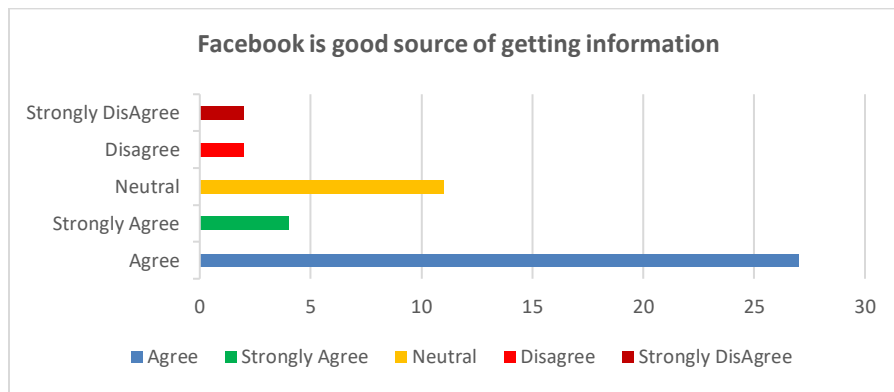
Facebook is good source of getting information

Figure 5. Illustrates responses across male & female subjects

In response to the statement is Facebook a good way for being social and it keeps one connected to its loved ones? Fig.6 illustrates 63% agreed, 24% strongly agreed, 2% were neutral, 4% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed. Overall it shows that majority of students agreed to the statement that Facebook is a good way for being social.
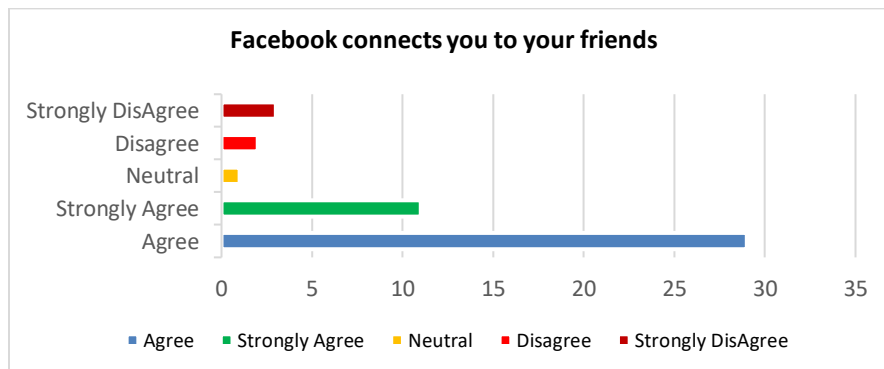
Facebook connects you to your friends

Figure 6. Illustrates the responses across male & female subjects

In response to the statement that Facebook affects academics of its users. Fig. 7 illustrates 41% agreed, 11% strongly agreed, 22% were neutral, 20% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed. The results show that majority of students agreed that use of Facebook affects academic performance of the students.
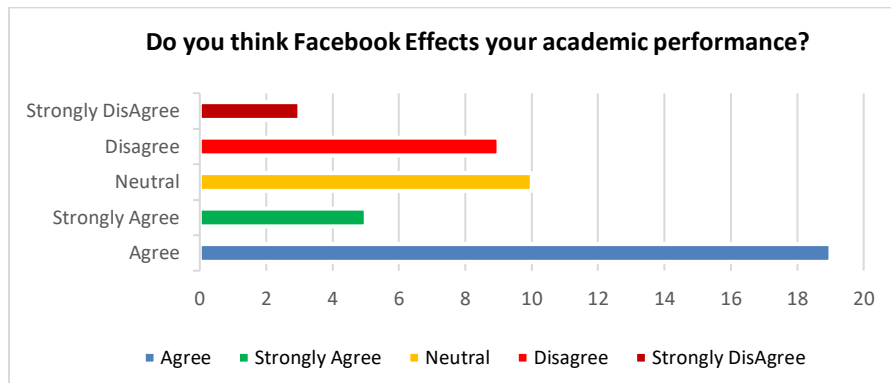
Figure 7. Illustrates the responses across male & female subjects

In response to the statement what role does Facebook play in their everyday life. Fig. 8 illustrates 9% responded it plays important role,16% responded it plays very important role, 23% responded it is unimportant, 19 % responded it as a moderate importance and 33% responded it has little importance. The overall results of this statement indicate that Facebook plays somehow important role in their life.
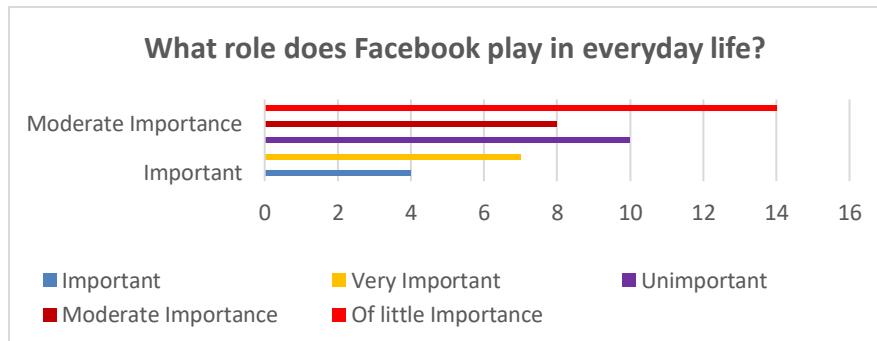

Figure 8. Illustrates the responses across male & female subjects

In response to the statement that the youth has disadvantages of Facebook. Fig. 9 illustrates 56% agreed, 26% strongly agreed, 9% were neutral, 9% disagreed and no one strongly disagreed. More than half of the subjects agreed that there more are disadvantages relatively.
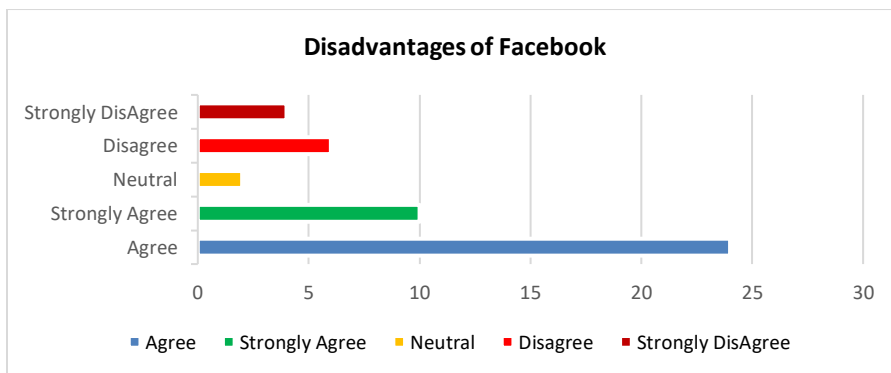

Figure 9. Illustrates responses across male & female subjects

In response to the statement on the excessive use of Facebook can bring negative change. Fig. 10 shows that the male results as follows: 52% were agreed, 22% were strongly agreed, 4% were neutral, 13% were disagreed and 9% were strongly disagreed. The statistics signposts the majority agrees the use of Facebook keeps them limited to surrounding and students of social community while good number of responses have shown disagreement indicating that they keep the balance use of social media and other physical social surrounding.
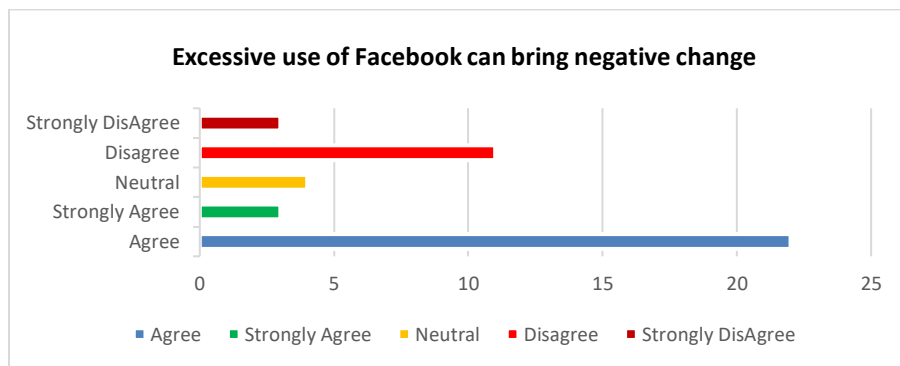
Excessive use of Facebook can bring negative change

Figure 10. Illustrates the responses across male & female subjects

The statement use of Facebook brings negative changes on its user's behavior responses is illustrated in Fig. 10. The results show that majority of students agrees that Facebook has negative impact over users' behaviors while there is also disagreement to the statement indicating good number of respondents do not agree with the negative impact over behavior. The statement: Facebook account is on their real names indicates 89% of subjects have account with their real name and 11% of subjects do not have account with their real names as illustrated in Fig. 11.
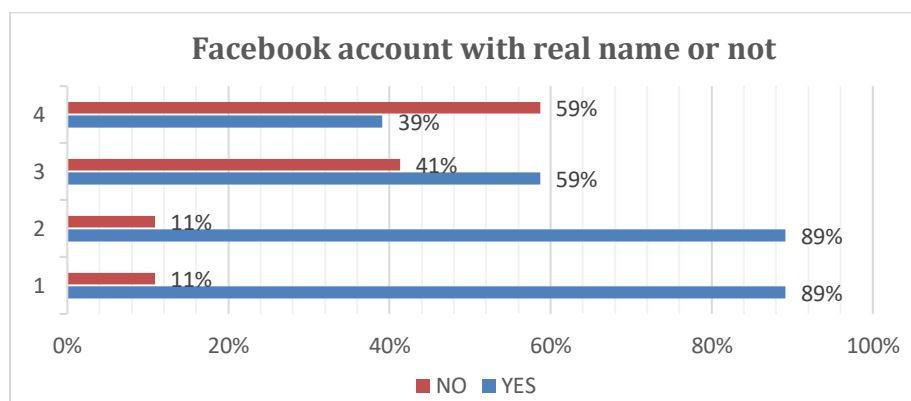

Facebook account with real name or not

Figure 11. Illustrates overall results across male & female subjects

Moreover, the study reveals that the majority of respondents have their accounts with real names and there is good number of respondents who have Facebook account with nicknames or other names to feel free to use social media. Furthermore, the statement whether you are familiar with the privacy setting of Facebook, male responded 83% in affirmation they are aware of the privacy settings and 17% do not know the privacy settings. Female subjects 96% responded that they are aware of the privacy settings and 4% do not know the privacy settings. The average results indicate that 89% respondents said that they are aware of the privacy settings and 11% do not know the privacy settings. The statistics show that majority of respondents agree to have knowledge about the privacy setting. In question, Facebook leads its users to indulge in some criminal activities: Male respondents 48% agreed, 13% strongly agreed, 18% were neutral, 17% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed. Females 48% agreed, 13% strongly agreed, 31% were neutral, 4% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed. Overall results show that 48% agreed, 13% strongly agreed, 24% were neutral, 11% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed.

Discussion

This study was conducted to investigate the use of Facebook the world-famous social media platform by the students who are the part of academic world which causes multiple effects of Facebook on personality, academic progress, behavior, social circle, and other domains of life, etc. The results were in accordance with the Hypotheses as follows:

Hypothesis H1

Facebook is a source of entertainment and a medium of connecting students. The results indicate that 27% of students use Facebook for communication purpose 27% use it for entertainment and only 5% use it for the sake of information.

33% respondents agreed that Facebook has less importance in real life while 16% responded that it has a greater role in real-life situations.

Hypothesis H2

There are some risks of Facebook use in terms of its privacy & Data Security. When students were asked whether Facebook is a secure platform to share information, 72% of respondents showed disagreement that it is not a secure platform to use for sharing posts, pictures, and information, whereas, only 28% showed their agreement to the statement that it is secure. Fifty-nine percent students agreed that Facebook is a good source of information indicating positive aspects of Facebook usage and there were rare disagreements in response to the statement as only 4% were disagreed. The students agreed that Facebook is a good way of being social, it helps to connect with all friends and loved ones. In this respect, 63% showed agreement and 24% showed strong agreement thus it seems to be a good source to connect people.

Hypothesis H3

Negative use of Facebook can affect students' social life. In response to another statement that Facebook affects academics of students 41% agreed and 11% strongly agreed, there is also good ratio of disagreement to the statement 20% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed. The study has further discovered the excess use of Facebook keeps students engaged in spending too much time on social media and limiting students to play their active role in social services and academic activities. Fifty percent responses were in favor that Facebook plays negative role on students' behavioral traits. Whereas, 24 % disagreed and 9% strongly disagreed. In this regard, the analysis reveals that the use of Facebook has both effects negative and positive. However, majority of students has their accounts on Facebook with real name while a good number of respondents have fake or nickname accounts to keep themselves secure and safe.

Conclusion

The study reveals that Facebook is the most popular social network, which has a positive and negative impact on the social and academic life of the students. It further reveals that Facebook is a good source of being social and it keeps students connected to their friends and families in and around the world. Similarly, it is a good source of information and entertainment as well. The majority of the users use it for communicating purpose and just for fun. Excessive and negative use of Facebook can bring negative results in terms of their academics. Users do not feel safe and secure while surfing on it by sharing their personal information and pictures as there is a possibility of hacking the data. Use of Facebook has positive effects, it provides information about the world around, it helps to be connected with people. It develops awareness among users while using it and develops mature ideas by viewing through different information based posts, images, and videos. The sample size could be increased for more significant results. However, the study was limited because the sample size was not on a large scale to academia particularly for the students of Public Sector University. It is recommended that there must be proper use of Facebook and students should not take everything for granted i.e., the posts and images and videos. The information must be accepted if it is from reliable sources and students should critically analyse the posts particularly related to religion, belief, traditional values, cultural beliefs, and political and philosophical posts because most of students try to assert their negative ideas strongly and those who are not familiar with the basic knowledge of the specific field. Facebook users should be conscious and they should give priority to the studies and there should be a balance between the use of Facebook, social world, and academics.

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