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SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING: A SURVEY OF PUBLIC SECTOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DISTRICT LAHORE

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ABSTRACT

Social media have turned out to be effective means for learning, offering innovative ways to engage students and support educational processes. The study was intended to find out the perceptions of students regarding social media as a learning tool in the secondary schools of district Lahore. Quantitative research design, using a survey method was used to collect data. It was conducted on 399 students of public sector secondary schools of district Lahore. The sample size was selected using Yamane Formula and proportionate stratified sampling technique was used. Data was collected by using a self-developed close-ended questionnaire. The validity of the instrument was ensured by experts' opinions and the reliability was established through pilot testing. Descriptive (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (independent samples t-test) seeking the help of SPSS software was used to analyse data. The study concludes that platforms like YouTube, WhatsApp, and Facebook enhanced learning of students by fostering collaboration, improving comprehension, and boosting engagement. However, distractions, unequal access, and low digital literacy remained key challenges.

Keywords: Student Perceptions, Social Media, Secondary Level.

Introduction

In recent years, social media integration in educational settings has attracted a lot of attention. It is an important technological advancement in the 21st century which has the potential to enhance learning processes by promoting interactive, collaborative, and student-centered approaches. However, the use of social media as an effective tool for educational purposes in secondary schools remains a topic of debate.

This study aims to investigate the use of social media as a tool for learning. It provides an overview of the different opportunities provided by social media and its challenges for the students.

People's lives have undergone major transformations as a result of technology (Atabek & Atabek, 2020). One of the popular technology applications is social media. The emergence of social media has remarkably changed different aspects of daily life, including education. Over the years, social networking sites have turned out to be effective means for learning, offering innovative ways to engage students and support educational processes. The emergence of social media has significantly transformed various aspects of daily life, including education. Over the years, social networking sites have turned out to be effective means for learning, offering innovative ways to engage students and support educational processes.

Social media has made it attainable for new educational ways, and it is an important part of today's educational system (Alenezi & Brinthaupt, 2022). Social media is changing quickly the common conversation in our society and making programs on a variety of subjects, including political, the environmental, educational, and technological sector. Thus, it should be clear that keeping up with the most recent events and fashions is essential in today's world. As it has been documented, most social network users are members of the younger generation (Basil et al., 2020).

Social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram provide a variety of functions that can be used for educational purposes. These platforms provide interactive and multimedia-rich environments that can make learning more engaging and accessible. One of the main markets for the usage of communication technologies is Pakistan. Approximately 44.6 million people in Pakistan use the internet; 35 million are frequent users of social media, and 32 million access the internet and social media through mobile devices (Luqman et al., 2020).

According to Masudi and Mustafa (2022), social media accounts have become important for many people these days because of its ease of access. Facebook is an example of a social media platform that has grown to be a significant player in the social landscape in the twenty-first century. In the beginning, it was utilised for educational and entertaining reasons by those who had access to it. Most people have viewed it as a negative element because it was an effective propaganda tool. People make use of social media to disseminate false and misleading information, as well as unpleasant caricatures and images. With time, the number of users has grown exponentially, and many people now have many accounts under different identities. However, numerous accounts may be used negatively, such as blackmailing others under the guise of emotions or spreading propaganda about one's philosophy and beliefs without disclosing one's genuine identity.

Social media's growth has the control over every aspect of individual activity. People are therefore convinced to argue that these social media application platforms have the ability to upgrade learning and data sharing between individuals and teaching staffs because the educational domain is not free from it (Basil et al., 2020).

Pakistan's educational landscape is undergoing significant transformation due to the fast advancement in technology and increased use of social media. With its dynamic and diverse citizens, Lahore is at the leading edge of this change. The application of social media for educational purposes is rapidly increasing in Pakistan.

In the context of District Lahore, secondary schools are witnessing growing interest of social media into their teaching and learning. Social media can serve as a bridge between traditional teaching-learning and the modern technology based learning. Ansari and Khan (2020) undertook a study in an effort to investigate how social media and mobile devices might be applied and effective in bridging the gap between academics and resources in higher education institutions. The study found that using social media for group learning greatly improved students' ability to share knowledge online and communicate with their teachers and classmates.

According to Kumar and Nanda (2022), particularly when it comes to encouraging information exchange, social networks are recognized as an excellent learning environment. Students mostly use online forums and groups for reading, exchanging textbooks, making decisions as a group, and sharing educational materials. Social media has many benefits. More than 20 million pupils have benefited from Google's educational tools, according to Chandralekha, Navaneethakrishnan, and Ahmed's (2018) study on Google and education. Students become more familiar with computers and other electronic devices as a result of working with new technology for extended periods of time. Students will develop lifelong skills as a result of the growing emphasis on technology in both industry and education.

According to Ansari and Khan (2020), social media usage and smart phones have advantages and disadvantages. The benefits are primarily felt when using them to access course materials, videos, or transfer educational notes. Students generally think that social media and smartphones are the most practical and economical means to find relevant information. According to Ubell's study (as cited in Abraham & Fanny, 2019), social media has been acknowledged for its many educational benefits. However, it is impossible to ignore this platform's fundamental drawbacks. Numerous obstacles have been linked to social media use in process of teaching and learning. With WhatsApp installed on their phones, most students may find it difficult to concentrate efficiently due to its alleged addictive nature. Due to the large amount of space that is typically used up by images, videos, and audio communications, backing up messages is typically exceedingly challenging and time-consuming.

According to Chandralekha et al. (2018), there are other drawbacks to social media, such as the widespread use of these platforms and the rapidity with which information is shared, which has led to a disregard for appropriate language and spelling. This makes it harder for students to write well without using a computer's spell checker. A dedicated focus on learning and remembering knowledge is necessary because many students rely on the availability of information on the internet and social media to offer solutions. Our ability to retain information has declined, and the enthusiasm to spend more time researching and looking up good information has concentrated, due the fact that we got used to the ease of availability to information on social media. Students, who attempt to multi-task, checking social media sites while studying, show reduced academic presentation. Their ability to deliberate on the task at hand is significantly reduced by the distractions that are brought about by YouTube, Facebook or Twitter.

The more time students spend on social sites, the less time they spend socializing in person. Because of the lack of body signals and other nonverbal cues, like tone and inflection, social networking sites are not a sufficient substitution for face-to-face communication. Students who spend a great deal of time on social networking are less able to efficiently communicate in person. The degree to which private information is available online and the anonymity the internet seems to provide has made students forget the need to filter the information they post. Many colleges and potential employers investigate an applicant's social networking profile before granting acceptance or interviews. Most students don't constantly evaluate the content they're publishing online, which can bring about unhelpful consequences months or years down the road. Students are having a harder time getting to communicate face to face with people, and are losing their people skills, due to that they are spend more and more time talking from behind a screen.

According to Basil et al. (2020), social media affects students' educational performance. The findings of this study showed that elder students in secondary schools used social media for different purposes, like making new friends, chatting with existing ones, uploading images and videos, searching assignments and other subject-related materials, getting up-to-date information and for group projects, exploring academic career paths, and engaging in conversation about different topics. Students were using social media for two to four hours per day; they used different platforms, but Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp were the most used ones.

Significance of the Study

This study is important to examine the utilization of social media as a learning tool in secondary school students of district Lahore for several reasons. There are not many quantitative studies on the usage of social media as a learning tool in Lahore's

secondary schools. The results of this research study shed light on how students view social media's use as a learning tool.

Using a quantitative approach, this study offers a thorough examination of social media's involvement in secondary schools of district Lahore, offering insights that could inform future educational strategies and policies.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the types of social media platforms commonly used by secondary school students for learning purposes.
2. To analyse students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of social media as a tool for enhancing their learning.
3. To identify the challenges students face while using social media for educational activities.

Research Questions

1. What are the types of social media platforms commonly used by secondary school students for learning purposes?
2. What are the perceptions of students regarding the effectiveness of social media as a tool for enhancing their learning?
3. Which challenges do students face while using social media for educational activities?

Research Design and Methodology

The current study was conducted to investigate how social media is used as a learning tool for secondary school students of district Lahore. The study employed a quantitative research design, using a survey method to collect data.

Secondary school students from all public sector of district Lahore were the population. Data was collected from both boys and girls. Detail of the population is given in table 1.

Table 1:

Detail of Population of Secondary Schools (Public) of Lahore

Sr. No.	Tehsils	No. of Schools		Students (9 th + 10 th)	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1.	Lahore Cantt	26	28	5994	6758
2.	Lahore City	64	84	17969	25174
3.	Model Town	44	48	11807	14156
4.	Raiwind	17	20	4319	4956
5.	Shalimar	37	49	13244	17752
Total		188	229	53333	68796

Source: <https://open.punjab.gov.pk/schools>

Table 1 shows the number of secondary schools and students according to five tehsils of District Lahore. There are 417 secondary schools in Lahore. The study was narrowed down to the students of classes IX-X. As there are 5 tehsils in Lahore district, so sample size of students was selected using Yamane Formula (i.e. $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$). This equation assumed a confidence level of 95%. Margin of error is 5%. 399 students were the sample size of the survey. By using proportionate stratified sampling technique, 174 boys and 225 girls participated in the survey.

Table 2:

Detail of Tehsil Wise Sample Size

Sr. No.	Tehsils	Sample Size		Total
		Boys	Girls	
1.	Lahore Cantt	20	23	43
2.	Lahore City	59	82	141
3.	Model Town	38	46	84
4.	Raiwind	14	16	30
5.	Shalimar	43	58	101
Total		174	225	399

Table 2 shows tehsil-wise distribution of sample size used in this study. The data is categorized by tehsils and further divided by gender (male and female). In all tehsils, the number of girls exceeded that of boys, reflecting a slightly skewed gender representation favouring female students in the study. But the sample was proportionally stratified to ensure representation from all major tehsils of Lahore, making the findings generalizable across the district.

A self-developed, close-ended questionnaire was administered among the students to gather quantitative data. The questionnaire included items on five-point Likert-type scale. The instruments included questions about four indicators: a) Demographic information b) Types of social media platforms used by students c) Perceived effectiveness of social media; and d) Challenges of social media usage.

The instrument was validated by three experts. Two of the experts were PhD Professors and the third expert was an MPhil Research Associate. Pilot testing was also done to ensure the reliability of the instrument. The value of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.86 which is considered as good internal consistency reliability.

Survey questionnaires were distributed to the selected students in paper format. The survey data was analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation,). Tests of inferential statistics such as independent samples t-test was used to examine the data of males and females.

Data Analysis and Results

The data acquired through questionnaire were evaluated using various techniques. The quantitative data analysis included the responses from the questionnaires which were coded and entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics included frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviations to calculate and summarize the demographic data and student perceptions. Inferential statistics included tests such as independent samples t-test to examine the differences in perceptions based on demographic variable (i.e. gender of respondents).

The research consisted of 399 students. Data was collected from 9 boy's schools and 11 girl's schools. 174 boys and 225 girls participated in the survey. The detail is given in table 3.

Table 3:

Types of Social Media Platforms Used by Students (Factor 2)

Types of Social Media Platforms	Mean		SD	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Facebook	0.52	0.20	0.50	0.39
WhatsApp	0.80	0.90	0.39	0.30
YouTube	0.87	0.88	0.34	0.32
Instagram	0.61	0.40	0.48	0.49
Use of Social Media for Learning	1.70	1.95	1.12	1.19
Time Spent on Social Media for Learning	2.19	2.14	1.05	0.94

The table above highlights the gender-wise usage patterns of different social media platforms and the extent of their use for learning purposes. The analysis highlights significant gender-based differences in the usage patterns of social media platforms for learning purposes among students. Male students reported higher use of Facebook (Mean = 0.52) compared to females (Mean = 0.20) indicating that males are more inclined toward this platform. The higher standard deviation among males reflects greater variability in their usage. On the other hand, WhatsApp usage was found to be more common among female students (Mean = 0.90) than males (Mean = 0.80), suggesting that females prefer WhatsApp for communication and collaborative learning. The higher variation among males indicates diverse usage habits.

YouTube emerged as a universally popular platform, with similar usage among males (Mean = 0.87) and females (Mean = 0.88). This underscores its broad appeal as a tool for both educational and entertainment purposes. Instagram, however, showed higher

usage among male students (Mean = 0.61) compared to females (Mean = 0.40), suggesting that males find this platform more appealing for social or educational interactions. The slight differences in standard deviation between the genders indicate relatively consistent usage patterns for Instagram.

In terms of using social media for learning, female students reported slightly higher engagement (Mean = 1.95) compared to males (Mean = 1.70). This suggests that females perceive social media as a more effective or accessible learning tool. However, the greater variation in female responses highlights differing levels of engagement within the group. Regarding the time spent on social media for learning, males and females reported similar usage (Mean = 2.19) and for males; Mean = 2.14). The slightly higher standard deviation among females indicates a wider range of time spent on these platforms, with some students spending significantly more or less time than others.

Table 4:

Perceived Effectiveness of Social Media (Factor 3)

Sr. No.	Statements	Mean		SD	
		M	F	M	F
4.	Social media helps me to understand difficult concepts.	3.9 4	4.2 8	1.1 2	0.7 2
5.	I find useful educational resources through social media.	3.8 3	4.1 2	1.1 5	0.7 7
6.	Social media helps in developing digital literacy skills.	3.8 3	4.2 1	1.1 3	0.7 3
7.	Using social media makes learning more enjoyable.	3.6 8	4.0 9	1.2 0	0.8 9
8.	Social media enhances student engagement.	3.5 4	3.9 9	1.2 3	1.0 2
9.	Social media improves communication between students and teachers.	3.7 6	3.7 3	1.1 5	1.0 9
10.	Social media helps in learning new skills or information.	3.9 6	4.3 3	1.1 2	0.6 4
11.	Social media helps me to stay motivated in my studies.	3.5 0	3.8 9	1.1 7	1.0 2
12.	Social media helps me in facilitating group discussions with my classmates.	3.7 7	4.0 3	1.1 0	0.9 7
13.	I find different learning materials like quizzes through social media.	3.5 2	3.7 2	1.1 2	0.9 9
14.	I find different perspectives on the same topic which helps me to understand the topic.	3.7 6	4.2 8	1.0 8	0.7 7

15.	I find videos and tutorials for difficult subjects like science using social media.	3.97	4.15	1.03	0.95
		3.9770			
16.	I discuss homework with my classmates using different social media platforms.	3.41	3.53	1.18	1.24
17.	I get updates about school's events or activities through social media.	3.90	4.11	1.22	0.98
18.	Social media helps me to ask questions from my teachers outside of class.	3.31	3.50	1.32	1.15
19.	Social media helps me to find new books related to my interest.	3.56	3.99	1.28	0.94
20.	I can finish my homework faster using social media.	3.59	3.96	1.17	1.16
21.	I learn new study tips from social media.	3.74	3.84	1.03	1.02
22.	The information I find on social media is useful for my studies.	3.83	4.08	0.96	1.01
23.	Social media allows me to learn at my own speed.	3.54	3.82	1.20	1.06
24.	Social media helps me develop better study habits.	3.56	3.75	1.10	1.03
25.	Social media provides previous papers to help me with my exams.	4.04	4.39	1.16	0.85
26.	Social media platforms also provide effective revision materials.	3.43	3.84	1.20	0.92
27.	I use social media to prepare for board exams.	3.71	4.13	1.23	1.11
28.	It is easier to remember concepts I learn through social media.	3.49	3.92	1.13	0.95
29.	Social media enhances my creativity in presenting academic work.	3.94	3.98	0.95	0.97
30.	I find extra study materials on social media which is not in the textbooks.	3.67	4.02	1.24	1.03
31.	I can listen to recorded lectures of teachers from other schools on social media.	3.74	4.27	1.23	0.92

This table highlights notable gender-based differences in the perceptions of social media's role in learning, with specific statements highlighting varying levels of agreement and variability among male and female respondents. Among males, the highest mean value was observed for statement 25 (Mean = 4.04), indicating that males find social media highly effective for accessing previous papers to prepare for exams. This was followed by statement 15 (Mean = 3.97), where social media was

perceived as equally valuable for accessing videos and tutorials for challenging subjects like science. Statement 10 (Mean = 3.96) also obtained high agreement, reflecting males' acknowledgment of social media's role in helping them acquire new skills or information.

In contrast, the lowest mean values among males were recorded for statements 18, 16, and 11, with means of (3.31, 3.41, and 3.50, respectively). Statement 18 highlights the limited perceived utility of social media for asking questions from teachers outside of class. Similarly, statement 16 underscores the minimal role of social media in facilitating discussions about homework, and Statement 10 (Mean = 3.96) also obtained high agreement, reflecting males' acknowledgment of social media's role in helping them acquire new skills or information reflects its comparatively weak motivational impact on studies.

For females, the highest mean was recorded for statement 25 (Mean = 4.39), indicating that females strongly value social media as a tool for accessing previous exam papers. This was followed by statement 10 (Mean = 4.33), reflecting its effectiveness in helping females acquire new skills or information, and statements 14 and 4 (both Mean = 4.28, SD = 0.77 and 0.72, respectively), which highlight the benefits of social media in providing diverse perspectives and aiding understanding of difficult concepts. The lowest mean values for females were associated with statements 18 and 16, with means (3.50 and 3.53, respectively), similar to males, showing that these aspects of social media usage were less favourable among females.

Notably, the highest standard deviations among males were associated with statements 18 (SD = 1.32), 19 (SD = 1.28), 30 (SD = 1.24), and 8, 31, and 27 has (SD = 1.23), indicating significant variability in male students' responses to these aspects of social media usage. Conversely, the lowest standard deviations were observed for statements 22 (SD = 0.96), 29 (SD = 0.95), and 15 and 21 (SD = 1.03), reflecting more consistent agreement among males regarding these items. The highest standard deviations for females were observed in statements 16 and 18 (SD = 1.24 and 1.15, respectively), reflecting significant variability in perceptions of social media's utility for homework discussions and teacher communication. Conversely, the lowest standard deviations were recorded for statements 10 and 4 (SD = 0.64 and 0.72, respectively), indicating consistent agreement on social media's effectiveness in skill acquisition and understanding complex topics. Since the value of standard deviation among males was slightly greater than females, which means that there was a relatively more variation in the responses of males than females.

In both genders, the mean was above the criteria which showed positive and strong perceptions of social media's effectiveness.

Table 5:
Challenges of Social Media (Factor 4)

Sr. No.	Statements	Mean		SD	
		M	F	M	F
32.	I find social media distracting when I am trying to study.	3.64	3.69	1.35	1.30
33.	I am concerned about privacy issues when using social media.	2.90	3.42	1.39	1.23
34.	Not all information on social media is reliable or accurate.	3.48	3.54	1.21	1.21
35.	Social media sometimes makes me delay my homework.	3.11	3.34	1.21	1.33
36.	I find it hard to balance time between social media and other study activities.	3.23	3.35	1.27	1.31
37.	Too much information on social media can be sometimes confusing.	3.59	3.69	1.26	1.22
38.	Spending more time on social sites, is gradually decreasing the communication skills in students.	3.44	3.38	1.31	1.26
39.	I often get distracted from non-study content on social media.	3.44	3.39	1.28	1.20
40.	Using social media for too long affects my health.	3.67	3.78	1.37	1.30
41.	It is hard for me to balance between social media usage for study and fun.	3.39	3.40	1.28	1.25
42.	I have trouble with internet connections.	2.87	3.40	1.29	1.39
43.	Social media makes me feel like I have to be ideal/perfect in the school.	3.48	3.61	1.20	1.17
44.	I worry about keeping my information safe on social media.	3.33	3.76	1.30	1.07
45.	I experience difficulty in accessing reliable internet for using social media.	3.14	3.33	1.18	1.22
46.	Some content on social media is not good for studying.	3.69	3.73	1.22	1.18
47.	A constant social media notification distracts my focus on studies.	3.44	3.72	1.22	1.27
48.	Social media has an effect on my mental health.	3.60	3.62	1.26	1.23
49.	Social media is not always controlled, so the way I perceive things, should not.	3.56	3.59	1.21	1.17
50.	Too much use of social media can affect my critical thinking skills.	3.35	3.76	1.27	1.14
51.	Using social media and studying at the same time causes poor academic performance.	3.18	3.67	1.27	1.24

52.	Continuous use of social media can cause eyesight issue.	3.6 2	4.1 1	1.2 0	1.0 4
53.	I sometimes delay my homework due to the use of social media.	3.2 1	3.5 4	1.2 5	1.2 3
54.	Social media sometimes detracts me from relevant learning.	3.3 6	3.4 2	1.1 3	1.0 9
55.	I find technical difficulties while searching for educational content on social media.	3.3 5	3.4 6	1.2 2	1.1 1
56.	There is a lack of face-to-face interactions in social media-based learning.	3.4 1	3.6 0	1.2 2	1.1 0
57.	Sometimes it is hard to find video lectures on certain topics.	3.4 0	3.5 0	1.1 8	1.3 0
58.	My confidence level lowers when I compare myself with others on social media.	3.0 9	3.0 9	1.3 0	1.3 1
59.	It is hard to tell if the information on social media is trustworthy.	3.0 9	3.9 0	1.2 4	1.0 2

The table explores the perceptions of male and female students regarding the challenges associated with social media usage for learning. Among males, the highest mean scores were observed for statement 46 (Mean = 3.69), indicating concerns about the appropriateness of study-related content on social media, with moderately consistent responses. This was followed by statement 40 (Mean = 3.67) and statement 50 (Mean = 3.62), highlighting their awareness of the physical health effects of prolonged social media use. The lowest mean scores for males were found for statements like 42 (Mean = 2.87) and 33 (Mean = 2.90), suggesting that these challenges were less significant for them, although privacy concerns showed considerable variability in responses.

For females, the highest-rated statement was 52 (Mean = 4.11), reflecting strong agreement and consistent responses regarding the health impacts of excessive social media use. Other high-rated statements included 44 (Mean = 3.76) and 50 (Mean = 3.76), indicating significant concerns about privacy and cognitive impacts. On the other hand, females gave lower mean scores to statements such as 33 (Mean = 3.42) and 35 (Mean = 3.34), with varying degrees of agreement on these challenges.

In terms of standard deviations, the greatest variability among males was observed for statement 33 (SD = 1.39), indicating diverse opinions on this issue. In contrast, the most consistent responses among males were for statement 46 (SD = 1.22). For females, the highest variability was noted for statement 35 (SD = 1.33), while the most consistent responses were seen for statement 52 (SD = 1.04). Since the value of standard deviation among males was slightly greater than females, which means that there was a relatively more variation in the responses of males than females.

Overall, both genders showed moderate to high agreement on several challenges related to social media usage, including its impact on health, time management, and the reliability of information. However, males were less concerned about privacy and connectivity issues compared to females, who demonstrated higher agreement on the adverse effects of social media on critical thinking and data safety. These findings highlight nuanced gender-based differences in the perception of social media's challenges for learning.

Table 6:

Detail of Descriptive and Inferential Statistics (N= 399)

Sr. No.	Gender	Factor	Mean	SD	Sig.	df
1.	Male	PE	3.70	0.58	0.01	397
		CSM	3.37	0.59	0.48	397
2.	Female	PE	4.00	0.46	0.01	397
		CSM	3.56	0.63	0.48	397

Table 6 shows the gender-wise comparison of means, standard deviation, and significance levels for the two factors, Perceived Effectiveness (PE) and Challenges of Social Media (CSM).

According to the first factor perceived effectiveness (PE), the mean score for males was 3.70 and standard deviation (SD) was 0.58, while for females the mean was a bit higher i.e. 4.0 with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.46. The significance value (Sig. = 0.01) indicates that this difference is statistically meaningful, suggesting that females view social media as a more effective tool for learning. The relatively higher value of SD in case of males reveals that there were more variations in their responses in comparison to the counterpart females.

According to the second factor challenges of social media (CSM), males have a mean score of 3.37 and a standard deviation of 0.59, whereas females have a slightly higher mean of 3.56 with a standard deviation of 0.63. The significance value (Sig. = 0.48) indicates no statistically significant difference between both the genders in this regard. There was a slight difference in the SD values between males and females which means that responses of both genders were almost similar with respect to challenges to social media.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate social media as a tool for learning in secondary school students of district Lahore. The findings of this study indicate that social media plays a pivotal role in enhancing learning processes in secondary schools within the District of Lahore. Students recognize its potential for improving communication, collaboration, and access to diverse educational resources. However, challenges such as digital literacy gaps, lack of infrastructure, and privacy concerns remain significant barriers.

Students reported that social media platforms improve their understanding of complex topics through online content and enable peer collaboration. These findings resonate with the study conducted by Purwanto, Fahmi, and Cahyono (2023). He found that social media is a way for people to connect and talk to others around the world. To do this, people need to make an online profile. The use of social media accounts like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat has increased a lot in recent years. Many people everywhere use social media actively. Another study is similar to these findings which were conducted by Basil et al. (2020) that social media affects students' educational performance. The results of this study showed that elder students in secondary schools used social media for different purposes, like making new friends, chatting with existing ones, uploading images and videos, searching assignments and other subject-related materials, getting up-to-date and for group projects, exploring academic career paths, and engaging in conversation about different topics. Students were using social media for two to four hours per day; they used different platforms, but Facebook, YouTube, and Whatsapp were the mostly used ones.

The challenges faced by students, such as distractions and lack of equitable access to technology, align with Browning, Gerlitch and Westerman's study (as cited in Ahmed, 2016), which stated that the use of desktop, laptop, mobile, e-reader, tablet, and many other devices has increased the exposure of today's college and school students to a wide range of technologies. These devices also constantly engage students in networking, blogging, online content sharing, and even text messaging. Similarly, Chandralekha et al. (2018) also expressed some drawbacks of social media, such as the widespread use of these platforms and the rapidity with which information is shared, which has led to a disregard for appropriate language and spelling. This makes it harder for students to write well without using a computer's spell checker.

This study found mixed effects of social media on academic performance. While active participation in social media-based learning activities improved concept retention for some students, excessive use led to reduced focus for others.

These results are consistent with the findings of Ansari and Khan (2020), that social media usage and mobile devices has benefits and drawbacks. The benefits are primarily felt when using them to access course materials, videos, or transfer instructional notes. In general, students believe that mobile devices and social media are the most affordable and practical ways to find pertinent information. Similarly, Ali and Pasha (2024) stated that social media sites have become a vital aspect of children's and young people's lives. Although content sharing and interaction have always been possible on the internet, children's digital involvement has been significantly impacted by the rise of social media platforms and the accessibility of smartphones.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study highlights the potential of social media as a tool for learning in secondary school students of district Lahore. Students recognize the benefits of social media in enhancing instructional practices. However, challenges such as, digital literacy gaps, infrastructural limitations, and privacy concerns should be addressed to fully recognize the potential of social media.

The analysis indicated that social media can enhance the learning process of students by offering visually stimulating and captivating content, but its effective application is mostly dependent on the availability of internet connectivity, and digital competence among learners. Students also stress the significance of appropriate use of social media.

A significant insight from the discussions was that, when social media is utilized strategically and methodologically, it may help students to develop their critical thinking and collaborative learning skills. In order to successfully incorporate these tools into the curriculum, the study also emphasizes the need for technical facilities, the creation of school regulations regarding the use of social media, and professional training for teachers in public schools. Moreover, the potential of social media to facilitate collaborative learning among students, platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp are seen as significant tools that could support group discussions, resource sharing, and skill development.

Based on these findings and conclusion of the study, following recommendations are put forwarded.

1. Run awareness campaigns for students to help them manage distractions and strike a balance between their academic and leisure use of social media.
2. Make investments in technology infrastructure, especially in rural regions, to provide reliable internet connectivity and fair access to gadgets. To close the digital divide and promote inclusivity, give impoverished schools financial and technical assistance.

3. Use interactive elements and multimedia on social media to improve the effectiveness and engagement of learning.
4. Studies can investigate the effectiveness of social media platforms that are specifically related to education in enhancing learning outcomes.
5. Studies can also explore the role of parental supervision and involvement in maximizing the educational use of social media among secondary school students.

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