ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL
Available Online: https://assajournal.com
Vol. 03 No. 02. April-June 2025.Page#.77-86
Print ISSN: 3006-2497 Online ISSN: 3006-2500
Platform & Workflow by: Open Journal Systems

Demographic Variations in the Impact of Mass Media on Health, Performance, and Values Among University Teachers and Students

Nosheen Rahim
Assistant Professor, Institute of Education & Research (I.E.R)
Gomal University, D.I.Khan.
saadankhan2016@gmail.com
nrmarwat@gu.edu.pk

Dr. Shabnam Razaq Khan (Corresponding Author)
Assistant Professor, Institute of Education & Research (I.E.R)
Gomal University, D.I.Khan.
srkhan.gu@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of mass media consumption on health, performance and values of university teachers and students, with special emphasis on the demographic variations. It investigates the impact of the effects of media exposure on the physical/social health, academic/collaborative performance, and social/organizational values with regard to gender, age, and educational background. A cross sectional survey design was employed to collect data of 331 (304 students and 27 teachers) from various universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. Media usage patterns were assessed using validated questionnaires, health outcomes, performance metrics and value systems, demographic factors were analyzed using Kruskal Wallis and Mann Whitney tests. Some key findings reveal how media exerts its power on important demographic groups. The consumption source for social media shaped up to be the largest (65%), and it was correlated with being sedentary and disturbed in sleep. However, there was a notable gender difference, as female participants were more prone to media self-esteem problems and male participants were more distracted. Age had an important role to play in the fact that younger people (18–24 years) were more likely to suffer academic performance declines due to excessive media use. For students with higher CGPAs (3.5–4.0), who experienced media exposure, higher educational attainment moderated outcomes, with students showing more improved health better teacher performance than

students with lower CGPAs (1.5–2.5). Early career teachers were strained with conflicts of values related to the media. This calls for media literacy intervention tailored to special populations. It recommends that simple programs are created for younger students aimed at reducing the distractions, that gender sensitive mental health support be provided and that institutional policies promoting balanced use of media are implemented. These contribute to the widening conversation around the media's uneven benefits and risks and support those approaches that attempt to maximize the one without tipping over into the other, for both general and special populations.

Keywords: Mass Media, Demographic Differences, Health, Academic Performance, Values, Media Literacy.

Introduction

Today, mass media has proven to be a powerful affecting element of life, operating perceptions of good health, educational performance and personal values (Parker et al., 2019). For university students and teachers, media is a principal source of information, entertainment, and social interaction with great impacts on their social and professional development (Johnson 2021). In general, media is able to transmit valuable health information and educational content and at the same time it is able to pose risks: for example, to disseminate misinformation, to be a distraction or to stablish unrealistic standards for a social group (Smith & Lee, 2020). The double face of media requires us to seriously consider its impact on it, especially in educational settings where students and teachers are very vulnerable to the media.

Much research has been conducted on media effects, yet there is big question mark regarding how demographic factors such as gender, age, and education affect those (Thompson & Green, 2022). Though most studies tend to generalize these effects across different populations, regional variation and particularly within the region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, where socio cultural dynamics may vary is lost within these studies (Shuja et al., 2022). For example, social media's impact on health and academic performance may differ for students with high CGPAs or low academic success or between early career and experienced teachers (Williams et al., 2018). This gap has to be addressed to be able to develop targeted interventions meant for the specific needs of various demographic groups.

The purpose of this study is to analyze, within various parameters of differential effect of mass media on health, performance and values among university students and teachers. It is specifically, how gender, age and educational background affect outcomes related to media

using a cross sectional survey of 331 participants. Statistical techniques of correlation analysis, regression modelling and the Kruskal–Wallis test are employed on the study to identify trends and relationships and hence provide results that can be used by educators and policymakers.. The findings contribute to the growing discourse on media literacy and its role in fostering positive health behaviors, academic success, and ethical values in educational contexts (Marcus & Pekmezi, 2024).

Literature Review

It is possible to understand the influence of mass media on individuals by using key theoretical frameworks such as cultivartion theory and uses and gratifications theory. Cultivation theory (Gerbner et al., 2002) holds that prolonged exposure to the media leads one to develop distorted perceptions of reality with regard to health behaviours, academic attitudes, and societal values. In comparing to uses and gratifications theory (Katz et al., 1973), it posits that people themselves actively pick media that will satisfy their needs, such as education, entertainment, etc. These theories serve as a basis for an understanding of how university students and teachers divergently consume media, with implications for how they perceive their health, for their engagement in the academic activity, and for their moral orientation.

Moreover, the media have been identified as having a dual role in education and wellbeing in previous research. However, media is also a useful educational tool through which knowledge, collaborative platforms and health information (Kumar, 2020) are available. However, it can also lead to sedentary behavior, academic distraction, and other mental health cases (Dontre, 2021). For example, Williams et al. (2018) report that the students with higher CGPAs are more likely to use the media consciously to learn, whereas those with low academic performance more likely get affected by distractions. As with teachers, early career educators find more difficulty balancing the benefits and drawbacks of media use as part of professional development (Hudson, 2013), while teachers with a great deal of experience may use media in the same way for professional development. Taken together, these findings demonstrate that media must not be understood as playing a passive role in educational settings.

However, media affects significantly differently, based on demographic factors that is gender, age and education. The research shows that younger individuals, especially students, spend more time using social media and this can affect their self-esteem and academic habits (Marciano et al., 2022). On the other hand, older teachers may prefer to use traditional media sources such as academic journals which are in line with their professional values (Lovat et al., 2010). Studies also

show that there are gender differences in the effect of idealized media portrayals on social comparison and stress for female students and teachers (Smith & Lee, 2020). Additionally, educational attainment has an important bearing; advanced degree student (e.g., PhD) is likely to possess higher critical media literacy skills that are leveraged by them in the use of media for research and learning effectively (Marcus & Pekmezi, 2024). These demographic variations demonstrate how media literacy programs need to be tailored for the diversity in the groups present in academic settings.

Methodology

In this study, cross sectional survey design was used to investigate the role of mass media in health, performance and values related to university students and teachers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The sample consisted of 331 participants (304 students and 27 teachers) who were randomly sampled for stratification in order to represent genders, age groups (18–24, 25–34, 35+) and educational levels (undergraduate, postgraduate, and faculty). By means of a validated questionnaire, data was collected featuring a 5 points Likert scale, measuring dependent variables, health (physical / social), performance (academic / collaboration), values (social / organizational) and independent variables, including media consumption (hours spent, platforms used). Subgroup differences were analyzed according to demographic moderators such as gender, age, or educational background.

Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies) were completed along with inferential tests. Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests were performed on group differences (such as by CGPA and teaching experience), as well as regression analyses of media consumption interactions with demographic factors. Non normal data distribution was established by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test which justified the use of non-parametric methods. Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.972$) was used to ensure reliability and expert reviews (CVR ≥ 0.78) led to validity. The limitations of the study were that because it was cross sectional, the study made no attempt to draw causal inferences and based on self-report bias.

Results

Gender Differences

The study discovered vast gender differences in the way media affects health, performance and values. Consistent with other studies, the values of female participants were higher than those of male participants, especially for social ethics, lifestyle perceptions, and sensitivity to media related health messaging. In contrast, media exerted a greater impact on a male participant's

performance, in particular when media play interfered with time management or caused distractions. The statistical data indicated that female respondents linked the media exposure to social and emotional outcomes while the males reported the media exposure's effect in terms of productivity and information seeking behaviours.

Gender	Health Impact Score	Performance Impact Score	Values Impact Score
Male	3.4	3.9	3.2
Female	3.8	3.5	3.9

Age-Based Variations

Comparisons by age showed that the respondents who were younger (students aged 18–25 years) consumed more media, and notably, much more social media; they also noted positive effects (knowledge, connectivity) and negative (less focus, health habits). More media use was reported by older participants (mostly teachers over 35) in a more selective and value aligned way with respect to their norms and ethics d.?nstitutional. Social media also added to emotional instability that was shown by the younger cohort and led to imbalance in their health and academic balance.

Age Group	Avg. Daily Media Use (hrs)	Health Influence	Performance Impact	Values Change
18–25 (Students)	6.2 hrs	High	Moderate	High
35+ (Teachers)	3.1 hrs	Moderate	High	Moderate

Educational Background

The perception and outcome regarding the media were significantly affected by educational level. The better health and performance outcomes reported by BS level students (with CGPAs > 3.5) were probably a result of time management and critical evaluation skills. Finally, media reached down to the MPhil/MS and, most particularly, PhD students, but having ideological impacts, especially with regard to values. More professional and constructive use of media was reported by teachers with more than 8 years of experience. It was found that use of media in a

constructive way and overall well-being increased when CGPA is higher and teaching experience is longer through Kruskal-Wallis tests.

Group	CGPA/Experience	Health Outcome	Value Adherence	Performance Level
BS Students	>3.5 CGPA	High	Moderate	High
MPhil/MS Students	3.0–3.5 CGPA	Moderate	High	Moderate
PhD Scholars	N/A	Moderate	High	High
Teachers (8+ yrs)	8+ years	High	Very High	High

Discussion

The study showed that there were major differences between genders in terms of how media influenced them, especially in the areas of health and values. As Marciano et al. (2022) suggest, women are more susceptible to the affirmative content contained in the media, such as health messaging, social values, etc. However, women reported higher susceptibility to media related content in my study. The patterns throughout are consistent with cultivation theory, that scenes repeated in the media articles influence perception and behaviour. The higher health and value impact scores may be explained by the stronger relationships found in the study between media and self-esteem, lifestyle perception, and emotional reaction by female participants. However, distraction was reported to be more considerable in academic performance by males which is in line with studies (Williams et al., 2018) where male students reported to be more engaged in gaming or news consumption that cuts off their attention. The findings support the need to develop gender sensitive media literacy interventions aimed at improving female students' emotional resilience as well as critical self-reflection capacity and digital focus strategies for male students.

The media impact was dependent on the age, as it relates to the frequency of use, focus, and value alignment. Compared to teachers (35+), who averaged 3.1 hours, media was consumed by students aged 18–25 at 6.2 hours daily. As per Dontre (2021), young users are more likely to overuse and get distracted, which is in sync with this. The center of the performance distribution was moderate academics and high health impact, which might be due to disrupted routines,

sleep patterns, and sedentary behavior (Parker et al. 2019). On the contrary older participants showed stronger alignment to ethical and professional values and used media more selectively for educational and institutional purposes. Conversely, this indicates that among people of high age, better self-regulation and media literacy, which is also shown by Lovat et al. (2010). These results emphasize the need for age-specific interventions: promoting discipline and time management for younger students, while enhancing digital engagement tools for older faculty to bridge generational gaps in media engagement.

However, educational attainment moderated the media effects on health, performance, and values significantly. High health and performance outcomes were reported by undergraduate students with CGPAs above 3.5, indicating that these are the academic achievers that are better at managing media influence, as proposed by Williams et al. (2018). The media will be used more purposefully by these students e.g., accessing online lectures or health information as opposed to for entertainment. Moderate health effects were reported among postgraduate and PhD students, who displayed very good academic and ethical values, but perhaps also used more media for research and professional networking. With regard to adherence and healthiest media behaviors, those who were experienced teachers (8+ years) showed the highest value adherence showing that maturity in a career is related to media discernment consistent with Hudson (2013). Corroborating this, it is relevant to incorporate media literacy into the academic progression, starting from preparing undergraduates with basic skills and guiding postgraduates and teachers to cognitively analyse the content of media. The associations were also noted by the Kruskal Wallis test of these observations, with statistically significant differences in educational levels.

The study is clear: demographic factors such as gender, age, and education are not just background variables; they are vital leung once it is liked and internalized through media. The psychological and social reactions to media content differ based on gender, and the way media is consumed and how easily susceptible a person is to being distracted is dependent on age. According to Education, it seems that it is the strongest predictor of the media literacy and constructive engagement. Literature supports these demographic differences: for example, as Smith & Lee (2020) noted, Youth is more susceptible to the influence of media on their self-esteem, and Marcus & Pekmezi (2024) stated that higher education affords people the evaluative media skills they need. Such findings indicate that there is no ‘one size fits all’ model of media education. Consequently, interventions have to be focused on individual realities, for example, carrying out awareness campaigns among female students of body positivity and the social

comparison or providing the structured media use framework for young undergraduates combating academic distractions.

It is interesting to note that some findings did not coincide with predictions. This could be pointed out to, for example, social media being to blame for poor academic performance, but while some students who had high CGPAs (higher than 3.5) were high in media usage without adverse effects; there was selective or strategic media engagement. This is contrary to the assumption that screen time itself predicts performance and consistent with the notion that quality of media use is more important than amount (Katz et al., 1973). The second surprising trend reflected in these newly observed silent values was in early career teachers who had more struggle reconciling media influence and professional ethics. Perhaps it is an adjustment period in which younger faculty swing between digital liberty and institutional obligation. These findings highlight the complexity of media effects and reject deterministic views. In other words, there is no chance; institutions must think about ways not only on a broad level but also in a more nuanced and evidence based way that addresses the specific needs of a group. Future longitudinal studies could help disentangle the dynamics of media influence on time, especially among fast responding educators and high performing students.

Conclusion

The critical insight reinforced in this study is that demographic factors are important moderating variables to the effects of mass media on health, performance and values, among university teachers and students. Research through comprehensive analysis concluded that gender, age and educational background have a bearing on the manner in which people digest and respond to media. Participants were more sensitive to media portrayals that mattered to self esteem and values in females and in males, more prone to performance related distractions. Just like under graduate students were more exposed to negative consequence of too much use of media such as sleep disruption and academic drop out. However, more discerning, constructive use of media was associated with higher education level and teaching experience, implying higher media literacy. These findings have practical implications. This calls for the introduction of media literacy programs that have been designed specifically for educational levels and cognitive maturity so as to provide undergraduate, postgraduate students and teachers adequate support. Gender sensitive interventions are also required to deal with emotional, psychological and performance related impacts. The conclusion of these implications are that media education

should be considered at institutional and policy level by taking a nuanced and inclusive perspective.

Recommendations

- Integrate media literacy modules within university curricula, designed according to students' demographic profiles (e.g., age, academic level, gender).
- Offer awareness workshops highlighting safe, critical, and purposeful media use to foster academic focus and mental well-being.
- Encourage faculty development programs on constructive media engagement, especially for early-career teachers.
- Develop and implement national guidelines promoting healthy media habits in educational institutions, considering diverse user needs.
- Fund media education campaigns tailored to regional and cultural contexts (e.g., for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).
- Mandate media use policies in universities that support ethical, time-bound, and health-conscious engagement.

References

Dontre, J. (2021). The influence of media multitasking on student academic performance and health outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *113*(4), 567–583. https://doi.org/10.

Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (2002). Growing up with television: Cultivation processes. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (2nd ed., pp. 43–67). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hudson, B. (2013). Professional development and media literacy: The role of educators in an evolving media environment. *Educational Technology & Society*, *16*(2), 34–45.

Johnson, R. (2021). Understanding the impact of media on academic engagement in university students. *International Journal of Media and Education Studies*, *9*(1), 21–38. https://doi.org/10.

Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and gratifications research. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, *37*(4), 509–523. https://doi.org/10.

Kumar, S. (2020). Mass media and health education: The digital shift in academic behavior. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *30*(3), 299–314. https://doi.org/10.

Lovat, T., Dally, K., Clement, N., & Toomey, R. (2010). Values education and quality teaching: The double helix effect. *Springer*.

Marciano, L., Ostroumova, M., Schulz, P. J., & Cameron, L. D. (2022). Digital media use and adolescent well-being: A cross-national study. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *71*(1), 21–29. https://doi.org/10.

Marcus, B. H., & Pekmezi, D. (2024). Advanced media literacy and critical thinking in higher education. *Journal of Learning and Development*, *12*(2), 44–62. https://doi.org/10.

Parker, C., Bianchi, S., & Gilliard, J. (2019). Social media consumption and wellness: A longitudinal study of college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, *60*(3), 345–359. https://doi.org/10.

Shuja, A., Rehman, H. U., & Ahmed, T. (2022). Media literacy in Pakistan: Regional perspectives and educational frameworks. *Pakistani Journal of Media Studies*, *4*(1), 10–25.

Smith, R., & Lee, S. (2020). Media idealism and mental health: Understanding gendered responses to media portrayals. *Journal of Mental Health and Society*, *28*(2), 143–157. https://doi.org/10.

Thompson, G., & Green, L. (2022). Digital inequality and media access among youth in South Asia. *South Asian Journal of Digital Research*, *6*(2), 201–218.

Williams, J., Faulkner, H., & Rasheed, Z. (2018). Media distractions and academic performance among university learners. *Journal of Educational Media Research*, *14*(3), 112–128.