



**ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL**

Available Online: <https://assajournal.com>

Vol. 04 No. 01. July-September 2025. Page#. 4342-4357

Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)

Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)



**Exploring Social Media Usage and Challenges in Knowledge Sharing Among Research Students at the University of the Punjab, Lahore**

**Muhammad Nadeem Akhtar (Corresponding Author)**

Head, Main Library & IT Department, Ayub Agricultural Research Institute, Faisalabad, Pakistan

Email: [ch.nadeem@aari.punjab.gov.pk](mailto:ch.nadeem@aari.punjab.gov.pk)

**Ayesha Asima**

Research Scholar, Department of Allied Health Sciences, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Email: [ayeshiakhan0786@gmail.com](mailto:ayeshiakhan0786@gmail.com)

**Dr. Muhammad Naushad Sabzwari**

Chairman/Associate Professor, School of Information Management, Minhaj University Lahore, Pakistan

Email: [muhnaushad@gmail.com](mailto:muhnaushad@gmail.com)

**Muhammad Tariq Latif**

Senior Librarian, Govt. College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan

Email: [mtariqlatif@gcuf.edu.pk](mailto:mtariqlatif@gcuf.edu.pk)

**Sidra Batool**

Technical Librarian, Ayub Agricultural Research Institute, Faisalabad, Pakistan

Email: [sidra.batool@aari.punjab.gov.pk](mailto:sidra.batool@aari.punjab.gov.pk)

**Ghulam Farooque Channar**

Librarian, Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology Nawabshah, Pakistan

Email: [farooqchanar@quest.edu.pk](mailto:farooqchanar@quest.edu.pk)

**ABSTRACT**

*Social media has emerged as a vital tool for knowledge sharing among research students, transforming academic collaboration and communication. This study explores the patterns of social media usage for knowledge sharing among research students at the University of the Punjab, Lahore, and investigates the challenges they encounter. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 350 research students (150 males, 200 females) from various departments. The results revealed that research students frequently used social media platforms such as Slide Share, instant messaging, blogs, wikis, and WhatsApp for knowledge sharing. However, they faced challenges including lack of expertise in using social networking technologies, financial constraints, time management issues, and institutional policies. Gender significantly affected perceptions of challenges in knowledge sharing through social media, with males reporting higher levels of perceived challenges compared to females. Education level did not significantly influence perspectives on the usage of social media for knowledge sharing or the challenges encountered. The findings highlight the need for institutions to provide training and support to enhance research students' digital literacy and effectively integrate social media into academic frameworks. Addressing the identified challenges and fostering a supportive environment for*

*knowledge sharing through social media can contribute to a more collaborative and innovative academic community.*

**Keywords:** *Knowledge Sharing; Social Media; Research Students; University of the Punjab, Lahore; Usage; Challenges; Academic Collaboration; Engagement.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Social media has fundamentally transformed how information is shared, communicated, and collaborated on, emerging as a vital tool across various sectors, including academia. Research students, in particular, have increasingly turned to social networking platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and ResearchGate to disseminate their research findings, engage with peers, and collaborate on academic projects. These platforms enable students to connect with a global academic community, enhancing their learning experience and academic growth by expanding the scope of collaboration. Social media seamlessly integrates both formal and informal learning environments, making it an effective medium for knowledge exchange and fostering continuous academic development. The widespread use of social media for academic purposes, the challenges research students face in effectively using these platforms for knowledge sharing remain underexplored. Barriers such as information overload, privacy concerns, and the credibility of shared content often hinder effective knowledge exchange. Furthermore, a lack of digital literacy and challenges in navigating these platforms efficiently pose additional obstacles. In particular, research on how students, especially in Pakistan, use social media for academic collaboration and their awareness of its potential benefits for academic success is limited.

Empirical studies have shown that social media can effectively promote knowledge sharing and enhance student motivation and performance. Research suggests that features such as file sharing and increased student engagement through social media platforms are beneficial for academic purposes (Sivakumar et al., 2023). Additionally, social networking systems can address challenges related to locating expertise, motivating individuals to share knowledge, and maintaining social ties (Fulk & Yuan, 2013). While social media fosters student engagement, it is important to note that engagement is moderated by students' self-efficacy in sharing knowledge (Hoi, 2021). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic underscored social media's role in revealing students' learning preferences and networking challenges, showing that it facilitates international knowledge sharing and contributes to a flexible online learning environment (Elenurm, 2024). Despite the opportunities that social media offers, challenges remain. Research indicates that while students extensively use social networking sites, they may not always perceive these platforms as effective learning tools. This suggests that the relationship between knowledge sharing and student engagement is complex and may depend on the specific social media platforms used (Koranteng et al., 2018).

This study aims to address these gaps by exploring the patterns of social media usage among research students at the University of the Punjab, Lahore. The research will investigate how these students engage with social media for knowledge sharing, identify the challenges they encounter, and assess their perceptions of the platforms' effectiveness for academic collaboration. By analyzing the level of awareness, engagement, and the obstacles faced by research students, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into how social media can be better integrated into academic frameworks to foster more effective knowledge sharing practices. Ultimately, this research highlights the increasing importance of social media as a tool

for academic collaboration and offers recommendations to enhance its utilization among research students, contributing to a more collaborative and innovative academic community.

#### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To find out usage of different social media for knowledge sharing by the research students in University of the Punjab, Lahore
- To find out challenges faced for knowledge sharing through social media by research students in University of the Punjab, Lahore

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Social media has emerged as a potent tool for knowledge sharing in educational settings, providing numerous benefits while also presenting certain challenges. Various studies have explored its application across different educational contexts, offering insights into its advantages and areas for improvement. In the context of medical education, social media and smartphones are frequently utilized for collaborative learning, improved communication, and knowledge sharing. Platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Edmodo are instrumental in fostering collaboration and engagement among medical students. However, challenges like addiction, distraction, and privacy concerns are also notable (Latif et al., 2019). Social media platforms like Instagram are also used for professional collaboration and digital social support among teachers. Teachers engage in activities such as information seeking, sharing, and co-creating, which enhances their professional development. This collaboration is positively associated with perceived digital social support, indicating the potential of social media in professional growth (Richter et al., 2022).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media played a crucial role in understanding students' preferences and networking challenges. It enabled international knowledge sharing, where students and educators could collaborate and adapt to the rapidly changing learning environments. This shift highlighted the need for flexibility in online and hybrid learning applications (Elenurm, 2024). In higher education, the utilization of social media as instructional networking platforms has shown a positive impact on learning, enhancing students' perceived academic performance and satisfaction. This aligns with the growing body of literature supporting social media's role as an educational tool (Sabah, 2022). Additionally, social media platforms, particularly Facebook, have been used for community education and outreach, demonstrating measurable impacts on participant recruitment into research studies, especially when posts are strategically boosted for visibility (Teano et al., 2024).

Previous studies highlight how social media has incorporated into today's social activity due to its unique qualities of interaction and content creation (Kwahk & Park, 2018). With the ability to share their experiences with friends, family, and markets, it has fundamentally altered how users contribute to the public knowledge base (Ganguly, Talukdar, & Chatterjee, 2019). Similarly, the university students are the most active operators of internet services, particularly social media services or platforms to exploit its fundamental functions of social networking and knowledge distribution (Sharabati, 2018). Taking into account, Courtney (2007) advocates that by leveraging social media, information professional can engage consumers on a wide social level by becoming active participant and monitoring blogs, group postings, and message boards; that may enable them to be involved with needed KS. Accordingly, Ameen (2008) states that university libraries are a special breed, with strong holdings and a capable staff. Despite the widespread use of ICT, formal collection sharing is virtually ever practiced. However, the author through the qualitative

interviews has identified a number of technological, procedural, psychological, and behavioral obstacles to implementing planned and effective collection [knowledge] sharing at social level. However, Jabr (2011) states that institutions have invested and allocated more funds in order to link the academic environment with Web 2.0 [SM] applications for promoting learning, teaching, and research. In fact, Sahu (2013) argues that social media tools empower information centers in sharing a variety of information, including library orientation, updates on new library resources, reference services, selective dissemination of information (SDI), and general customer services. The study of Anwar and Zhiwei (2022) has also advocated that SM is quite useful in university libraries in terms of being an instrument for marketing library resources and services. Due to its interactive features, such as knowledge sharing (KS), document exchange, virtual conversations, and knowledge building, SM has developed into a useful tool for teaching and learning. The importance of SM employing social cognitive and connectivism theories on knowledge and learning performance among students in higher education has been acknowledged by Hosen et al. (2021). Our work provides empirical support for the idea that SM functions such as document exchange, online communication, and knowledge formation as well as individual motivation such as reputation are key elements that HEIs can use to promote KS and enhance learning outcomes for tertiary students.

Recent studies have shown that social media users frequently utilize SNSs like Facebook, which has led researchers and educators to investigate how to leverage this online platform to increase student engagement. The study of Ngoc Hoi (2021) has contributed by examining the mediating effect of KS behaviour between using SM (Facebook) in pedagogy and students' cognitive engagement alongside the moderating role of KS self-efficacy. The findings reveal that the SM media affordance in pedagogical has significant indirect effect on cognitive engagement through KS behaviour among the students who had strong confidence in KS.

In a cross-disciplinary study, Latifah, Setiawan, Aryani, Sadalia, and Al Arif (2022) looked at the role of SM in mediating the relationship between knowledge and human capital and open innovation among young businesspeople who attended incubator programs run by universities in Central Java and Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The result shows that human capital, KS, and SM networking directly affect innovation. SM networking and KS partially mediate the effect of human capital on innovation. Similarly, the study of Baima, Santoro, Pellicelli, and Mitrega (2022) has highlighted that the adoption of SM has changed the way of sharing knowledge by consumers about products and services among each other. This paper has explored the certain factors that drive customers to share knowledge about products and services on SM through a quantitative survey among consumers in Italy. This study has identified that perceived usefulness, online reviews, social bonds, subjective happiness, reciprocity and informational perspective are significant predictors of KS on SM among customers.

Etemadi, Hon, Manley, and Murphy (2022) have employed grounded theory to identify types of SM platforms used for KS and key problems influencing intentions to use of SM for KS. The study has carried out semi-structured interviews among Australian construction professionals. The results demonstrate that the participants prefer to utilize private SM for KS; yet, they perceive some ambiguities regarding privacy, confidentiality, and the caliber of the shared knowledge that may negatively impact the transition of the professionals' intentions into use of SM for KS. Most importantly, the adoption of SM in business world has predominantly transformed KS activities

in organizations that have created positive impacts on employees' social, work, job performance and organizational success.

In connection with, Chauhan (2022) has integrated organizational commitment theory to explore the influence of KS through SM use on job performance and employee retention in IT industry. This study has significantly contributed that the KS through SM use in work and social perspectives have positively influenced organizational commitment, job performance and employee retention by enhancing employee KS capability. Likewise, Lissillour and Ruel (2022) have studied that the distinct role of SM as key a medium has facilitated KS for successful supply chain functions in manufacturing industry.

On the other hand, the development of academic SNSs has linked academic users to SM on account of its immense benefits related to learning and sustainable development. Thus, it has led research to study academic exchanges in association with SM and the influencing factors of KS behavior of academic users on SM. The study of Chen, Zhang, Fan, Liu, and Li (2022) has integrated Information System Success Model and Expectation confirmation theory and concluded that system quality and information quality have a positive impact on perceived usefulness of SM which then positively associated to expectation confirmation in developing behavioral intention towards KS academic SM users.

Similarly, Li and Qin (2022) have focused the improvement of SM that has enriched the modern communication among people and made KS convenient by reducing the limitations of time and space within the groups. This quantitative study has empirically tested that knowledge reciprocity through SM between teachers and students can promote students' entrepreneurial motivation. Research also emphasizes on the importance of using SM for KS in healthcare and found that it is becoming an integral part of medical information dissemination. The study of Asfaw and Mekonnen (2022) has found that health professionals are adopting SM for clinical KS and for social networking. This study reveals that SM is used solely for professional KS, individual, professional and social networking. The majority of health professionals frequently use more than one SM tool including Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and YouTube. Although clinicians use a variety of SM tools to share clinical knowledge; however, they do not exploit medically focused virtual sites for clinical KS due to lack of quality and reliability.

Similarly, the qualitative study of Ghalavand, Panahi, and Sedghi (2022) has explored the physicians' perspectives towards the potential role of SM in KS. The study concludes that SM supports in sharing health knowledge and information encountering, stimulating explicit and tacit KS. Additionally, SM can facilitate health professionals in healthcare management and to better understand the impact of SM in health KS. In Pakistan, the students have also transformed their attitudes to use SM in their academic communication. The study of Shafique, Anwar, and Bushra (2010) has found that university students use social media for a range of activities, including making friends, exchanging links, online learning, passing the time, seeking for jobs, reading the news, and having fun. However, students hardly ever use these platforms for research assignments or communication.

Similarly, the study of R. Ahmed (2016) focuses on the value, necessity, suitability and implementation of social media in secondary education in Pakistan. This study has made it easier to weigh the benefits and drawbacks of using social media in the classroom and to determine whether it enhances academic growth, classroom performance, and student learning. The study of Arif and Kanwal (2016) extends that the students use a variety of SM platforms such as

“Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Wikipedia, WhatsApp, and Skype” to perform their academic activities. This is the first study has addressed the application of SM in distance learning and provision of educational services to off-campus students. Another study by Khan and Du (2017) has investigated the role and use of SM for professional development of Pakistani female librarians. The study has determined that the participants are familiar with and routinely use social media and identified that SM is perceived helpful in professional and career development. As regard the higher education institutions, Iqbal (2018) has explored the usage, goals, and trends of social networks in Pakistani academic libraries. The study has found that SNSs are used for user outreach, promoting library resources and services, and addressing difficulties faced by library professionals. However, this study besides shows current use of SNSs in HEI libraries, highlights the need of a comprehensive study to examine potential opportunities of SM implementation for KS and information dissemination, particularly in the context of research students in Pakistan.

Qasim and Shah (2023) assessed that the issue and challenges which are faced by the librarians to automate the libraries, the majority of the respondents stated that they were provided partial training about the usage of software, but it was not sufficient, and they felt difficulty in installing the open-source library software KOHA to automate the functions of the library. The study uncovered a shortage of staff in the libraries; furthermore, they pointed out that the provided budget amount by the parent organization was not sufficient and could not fulfil the needs relevant to the automation process of the libraries. A big problem was also highlighted in that most of the universities had no concern about automating their libraries.

Over the past years, social media has developed into a significant information-sharing and information-acquisition tool in many areas of life. Bashir, Malik, and Mahmood (2022) have pointed out the concerns over rising popularity and wide use of SM and kinds of information shared on it. Correspondingly, this study has investigated the behavior of university students regarding SM use including type of platforms, frequency and the types of information shared through a cross-sectional survey. The study indicates that students are familiar to use SM for information sharing frequently through “WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube”, particularly male students.

Recently, Arif, Qaisar, and Kanwal (2022) has integrated the theory of reasoned action to investigate SMTs usage for KS and factors stimulating students to share knowledge through SMTs and what is relationship between KS and creativity. This study used a structured questionnaire for data collection from business students enrolled in a Pakistani public sector university. The findings reveal that students leveraged SMTs for KS. They use SMTs for KS intentionally which is developed by their attitude, social norms and enjoyment from helping others, facility, KS ability, and reciprocity. This study also reinforces that KS through SM is positively associated with students’ creativity.

To sum up, the review of literature shows that even though much of research reports an increased use of social media technologies in education. However, several studies have found that students use SM merely for social networking, commenting, sharing and posting images, videos, etc. There are several empirical gaps existing on knowledge sharing through social media in higher education. The most important is to understand how SM can be integrated into higher education to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration for better learning outcomes, which needs for more empirical research. Also, a little is known about KS through SMTs, awareness,

individual creativity, and ethical implication of SM for KS in developing countries like Pakistan. Thus, more research is needed to explore the individual, environmental, psychological, organizational and particularly technological factors involving in knowledge sharing through SM in higher education, particularly among research students.

While social media serves as a significant tool for knowledge sharing in education, it presents several challenges. Key issues include fostering and sustaining trust, ethical concerns, and the balance between engagement and distraction. Firstly, the challenge of trust and the effective exchange of knowledge within online communities is well recognized. Educators face difficulties in creating an environment where users feel secure and valued enough to share information openly. Establishing trust within these communities often requires the presence of active, credible moderators, alongside clear guidelines for interaction (Booth, 2012). Another significant issue is the ethical and professional challenges associated with social media use. In fields like dermatology, while social media extends professional networking and patient education, it also poses issues such as misinformation, conflicts of interest, and potential breaches of patient confidentiality. These platforms necessitate careful navigation to ensure transparency and integrity in interactions (Militello et al., 2021).

Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the shift towards more learner-controlled social media environments highlighted both the opportunities and the challenges of online learning. Students expressed preferences for flexibility in learning, yet the transition also brought to light issues related to digital literacy and the tendency for social media platforms to distract students from their studies. This balance between engagement and distraction remains a critical area of concern (Elenurm, 2024; Rajaraman et al., 2024). In higher education, perceptions of the effectiveness of social media as a learning tool diverge among students. While some find these platforms beneficial for information sharing and engagement, others do not view them as effective learning tools, which might be due to varying behavioral norms and conventions across different platforms. This suggests that specific academically focused platforms may yield different outcomes in future studies (Koranteng et al., 2018).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

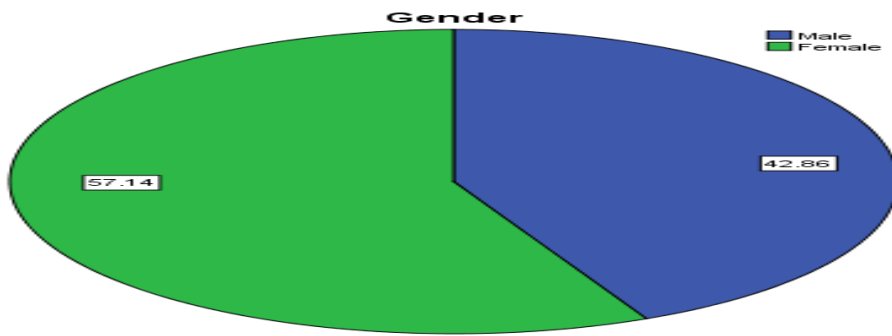
### **Demographic Information**

#### ***Gender Distribution***

According to table 1 the female participants were, 200 and their percentage was 57%, while the male participants were 150 and their percentage was 43%.

***Table.1 Gender wise distribution***

		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	150	42.9%
	Female	200	57.1%
<b>Total:</b>		<b>350</b>	<b>100%</b>



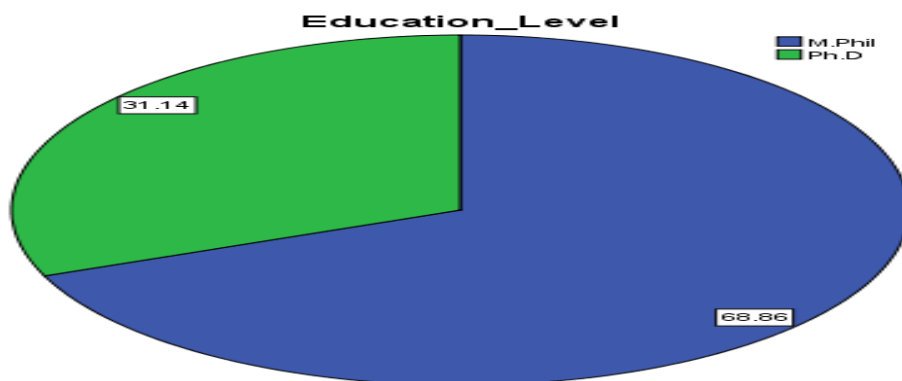
**Fig 1: Gender wise distribution**

**Educational Level**

According to table 2 the academic qualification of participants, the 241 participants were registered in Master of Philosophy degree program, and their percentage was 69.9% and 109 participants were enrolled in doctor of philosophy degree program and their percentage was 31.1%.

**Table 2 Educational Level**

		<i>f</i>	%
Education Level	M.Phil	241	68.9%
	Ph.D.	109	31.1%
<b>Total:</b>		<b>350</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Fig.2: Educational Level**

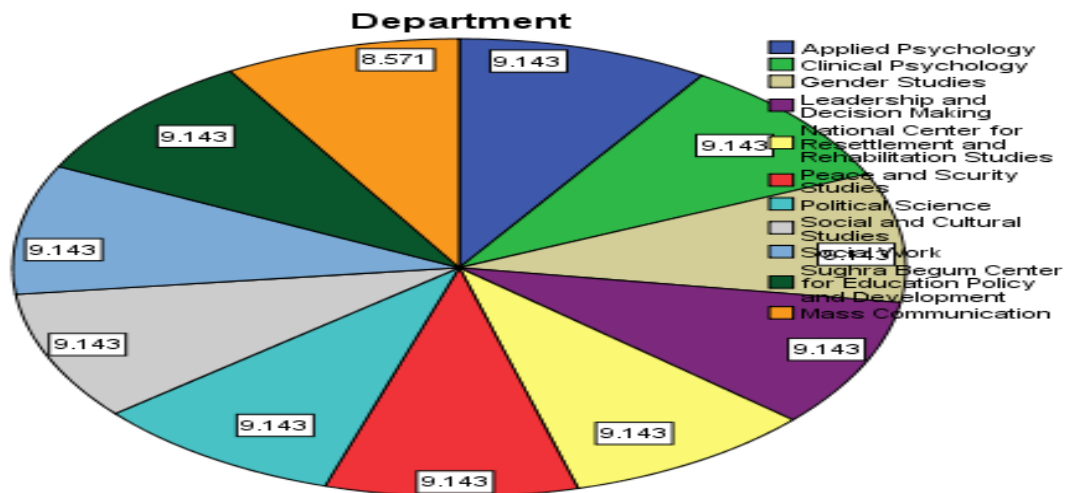
**Department wise distribution of Respondents**

According to participation from the department, the participants ratio was almost equal that is 32 from each department and their percentage was (9%) from each department. The participation from Mass Communication was 30 and their percentage was 8.6%.



**Table 3 Department wise distribution of Respondents**

		<i>f</i>	%
<b>Department</b>	Applied Psychology	32	9.1%
	Clinical Psychology	32	9.1%
	Gender Studies	32	9.1%
	Leadership and Decision Making	32	9.1%
	National Center for Resettlement and Rehabilitation Studies	32	9.1%
	Peace and Scurity Studies	32	9.1%
	Political Science	32	9.1%
	Social and Cultural Studies	32	9.1%
	Social Work	32	9.1%
	Sughra Begum Center for Education Policy and Development	32	9.1%
	Mass Communication	30	8.6%
<b>Total</b>		<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**Fig 3: Department wise distribution of respondents**  
**Usage of Different Social Media for Knowledge Sharing**

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics (n=350)**

	M	SD
1. Slide Share	4.03	1.076
2. Instant messaging	3.98	1.094
3. Blogs	3.97	1.139
4. Wikis	3.97	1.021
5. Flickr	3.96	1.066
6. WhatsApp	3.88	1.254
7. Instagram	3.77	1.151
8. Foursquare	3.73	1.083
9. Facebook	3.65	1.067
10. Myspace	3.64	1.164
11. LinkedIn	3.54	1.106
12. YouTube	3.51	1.088
13. Twitter	3.45	1.124

The results exposed that the perceived level of usage of different social media for knowledge sharing by research students in University of the Punjab, was stated as often as the mean scores of all dimensions of social media is higher than 3.00. The highest score was obtained for Slide Share blog followed by instant messaging, WhatsApp, and Videos. While the lowest mean score was attained for YouTube and Twitter.

#### **Challenges for Knowledge Sharing through Social Media**

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics (n=350)**

	M	SD
1. Not expertise in using SNTs	4.04	1.090
2. Financial constraints	4.10	.955
3. Time management	3.83	.867
4. Institution's policies	3.50	1.051
5. Priorities of another task	3.60	1.063
6. Load of work	3.45	1.025
7. Network's problems	3.42	1.051
8. Power failure	3.35	1.092
9. Less expertise in searching techniques	3.33	1.085
10. Downloading problem	3.48	1.020
11. Less subscribed journals	3.55	1.093

The results exposed that the perceived challenge of for knowledge sharing through social media by research students in University of the Punjab, was stated as "Agree" as the mean scores of all dimensions of social media is higher than 3.00. The highest challenge mean score was obtained for "Not expertise in using SNTs" followed by Financial constraints, Institution's policies, and Priorities of another task. While the lowest challenge mean score was attained for less subscribed journals and Downloading problem.

#### **Over all Descriptive Statistics**

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics (350)

Indicators / Dimensions	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Usage of social media for knowledge sharing	2	5	3.77	.420
Challenges of social media for knowledge sharing	1	5	3.60	.600

Above Table shows the standard deviation of the utilization of social media for knowledge sharing scale is (.420) and the mean value was (3.77), shows a high level of perceived usage. Therefore, it can be understood that the most of respondents stands to the predetermined level and shows that social media was frequently or frequently used for knowledge exchange. Furthermore, the standard deviation of the Challenges of Social Media for Knowledge Sharing Scale is (.600) and the mean value (3.60) pointed out towards a moderate level of perceived challenges with social media for knowledge sharing. It can be concluded that the most of respondents are at predetermined scale and perceived that social media presented only mild problems for information sharing.

**Overall t-test for Gender**

**Table 7: Independent sample t-test on participants' views about knowledge sharing through social media with regard to gender**

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.(p)
Usage of social media for knowledge sharing	Male	150	3.81	.314	1.363	348	.174
	Female	200	3.75	.484			
Challenges of knowledge sharing through social media	Male	150	3.71	.418	2.789	348	.006
	Female	200	3.53	.697			

An independent sample t-test was used, according to Table 7, The results revealed that gender does not significantly affect in perspective towards usage of social media for knowledge sharing subscale, as the  $t = 1.362, p = .174 > .05$ . It is concluded that both females as compared to males' participants, had shown almost similar perspective towards usage of social media for knowledge sharing, at university level. The results revealed that gender does significantly affect in perspective towards challenges of knowledge sharing through social-media subscale, as the  $t = 2.789, p = .006 < .05$ . It is concluded that males as compared to females' participants, had shown higher perspective towards challenges of knowledge sharing through social-media, at university level.

**Overall ANNOVA for Education Level**

ANOVA for perceived knowledge sharing through social media scale on the basis education level groups of participants

**Table 8**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Usage of social media for knowledge sharing	Between Groups	.086	1	.086	.488	.485
	Within Groups	61.524	348	.177		
	Total	61.610	349			
Challenges of knowledge sharing trough social media	Between Groups	1.073	1	1.073	1.919	.084
	Within Groups	124.479	348	.358		
	Total	125.552	349			

Table 8 describes that the F-value (.488) with p = .485 got for Usage of social media for knowledge sharing and the F-value (1.919) with p = .084 attained for challenges of knowledge sharing trough social media which is not statistically significant respectively, at standard alpha level of significance ( $\alpha < .05$ ). There is no significant difference of various education level groups (BS, M.Phil., Ph.D.) of participants on perspective towards positive aspects of Technology usage, negative aspects of technology usage and usefulness of technology for effective learning. Therefore, it is concluded that having different age does not affect significantly in perspective towards usage of social media for knowledge sharing and challenges of knowledge sharing trough social media, at university level.

**RESULTS**

The study explored the usage patterns and challenges of social media for knowledge sharing among research students at the University of the Punjab, Lahore. The findings highlight the significant role of social media platforms in facilitating knowledge sharing, while also shedding light on the challenges faced by students in utilizing these platforms.

**Usage of Social Media for Knowledge Sharing**

The results indicate that social media is frequently used by research students for knowledge sharing. The most commonly used platforms were SlideShare (M = 4.03, SD = 1.076), instant messaging (M = 3.98, SD = 1.094), blogs (M = 3.97, SD = 1.139), and wikis (M = 3.97, SD = 1.021). Other notable platforms included WhatsApp (M = 3.88, SD = 1.254), Instagram (M = 3.77, SD = 1.151), and Facebook (M = 3.65, SD = 1.067), though they were slightly less favored for academic purposes. In contrast, platforms like YouTube (M = 3.51, SD = 1.088) and Twitter (M = 3.45, SD = 1.124) had the lowest usage ratings for knowledge sharing.

**Challenges of Knowledge Sharing**

The challenges faced by research students in using social media for knowledge sharing were also evident. The most significant barriers included a lack of expertise in using social networking technologies (M = 4.04, SD = 1.090), financial constraints (M = 4.10, SD = .955), and time

management issues ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = .867$ ). Institutional policies ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 1.051$ ) and competing priorities ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 1.063$ ) were also reported as notable challenges. The least significant challenges were related to issues such as downloading problems ( $M = 3.48$ ,  $SD = 1.020$ ) and fewer subscribed journals ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = 1.093$ ).

### **Gender Differences**

Gender differences were observed in the perceptions of challenges in knowledge sharing through social media. Males reported a higher level of perceived challenges ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 0.418$ ) compared to females ( $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = 0.697$ ). The independent sample t-test confirmed this significant difference ( $t = 2.789$ ,  $p = .006$ ), indicating that gender influences students' perceptions of the challenges associated with using social media for knowledge sharing. However, gender did not significantly impact the usage of social media for knowledge sharing ( $t = 1.362$ ,  $p = .174$ ).

### **Education Level Differences**

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the influence of education level (M.Phil., Ph.D.) on the usage and challenges of social media for knowledge sharing. The results indicated no significant differences in the perceptions of social media usage for knowledge sharing ( $F = 0.488$ ,  $p = .485$ ) or the challenges of using social media ( $F = 1.919$ ,  $p = .084$ ) based on education level. Therefore, it can be concluded that education level does not significantly affect the research students' perspectives on using social media for knowledge sharing.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study highlight the widespread usage of social media by research students for knowledge sharing, with platforms like SlideShare, instant messaging, and WhatsApp emerging as the most frequently used tools. This finding aligns with previous studies suggesting that social media can facilitate knowledge sharing and academic collaboration (Sivakumar et al., 2023). These platforms enable students to engage in collaborative learning, share academic resources, and expand their academic networks, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience. However, the study also identifies significant challenges that impede effective knowledge sharing through social media. A lack of expertise in using social networking technologies was the most reported challenge, which supports previous research indicating that digital literacy is a crucial factor for effective knowledge sharing (Hoi, 2021). Additionally, financial constraints and time management issues further hinder students from utilizing social media platforms to their full potential. These barriers are particularly concerning given the increasing reliance on digital tools for academic success in higher education.

The gender differences observed in the perceptions of challenges are noteworthy. Males reported greater challenges in using social media for knowledge sharing compared to females, which could be attributed to differences in digital literacy, access to resources, or gender-specific socialization patterns in academic settings. This finding warrants further investigation to better understand the underlying reasons for these differences. The study also found that education level did not significantly influence perceptions of social media usage or the challenges associated with it. This suggests that the challenges faced by research students in effectively using social media for knowledge sharing are not necessarily related to their academic level but may be more linked to individual skills, institutional support, and access to resources.

The results of this study underscore the need for universities to provide targeted training and support to enhance digital literacy among research students. By addressing the identified

challenges, universities can improve students' ability to leverage social media for knowledge sharing, fostering a more collaborative and innovative academic community. Institutions should also consider revising policies that may hinder the effective use of social media in academic contexts and ensure that students have the necessary tools and support to navigate these platforms effectively. While social media presents significant opportunities for knowledge sharing among research students, it is essential to recognize and address the challenges that limit its effectiveness. By providing the necessary resources and support, universities can help students overcome these barriers and fully capitalize on the potential of social media for academic collaboration and learning.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the usage of social media for knowledge sharing among research students at the University of the Punjab, Lahore, as well as the challenges they face in utilizing these platforms effectively. The findings suggest that social media is widely used by research students, with platforms like SlideShare, instant messaging, blogs, and WhatsApp being the most commonly utilized for academic collaboration and knowledge exchange. These platforms provide students with valuable opportunities to engage with peers, share their research, and build academic networks, contributing to their academic growth and development. The widespread usage, the study highlighted several significant challenges that hinder the effective use of social media for knowledge sharing. These challenges include a lack of expertise in using social networking tools, financial constraints, institutional policies, and the need to prioritize other academic tasks. Gender differences in perceptions of challenges were observed, with male participants reporting higher levels of perceived difficulties compared to females. Additionally, the study found that education level did not significantly influence students' perspectives on social media usage or the challenges they encountered. The findings underscore the need for educational institutions to address these barriers in order to enhance the effective use of social media for academic collaboration. Providing targeted training programs to improve students' digital literacy, revising institutional policies to support flexible use of social media, and offering support for managing the technical aspects of these platforms are essential steps towards maximizing the benefits of social media in academic settings. By addressing these challenges, universities can foster a more collaborative, innovative, and effective learning environment, helping research students to make the most of social media for knowledge sharing and academic success.

## REFERENCES

- Ahmed, R. (2016). Social media integration in secondary education in Pakistan. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 3(1), 74-99.
- Ameen, K. (2008). Barriers in collection sharing among libraries of Pakistan: University library managers' viewpoint. *LIBRES Library and Information Science Research Electronic Journal*, 18(1), 1-11.
- Anwar, M., & Zhiwei, T. (2022). University libraries of Pakistan, application of social media to market library sources and services. *Webology*, 19(2).
- Arif, M., & Kanwal, S. (2016). Adoption of social media technologies and their impact on students' academic performance: The only way for future survival of distance education students in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Information Management and Libraries*, 18(1), 25-36.

- Arif, M., Qaisar, N., & Kanwal, S. (2022). Factors affecting students' knowledge sharing over social media and individual creativity: An empirical investigation in Pakistan. *International Journal of Management Education*, 20(1).
- Asfaw, T. T., & Mekonnen, B. Y. (2022). Knowledge sharing by clinicians using social media: A case study in Ethiopia. *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, 14(3), 630-641.
- Baima, G., Santoro, G., Pellicelli, A. C., & Mitreġa, M. (2022). Testing the antecedents of customer knowledge sharing on social media: A quantitative analysis on Italian consumers. *International Marketing Review*, 39(3), 682-705.
- Bashir, I., Malik, A., & Mahmood, K. (2022). Measuring personal and academic differences in students' perceived social media credibility. *Digital Library Perspectives*, 38(3), 251-262.
- Booth, S. E. (2012). Cultivating Knowledge Sharing and Trust in Online Communities for Educators. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 47(1), 1-31.
- Chauhan, R. (2022). Impact of social media usage on job performance and employee retention: Role of knowledge sharing and organizational commitment. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*.
- Chen, X., Zhang, S., Fan, X., Liu, H., & Li, Y. (2022). Knowledge sharing behavior for academic users of social media and its empirical research. Paper presented at the *Artificial Intelligence and Security: 8th International Conference, ICAIS 2022*, Qinghai, China, July 15-20, 2022, Proceedings, Part II (pp. 253-263). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Courtney, N. (2007). *Library 2.0 and beyond: Innovative technologies and tomorrow's user*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Elenurm, T. (2024). Social media as an e-learning tool for understanding the challenges of COVID-19 for students. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 22(1), 86-101.
- Etemadi, R., Hon, C. K. H., Manley, K., & Murphy, G. (2022). Mechanisms for enhancing the use of social media for knowledge sharing by construction professionals. *Construction Innovation*, 22(2), 284-304.
- Fulk, J., & Yuan, Y. C. (2013). Location, Motivation, and Social Capitalization via Enterprise Social Networking. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19(1), 20-37.
- Ganguly, A., Talukdar, A., & Chatterjee, D. (2019). Evaluating the role of social capital, tacit knowledge sharing, knowledge quality, and reciprocity in determining innovation capability of an organization. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 23(6), 1105-1135.
- Ghalavand, H., Panahi, S., & Sedghi, S. (2022). How social media facilitate health knowledge sharing among physicians. *Behaviour and Information Technology*, 41(7), 1544-1553.
- Hosen, M., Ogbeibu, S., Giridharan, B., Cham, T. H., Lim, W. M., & Paul, J. (2021). Individual motivation and social media influence on student knowledge sharing and learning performance: Evidence from an emerging economy. *Computers and Education*, 172.
- Iqbal, M. (2018). Usage, goals, and trends of social networks in Pakistani academic libraries. *International Journal of Library and Information Science*, 3(1), 1-10.
- Jabr, N. H. (2011). Social networking as a tool for extending academic learning and communication. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(12), 93-102.
- Khan, N. A., & Du, H. (2017). The role and use of social media for professional development of Pakistani female librarians. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1-14.

- Koranteng, F. N., Kuada, E., & Wiafe, I. (2018). An Empirical Study of the Relationship Between Social Networking Sites and Students' Engagement in Higher Education. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 57(5), 1131–1159.
- Kwahk, K.-Y., & Park, D.-H. (2018). Leveraging your knowledge to my performance: The impact of transactive memory capability on job performance in a social media environment. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 80, 314-330.
- Latif, M. Z., Hussain, I., Saeed, R., Qureshi, M. A., & Maqsood, U. (2019). Use of smart phones and social media in medical education: Trends, advantages, challenges, and barriers. *Acta Informatica Medica*, 27(2), 133.
- Li, J., & Qin, J. (2022). Effect of teachers' knowledge sharing behavior on students' entrepreneurial motivation in social media environment. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 17(2), 143-157.
- Lissillour, R., & Ruel, S. (2022). Chinese social media for informal knowledge sharing in the supply chain. *Supply Chain Forum*.
- Militello, M., Yang, R. A., Anderson, J. B., Szeto, M. D., Presley, C. L., & Laughter, M. R. (2021). Social Media and Ethical Challenges for the Dermatologist. *Current Dermatology Reports*, 10(4), 120–127.
- Ngoc Hoi, V. (2021). Augmenting student engagement through the use of social media: The role of knowledge sharing behaviour and knowledge sharing self-efficacy. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 31(7), 4021–4033.
- Qasim, M., & Shah, M. A. (2023). A research on the status and challenges of library automation in the university libraries of Faisalabad Division, Pakistan. *Journal of Social Sciences Review*, 3(1), 362-371.
- Rajaraman, G., Klein, R., & Sinnayah, P. (2024). ZOOMED IN, ZONED OUT: Academic Self-Reports on the Challenges and Benefits of Online Teaching in Higher Education. *Education Sciences*, 14(2), 133.
- Richter, E., Carpenter, J. P., Meyer, A., & Richter, D. (2022). Instagram as a platform for teacher collaboration and digital social support. *Computers & Education*, 190, 104624.
- Sabah, N. M. (2022). The impact of social media-based collaborative learning environments on students' use outcomes in higher education. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 39(3), 667–689.
- Sahu, M. K. (2013). Information dissemination through using social networking site among library professionals in the engineering colleges of Odisha: A survey. *International Journal of Digital Library Services*, 3(1), 45-95.
- Shafique, F., Anwar, M., & Bushra, M. (2010). Exploitation of social media among university students: A case study. *Webology*, 7(2), 34-47.
- Sharabati, M. M. (2018). The impact of knowledge sharing through social networks on students' academic performance. *International Journal of Business and Information*, 13(2), 155-190.
- Sivakumar, A., Shaik, S., & Jayasingh, S. (2023). Social Media Influence on Students' Knowledge Sharing and Learning: An Empirical Study. *Education Sciences*, 13(7), 745.
- Teano, A. L., Scott, A., Gipson, C., Albert, M., & Pettigrew, C. (2024). Social media programs for outreach and recruitment supporting aging and Alzheimer disease and related dementias research: Longitudinal descriptive study. *JMIR Aging*, 7, e51520.