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# Uses Of Social Media And Needs Gratification Of University Students In Pakistan

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## ABSTRACT

The significant rise in technology and the application of social media during the last one and half decade has changed the concept of communication and relationship among masses. Both social media & contemporary technology is increasingly becoming part of individual's lives in modern society; nevertheless, It has considerably persuaded student community (Raghavendra, P et al. 2018). They use social media for seeking online help via communication, preparing assignments and many other projects. Using the Uses and Gratification Model the current project tends to probe, the frequency of social media uses among the University students in Pakistan along with the level of needs gratification (general/basic & academic) of these students through their favorite social media site. It also aims to discover the correlation between different variables like age with social media use and level of needs satisfaction.

The data concludes that 50.8% of the total respondents frequently use social media sites and were found constantly log on to their favourite social site. 36.1% being majority, visit their favourite social site more than 2 times a day & 13.1% visited 1-2 times a day. The study also concludes that 48.9% respondents use 2-4 hrs daily. The researchers also found that respondents were highly satisfied as their favourite social media site gratified their General/Basic and Academic needs to a high extent. For the general needs, 38.6% of the total respondents agreed to a "High Extent" satisfaction through their favourite social sites for information need, 32% for Entertainment, 32% for Surveillance, 36.4% for companionship, 31.3% for Relaxation, 40.2% for Excitement and Enjoyment need. On the other hand, only two out of the six academic needs i.e.

Pursuing course relating quizzes, exams & tests need and Communication with course teachers need were found gratified to a “High Extent”, 36% and 33.4% respectively, while the rest viewing course schedule, accessing course notes, searching subject topics,& Preparing assignments were found fulfilled to a “**Normal Extent**”.

**Keywords:** Social media, Uses and Gratification, General/Basic Needs, Academic Needs.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Social media for the last couple of years have become vastly popular among the masses around the globe. It has made communication convenient for users and has remained a platform where people connect and communicate with their friends and family, discuss their problems, issues and get supports from them even sitting in other parts of the world. One can understand the popularity of these site from the numbers of its users across the world. For example, Facebook has 2.89 Billion users (Statista 2021) with 2.1 billion active daily users, YouTube has 2 Billion users, while Twitter has 330 million.

Individuals create their own profiles & generate their contact lists via the most suitable platform for them. These platforms most likely comprise plenty of features like chatting, blogging, audio, and video calling etc. Facebook has been found, giving its users numerous opportunities and liberties in this race. It allows users to create their profiles, develop their pages and groups which could be used for marketing and educational purposes. Posting photos and videos, liking and sharing them with others sending messages to loved ones in the form of text, audio and video are among the general activities of online users. Twitter permits its users to tweet something, retweet about that particular subject, send message to friends and family and adding other users as followers. People, through Instagram, let their followers know through their online pictures, what they are doing now. At the same time, YouTube is the social site which allows its user to generate their account, make channels online and to upload a video. The followers watch the videos and support in the form of commenting on the video. It also allows users to search for any particular video.

Boyd (2007) expressed that these sites initially became a hub of entertainment for some users, but soon it becomes a social standard and way of life for them. He further added that teenagers precisely, are addicted to using social media sites for communication and sharing information with their peers, friends and family.

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010, P.61) defines social media sites as “Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content”. While, Nielsen, M.I.S.W (2017) argued that social media are computer related applications which help users to share ideas, information, videos etc.

## **EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL SITES**

Social media had been created for social interaction and relationship majorly rely on different online websites & mobile application. It enables its users to express themselves, get information about the world and share them with their friends and family on the contact lists. Characteristics like diverse, cheap availability and easy use of social media have made it way easy to millions of people's lives. Some of the users use it for academic while other use it for marketing purposes However, some of the users use it for social interaction by building new and maintaining the existing relationships. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and WhatsApp etc are among the top social media sites of the present day.

Technology has been observed as the most important factor responsible for the fast and rapid growth of social media sites. It has made access to social media extremely easy and has made it available for individuals everywhere. Laptops, Advance computers and smartphones with contemporary software tools are among the factors which helped social media to grow promptly. It is the modern-day technology which has welcomed social media users and enabled them to interact with people through different social sites despite their physical presence other parts of the world. During the 90s, the internet got popularity and started growing quickly. Social media sites began in the year 1995 for the first time after the launch of classmates.com aiming to facilitate student to connect to the internet effectively. But after the inauguration of SixDegrees.com was a way for a series of sites. The advance technology and rapid growth of social media over time did attract millions of users towards itself.

Michael Dewing (2012) explained that during 2000s, social media got extreme popularity. In a short span of few years' social sites like Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn become exceptionally popular among the users. According to Alexa.com, the top five visited websites were social media sites in 2007. Gonzalez, N (2007) found that the same year, i.e. 2007 Facebook had touched the 30 million online users which increased by 89% each year, however, the number increase by 500% in the UK from Nov 2006 till May 2007. The decision of Facebook in 2006 to register non-college users led the social site to grow tremendously and thus become the most popular social site among the non-educational organization.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

1. There is a significant correlation between age and use of social media sites.
2. There exists a significant correlation between age and level of needs satisfaction.
3. There exists a significant correlation between social media use and level of needs gratification.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **PATTERNS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE**

To understand the nature of social media, Uses & Gratification (U&G) model is used which aim to understand the socio-psychological needs of individuals, which generate their expectations, expose them to different media outlets and eventually lead to its gratification (Katz et al., 1974). Ruggiero (2000) argued that the basic principle of U&G theory is that each individual selects a proper and relevant media outlet to satisfy their different specific needs. They are motivated towards a particular media because of these needs. The U&G approach helps in bringing the connection between choices and their outcomes.

Different researchers have identified the usage patterns of various social media .Maia et al. (2008) used different demographics like information, records of activity, and network properties, and categorised YouTube users into: small community members, content producers, content consumers, producers and consumers, and others. Different people use social media for different purposes however Underwood et al. (2011) found that the social media users either spread information about themselves or they try to communicate with it. These researchers found broadcaster, communicator, and high interaction as main groups of these users. Fazeen, Dantu, & Guturu (2011) classified the users of Twitter into leaders, lurkers, spammers, and close associates.

Salihu et al. (2016) attempted to discover the reasons behind social media use, the gratifications through it and their preference in social media sites among all the available to them. These researchers concluded that 98.2% of the students were active users of social media like Facebook & WhatsApp. However, these researchers identified seven different factors & reasons behind social media use: Communication, sharing of news, researching, expressing onself, connection with existing friends. Likewise, socializing and personal connections were found to be among the gratifications sought and obtained.

Karimi. L et al. (2014) found the following three reasons for social media use. i.e. a friend suggested it, everyone I know is using SNSs, & keeping in touch with others. These results are found similar to other studies like the study of Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) & Gross. E (2004) found that the primary reason for social media use of majority of the respondents was to be in contact with friends. Park et al. (2009) found it to be used for gratifying the information need.

This current study is in line with the findings of LaRose, Mastro & Eastin (2001). They found information, entertainment, and different social needs among the gratification of the users. Additionally, Haridakis and Hanson (2009) also concluded that using YouTube gratify the need of information seeking while Gross (2004) investigated that motivation behind using Facebook is to know about class fellow.

Likewise, a study in the South Africa exposed Passing time to be the main reason of social media use. Clark, Lee, and Boyer (2007) argued that majority of the college students use Facebook for passing time & entertainment. Quan-Haase & Young (2010) on the other hand also found that killing time was the main reason of social media use.

According to Bashir. S. et al. (N.d) students use the Internet for preparing class assignments, assistance in their research projects, to update their knowledge, for communication, entertainment, passing time and examination preparation purposes. They use it for reading news, poetry, nation and international political & global affairs downloading software, online job search & application, projects and notes & career development. They use it for the latest developments about sports and other fields of lives, while many users use it for purchasing items.

Karimi. L et al. (2014) found that male students use SNSs for information seeking, while the female students used it for passing time. Haridakis & Hanson (2009) conclude that male users used YouTube entertainment, seeking thrill and information.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN PAKISTAN**

The total population of Pakistan is more or less 216.57 Million<sup>i</sup>, where 64% of the total population comprises of youth, with a median age of 22. Among them are the school, college and university going students who use both the internet and social media application. A huge number of students in Pakistan today are part of a social media site one or the other way. Ahmed & Qazi (2011)<sup>ii</sup> revealed that the use of social media applications do not effect the academic performance of students. However, it is also true that the frequency of using social media is an alarming situation as student use these sites even during their classrooms.

Eijaz, A. (2013) revealed that exposure to the mobile phone in contemporary society is a recent example of how fast technology evolved in the last few years. The technology has made internet available to the general public at their doorstep. Users in Pakistan are thus experiencing internet through their laptops, PCs and mobile phones (Haque, 2013). However, Ali. et al. (2015) recorded that the drastic change in internet use occurred after the introduction of 3G and 4G services.

Social media affected the lives of individuals in many ways. Their daily life communication is to talk about chatting, posting, tweeting and commenting on photos and videos of self and others. Youth, particularly students across the globe are nearly addicted to social media today, and Pakistani students like rest of the world show immense interest in these sites. It is, therefore, that social media sites are rapidly growing and getting popular among the user's day by day.

## **USERS MOTIVATIONS & SCALE USED FOR THIS STUDY**

Wellman. B. & Gulia. M. (1999) investigated that social media and related networks are good sources of information, social & emotional support and ties with others, for its users. Online communities do have similar types of networks where individuals seek emotional support and information about everything happening around them. Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe (2006) argued that in either situation, these networks help individuals to improve their social capital. 90% of the users use social media for communication with friends who are already in social contact while 41.6% use it for

messaging to make connection with new friends (Golder et al., 2007). This attitude towards social media sites helps individuals to develop their social ties and social capital beyond the borders. Lampe et al. (2006) added that people use social sites for the gratification of surveillance need. Social media enable its users to look for the activities like occurring around comprising tracking actions of others, following different beliefs online and discovering the interest of the larger community. College students in the US use social media for interaction with old friends and maintain those relationships instead of making new ones (Ellison et al., 2007). Other researchers like Lenhart & Madden, (2007) and Wiley & , (2006) came up with similar results and found that students use social media for maintaining & retaining friendship with old friends whom they see often & rare.

The concept of user's motivation is related to the reasons which compel individuals to use different social sites for their needs gratification. The researchers found in the literature review that scholars like Salihu. A & Latiff. N et al. (2016)<sup>iii</sup>, Karimi. L et al. (2014), Pempek et al. (2009), Haridakis & Hanson (2009) & Clark et al. (2007), who had already worked on user's motivations for social media use.

The current study used combination of different scales used by researchers like Al-Menayes (2015) and Siddike, Islam, & Banna, H. (2015) in "use of social networking sites: Facebook group as a learning management system". Stone, Singletary & Richmond (1999) also reported number of motivations (basic human needs) behind media usage like "Entertainment, Surveillance, Information, Diversion, Escape, Social interaction, Identity, Pass time and Companionship". This study also got help from motivation scale used by Katz, Gurevitch, Haas, (1973) comprises of five different categories, i.e. cognitive, affective, personal identity, integration & social interaction and escapism needs, and Rubin (1981) comprises of, passing time, Companionship, Escape, Enjoyment, Social interaction, Relaxation, Information and Excitement. However, Siddike, Islam, & Banna, H. (2015) categorised different needs into general/basic and Academic needs. The review of all these previously mentioned frameworks revealed specific common themes.

Following are the General/basic and Academic needs, derived from the past studies on the same subject:

### **GENERAL/BASIC NEEDS**

- Information (Get information through documents and documentary).
- Entertainment (watching songs, movies, documentaries, funny videos, dramas).
- Surveillance (keep me up-to-date through news etc).
- Social Relationship.
- Companionship (reduce my loneliness).
- Personal Identity (Learn about oneself).
- Relaxation.
- Passing time.

- Excitement/Enjoyment (Simply enjoy using social media sites).
- Escape (to escape from the pressure of assignments etc).
- Looking for Jobs.
- Writing blogs.

## **ACADEMIC NEEDS**

- Viewing course schedule
- Accessing course notes
- Communication with course teachers
- Pursuing course relating quizzes, exams and tests
- Searching subject topics
- Prepare my assignments and other relevant stuff.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study tends to probe the Uses of Social Media & Needs Gratification of University Students in Pakistan. There searchers used different techniques and scales from previous research study like, Sheldon's et al. 2001; Ellison's et al. 2007; Watson, 1988, in order to identify users' experiences and need fulfilment through using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram.

Keeping in mind the quantitative nature of the study, a survey is conducted in Islamabad and Rawalpindi comprising 800 students from four public Universities comprising International Islamic University, Islamabad, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi, National University of Medical Sciences Rawalpindi. The researchers used proportionate sampling technique to understand the number of respondents to participate in the survey from each university and after wards the purposive sampling method is applied to get to precise and accurate data. The number of students in each university divided by the total number of students in all four universities gave a percentage of students in a single university to be participating.

Using a five point Likert scale, a questionnaire was developed upon which the researchers collect data and later used SPSS 23 for analysis of that data, with a response rate of 91.75%, through frequency and Pearson's correlation tables.

The administered questionnaire had been divided into two parts with a series of questions: The 1st covers demographic details of respondents like sex, age, information about discipline, semester etc. while the 2nd part contained questions regarding student use of social media sites, frequency of their use and level of their satisfaction for general/basic and academic needs through their favourite social site(s).

## **RESULTS**

**TABLE 1-3 FREQUENCY OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE****TABLE 1**

How often do you visit/log on to your favorite social site(s)?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid I'm constantly logged on	373	50.8	50.8	50.8
1-2 times a day	96	13.1	13.1	63.9
More than 2 times a day	265	36.1	36.1	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	

The current table demonstrates the frequency of visiting/logging on to favourite social site. It reveals that majority of the respondents i.e. 373 being 50.8% constantly log on to their favourite social site, while 265 being 36.1% visit their favourite social site more than 2 times a day however, 96 being 13.1% respondents visit their favourite social site 1-2 times a day.

**TABLE 2**

How frequently do you update your status on your favorite social site(s) for the satisfaction of your needs?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very Frequently	81	11.0	11.0	11.0
Frequently	151	20.6	20.6	31.6
Normal	271	36.9	36.9	68.5
Rarely	137	18.7	18.7	87.2
Very Rarely	94	12.8	12.8	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	

The data reveals that majority of the respondents i.e. 271 being 36.9% of the total respondents update their status to a normal extent, 151 being 20.6% update their status frequently, 137 being 18.7% rarely update their status where as 94 being 12.8% and 81 being 11% update their status very rarely and very frequently, respectively.



TABLE 3

What are Average hours of your active social media (Favorite site) use per day?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 2 hours	111	15.1	15.1	15.1
	2-4 hours	359	48.9	48.9	64.0
	More than 4 hours	264	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	734	100.0	100.0	

The above table uncovers the frequency of respondent's daily time spent on favourite social site. The table shows that 48.9% being majority pay 2-4 hours/day on their favourite social site. 36% spend more than 4 hours a day however, 15.1% pay less than 2 hours a day on their favourite social site.

**TABLE 4 GENERAL/BASIC AND ACADEMIC NEEDS AND THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION**

	Very High Extent	High extent	Normal	Low Extent	Very low extent	Total
To what extent do you think your favorite social site(s) gratify your Information need.	139 (18.9%)	283 (38.6%)	185 (25.2%)	113 (15.4%)	14 (1.9%)	734
..... gratify your Entertainment.	157 (21.4%)	235 (32%)	227 (30.9%)	93 (12.7%)	22 (3%)	734
..... gratify your Surveillance (keep me up-to-date) need.	180 (24.5%)	277 (37.7%)	177 (24.1%)	86 (11.7%)	14 (1.9%)	734
..... gratify your Social Relationship need.	144 (19.6%)	229 (31.2%)	246 (33.5%)	92 (12.5%)	23 (3.1%)	734
..... gratify your Companionship (reduce my loneliness) need.	175 (23.8%)	267 (36.4%)	149 (20.3%)	108 (14.7%)	35 (4.8%)	734
..... gratify your Personal Identity.	106 (14.4%)	216 (29.4%)	282 (38.4%)	71 (9.7%)	59 (8%)	734
..... gratify your Relaxation need.	151 (20.6%)	230 (31.3%)	202 (27.5%)	102 (13.9%)	49 (6.7%)	734

..... gratify your Passing time need.	246 (33.5%)	213 (29%)	201 (27.4%)	56 (7.6%)	18 (2.5%)	734
..... gratify your Excitement and Enjoyment need.	179 (24.4%)	295 (40.2%)	161 (21.9%)	81 (11%)	18 (2.5%)	734
..... gratify your Escape need.	80 (10.9%)	253 (34.5%)	311 (42.4%)	58 (7.9%)	32 (4.4%)	734
..... gratify your looking for jobs need.	93 (12.7%)	202 (27.5%)	237 (32.3%)	139 (18.9%)	63 (8.6%)	734
..... gratify your Writing blogs need.	143 (19.5%)	158 (21.5%)	212 (28.9%)	127 (17.3%)	94 (12.8%)	734
..... gratify your Viewing course schedule need.	101 (13.8%)	228 (31.1%)	246 (33.5%)	123 (16.8%)	36 (4.9%)	734
..... gratify your Accessing course notes need.	145 (19.8%)	166 (22.6%)	241 (32.8%)	123 (16.8%)	59 (8%)	734
..... gratify your Communication with course teachers need.	137 (15.7%)	264 (36%)	197 (26.8%)	99 (13.5%)	37 (5%)	734
..... gratify your Searching subject topics need.	166 (2.6%)	181 (24.7%)	233 (31.7%)	88 (12%)	66 (9%)	734
..... gratify your Pursuing course relating quizzes, exams & tests need.	144 (19.6%)	245 (33.4%)	222 (30.2%)	74 (10.1%)	49 (6.7%)	734
..... gratify your Prepare my assignments and other relevant stuff need.	165 (22.5%)	200 (27.2%)	208 (28.3%)	117 (15.9%)	44 (6%)	734

**TABLE NO 5-7 CORRELATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT VARIABLES**

**TABLE 5**  
**Correlations**

		What is your age	What are average hours of your active social media use per day?
What is your age	Pearson Correlation	1	-.109**

	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	734	734
What are average hours of your active social media use per day?	Pearson Correlation	-.109**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	734	734

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above shows the correlation between age of the respondents and average hours of active social media use per day. According to the Pearson's correlation concept, the 'p' value range from +1 to -1, where +1 is associated with perfect positive linear correlation and -1 is linked with perfect negative linear correlation while 0 mean no linear correlation.

The statistics shows that there is strong negative (Significant) correlation between age of the respondents and average hours of active social media use per day i.e. -.109\*\*. The negative correlation means that the more the age of the respondents goes up the less they consume social media per day and vice versa.

TABLE 6  
Correlations

		What is your age	To what extent do you feel satisfied with your favourite social site?
What is your age	Pearson Correlation	1	-.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.264
	N	734	734
To what extent do you feel satisfied with your favourite social site?	Pearson Correlation	-.041	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.264	
	N	734	734

The current table shows the correlation (Pearson's) between age of the respondents and level of satisfaction with favourite social site. The data of the table demonstrates that there is a moderate negative correlation i.e. -.041 between age of the respondents and level of satisfaction with favourite social site. The needs satisfaction level of respondents decreases with the increase in age of respondents.

Correlations

TABLE 7

		What are average hours of your active social media use per day?	To what extent do you feel satisfied with your favourite social site?
What are average hours of your active social media use per day?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1  734	-.136**  .000 734
To what extent do you feel satisfied with your favourite social site?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.136**  .000 734	1   734

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above shows the correlation between average active hours' respondents spend on social media daily and the feeling of satisfaction with favourite social site. Ranging the 'p' value from +1 to -1, where +1 is associated with perfect positive linear correlation and -1 with perfect negative linear correlation while 0 mean no linear correlation, the current table shows a significant negative correlation i.e. -.136\*\* between average active hours' respondents spend on social media daily and the feeling of satisfaction with favourite social site.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Keeping in view objectives of this research study the researchers not only tried to find the frequency of social media use and the level of need gratification through it but also explored the correlation between different variables like age and social media use and age and needs satisfaction. Using quantitative research design, the researchers conducted a survey from 800 University students (Undergraduate) from four different Universities of Islamabad (2 Universities) & Rawalpindi (2 Universities).

The results of our study show that 50.8% of the total respondents being majority frequently use social media sites and they were found constantly logged on to their favourite social site. 36.1% use social media sites more than 2 times a day while 13.1% visited 1-2 times a day. The study concludes that respondents (48.9%) spend 2-4 hours daily on social media for the gratification of their needs. A high level of General/Basic and Academic needs satisfaction is recorded among the students through using their favorite social site.

According to the statistics 38.6% of the respondents were found satisfied to a "High Extent" for information need, 32% for Entertainment, 32% for Surveillance, 36.4% for companionship, 31.3% for Relaxation, 40.2% for Excitement and Enjoyment need.

Likewise, for the academic needs i.e. 36% of respondents agreed to Pursuing course relating quizzes to a high extent while 33.4% told that exams & tests need and Communication with course teachers need is gratified to "High Extent". Remaining of the academic needs like viewing course schedule, accessing course notes, searching subject topics, & Preparing assignments were found fulfilled to a "**Normal Extent**".

To understand the relation between different variables (Hypothesis) the researchers used Pearson's correlation coefficient. Three different hypothesis were designed and the relationships were found as below

According to the 1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis of the study

1. There exists a significant correlation between age and use of social media sites.

The finding of the study (Table No. 5) in this regard revealed that there is a significant negative correlation between age of the respondents and social media use per day i.e.  $-.109^{**}$  which means the more age of the respondents increase the less they consume social media and vice versa.

The second hypothesis was that

2. There exists a significant correlation between age and level of needs satisfaction.

The results in table No.6 revealed that a moderate (not significant) correlation i.e.  $-.041$  does exist between age of the respondents and level of satisfaction with favorite social site which means that although the relation is not significant but there still exist a negative relation between the variables. The older respondents in this situation were found to be less satisfied with their favorite social sites for their different needs.

The researchers lastly hypothesised that

3. There exists a significant correlation between social media use and level of needs satisfaction.

The statistics in the table No. 7 shows a significant negative correlation i.e.  $-.136^{**}$  between average hours spend on social media daily and the feeling of satisfaction with favorite social site which means that increase in the use of social media sites of respondents leads to decrease in their needs satisfaction level.

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