



Saira Zaka<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Arfan Latif<sup>2</sup>, Anser Ali<sup>3</sup>, Hafiz Muhammad Ahmad<sup>4</sup>

## Abstract

In the early 21st century, social media platforms grew worldwide. Since then, these sites have become a big part of people's lives, especially Youth. Many people use social media, particularly Facebook, to interact with others, learn, grow, and improve their social life. Social networking sites expand people's social circles, improve their communication skills, broaden their perspectives, and broaden their education and career opportunities. Where social media have many positive effects, there is some significant negative impact on people's life. This descriptive study used simple random sampling (N=394, males=210, and Females=184). Two postgraduate colleges and the University of Okara's students were selected as the study population. The study revealed that social loneliness is significantly different across the use of social media. The study results showed that people who use extreme social media sites suffer loneliness. The study suggests that people should decrease social media sites on regular bases.

**Keywords:** Social media, Loneliness, Social Sites

## 1. Background

Numerous users have incorporated social networking sites (SNSs) like MySpace, Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Cyworld, and Bebo into their daily routines, drawing millions of consumers to these platforms. As of this writing, there are hundreds of social networking sites, each supporting a diverse range of practices, passions and offering a variety of technical opportunities. The communities that develop around SNSs are diverse, despite the fact that their primary technological aspects are quite uniform. The majority of websites aid in the upkeep of currently present social media platforms, while others facilitate connections between newcomers based on common hobbies. Sites also differ in how much new information and communication tools—like mobile networking, blogging, and photo/video sharing—they integrate.

Social networking sites (SNS) are online communities where users may engage with one another and modify their statuses. SNS, such as Skype, Viber, Facebook, and Twitter, have drawn millions of subscribers from all over the world, including Pakistan.

SNS programmes made it simple for people to stay in touch with relatives, close friends, and entrepreneurs throughout the world. Developing nations are in the lead as a result of the widespread use of SNS. From Pakistan's standpoint, SNS is gaining recognition every day. University students and the younger generation in Pakistan use the majority of their time on SNS. With 9 million members nationwide, Facebook is presently the most popular social networking sites in Pakistan. Pakistani Facebook users reported being 70% boys and 30% girls in April 2013, with the majority being younger people (Ali, 2016). Since the early 1990s, when social media utilize as a means of communication first emerged in Pakistan, the information and communication technology sector has grown at one of the fastest rates in the nation. In regard to social media users, Pakistan ranked 20th in the world in 2012. (Stats I.L, 2019). 44,608,065 individuals, or around 22% of the entire population, were using the internet in Pakistan in 2017, according to Internet World Statistics. In order to identify the usage habits of online platforms across Pakistan's seven major cities, Google conducted a poll. The results showed that 70% of respondents typically use websites for leisure. Additionally, it was discovered that online users spend an average of 2.5 hours per day of work and 3.5 hours per weekend browsing the social media. The intense rivalry among internet service providers and in the telecommunications industry is a significant factor in the country's adoption of the social media. Wi-Fi's broad availability and smartphones' low cost have led to a sharp rise in the number of social media users (Chaudhari et al. 2015).

### 1.1. Advantage of social media

#### 1.1.1. Way of increase teacher performance

Instead of being a virtual network, social media platforms are a symptom of a real-world society. High school class fellows, individuals they live with on campus, persons they belong to a similar organization with, and connections they make at events like festivals and meetings are all places where college students make friends. The first social media platform that connects users with one or more social links and creates an association with the entire globe debuted in the 1990s (Wink D, 2010). They can be found in a variety of places, such as posts and micro blogs, stages and chat rooms, social media platforms, wikis, virtual universes, social bookmarking, tags, and news, writing societies, online storytelling, podcast portals, and communal intelligence. Teachers are going to implement various internet-based resources to improve their results and improve the educational environment for their students because social media has a major effect on their academic achievement. Teachers are subsequently the decision-makers and have the authority to produce more accurate manpower for the nation.

#### 1.1.2. Social media usage of entrepreneurs

The use of social media has rapidly increased in Pakistan during the past several years. Facebook, the most popular social networking platform, now has 19 million members in Pakistan, up 72% since January 2014, confirming its popularity. It has made it possible for young people to start small businesses using this platform, particularly for females. Information about their company and goods may be found on their profile sites. It is a praiseworthy business platform thanks to the uploading of product photos, frequent announcements about price reductions and fresh offerings, and regular response to questions. In their study, Ezmieralda et al. (2015) found that the main advantage it has provided is skill, allowing females to develop their businesses at any time and from any location while juggling their other duties at house and with their families.

Large-scale internet advertising campaigns have received the majority of the attention in the research to date (Genç & ksüz, 2015). Contrarily, the goal of this article is to demonstrate how social networking sites is promoting micro-scale female's entrepreneurship in Pakistan, whether it provides chances for those who are unable to conduct business through traditional channels due to expected financial, social, and systemic problems, or whether it merely serves as an online supplement to traditional media. A key objective of the article is on discovering the chances it has provided and the barriers that these entrepreneurs face.

University students utilize social media often. Web 2.0 platforms called social media allow users to share content that they have created. Students are constantly bombarded with adverts online from people, companies, and both public and private organizations. Based on their choices, students decide which social networking sites to read and engage with. Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube

<sup>1</sup> MPHIL Research Scholar at University of Okara, Pakistan, [zsaira101@gmail.com](mailto:zsaira101@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor Sociology University of Okara, Pakistan, [arfanlatif9292@uo.edu.pk](mailto:arfanlatif9292@uo.edu.pk)

<sup>3</sup> BS Scholar University of Okara, Pakistan, [anserali35301@gmail.com](mailto:anserali35301@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup> MPHIL Scholar at University of Okara, Pakistan, [muhammadahmadwattoo2525@gmail.com](mailto:muhammadahmadwattoo2525@gmail.com)

are less essential when it comes to politics and society than Twitter, whereas YouTube is used for independent learning and WhatsApp is an online community built on instant messaging. The primary subjects of entrepreneurship study include social. Furthermore, studies on the benefits of online platforms for cultural tourism and female-owned companies have been conducted (Nawi et al. 2019). Investigation on the relationship between persistent Sustainable Entrepreneurial Intentions (SEIs) among business graduates and EE, Attitudes towards Sustainable Entrepreneurship (ATSE), and Social Media Usage is extremely scarce and typically ever seen in the literature. There are thus several knowledge deficits in the industry. Additionally, the amount of time students spend on social media platforms can have a positive or negative impact on educational efforts to promote entrepreneurship skills.

### **1.1.3. Social media use for advertisements of products**

Today, almost all businesses use online platforms as a tool for marketing and promoting their goods and services, conducting online transactions, luring new prospects that connect with present customers and vendors, supporting brands, contacting clients, and other purposes. Additionally, connecting with other customers, customers, and users has gotten much simpler and faster thanks to the accessibility of modern online smart phones. They frequently share their ideas, emotions, and attitudes about using goods and services on online platforms. Additionally, social networking site gives consumers the chance to evaluate the price, quality, specifications, offerings, and ease of use of goods and services provided by various businesses of the same nature.

It has been noted that marketing leaders and executives design particular techniques by taking into account consumers' thoughts and opinions about their products and services in order to secure the recurrent sale of items and acquire the trust and devotion of customers. Studying customer reviews will provide you all the details you need about how people feel about a brand or product, their commitment to it, and their attitude towards it. Additionally, social media platforms give regular people and consumers the chance to express their thoughts on a variety of topics related to commerce, politics, faith, or other societal issues on multiple sites, blogs, pages, or places and allow for global sharing.

Social media now offers tools for users to assess the products and offerings of brands and to share their recommendations with their colleagues, friends, and family. Social networking is a highly significant channel for ongoing communication between businesses and their consumers.

### **1.2. Disadvantage of social media**

Modern education is not stable or restricted to the four walls of institutions. The general educational and social systems of humanity were impacted by a variety of circumstances. Social media is one of those variables that has a higher percentage of effects that quickly change individuals. According to (Haşiloğlu et al., 2020), the use of social media platforms and other tools has altered how students at all educational levels approach their studies and their learning. Social media plays a crucial role in education since it has become a vital aspect of every person's life. Social media use has a variety of effects on how students learn. Social media's important role is exacerbating value problems in societal social norms. The primary components are connected to education and pupil perception changes (Alava, 2017).

Additionally, according to (Ahmad & Sheikh, 2020), social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and all other linking apps foster consciousness among users and inform them of the benefits as well as the drawbacks of media outlets. Additionally, according to (Mahamid, 2019), student media dependency may upset and disturb the socially desirable balanced of the culture. However, blogging interactions between various cost-effective learners and the rest of the world as well as online platforms mobilized the pupils from various angles. In addition, multiple indicators and resources contained incorrect data that led to the development of value issues in university students. The usage of mobile devices by students interfered with their ability to focus on coursework, lectures, and driving. Additionally, this routine violates the established cultural and informative rules that apply to all aspects of society.

Furthermore, associations of students with solid principles help to create a positive environment in colleges and universities, which in turn contributes to the social welfare of people. Social media platforms now provide you more chances of researching fresh facts. The youth in institutions have poor levels of self-confidence as an outcome of this phenomenon. According to (Keles, 2020), social media use has an impact on how depressed, anxious, and psychologically distressed students are. This situation makes it difficult for students to communicate with others in the community and form new connections. Social networking websites actively encourage undesirable behavior, aggressiveness, physical harm, harassment, drug usage, excessive sexual material, extortion, threats, and ethical degradation. (Habiba, Farid & Saud, 2011) defines verbal or visual content which depicts or outlines sexual behavior that is harmful or violent to one or more of the individuals involved in such a way as to promote the destitution as being the graphic, sexually suggestive submission of women through words or images that also include pornography. The fact that a person has chosen or agreed to be injured, mistreated, or subjected to compulsion does not change the fact that such behavior is demeaning. Social networking applications have made it possible to spread offences like pornography. Between the ages of 10 and 24 years, young people and children account for the majority of instances.

### **1.3. Social media usage and Loneliness**

According to (Cacioppo et al. 2002), social exclusion, which is a kind of loneliness, has a significant role in the emergence of psychological issues and health-related issues, which are particularly prevalent in learners. Adolescents utilize the web and are linked to the online world, but this has the unfavorable effect of isolating them from actual interactions, which further contributes to their sense of alienation from truth and worsens their health (Fioravanti et al., 2012; Audi et al., 2021). The latest research looked at how the development of electronic devices is leading to an increase in loneliness, young people overabundance of use of the internet, their attachment to the online world, and how they are cut off from the actual world. Feeling alone does not just refer to people who are alone and do not communicate or interact with others; it also refers to people who stop interacting with others in actual life because they are linked to the digital one, as well as the social exclusion effect of this.

The biggest social issue that arises from internet use among students is feeling alone which results in a lack of interaction with other social members in real life and the development of bashful. Students set up particular communication environments for each other, such as live chat rooms and sexual websites, yet they are actually unwilling to connect with other members with confidence (Casale & Fioravanti, 2011; Audi et al., 2022).

In contrast, a research found that using the internet helped older folks feel less lonely, provided opportunities to meet new people, reduced feelings of dullness through discussion forums, and reduced isolation from society through online media platforms (Cotten, Anderson, & McCullough, 2013). The onset of drug, alcohol, and nicotine dependence is influenced by loneliness.

The loneliness has a lot of bad tendencies. Loneliness is correlated with powerlessness and sadness. People who experience loneliness are more likely to develop bad habits and conduct. Social stress, poor communication abilities, depression, and loss of

sleep are all caused by loneliness. As a result of feeling alone students are more likely to engage in risky behavior, and using cigarettes and other associated substances are harmful effects of loneliness (Zawadzki et al, 2013).

According to a study, young adults between the ages of 15 and 19 reported feeling more lonely than those with a secondary or higher level of education. Feeling alone is a significant risk factor for health problems, and it varies by age and educational attainment. Loneliness has a substantial correlation with sexual activity and thoughts about suicide. On the other hand, the study found that the feeling of loneliness is more prevalent in early adolescence compared to late adolescence and has a greater detrimental impact on teenagers of all ages.

According to Ladd and Ettekal (2013), loneliness is a danger that keeps people from engaging in social environments and social events that are not permitted. This further leads to psychological and physical difficulties such as stress, sadness, adjustment issues, coronary artery disease, and lung illness, all of which are covered below. For senior citizens and those with internet addictions in many nations, loneliness is a severe and huge concern. It reduced the availability of friends, social interactions, and support systems. A study confirmed how loneliness affects teenagers' psychological abilities and lowers their life happiness (Zysberg, 2012). A severe professional risk that organizational managers or internet facilitators perceive as cutting off genuine relationships and upholding the online universe is another facet of loneliness. The two primary causes of loneliness are feeling isolated from society as a whole and going through the pain and anguish of loneliness (Weeks & Asher, 2012).

**1.4. Objective of the study**

- To find out the connection between loneliness and addiction to social networking sites.

**2. Methodology**

**2.1. Research design**

A detailed plan for conducting a research study, including operationalizing variables so they can be measured, selecting a sample of interest to study, collecting data to be used as a basis for testing hypothesis, and analyzing the results. De Vos, and Fouche (1998). Because the study focuses on youth perceptions, the researcher chose a quantitative research design.

**2.3. Sampling Strategy**

Because this was a quantitative study, selecting a sample that would allow for accurate extrapolation of the respondent's responses to the entire population and universe was necessary. Probability sampling was the method that was utilized to obtain a sample for this study. With this method, each student in the population has a chance that is relatively equal to the others of being selected as a respondent. This approach to collecting data, known as Random Cross-Sectional Survey Design (De Vos, 1998: 127), is most frequently utilized in surveys as a method of data collection.

**2.4. Population and sampling frame**

**Table 1: Sample Distribution**

Sr. No.	Name of University/College	Name of Department	Class	Semester/Year	No of Male Student	No of Female Student	Total
1	University of Okara	Sociology	MSc	2nd	25	25	50
		Psychology	BS	2nd	20	20	40
		Mass Communication	BS	5th	30	30	60
		Urdu	MSc	4th	25	25	50
2	Punjab group of College Hujra Campus	Science	FSc	1st	20	19	39
		Arts	FA	2nd	30	22	52
3	Aspire group of College Hujra Shah Moqueem	Science	FSc	2nd	40	25	65
		Arts	FA	1st	20	18	38
Total					210	184	394

Table 1 provides a sample distribution of students across various departments and classes in two different educational institutions. The first institution listed is the University of Okara. In the Sociology department, there are 50 students in total, with an equal distribution of 25 male and 25 female students. In the Psychology department, there are 40 students in total, with 20 male and 20 female students. The Mass Communication department has a total of 60 students, equally divided between males and females. Lastly, in the Urdu department, there are 50 students, with an equal representation of males and females.

The second educational institution mentioned is the Punjab group of College Hujra Campus. In the Science department, specifically in the first year of FSc, there are 39 students. Among them, 20 are male, and 19 are female. In the Arts department, which is in the second year of FA, there are a total of 52 students, with 30 males and 22 females.

Lastly, the Aspire group of College Hujra Shah Moqueem has also been included in the table. In the Science department, in the second year of FSc, there are 65 students, with 40 males and 25 females. In the Arts department, specifically in the first year of FA, there are 38 students, consisting of 20 males and 18 females.

**2.4. Sample Size**

The sample size for the current study was based on proportionate sampling technique in accordance with the total enrolment of each selected university and college. 200 Students were selected from university of Okara, 97 students were selected from Punjab Group of College. While 97 students were selected from Aspire College Hujra Shah Moqueem

**2.5. Construction of questionnaire**

The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect more in-depth data that was focused on particular, pre-determined issues. The questionnaire was designed with closed-ended questions.

The final survey consisted of closed-ended questions, each of which was based on a unique point rating on the Likert Scale. According to Key (1999), a closed-ended question is one for which a researcher provides a suitable list of possible responses (for example: O (often), S (Sometimes), R (rarely), or N (never)). The majority of the information that is derived from this is quantitative and can be used to study the percentage of students who agree with various ideas and those who do not.

The entire questionnaire was broken up into four sections that were labeled section A, section B, section C, and section D respectively. The demographic information of the respondents was contained in Section A of the questionnaire. Questions in Section B include those about the respondents' use of various social media platforms, websites, and the amount of time spent on these websites.

The measurement of loneliness was included in Section C. It inquired about their feelings regarding loneliness, the quality of companionship they had, and the circumstances in which they lived. Loneliness from society was covered in Section D. It included questions such as how they felt about the amount of time spent with their families.

The social media disorder SMDS scale, which consists of 09 questions, was chosen for measuring the respondents' subjective experiences of social media addiction. The participants give each item a rating of "O" for "I often feel this way," "S" for "I sometimes feel this way," "R" for "I rarely feel this way," or "N" for "I never feel this way," with the ratings being coded as "1" for "O" to "5" for "N."

The UCLA Loneliness scale, which consists of 20 questions, was chosen for measuring the respondents' subjective experiences of loneliness. The participants give each item a rating of "O" for "I often feel this way," "S" for "I sometimes feel this way," "R" for "I rarely feel this way," or "N" for "I never feel this way," with the ratings being coded as "1" for "O" to "5" for "N." In addition to that, there were questions regarding the students' level of self-assurance regarding their bodies.

### 3. Result and Analysis

#### 3.1. Quantitative analysis

This information was collected from a representative sample of the target demographic. Tables illustrate the data obtained from the structured questions.

**Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of the demographic variables**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
15-19	40	10.0
20-24	303	75.4
25-29	35	8.7
29& above	16	4.0
Gender		
Male	210	52.2
Female	184	45.8
Residence		
Urban	231	58.5
Rural	163	41.5
Education		
Illiterate	37	9.2
Secondary	77	19.2
Higher	280	69.7

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables in the surveyed population. The first variable listed is Age. Among the respondents, 10% fall within the age range of 15 to 19. The majority, 75.4%, belong to the age group of 20 to 24. A smaller proportion, 8.7%, falls in the 25 to 29 age range, while 4% are aged 29 and above. The second variable is Gender. In the survey, 52.2% of the respondents identify as male, while 45.8% identify as female. The next variable is Residence, which categorizes respondents based on their place of living. Among the surveyed population, 58.5% reside in urban areas, while 41.5% live in rural areas. The final variable is Education, which indicates the educational attainment of the respondents. In the survey, 9.2% of the respondents are classified as illiterate. The majority, 69.7%, have received higher education.

#### 3.2. Device for using social media

The table below show which tools people use for social media.

**Table 3: usage of social media and devices**

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Laptop	37	9.2
Mobile	309	76.9
Tablet	23	5.7
PC	25	6.2
Total	394	98.0

Table 3 presents information about the preferred devices used by individuals to access their social media feeds. The table includes four categories: Laptop, Mobile, Tablet, and PC, along with the corresponding frequencies and percentages. The data is based on a total sample size of 394 individuals. Among the respondents, the largest proportion, accounting for 309 individuals or 76.9%, stated that their go-to device for accessing social media was a Mobile device. This indicates that the majority of people prefer to use their smartphones to stay connected to their social media accounts. The next most popular device was the Laptop, with 37 individuals or 9.2% using it as their primary means of accessing their social media feeds. A smaller percentage of respondents, 5.7% or 23 individuals, reported using a Tablet, while 6.2% or 25 individuals indicated using a PC. Overall, the data reveals that Mobile devices are the most commonly used for accessing social media, followed by Laptops, with Tablets and PCs being less frequently chosen for this purpose.

#### 3.3. Social Media and usage of Time

Table 4 provides information about the average amount of time individuals spend on social media. The table consists of four

categories: 30 minutes, 1-2 hours, 3-4 hours, and more than 4 hours, along with their corresponding frequencies and percentages. The data is based on a total sample size of 394 individuals. Among the respondents, the largest proportion, comprising 165 individuals or 41.0%, reported spending more than 4 hours on social media on average. This suggests that a significant portion of the surveyed group tends to dedicate a substantial amount of time to engaging with social media platforms. The next most common time range was 3-4 hours, with 100 individuals or 24.9% falling into this category. Similarly, 97 individuals or 24.1% reported spending 1-2 hours on social media, indicating another significant portion of the sample population dedicating a considerable amount of time to social media usage. The smallest proportion was the 30-minute category, with 32 individuals or 8.0% reporting spending this amount of time on social media. Overall, the data highlights that a substantial number of respondents spend extensive periods, more than 4 hours, on social media, with a smaller but still significant percentage devoting 3-4 hours or 1-2 hours to social media usage.

**Table 4: On an average how much time do you spend on social media?**

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
30 minute	32	8.0
1 - 2 hour	97	24.1
3 - 4 hour	100	24.9
more than 4 hours	165	41.0
Total	394	98.0

### 3.4. Social Isolation and Loneliness

**Table 5: One Way Analysis of Variance of Isolation and Loneliness of students by time of use of social media**

Variable		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Isolation	Between Groups	.164	4	.041	3.338	.011
	Within Groups	4.773	389	.012		
	Total	4.937	393			
Loneliness	Between Groups	15.397	4	3.849	3.998	.003
	Within Groups	374.562	389	.963		
	Total	389.959	393			

Table 5 comprised the results of the One-Way analysis of variance. The table showed that the isolation is significantly different across the time of use of social media,  $F(4, 389)= 3.338, p=0.011$ . The table also showed that the loneliness of the youth is significantly different across time use of social media,  $F(4, 393)=3.998, p=0.003$ .

**Table 6: Correlations**

			Social Media Usage	Feeling of loneliness
Spearman's rho	Social Media Usage	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.056
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.008
		N	250	250
	Feeling of loneliness	Correlation Coefficient	.056	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.
		N	250	250

The Spearman's rho correlation coefficient between Social Media Usage and Feeling of loneliness is 0.056. This positive correlation coefficient suggests a weak positive relationship between the two variables. As social media usage increases, there is a slight tendency for Feeling of loneliness to increase as well.

The p-value associated with the correlation coefficient is 0.008, which is less than the commonly used significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the correlation between Social Media Usage and Feeling of loneliness is statistically significant.

### 4. Conclusion

The prime objective of the study was to explore the contributing role of the usage of social media to the loneliness of the youth. The study measured the differences of the selected variables across the use of social media. It was explored that the use of social media platforms has a negative impact on individuals, leading to feelings of loneliness. The findings support previous research suggesting that increased engagement with social media correlates with higher levels of social loneliness. It is important for individuals to be mindful of their social media usage and consider reducing their reliance on these platforms to mitigate the adverse effects on their social well-being. By fostering a healthy balance between online and offline interactions, individuals can enhance their social connectedness and well-being.

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