The Role of Social Media Website Usage on the Academic Performance of University Students in Jordan

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Abstract: This study aimed to identify the role of social media usage on the academic achievement rate of university students in Jordan. A questionnaire was designed to collect data from 1,508 students attending Jordanian universities. Results revealed that most students had mobile phones with internet access. All participants were also aware of several social media websites and most spent 2-3 h a day surfing them. In addition, the study confirmed that the use of social media negatively influences student's academic performance. The study highlights the need for encouraging students to read books and take advantage of social media websites for academic activities, instead of using them only for chatting and entertainment. The researchers also recommend providing students with advice and guidance on the dangers of using the internet for long periods of time. Students are encouraged to limit the time they spend on these social media websites.

Key words: Social media websites, academic performance, university students, internet, achievement, influences

INTRODUCTION

In the 1990's, the world witnessed the advent of globalization and metaphorically shrank with news quickly spreading to all four corners of the globe. The rapid technological progress in communication led to many inventions including the Internet. In the first decade of the 21st century, the world again changed rapidly, thanks to the invention of several online social media platforms that have become a part of social discourse; individuals created their own content and allocated their attention across platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Messenger, Myspace and YouTube. These platforms have grown in popularity because they are easy to use and access. As a result, young people of both genders are now exchanging their ideas, emotions, personal information, pictures and videos at a considerable rate. Moreover, social media keeps pace with the speed of public discourse in society, shaped by the trends and topics discussed by individuals and the current political agenda in topics that range from the sociopolitical environment and technology to the entertainment industry (Asur and Huberman, 2010).

Now a days, social media websites have acquired the status of important social institutions. They play a major role in educating individuals, leading them to acquire appropriate habits and behaviors. These websites are also considered to be a tool of social change. Educational institutions have taken an interest in developing programs and studies, so that, students can benefit from these websites and make use of their time in an effective manner. In fact, the educational process does not merely involve teaching content, rather, the process itself is beneficial as it builds student's character in all aspects and instills a sense of social responsibility and self-confidence while equipping them to assume responsibility and attempting to develop in them a well-balanced, rounded personality. Scientists and researchers have become alert to the importance of using social media for young people's individual character-building. In 2010, the number of Arabic Facebook users reached 15 million. Studies indicated that the number of Arabic users is increasing by one million people per month (Jihad, 2014).

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study was to identify the role of social media usage on the academic achievement rate of university students in Jordan. The use of modern technology such as the Internet is one of the most important factors-that has the potential to affect student learning performance either positively or negatively. Parents are not comfortable toward the attitudes of their children who spend long hours surfing different social media websites at the expense of the times allocated for the study. Despite concerns of parents about the time their children spent on social networking

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websites, many students still seek to benefit from these websites for learning and studying on a daily basis. Thus, this study tried to explore the role of student's use of social websites on their academic achievement. And whether there is a correlation between the average time spent on these websites and their academic achievement. The researchers also ask questions about the time students spend on social networking websites and the motivation behind using these websites.

Limitations of the study
Spatial boundaries: The study was conducted in Jordan within the three public universities:

- University of Jordan
- Yarmouk University
- The Hashemite University

Human boundaries: Baccalaureate students at the three universities enrolled in 2016/2017.

Time limits: The researcher applied the study to the sample between the mid of August to December for the year 2016.

Literature review: Alzboun and Atiyah (2016) conducted a study entitled "The role of the Jordanian educational system to limit the negative impact of the means of modern communication technology in the education of young people from the point of view of their teachers". The sample consisted of 128 male and female teachers from Oman. The study indicated there were many negative effects of modern communication methods on students in terms of moral, religious, social, economic, health, sexual and psychological values. The study also showed that, there was an intermediate role of the educational system to limit the negative impact of modern means of communication.

In the same field, Al-Jeraisy *et al.* (2015) identified the impact of mobile applications and social networking websites on teaching and learning Quran. The study sample consisted of (34). The study concluded that there were significant differences between the use of mobile phone applications for social networking websites and the learning and teaching of the Holy Quran. The study recommended the establishment of training courses for faculty members and students in Saudi universities to train them on using mobile applications in social networking websites to learn and teach the Holy Quran.

Some studies pointed out to the positive influence of social media websites on college students. Radi (2003) addressed the increasing impact of social networking websites on the academic performance of students. The study sample included 300 university students. The results advocate that the use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Skype and Google positively affect the level of academic performance of students.

In his study at Lagos University which included 378 students at Lagos University, Peter (2015) recommended monitoring the use of social media by teachers and parents to create a balance between the usage of social media and the academic activities of students to avoid possible decline of student academic achievement.

A study on Facebook at the University of South Africa was conducted on a sample of university students enrolled in Foundation of Information Technology (Mbodila *et al.*, 2014). The study aimed to identify the effect of the use of social media on the academic performance of students. The results showed that university students use social communication methods among for academic purposed, mainly, the Facebook. The study recommended further studies to evaluate the importance of social websites on the academic outcomes of college students.

Al-Tarawneh (2014) examined the impact of social networks on student performance. The study aims to identify the impact of the use of social media and Facebook, especially, on the performance of students in secondary schools. The results indicated that social media, especially, Facebook being a great tool can help improve the performance of high school students. However, overuse of Facebook and addiction to it can waste much of student time.

On the other hand, some researchers such as Junco *et al.* (2011), anticipated positive impact of social networking websites on student's academic participation. They conducted a study on a sample of 125 students from the University of Pennsylvania. The use of Twitter students and faculty on Twitter went beyond traditional classroom activities and therefore tweeting on Twitter could be considered as an educational tool to reinforce interaction between students and faculty members and to practice more academic activities.

Unlike, the other studies, this study examined the most common social networking websites currently used and discussed the impact of these applications on academic performance in three large universities in Jordan. Researchers monitored representative study population and relied on the descriptive approach of social survey method as it is suitable for the nature of this study in terms of saving time and effort. And was applied to a representative sample in order to identify the impact of using the means of communication meeting on the rate of academic achievement of university students in Jordan.

Theoretical framework

The concept of social networks: Social networking is a collection of websites and services that support collaboration, community building, sharing and role sharing. Over the years, these social networks have become more popular among students and have become a means of communication on and off campus. People feel a sense of belonging to society while economists and professors wonder about the consequences of using these websites and their impact on student's academic performance. Almost (57%) of social networks user's ages ranged between (18-29) years old and spend many hours per day to browse these websites. Moreover, most university students explore these websites several times a day, an average of about 40 min each time (Sheldon, 2008).

The phenomenon of social communication has contributed to changing the way people interact and communicate with each other around the world. Social media has also affected many aspects of social and economic life of individuals allowing them to build and display their own personalities. Dealing with trade, through the means of social networking websites, made it easier and less expensive. These means included Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Myspace and others which appeared in the late nineties and spread more at the beginning of the second millennium (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2011).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study approach: The study relied on the descriptive approach of social survey method as it is suitable for the nature of this study in terms of saving time and effort. And was applied to a representative sample. This helped in identifying the rate and impact of using social media communication websites on academic achievement of students in Jordan.

Population of the study: The study population consisted of all the undergraduate students in three public universities in Jordan: University of Jordan, Hashemite University and Yarmouk University during the academic year (2017/2018).

The study sample: The study sample consisted of 1508 male and female students from the three universities as shown in Table 1. The researcher chose a stratified sample of the three universities for being the most suitable for such a large variety of societies in terms of specialization and academic level (the year of study). The random

Table 1: Distribution of the sample according the universities

Universities	Total community	Total frequency	Percentage
University of Jordan	4284	1245	82.6
Hashemite University	587	160	10.6
Yarmouk University	390	103	6.8
Total	5261	1508	100.0

stratified sample gives equal opportunities to all members of the study community. This sample represent 30%of the total student population in the three universities.

Study tool: The study was based on a questionnaire as a main tool to collect data. The questionnaire was designed based on the previous literature and was developed to serve the purposes of this study. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part asked (Yes or No) questions to collect general information about participant's knowledge of social networking websites. It also explored the impact of these websites on academic prospects and their relationship on student's academic progress. The second part included multiple-choice questions about the types of programs used by participants, time spent surfing social networking websites and the purpose of using the social media.

Tool validation: Peer review is the tool used to verify the authenticity of the tool. It was presented to a group of 7 specialized Professors in the fields of Arts and Educational Sciences at the University of Jordan and the Hashemite University. They checked the accuracy of questionnaire. Based on their feedback, some paragraphs were added, modified or deleted.

Stability of the tool: In order to test the stability of the tool, the Cronbach alpha equation was applied to the study fields. The alpha coefficient of the instrument was 89 which is high and acceptable for the purposes of applying the study.

Data collection: Data on the subject of the study were collected directly from students of the three universities between August 2017 and January 2018 by the researchers who submitted the questionnaire directly to the participants. They were informed of the study objectives in advance and they received a consent form to ensure confidentiality of the information they provided.

Statistical processing: Data were analyzed using statistical methods such as frequency, percentages, arithmetic averages and standard deviations to answer all study questions. The Pearson correlation test was used to answer the hypothesis of the study and the Cronbach-α equation to confirm the stability of the study instrument.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results related to the knowledge of Jordanian university students on the internet and social networking sites. The results in Table 2 shows that all participants were aware of the social networking websites (100%). The majority of participants 1408 had mobile phones (93.4%). The 1260 participants had internet access to their mobile phones (85.0%).

Results related to the role of social networking sites on the academic performance of Jordanian university students. Preferred social networking websites for participants shown in Table 3 indicates that (66.4%) of them prefer to use Facebook 1002. The 301 participants tended to use What's up (19.9%) followed by 94 participants who preferred to use Twitter. Skype users were 3.2% followed by 40 participants who preferred to use Snape Chat and represented 2.6%.

It is clear from the results of the study that the majority of the university students preferred to use Facebook for social communication among the available social networking websites. These results are consistent with the findings of Munienge (Khadija, 2014). The majority of university students prefer to use Facebook on the rest of the programs.

The results of Table 4 shows that (1001) participants who represent more than two-thirds the study sample spent 2-3 h a day, while (485) participants (32.2%) used social networking websites between thirty minutes to an hour daily. A few participants (22) who represent 1.5% spent longer time socializing with others between four to five hours a day. These findings are in line with the results of the Osharive study, which pointed out to the overuse of social media by university students and its negative associations which leads to major academic failure due to the time they waste at the expense of their study.

Table 5 shows that 1308 participants used social networking websites to chat with friends, while 104 participants used these websites to download music and videos. Study was the lowest priority for participants where only 6.4% of the total population used these websites for educational purposes.

As shown in Table 5, the majority of university students did not use social networking sites for study or academic activities, instead they used them for chatting, entertaining, watching videos and listening to music. These results are consistent with the ones found at Tariq *et al.* (2012) which stresses the negative effect of social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter, on student's academic performance and have the potential to cause their failure.

Table 2: Distribution of study sample participants according to mobile phone ownership and their knowledge of social networking websites and the internet

Items No.	Questions	Answer with yes	Percentage
1	I own a mobile phone	1408	93.4
2	Have access to the internet to mobile phone	1260	85.0
3	Familiar with social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	1508	100.0

Table 3: Frequencies and percentages of study members by favorite social media sites

Websites	Frequencies	Percentage
Facebook	1002	66.4
What's up	301	19.9
Twitter	94	6.2
Skype	51	3.2
Snap chat	40	2.6
Total	1508	100.0

Table 4: Time students spend on social networking websites

Response	Frequencies	Percentage
30-60 min/day	485	32.2
2-3 h/day	1001	66.3
4-5 h/day	22	66.3
Total	1508	100.0

Table 5: What motivated Jordanian university students to visit social media websites?

Response	Frequencies	Percentage
Chat	1308	86.8
Download music and movies	104	6.8
Study	96	6.4
Total	1508	100.0

Results related to relationship between the time students spent using social communication websites and their academic performance (Table 6). The survey shows that 1208 of participants agreed that social networking websites affect their academic performance (80.1%) while 164 of them 8.6% responded with (No) to indicate the use of social networking websites do not affect their academic performance. The remaining number of participants 36 were not sure about the impact social networking websites on their academic performance.

The majority of participants 80.1% noticed that their use of social networking websites affects their performance and academic work. This finding is consistent with Amin *et al.* (2016) which confirmed that the use of social networking websites negatively affects the level of academic performance of students. It also agrees with Alzboun and Atiyah (2016) which associates negatively the long time spent using social networking websites on student's academic and social outcomes.

Table 7 shows a strong relationship between the dependent variable (academic performance) and the independent variable (time spent) at a level of significance (0.01). This indicates that the use of social media

Table 6: Relationship between the time students spent using social communication websites and their academic performance

Response	Frequencies	Percentage
Yes	1208	80.1
No	164	18.6
Not sure	36	2.3
Total	1508	100.0

Table 7: Pearson correlation test results to detect differences in the relationship between time spent on social networking sites and academic performance

Variables	Time spent	Academic perform
Time spent person	1	0.922**
Pearson correlation		0.028
Sig. (2-tailed)	1508	1508
N	0.922**	1
Academic performance	0.028	
Pearson correlation	1508	1508
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	1	

**Significant values

significantly reduces the level of academic performance because the value of alpha level was <0.5 which means that the academic performance of university students is not related to the length of time and time spent on using of social networking websites.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to identify the impact of using social networking websites on the academic performance of university students. Overall, the study showed that students explore social networking websites frequently but rarely used them for academic purposes. As a result, spending long hours on these websites for entertainment and chatting at the expense of their study time affected negatively student's academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the current study, the researchers recommend some suggestions as follows: university staff and advisors are encouraged to provide introductory seminars and workshops about the importance of social networking websites to increase awareness among university students and to stress the importance of mobile phones as a modern device to reinforce academic performance and to maximize the benefits students may get when using their mobile phones for study and research purposes besides chatting and entertainment. Students are advised to make balance between socializing, entertainment and learning opportunities they could benefit from when using their mobile phones. They are also encouraged to invest their long hours on phones to read and explore whatever it may foster their academic knowledge.

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