# Impacts of Social Media on University Student's Learning in Afghanistan

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## Impacts of Social Media on University Student's Learning in Afghanistan

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of the research is to determine the positive and negative effects of social media on students' education in order to take advantage of the positive aspects of social media and avoid its negative effects.

**Methodology:** The doctrinal research methodology and descriptive, explanatory, analytical, and comparative research approaches are used in this work. The first part of this research study is entirely based on library sources. The second part is completed based on the materials collected through the questionnaire, in which 193 people participated.

**Findings:** At the culmination of this research, it is evident that students extensively utilize various social media platforms, notably Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube. While these platforms offer convenient communication and information-sharing avenues, it is imperative to acknowledge that, regrettably, addiction to social media has been observed to exert a detrimental impact on the academic pursuits of university students.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Drawing upon the framework of social learning theory, which posits that individuals acquire knowledge through facing with lights, it is discernible that social media has yielded constructive outcomes within the realm of education. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that alongside its merits, social media has also engendered adverse effects on students' academic progress. Predominantly, this is attributed to the significant time loss incurred as a result of social media addiction. In light of these findings, we advocate for heightened public awareness regarding the judicious utilization of social media, emphasizing its application within a well-defined and purposeful framework. Such conscientious use can greatly enhance its contribution to educational endeavors.

**Keywords:** *Social Media, University Students, Education*

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, interest in the use of internet communication tools (ICT) has increased, and the internet has become a necessity. More and more tools have been created to stay in touch with others. (Aljuboori, 2020). The World Wide Web (www) has helped human beings communicate with each other, make friends, do business, and do whatever else they want to do. Some of these internet sites only allow users to post photos and receive comments; however, some of them are widely used for many advanced purposes by companies and organizations. Such as trade, business, advertising, and services. (Moisea, 2014).

Social media has quickly become a popular tool of communication, especially among young people, while previous generations relied on the phone to keep in touch with their friends. Nowadays, people can use cell phones, voicemails, text messages, and online social networks to keep in touch with their friends. (Lusted, 2011). Social media is a virtual world that brings possibilities, freedom, opportunities, challenges, and limitations to its users. Media is a new means of communication and transactions in the economic, social, cultural, and political fields, which has created a good foundation for membership, activity, and participation for its participants. (Karwani, 2017). People all over the world use social media to communicate, connect, and share information with others. Furthermore, social media facilitate the sharing of information, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression. Social media has many parts, some of which are going to be mentioned as follows:

### Facebook

It is founded on February 4, 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, a Harvard University student. Facebook was first created for Harvard University students, and it made it possible for Harvard students to create profile pages with personal information and keep in touch with each other. In order to operate Facebook, the only condition was that they should have an email that ends with harvard.edu. Moreover, the age of the user should be older than 18 years. Later on, this work was extended to 800 other universities. Facebook is one of the types of social media that has many users and is where individuals find friends. Furthermore, Facebook users can post photos, videos, songs, writings, and ideas and share their feelings with others. (Koukaras, 2020). In April 2004, the number of Facebook users reached 70,000. In December 2004, the number of users reached one million, in 2005, the number of users increased to six million; and in December 2006, the number of users increased to 12 million. (Brugger, 2015).

### YouTube

Is a type of social media that has more users than Facebook. Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim launched YouTube in 2004.There were some other networks before YouTube, but they failed. YouTube is a massive social network for video sharing, advertising, and marketing. Approximately 365,512 videos are uploaded daily. (Soukup, 2014). YouTube users can upload their own videos and live broadcasts on YouTube and watch other users' videos and live broadcasts in high quality. (Koukaras, 2020). It is the second-most visited and watched network in the world, with more than 2 billion users and up to one billion hours of videos watched every day. Millions of students around the world use it for academic purposes. YouTube education channel was created in 2009, after which its usage increased in formal education, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, because it helped students and teachers maintain social distance. Research shows that more usage of YouTube in the educational sector has increased the level of knowledge, capacity, and satisfaction of students because they can benefit from high-quality and good trainers instead of ordinary videos. (Shoufan, 2022). In which up to 365,512 videos are uploaded every day. (Soukup, 2014).

## WhatsApp

The use of social networking sites (SNS) is common among students and academicians. A study conducted on over 875 students in the United States of America shows that 100% of the students use social networking sites (SNS) on their smartphones anytime and anywhere. They use these pages for various purposes, such as communication, information sharing, and pastimes. (Vorderer a., 2016). One of these SNS is WhatsApp, which supports teaching and learning. In addition to sending texts, voice, and picture messages to its users, WhatsApp also has the facility to share pictures and information. In 2017, the number of monthly users of WhatsApp reached 1.2 billion. One of the advantages of WhatsApp is that it has the ability to communicate both privately and in groups, and on the other hand, it is easy and free. It is usually used for educational purposes in addition to health, commercial, and business matters. Additionally, WhatsApp is very popular because of its quick and easy communication among university students and easy sharing of information related to projects and subjects. (Gasaymeh, 2017).

## Twitter

It is also a type of social media where most of the users are celebrities. On Twitter, users can tweet, retweet, direct message, and follow people, as well as share photos, videos, links, and articles. It is worth mentioning that Twitter has a special place in the world of social media. Today, it has more than 554.7 million active users. There are 58 million tweets on this page every day, and an average of 135,000 people visit and search this page every day. Twitter not only supports traditional approaches to education and research but also supports the correct and beneficial use of social media. Twitter is effective for out-of-class learning as well as conference and organizational-format meetings. (Malik, 2019).

## Tik Tok

It is one of the most popular social media sites, created in 2017. It is used in 150 countries and has more than 800 million users. Each user watches an average of 41 minutes of video per day. TikTok is used to upload short videos. In the past, videos up to 60 seconds could be uploaded, and now videos up to 3 minutes of video can be uploaded. In addition, users are allowed to comment and chat. Tik Tok is more focused on the new generation so that they can easily solve the problems of chemistry, mathematics, physics, and other fields. In Tik Tok, teachers and lecturers can convey various difficult matters in a short and easy way. (Salha, 2021). Furthermore, it is used as a pedagogical tool at a number of universities, and students use it on a daily basis. (Fajardo, 2021).

## Instagram

It is one of the social media types, created in 2010. Until 2012, the number of its users reached 100 million. By 2018, the number of its users had reached 500 million. Instagram users can upload their photos, videos, songs, and stories, and the most important users can earn through it. (Koukaras, 2020). Instagram helps students learn and has a positive impact on their learning. (Sari, 2018).

Telegram

It is one of the social networks that has extensive applications in higher education. Participants in this network can be totally protected and can communicate privately or publicly at any time. It is easy for participants to use Telegram on their smart phones or computers and follow their lessons. Up to 20,000 people can join each Telegram group at once. (Aladsani, 2021).

Afghanistan is one of the countries that has created opportunities and challenges for the users of social media for more than a decade, and these opportunities and challenges have proven to be effective in the education sector for students. After three decades of war, Afghanistan has faced many problems and challenges, such as illiteracy, a lack of development, poverty, a lack of proper use of technical resources, and so on. With the advent of two decades of democracy and the development of technology, society is progressing; however, this progress must be managed effectively. (Sharif, 2021).

One of the challenges to students' academic progress is the lack of proper utilization of their free time, which is the only irreplaceable element that, if not used properly, will lead society towards crisis. The most important thing is that social network users use technology and the Internet to create relationships that bring opportunities and challenges. Although social networks provide their users with opportunities for communication and harmony in social life by creating a friendly environment, in addition to the benefits, excessive and addictive use of these new media has negative consequences, creates challenges between generations, and in general creates many unpleasant events in people's lives. The unrestrained use of these networks is a threat to a society; if not allocated and managed, it will lead to crises in the future. Identifying, reducing, or eliminating the above-mentioned threats will be an effective step in crisis prevention and management. In social networks, people share their interests, thoughts, and activities with others, and this sharing creates new relationships and leads to the formation of friendships among young people regardless of gender and geographical phenomena. (Sharif, 2021).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Social learning theory, a cornerstone of psychology, posits that individuals acquire knowledge by observing, modeling, and emulating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses of others. It underscores the pivotal role of social interactions and the environment in sculpting one's conduct, cognitive processes, and overall persona. As per this theory, individuals exhibit a proclivity to adopt behaviors that receive positive reinforcement or commendation from their social milieu, while being disinclined to adopt behaviors met with punishment or adverse reactions.

This influential theory finds application across diverse disciplines including education, psychology, criminology, and communication. It was initially introduced by the eminent psychologist Albert Bandura in 1977, and has since become a linchpin in understanding human behavior and learning mechanisms. (Bandura, 1977)

Esfandyar Ghafari conducted research in 2021 under the title "Virtual social networks and their negative effects on the free time of Kabul students.". The research was conducted in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, where 200 people participated and the data was collected through a questionnaire. The core purpose of this research study is to find out how social media has affected students' free time. The research shows that students are too busy on social media; therefore, they are not making full use of their free time. (Sharif, 2021).

The difference between the above-mentioned research study and this research is that the above-mentioned research is done only regarding free time; however, this research study discusses the impact of social media on the learning process of students, and a lot of attention is focused on the effect of social media on the health and behavior of students.

Abbas Fadhil Aljuboori, Abdul Naser M. fashakh, and Oguz Bayat conducted a quantitative research study in 2019 under the title "The Impact of Social Media on University Students in Iraq. In the research study, 201 students participated. The relevant information was obtained

through a questionnaire from three Iraqi universities. The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of social media on students' learning. (Aljuboori, 2020). The difference between this research study and my research is in terms of location. My research study aims to find out the effects of social media on the learning of Afghan students.

In 2013, Rithika M. and Sara Selvaraj conducted a research study under the title "Impact of social media on students' academic performance in India. In this study, he used first-hand information and collected information through a questionnaire, in which a total of 100 students participated. The difference between this research study and my research study is that this research was conducted in India, while my research was conducted in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan. Furthermore, this research study generally discussed the effects of social media on the learning of all students, while my research study discussed the impact of social media on university students' learning. (Selvaraj, 2013).

In 2015, Hira Hasnain, Anum Nasreen, and Hamza Ijaz conducted a research study under the title "Impact of Social Media Usage on Academic Performance of University Students. This research study took place at seven Pakistani universities. The data and information were collected through a questionnaire. The research participants are 171 students, of whom 109 are female and the rest are male. (Ijaz, 2015). The difference between this research study and mine is that this research was conducted in Pakistan, while mine was conducted in Afghanistan's Nangarhar Province. On the other hand, this research study discussed and analyzed the effect of media on the academic activities of students, and more emphasis and attention were given to Facebook; however, my research study analyzed and discussed the impact of all types of social media on students' learning.

In 2016, Tugberk Kaya and Huseyin Bicen conducted a research study in Turkey under the title "The Effect of Social Media on Students' Behavior: Facebook as a Case Study." The research was completed on the basis of first-hand information collected from the students through a questionnaire. The participants were 362 male and female students aged between 15 and 18 who were studying in the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades of school. The difference between this research study and mine is in terms of location. This research study took place in Turkey, and mine was in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan. On the other hand, the impacts of social media on school students were discussed and analyzed, while my research study discussed the impacts of social media on the learning of university students. (Kaya, 2016).

Our research diverges from previous studies in a significant manner. While research conducted in other countries examined social media usage, we discern a unique characteristic in our context. Here, the predominant platforms utilized by students, notably Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube, play a substantial role in their pursuit of academic objectives.

In contrast to prior studies, which allocated substantial sections to political and business considerations alongside educational matters, our approach deviates. Our questionnaire places heightened emphasis on educational concerns. Also, addressing political and business topics within the framework of a singular inquiry. This delineation underscores our commitment to prioritizing educational insights in our research methodology .

One big thing to note is that the issues caused by social media for students in Afghanistan are not the same as in other parts of the world. The main concerns are about how it affects their social life the most. Another big problem is spending too much time on social media without clear goals, and sometimes getting addicted to it. These are specific challenges faced by students here.

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## METHODOLOGY

The research is related to the effects of social media on the learning of university students and was conducted in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan. The first part of the research study is library research, in which the data and information were collected from reliable journal articles, text books, internet sites, etc. The second part of the research study is quantitative research, in which the material was collected from the university students through a questionnaire. The questionnaire has two parts. The first part is related to the use of social media in general, and the second part is specifically related to the use and effects of social media in academic settings. The data was collected from 193 students of both public and private universities in Jalalabad city, including undergraduate, master's, and Ph.D.-level students. The information was analyzed by SPSS, and its results were drawn. It is worth mentioning that there were only doctoral students at Nangarhar Public University who filled out a number of forms, and there are a number of doctoral scholars in universities who are engaged in online or in-person doctorates in other countries.

### Data Analysis

In this section, the questions related to the research study are analyzed as follows:

### Personal Information

### Question 1: Age?

In this part, the age of those participants is described who are interviewed. The collected data for different age categories is analyzed as follows.
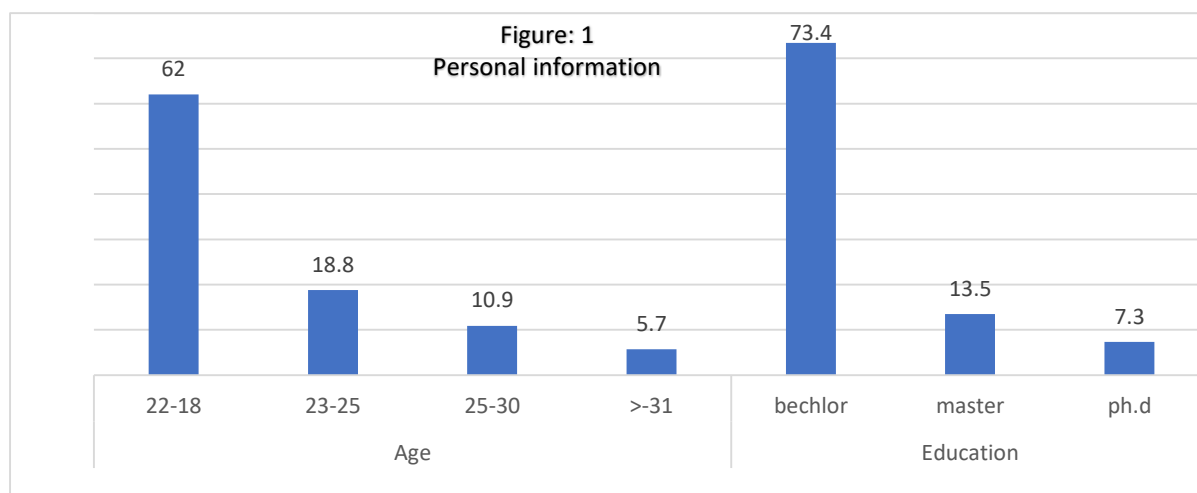


*Figure 1: This Figure Describes the Age of the Participants in This Research Study*

Information about age shows that most of the participants are young people between the ages of 18-22, who constitute 62% of the participants, people between the age of 23-25 who constitute 18 % of the participants, those who are 25-30 constitute 10% of the participant, and those whose age is more over 31 years constitute 5% of the participants. This means that the majority of the participants are young people between the ages of 18-30.

### Question 2: What are the Educational Qualifications of the Participants?

In this part, the educational qualifications of the interviewed students are described. The collected data is analyzed as follow: The second question is related to the education level of the participants. According to the information, 73% of the participants are bachelor's degree, 13% of the participants are master's level, and 7% of the participants are Ph.D. scholars.

**General questions**

**Question 1: What are the General Impacts of Social Media?**

In this part, the impacts of social media are described. The collected data is analyzed as follows:
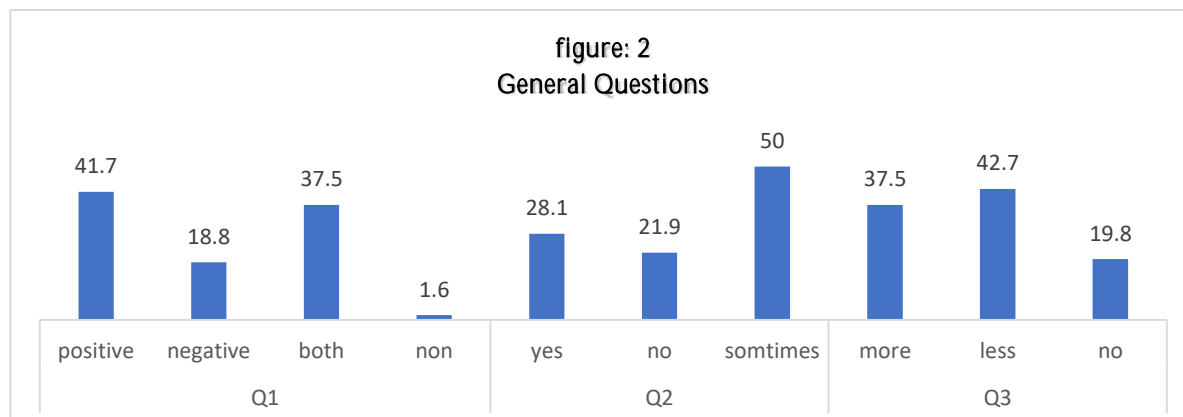


*Figure 2: General Impacts of Social Media*

Based on the information, 41% of the participants said that it has a positive impact, 18% said that it has a negative impact, 37% of the participants said that is has both positive and negative effects, only (1.6%) believes that social media has no impact.

**Question 3: What are the Impacts of Social Media on Health?**

In this part, the participants are asked whether social media has affected people's health or not. The collected data is analyzed as follows:
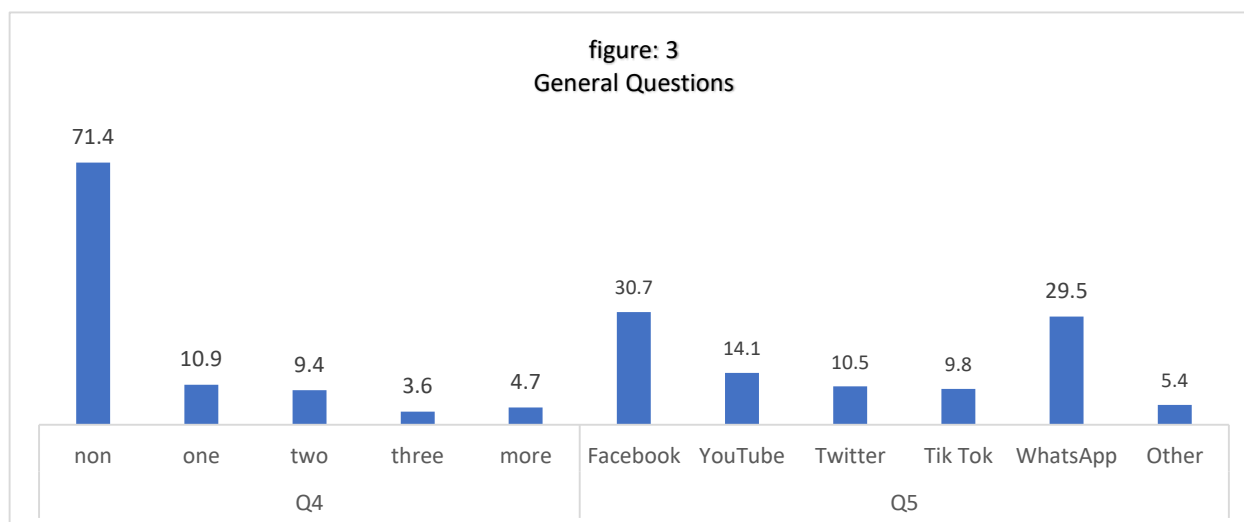


*Figure 3: Impacts of Social Media on Health*

**Question 4: Have Students Become Addicted to Social Media?**

In this part, the participants are asked whether they are addicted to social media or not. The collected data is analyzed as follows: Based on the information, 37% of the participants said that they are addicted to social media, 42% of the participants said that they are slightly addicted to social media, and 19% of the participants said that they are not addicted to social media.

### Question 5: Do Students Have Fake Accounts on Social Media?

In this part, the participants are asked whether they have fake accounts on social media or not. The collected data is analyzed as follows: Based on the information, 71% of the students do not have fake accounts on social media, 10% of the students have fake accounts of social media, 9% of the students have double fake accounts on social media, 3% of the students have three fake accounts on social media, and 4% of the students have more than three fake accounts on social media.

### Question 5: To What Extent Do Students Use Social Media?

In this part, the participants are asked that which of the social media types is used the most. The collected data is analyzed as follows: Based on information, 30% of the participants use WhatsApp, 29.5% of the participants use You Tube, 14% of the participants use Twitter, 10.5% of the participants use Tik Tok, and 5% use the rest of the social media.

### Question 6: What is the Role of Social Media in Educating Society?

In this part, the participants are asked if social media plays a positive role in making society educated. The collected data is analyzed as follows: Based on the information, 5% of the participants said that social media has a very little impact one making an educated society, 21% of the participants said that social media has no role in educating society, and 28% said that social media is an important factor in educating a society.

### Question 7: Is Personal Information Safe on Social Media?

In this part, the participants are asked to know whether their personal information is safe and secure on social media or not. The collected data is analyzed as follows: Based on the information, 47% of the participants believe that their personal information is safe, 11% of the participants said that their personal information is sometimes safe, and 41% of the participants said that their personal information is not completely safe on social media.

### Question 8: Can Students Have Access to Information on Social Media?

In this part, the participants are asked whether social media is a good and reliable source or not. The collected data is analyzed as follows: The results related to this question show that 82% of the participants consider social media an easy and simple way to get information, 9% of the participants said that social media is not an easy and simple way to get information, and 7% of the participants believed that sometimes it is an easy and simple tool to get information.

### Question 9: What are the Impacts of Social Media on Social Ties?

In this part, the participants are asked whether social media affects social ties or not. The collected data is analyzed as follows: The related information shows that 43% of the participants said social ties are less affected by social media, 37% of the participants believe that social ties are more affected by social media, and only 18% of the participants said that there is no negative impact of social media on social ties.

### Question 10: What are the Purposes of Using Social Media?

In this part, the participants are asked for what purpose they use social media. The collected data is analyzed as follows: Based on the collected information, 48% of the participants said that they use social media for research (blogging), 37% of the participants said that they use social media for many purposes such as contacting, enjoyment, and researching, 7% of the participants said that they use social media for time passing and enjoyment, and 5% of the participants said that they use social media to keep in touch with others.

**Question 11: Does Social Media Harm Personal Information?**

In this part, the participants are asked whether social media harms their personal information or not. The collected data was analyzed as follows: Based on the collected information, 9% of the participants said that social media can damage personal information in such a way that they can be forced to do unwanted work, 51% of the participants said that social media does not harm their personal information, and 28% of the participants said it is possible that social media can harm their personal information.

**Question 12: Is Social Media Used for Political Purposes?**

In this part, the participants are asked whether social media is used for political purposes. The collected data was analyzed as follows:  According to the information, 14% of the participants said that they always use social media for political purposes, 44% of the participants said that they rarely use social media for political purposes, and 40% of the participants said that they never use social media for political purposes.

**Question 13: Is Social Media Used for Business Purposes?**

In this part, the participants are asked whether social media is used for business purposes. The collected data was analyzed as follows:  According to the information, 22% of the participants said that they use social media to do business, 48% of the participants said that they sometimes use social media for business purposes, and 28% of the participants said that they never use social media to do business.

**Question 14: How Much Time Do Students Spend on Social Media?**

In this part, the participants are asked how many hours they spend using media daily. The collected data was analyzed as follows: Based on the information, 11% of the participants said that they spent more than five hours daily on social media, 77% of the participants said that they spent less than five hours daily on social media, and 11% of the participants said that they spent no time on social media.
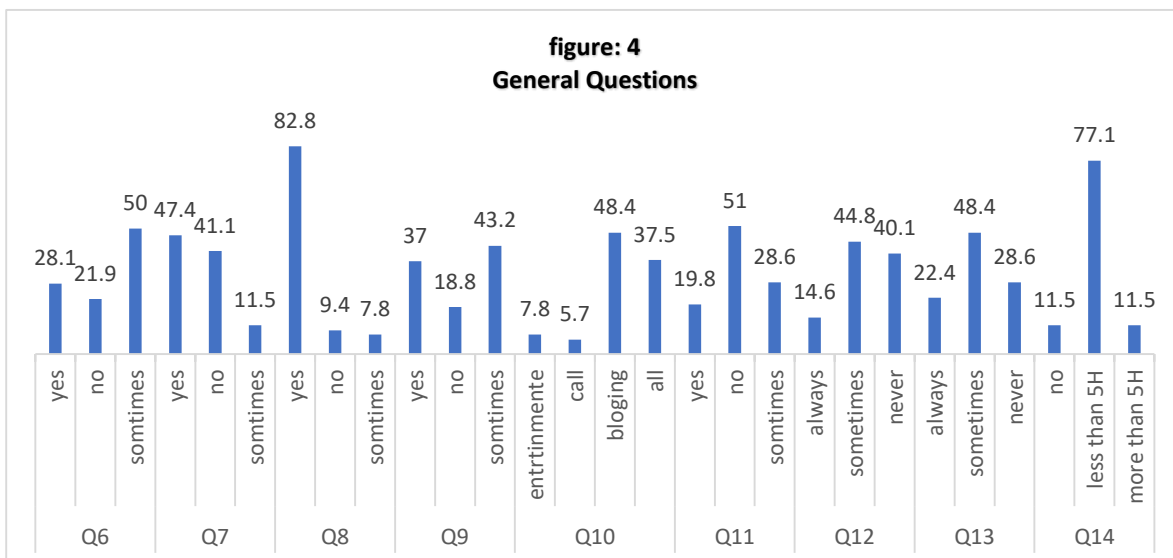


*Figure 4: Time Spent by Students on Social Media*

**Academic Question and Information**

Figure 4: This section is designed to clarify the engagement and benefit of students related to social media in the academic field and finally it is determined how social media has affected their learning.

**Question 1: Is Social Media Used for Learning?**

In this part, the participants are asked whether they use social media for learning. The collected data is analyzed as follows:  According to the information, 51% of students said that they always use social media for learning, 45% students said that they sometimes use social media for learning, and 3% students said that they never use social media for learning.

**Question 2: Do Students Use Social Media to Follow University Website?**

In this part, the participants are asked whether they follow their university website using social media. The collected data is analyzed as follows: According to the information, 72% of students said that they follow their university website using social media, 18% of students said that they sometimes follow their university website using use social media, and 7% of students said that they never follow their university website using social media.

**Question 3: Is Social Media an Essential Source in an Educational Major?**

In this part, the participants are asked whether social media is an essential source in their educational major. The collected data is analyzed as follows: The data analysis shows that 74% of the students consider social media an important source for their educational field, 17% of the students consider social media a less essential source for their educational major, and 7% of the students do not consider social media a source of their educational filed.

**Question 4: Can Social Media Be an Alternative to Other Scientific Sources?**

In this part, the participants are asked whether social media is an alternative to a recognized academic source. The collected data is analyzed as follows:  Based on the information, 55% of the students consider social media an alternative to other scientific sources, 29% of the students said that it can be an alternative in some cases, and 14% of the students do not consider social media as an alternative to other scientific sources.

**Question 5: Is Social Media a Reliable Source of Academic Information?**

In this part, the participants are asked whether social media is a reliable source of academic information. The collected data is analyzed as follows:  Based on the information, 64% of the students consider social media a reliable source for obtaining academic information, 28% of the students said that social media is a reliable source for obtaining academic information, and 6% of the students do not consider social media a reliable source for obtaining academic information.

**Question 6: Can Social Media Help Reduce the Time, Problems, and Expenses of Obtaining Academic Information?**

In this part, the participants are asked if media can help reduce the time, problems, and expenses involved in obtaining academic information. The collected data is analyzed as follows:  Based on the information, 51% of the participants said that social media has made it easier to get information, 31% of the participants said that social media has made it easier to get information but to a lesser extent, and 15% of the participants said that social media has not made it easier to get information.

**Question 7: Is Social Media Used for Getting Information or Learning?**

In this part, the participants are asked if they use social media for obtaining information or learning purposes. The collected data is analyzed as follows: Based on the information, 12% of the students said that they use social media for learning, 13% of the students said that they use social media for getting information, and 73% of the students said that they use social media for both learning and obtaining information.

**Question 8: Which Type of Social Media is Used for Learning Purposes?**

In this part, the participants are asked which social media are used for learning purposes. The collected data is analyzed as follows: Based on the data information, 42% of the students use YouTube, 21% of the students use WhatsApp, 20% of the students use Facebook, 4% of the students use Twitter, 2% of the students use TikTok, and 8% of the students use other websites and networks in addition to the above-mentioned networks.

**Question 9: What are the Impacts of Social Media on Learning?**

In this part, the participants are asked what the impacts of social media are on their studies. The collected data analyzed as follows: Based on the information, 38% of the students said that social media had a positive impact on their learning, 17% of the students said that social media had a negative impact on their learning, 43% of the students said that social media had affected their learning negatively and positively, and 0.5 % of the students said that social media had no effect on their studies.

**Question 10: How Much Time is Spent for Academic Purposes on Social Media?**

In this part, the participants are asked how much time they spent on social media for academic purposes. The collected data is analyzed as follows: Based on the information, 55% of the students said that they use social media for an hour for their academic purposes, 33% of the students said that they use social media for more than an hour for their academic purposes, and 9% of the students said that they did not use social media for their academic purposes.
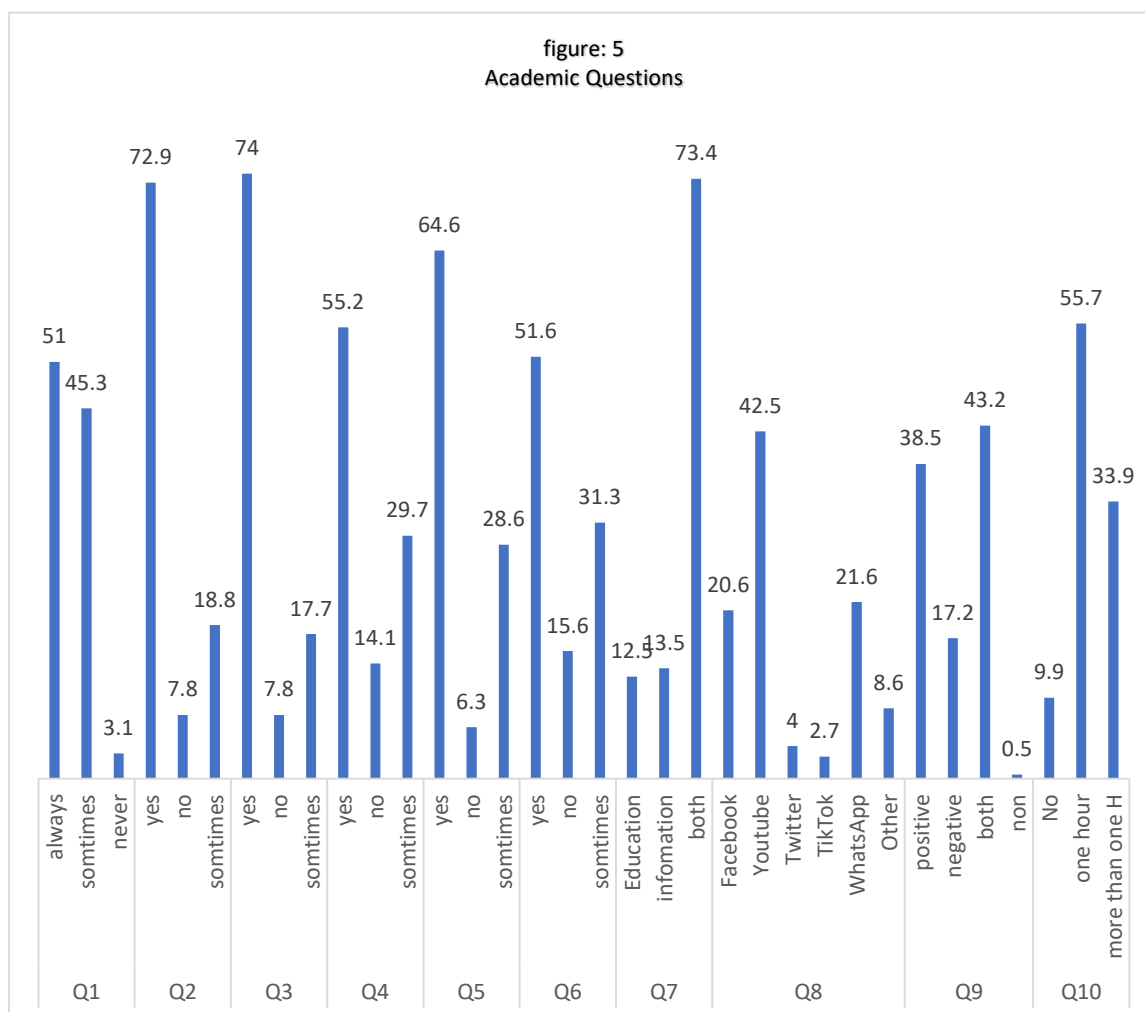
*Figure 5: Time Spent for Academic Purposes on Social Media*

**Conclusion**

According to the research, 88% of bachelor's, master's, and PhD students use social media during the day and night. The top social media platforms used are Facebook and WhatsApp, followed by YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter. Furthermore, 30% of university students have fake accounts on social media. On the one hand, the effect of using social media has been proven to be positive. The positive effects include educating the community, getting information, and using social media for business and political purposes. On the other hand, social media has its own negative effects. For instance, excessive busyness, exposure of personal information, being forced to do unwanted work, addiction, and negative effects on health and social life.

According to the research, students use social media for academic purposes as a scientific and reliable source for their education major. 73% of students use social media to get educational and academic information. The most used social media platform in the academic sector is YouTube, followed by WhatsApp. In addition, Facebook and other media are also used. The positive aspects of social media for academic purposes for students include; the facilitation of academic data collection and the reduction of time and costs.

According to the study, 55% of students spend one hour per day on social media for academic purposes, while 33.9% spend more than one hour. while for general and non-academic

purposes, 77% of students spend less than five hours and 11% of students spend more than five hours on social media.

## Recommendations

1. University students are suggested to use social media as a reliable resource in order to pursue their academic goals and purposes. Furthermore, since social media has a positive impact on university students' studies, they are supposed to take full advantage of it to help them achieve their academic goals.

2. University students are advised not to ignore the negative effects of social media, to avoid excessive use of social media, and to refrain from unnecessary issues.

3. Social media should not affect the individual and family lives of university students; therefore, university students have to keep a balance when using social media.

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