Impact of Social Networking Websites on Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to explore the impact of social networking websites on students. A research questionnaire was designed to determine the factors of social networking websites that have impact on students. Variables identified are age, gender, education, social influence and academic performance. 168 respondents that were only students were randomly selected. The study concluded that students whose age range from 15 to 25 mostly use social networking websites for entertainment. 60% of male students commonly used social networking websites for knowledge. Graduation students generally prefer social networking websites for entertainment. From this research study it was also found that people can use social networking websites due to social influence. This study determines that most of students use social networking websites due to their friends and its total average is 67.3% of total sample. Students having 3.0 to 3.5 GPA (Grade Point Average) mostly use social networking websites for entertainment.

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Internet is a very important element of life which cannot be ignored. Internet is used for educational purpose by a large community but unfortunately we have a large community including majority of youth and teenagers who use Internet for only social networking sites (Boyd, 2006). Trusov, Bucklin,

and Pauwels (2009) reviewed that the phenomena of social network is quite simple to understand, it is a web based facility which allows individuals to build a profile identity and generate subjective associations and connections among themselves and communicate them at a central location. According to Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010) social network websites grab attention of the students and then diverts it towards non-educational and inappropriate actions including useless chatting. On the basis of the above statement we can say that social networking sites may badly affect the academic life and learning experiences of the student. Whereas on the other hand, Liccardi et al (2007) reviewed that the students are socially connected with each other for sharing their daily learning experiences and do conversation on several topics.

Tinto (1997) argued that extracurricular activities and academic activities are not enough to satisfy some student those who are suffered by social networking isolation. This shows that social networks are beneficial for the students as it contributes in their learning experiences as well as in their academic life. Trusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels (2009) noted that the Internet is no doubt evolution of technology but specifically social networks are extremely unsafe for teenagers, social networks become hugely common and well-known in past few years. According to Cain (2008) social network websites provide ease of connecting people to one another; free of cost and after connecting one can post news, informative material and other things including videos and pictures etc. This free of cost factor fascinate students for communication and data sharing. Cain (2009) stated that although social network websites can be practiced for good determinations but it is usually used for Involvement of digital snapshots and information, exposing securities, and conducting online conversations because many other communities inside social networking websites motivate user for this kind of inappropriate actions. Wiley and Sisson (2006) argued that the

previous studies have found that more than 90% of college students use social networks. In the same way Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) stated that the students use social networking websites approximately 30 minutes throughout the day as a part of their daily routine life. This statement shows the importance of social networking websites in students' life. Lenhart and Madden (2007) revealed through a survey that students strongly recommend social networking websites to stay in touch with friends to keep informed and aware.

This research is conducted to explore the affect of social networking websites and its impact on academic life and learning experiences of students. As Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010) explained that the social networks grabs the total attention and concentration of the students and diverts it towards non educational, unethical and inappropriate actions such as useless chatting, time killing by random searching and not doing their jobs. Students and teenagers mostly use social networks for time killing and sake of enjoyment but it has been analyzed that internet use for education purpose and any appropriate task including online tutorials, online lectures and education material downloading is very good but use of internet for only social network is very useless perhaps dangerous. Some of the appropriate and un-negligible statements that fascinated us to conduct this research are stated below. Benzie (2007) noted that the Canadian government prohibited employees from Facebook.com. In the same way Boyd & Ellison (2007) also pointed out that the U.S. Congress has proposed legislation to ban youth from accessing social networking websites in schools and libraries. When the highly developed nations take stands over the use of social networking websites and cannot allow these social networking websites for countrymen, youth, students and working people, then the need is felt to see into that either social networking websites adversely effects students or not. This research mainly focuses on such factors that affect student's academic life and learning experience.

This research will explain and detail presents the impact of using social networking websites on student academic life and learning experience. Literature analyzed that the social networking websites are not designed for negative impact but we have noticed in our daily life that students become addicted to social networking websites. This part of research contribution will analyze the reality and gap between the positive and negative impact and aspects of social networks on education.

Objectives

- To analyze the impact of students' age, gender, education and social influence.
- To determine how social networking websites affects students' academic performance.
- To evaluate why mostly people use social networking websites.

Literature Review

According to Boyd & Ellison In late 1990's social network born with Web 2.0 introducing features of blogging and posting with the website named 'six degrees.com', which promoted itself as a tool to help people connecting with each other and providing E-messaging facility. Weinreith (2007) says that although it attracted millions of people but unfortunately it fails to become a sustainable business. Its organizer believes that sixdegrees.com was simply a head of its time. Wasow (2007) argues that from 1997 to 2001, number of social networking websites began to support various combinations of profiles and publicly expressed friends. Asian Avenue, Black Planet, and Mi-Gente allowed users to create personal, professional, and dating profiles, users could identify friends on their personal profiles without seeking approval for those connections. Later, it come up with new features in year 2003 a new face of social networks linkedin.com and myspace.com but in year 2003 facebook.com

and orkut.com change the total concept of social networks in the history of social media and web sciences, it changes the definition of social networks. After year 2003 social networks were very much advance with new features, by new features the user even can change the whole front end appearance of the website on his profile which is a step towards evolution.
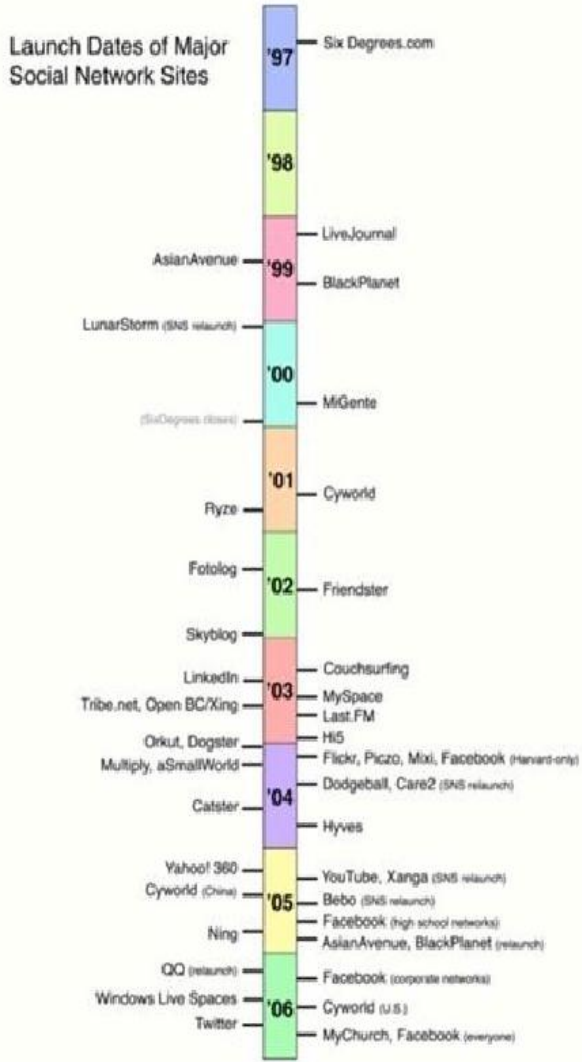

Figure 1. Launching and re-launching years of major social networking sites (Boyd and Elison, 2006)

Boyd and Nielsen (2006) reported that the top ten social networking sites developed with the passage of time, and its number of users increases from 46.8 million to 68.8 million. This rating reveals the important information about how new generation interacts with each other. Talking about law and jurisdiction it is international law that one must be 18 years old minimum to use social networking websites but unfortunately, Lenhart & Madden (2007) calculated a huge amount of underage users which must be violated. According to Lenhart & Madden (2007) calculation it has been analyzed that 41% of 12–13 years old and 61% of 14–17 years old users use social networking websites.

Charlene Li et al., (2007) estimated that students are more likely to use social networking websites; nearly 47% of teenagers (12 to 17year olds) and 69% of young adults (18 to 21year olds) and 20% of adults (18+) use social networking sites, and only 20% use them to contact other people as shown in figure 1.2.
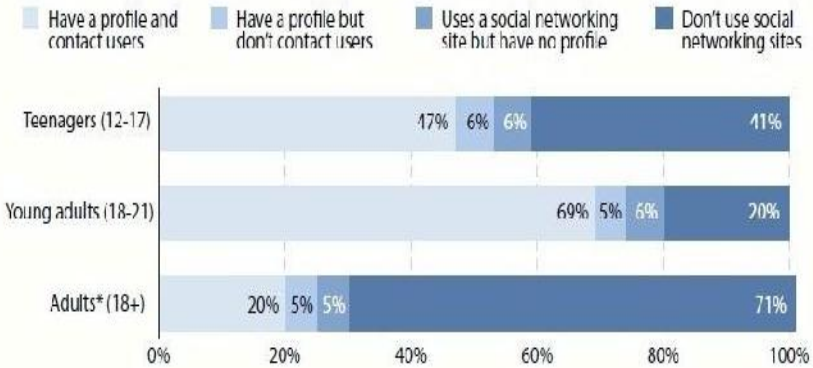

Figure 2. Students using social networking sites (Charlene et al., 2007)

Charlene Li et al., (2007) also reviews that students that use social networking sites, 60% of teenagers and 68% of young adults visit them every day or more as shown in figure 1.3. In contrast, only 42% of adults that use social networking sites visit them daily or more and 24% adult users visit social networking sites monthly.
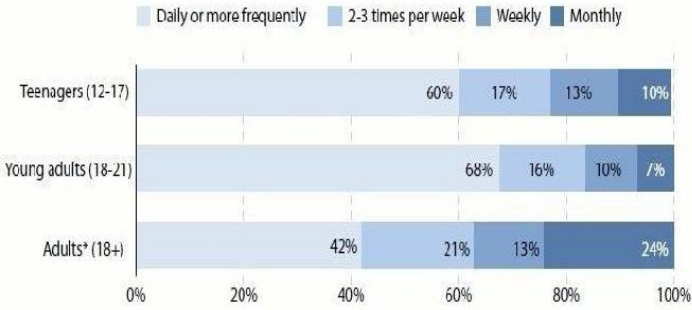
Figure 3. Social Sites visit frequency (Charlene li et al., 2007)

According to Charlene Li et al (2007) student activity on social networking sites focuses on communicating with each other. The most popular activities done by students and users on social networking sites revolve around looking at profiles of one another, searching for someone here and there, or updating one's own profile, eavesdropping (sensing others activities on social networking websites and analyzing their posts). Media and content related activities like looking for an event, watching online videos, or listening to music and news. The ratios of these common activities which are almost practiced by almost every social networking websites user are calculated by as shown in figure 1.4.

Tinto reviews that in this (14-18) stage of human life people are more attracted towards social networking websites because those students who get aware from social networking websites cannot satisfy themselves only from academic activities, and for that reason they are highly attracted by common social networking websites which are specifically specified for online personal, professional and dating profile. Wasoww (2007) says that in this age of human life students get auditory and adoptive activities rapidly and involve them in it. According to the theory of Erikson (1953) in this age of life student cannot differ between his identity and role inside society and he cannot solve the conflict within his role in society and his real identity, to resolve this confusion student get attracted to social networking websites because in between social networking websites he find a virtual

life and friends which cannot let him (student) to be bored even for single moment.

From Lenhart & Madden (2007) point of view social networking websites provide a virtual life to those students who use social networking websites to make new friends although every contact and friend is virtual and un-real. Some of users register themselves in social networking websites because they want others to know about them, for such reason students get registered and make friends, students thought that increasing number of friends could make them famous among other friends but unfortunately social networking websites provide virtual contacts.

Theory of self-efficacy claims that "People believe about their capability to realize a goal influences the way they approach tasks". According to Bandura (1977) students having robust self-efficacy owns advanced level of self-confidence to express social networking websites, where those who have weaker self-efficacy may not, as they fear rejection from the network established members this level of self-efficacy can exacerbate a student sense of isolation. Margolis and Fisher (2003) agreed to the idea put forwarded by the Bandura (1977) and highlighted the aspect of self-efficacy which promotes students to use social networking websites. Balsamo (1995) asserted that social networking websites have the ability to decrease social exclusion and increasing student's self-efficacy. In 1990's "Cyber space" was initially thought as a place to escape from face to face communication and personalization of gender and race implications also including disabled people.

Williamson et al (2011) has conducted a research report in which it has been analyzed that 35.3% of female user use social networking websites where 42.2% male user use social networking websites according to D. A. Williamson the ratio of male and female users is almost near to be equaled, as shown in figure 1.5.

According to Acquisti & Gross (2006) point of view many users believe that whatever they post is only limited to their associations and close group of friends unaware of the fact that the information they posted may be publically available to be searched and read by much wider ordinance. Tinto (1997) reviews that new information on social networking websites encourages growth and provide students with an ever growing learning community which in-returns substitute both academic and social success. Cormode and Krishnamurthy (2008) says that in today world of Internet there are many social networking websites but among all of them the social networking websites which entertain user with special and detailed information profile are more liked by people instead of other social networking websites which provide fewer features. As shown in table 1.1 social networking websites like facebook.com and myspace.com provide much features including age information, gender inform action, location of user, testimonial and other information about user; this information is accessible by external user and by the help of given information external user can analyze one's profile so websites including more features are liked by users instead of those websites which provide less functionality and features.

According to Greenhow & Robelia (2009), Madge et al (2009) & Selwyn (2009) point of view social networking websites best serve educational goal and objectives by connecting students through such informal methods as it allows student through the process of collaborative sense making. Some of social networking websites are specifically specified for educational environment including linkedin.com which is fully featured for education purpose and let user to updates his educational credential and make a professional connections. In addition to the above statement Ellision et al (2007) & Lampe et al (2008) also stated that social networking websites may enable collaborative sense making among students as it is used by majority of students. A number of studies have found relationship between social media and student commitment in higher education including King & Robinson

(2009) who found that students who use electronic voting system were more likely to answer question in their math course. Annetta et al (2009) observed that students who played an educational game is more committed towards their work rather than a group control. Nicole et al (2007) analyzed that there is a strong link between social networking websites and students as social networking websites helps to maintain relation with people when they move from one offline community to another. Such connections could help students in term of home assignments and projects in terms of job, internship and other opportunity.

Madge et al (2009) & Salaway et al (2008) argue that often students use social networking websites to discuss their academics issues formally and informally and also to interact with their instructor, teachers and professors. Research examining student instructor relationships suggests that professors who have online profiles with high disclosure levels are associated with increased student motivation (Mazer et al. 2007) and that self-disclosures decreased uncertainty, increased student motivation, and created more positive attitudes toward both the course and the professor (O'Sullivan et al. 2004).

Theoretical framework

This theoretical frame work shows the dependency and independency of factors age, gender, education and social networks.
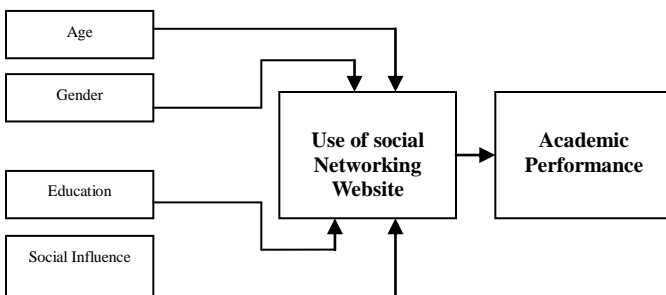

Figure 4. Theoretical Framework

Use of social networking websites depends upon the above four factors so use of social networking website is dependent variable and the above four factors are independent variables. Whereas on the other hand academic performance depends upon use of social networking websites in this case academic performance is a dependent variable and use of social networking website is independent variable.

Research Methodology

Data Collection

In this study both primary and secondary sources of data will be included. The primary data for this research study will be collected through a questionnaire; the data of questionnaire was collected from 168 respondents which served as the primary source of data for the analysis of this research and that lead this research study to the exploration of the impact of social networking websites on students. At the same time literature review of this research study will provided the secondary. Source of secondary data which is gathered from published research articles.

Sampling Design

168 respondents were randomly selected from Khyber Paktoon khwa, Peshawar. Respondents were only students who filled a questionnaire the collected data were
carefully assessed to the statistical software i.e. SPSS and the results were taken as they were required for the analysis of this research study.

Analytical Techniques

SPSS Software used in this study for analysis of factors that determine the impact of social networking websites on students. This software have different statistical analysis for e.g.

correlation, regression, chi square etc. In this research study the results are found by descriptive statistics and cross tabs analysis.

Results and Analysis

Age and use of SNS

According to the results gathered from 168 respondents shown in table 1 which describe that the age is divided into four categories i-e less than 15, 15 to 25, 25 to 35, and 35 to 45 and above. Similarly the use of social networking websites comprises of the four factors which are entertainment, communication, knowledge and time killing. The analysis of 168 respondents reviles the following results;

Table 1
Use of Social Networking

	Age				
	Less then 15	**15 to 20**	**20 to 35**	**35 to 45**	**45 above**
Entertainment	1	33	11	4	2
Knowledge	1	23	14	8	3
Time Killing	0	14	12	1	0
Communication	0	23	13	4	1
Total	2	93	50	17	6
Percentage	1.2%	55.4%	29.8%	10.1%	3.6%

The total average of total population whose age is less than 15 is 1.2% that uses social networking websites. Total numbers of respondents in this age range are 2 which include 1 respondent that uses social networking websites for entertainment and only 1 respondent use social networking websites for knowledge.

Age ranges between15 to 25 includes 93 respondents that use social networking websites in which 33 respondents use social networking websites for purely entertainment, 23 of them uses social networking websites for communication purpose similarly 23 respondents use social networking websites for knowledge and

14 respondents are those who use social networking websites for time killing. Total average that uses social networking websites is 55.4% of total population whose age ranges between15 to 20.

Total average of total population, age ranges between20 to 35 that use social networking websites is 29.8% that use social networking websites. Total number of respondents in this particular age range are 50 in which 11 respondents use social networking website for entertainment, 13 of them uses social networking websites for communication, 14 respondents use social networking websites for knowledge and 12 of them use social networking websites for time killing.

Age ranges between 35 to 45 includes 10.1% of total population that uses social networking websites. Total number of respondents are 17 in which 4 respondents use social networking websites for entertainment, 4 respondents use social networking websites for communication, 8 of them uses social networking websites for knowledge and only 1 of them uses social networking websites for time killing.

Gender and use of SNS

According to the results gathered from 168 respondents shown in table 2 in which the gender is defined and the use of social networking websites which includes the factors which are entertainment, communication, knowledge and time killing. The analysis of 168 respondents reviles the following results;

Table 2
Gender use of Social Networking

	Male	Female
Entertainment	27	24
Knowledge	36	13
Time Killing	13	14
Communication	25	16
Total	101	67

Percentage	60.1%	39.9%

Total numbers of male respondents are 101 in which 27 male respondents use social networking websites for entertainment, 25 respondents for communication, 36 respondents use social networking websites for knowledge and 13 male respondents use social networking websites for time killing. The above analysis concludes that the total average of male respondents is 60.1% of total population who use social networking websites.

The total average of female respondents is 39.9% of total population who use social networking websites .Total numbers of female respondents are 67 in which 24 female respondents use social networking websites for entertainment, 16 respondents for communication, 13 respondents use social networking websites for knowledge and 14 female respondents use social networking websites for time killing.

Education and use of SNS

According to the results gathered from 168 respondents shown in table 3 in which the education is classified into four group's i-e SSC, HSSC, Graduation, Masters and PHD. Similarly the use of social networking websites classified into four group's i-e entertainment, communication, knowledge and time killing. The analysis of 168 respondents shows the following results;

The total average of SSC respondents is 0.6% of total population. The total number of respondents in SSC is 1who use social networking websites for knowledge. Total number of respondents in HSSC is 16 in which 9 respondents use social networking websites for entertainment, 3 uses social networking websites for communication, 1 of them use social networking websites for knowledge and 3 respondents use social networking websites for time killing. The above analysis of collected data

concludes that the total average of people in HSSC is 9.5% of total population that use social networking websites.

Table 3
Educational use of Social Networking

	Education				
	SSC	HSSC	Graduation	Master	PhD
Entertainment	0	9	26	15	1
Knowledge	1	1	18	26	3
Time Killing	0	3	15	9	0
Communication	0	3	18	19	1
Total	1	16	77	69	5
Percentage	0.6%	9.5%	45.8%	41.1%	3%

Total number of respondents in Graduation is 77 in which 26 respondents use social networking websites for entertainment, 18 uses social networking websites for communication, 18 of them use social networking websites for knowledge and 15 respondents use social networking websites for time killing. This concludes that the total average of people doing Graduation is 45.8% of total population that use social networking websites.

The total average of people doing Masters is 41.1% of total population that uses social networking websites. Total number of respondents in Masters is 69 in which 15 respondents use social networking websites for entertainment, 19 of them uses social networking websites for communication, 26 use social networking websites for knowledge and 9 respondents use social networking websites for time killing.

Total number of respondents in PHD is 5 in which 1 respondents use social networking websites for entertainment, 1 uses social networking websites for communication and 3 of them use social networking websites for knowledge. The above analysis of collected data concludes that the total average in PHD is 3% of total population that use social networking websites.

Social influence and use of SNS

According to the results gathered from 168 respondents shown in table 4 in which the social influence is categorized into four group's i-e friend, family, teachers and others. In the same way the use of social networking websites classified into four group's i-e entertainment, communication, knowledge and time killing. The analysis of 168 respondents shows the following results;

The total average of respondents that uses social networking websites due to their friends is 67.3% of total population. Total number of respondents that uses social networking websites due to their friends are 113 which includes 43 respondents that uses social networking websites for entertainment, 28 respondents that uses social networking websites for communication, 24 of them uses social networking websites for knowledge and 18 respondents uses social networking websites for time killing.

Table 4
Social Influence and use of Social Networking

	Social Influence			
	Friends	Family	Teachers	Others
Entertainment	43	4	3	1
Knowledge	24	5	0	14
Time Killing	18	3	6	6
Communication	28	6	3	4
Total	113	18	12	25
Percentage	67.3%	10.7%	7.1%	14.9%

The total average of respondents that uses social networking websites due to their family is 10.7% of total population. Total number of respondents that uses social networking websites due to their family are 18 in which there are 4 respondents that uses social networking websites for entertainment, 6 respondents that uses social networking websites for

communication, 5 of them uses social networking websites for knowledge and 3 respondents uses social networking websites for time killing.

Total number of respondents that uses social networking websites due to their teachers are 12 which includes 3 respondents that uses social networking websites for entertainment, 3 respondents that uses social networking websites for communication and 6 respondents uses social networking websites for time killing. This analysis determines the total average of respondents that uses social networking websites due to their teachers is 7.1% of total population.

The total average of respondents that uses social networking websites due to others is 14.9% of total population. Total number of respondents that uses social networking websites due to others are 25 which includes 1 respondent that uses social networking websites for entertainment, 4 respondents that uses social networking websites for communication, 14 of them uses social networking websites for knowledge and 6 respondents uses social networking websites for time killing.

Use of SNS and academic performance

According to the results gathered from 168 respondents shown in table 5 in which the use of social networking websites classified into four group's i-e entertainment, communication, knowledge and time killing. In the same way academic performance is analyzed through GPA (grade average point) which is classified into four group's i-e 1.5 to 2.0, 2.0 to 2.5, 2.5 to 3.0, 3.0 to 3.5 and 3.5 to 4.0. The analysis of 168 respondents shows the following results;

The total average of people having 1.5 to 2.0 GPA is 2.4% of total population that uses social networking websites. Total number of respondents having GPA ranges 1.5 to 2.0 is 4 in which 1 respondent use social networking websites for entertainment, 2

of them use social networking websites for knowledge and 1 respondent use social networking websites for time killing.

Table 5
Social Networking and Academic Performance

	Grade Average				
	1.5 to 2	2 to 2.5	2.5 to 3	3 to 3.5	3.5 to 4
Entertainment	1	2	13	28	7
Knowledge	2	3	12	25	7
Time Killing	1	1	12	11	2
Communication	0	1	18	18	4
Total	4	7	55	82	20
Percentage	2.4%	4.2%	32.7%	48.8%	11.9%

Total number of respondents having GPA ranges from 2.0 to 2.5 is 7 in which 2 respondent use social networking websites for entertainment, 1 uses social networking websites for communication, 3 of them uses social networking websites for knowledge and 1 respondent use social networking websites for time killing. This concludes the total average of people having 2.0 to 2.5 GPA is 4.2% of total population that uses social networking websites.

Total number of respondents having GPA ranges between 2.5 to 3.0 is 55 which includes 13 respondents that uses social networking websites for entertainment, 18 respondents that uses social networking websites for communication, 12 of them uses social networking websites for knowledge and 12 respondent uses social networking websites for time killing. This determines the total average of people having 2.5 to 3.0 GPA is 32.7% of total population that uses social networking websites.

The total average of people having GPA that ranges between3.0 to 3.5 is 48.8% of total population that uses social networking websites. Total number of respondents having GPA from 3.0 to 3.5 is 82 in which there are 28 respondents that use social networking websites for entertainment, 18 that uses social

networking websites for communication, 25 of them uses social networking websites for knowledge and 11 respondent use social networking websites for time killing.

Total number of respondents having GPA ranges between 3.5 to 4.0 is 20 which includes 7 respondents that uses social networking websites for entertainment, 4 respondents that uses social networking websites for communication, 7 of them uses social networking websites for knowledge and 2 respondent uses social networking websites for time killing. This determines the total average of people having 3.5 to 4.0 GPA is 11.9% of total population that uses social networking websites.

Findings and Conclusion

A total of 168 were surveyed for the study. Respondents whose Age ranges between 15 to 25 mostly use social networking website whose total average is 55.4% of total population. An individual whose age is between15 to 25 generally uses social networking websites for entertainment.

Gender analysis shows that male mostly uses social networking websites and the total average of male that uses social networking websites is 60.1% of total population. Male commonly uses social networking websites for knowledge.

The analysis of the collected data shows that people doing graduation generally use social networking websites whose total average is 45.8% of total population. Graduate students mostly use social networking websites for entertainment.

People mostly use social networking websites due to influence of their friends and the total average of the people who uses social networking websites due to their friends influence is 67.3% of total population. People using social networking websites because of their friends influence generally uses it for entertainment.

Academic performance analysis with use of social networking websites shows that the people having 3.0 to 3.5 GPA (grade average point) mostly use social networking websites and the total average of people having GPA ranges between 3.0 to 3.5 is 48.8% of total population. People having 3.0 to 3.5 GPA generally uses social networking websites for entertainment.

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