



## **Social Media Dependence: An analysis of youth's motives for using Social Media Networks in Karachi**

**Tahira Parween**

Research Scholar

Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences & Technology Karachi, Pakistan.  
tt.tahiratariq@gmail.com

**Dr. Huma Nisar**

Assistant Professor

Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences & Technology Karachi, Pakistan.  
h.nisar@fuuast.edu.pk

**Dr. Muhammad Irfan**

Assistant Professor

Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences & Technology Karachi, Pakistan.  
erfanaziz@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

Since social media is being used as a channel of communication in virtually all parts of the world, it is seen as a growing trend in Karachi too. People including the youth make use of social media networks. Social media networks provide a lot of opportunities to their users. It can provide news, information, social interaction, entertainment, and much more on a 24/7 basis around the year. Our youth can be seen glued to the screen of their laptops and smartphones and can be seen using social media networks without taking breaks. Excessive use of anything is dangerous. The purpose of the study was to find out about social media dependence in our youth living in Karachi city and their motives for using social media networks. The core problems to seek answers through this study were: What purpose does the youth in Karachi use social media for? Which social media networks are mostly used by youth? Whether the usage of social media affects the amount of time the youth gives to their studies? Is the youth addicted to social media? The quantitative survey methodology was adopted for this study and the population for the study was social media networks using youth living in Karachi. The sample size of the study was 100 and the data was collected online via google survey forms using the non-probability convenience sampling method. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. To evaluate social media dependence among youth, questions were designed to get proper responses and the collected data was tabulated and analyzed. The major findings of the study were that the youth were addicted to social media and were using more than one social media network at a time. On average, youth from both genders were using five different social media networks to meet their needs and gratification.

**Key Words:** Social media, social networks, addiction, dependence, gratification, youth.



## **Introduction**

The internet comprises a huge system of interconnected computers around the world that enables the sharing of information and helps people communicate with each other. It is actually a network of networks that encompasses academic, business, public, private, and government networks linked by an extensive assortment of various technologies. Social media is a form of electronic media that enables people to share information and communicate using the internet via computers and other communication devices.

Depending on its use social media is divided into different social networks. Social networks can be divided into four main types:

- 1) Social networks-Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook are used to connect with people.
- 2) Social blogging networks-Tumblr, Medium and WordPress are used to discover, publish, and post comments.
- 3) Media sharing networks-YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat used to share photos, videos, etc.
- 4) Discussion networks-Reddit, Digg, and Quora used to discuss, find and share information, news, views, and opinions.

Social media has become a popular means of both interpersonal and public communication in Karachi and the world as a whole. Social media serves as an interactive communication channel that enables people to connect with one another, and share pictures, messages, information, experiences, and ideas. The interactive nature of social media allows its users to become a part of it regardless of residing in any part of the world McQuail (2010, p. 39) differentiated social media from traditional mass media when he noted that “traditional mass communication was essentially one-directional, while the new forms of communication are essentially interactive.” This interactive quality of the new media bestows exceptional popularity over traditional media.

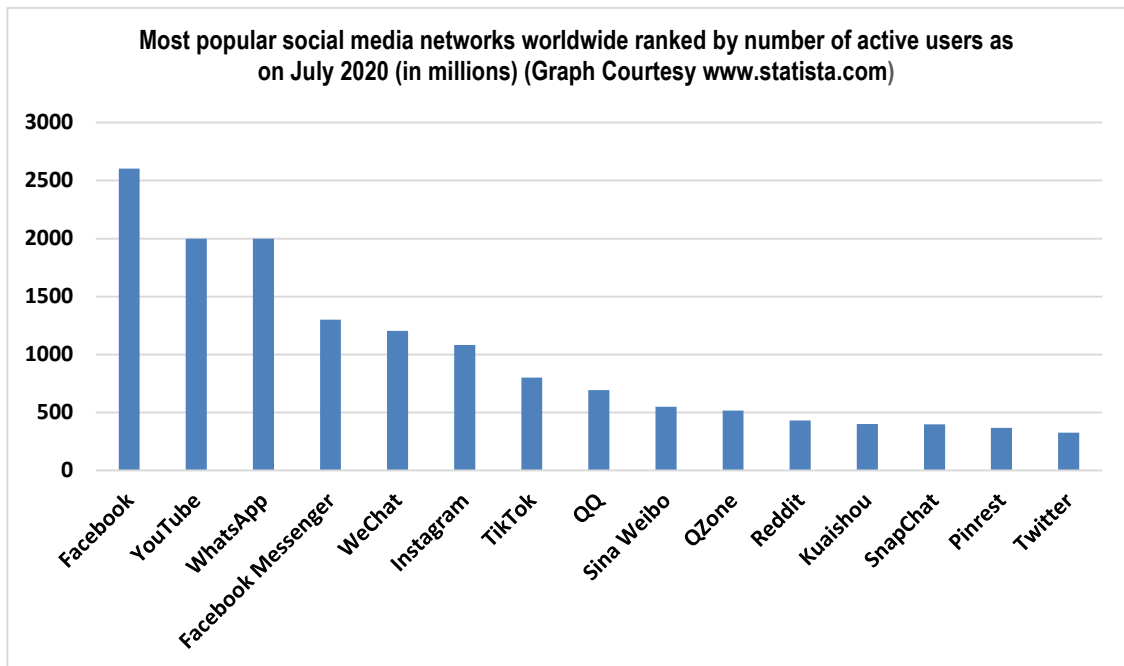
The data provided by the United Nations at the beginning of December 2018 via the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) estimates that 3.9 billion people will be online by the end of December 2018. The world population was estimated at 7.594 billion in 2018 which means that more than 51% of the total world population are using the internet since 2018. ITU is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs) (ITU Releases 2018 Global and Regional ICT Estimates, 2018). According to a new research (More than Half the World Now Uses



Social Media, 2020) up till July 2020, the number of people who actively use social media networks around the world was 3.96 billion. Annual growth in the total number of social media users is more than 376 million users annually which is a 10.50% increase in social media users every year.

According to a study by David, Et al., (2014) the smartphone is one of the greatest innovations of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in human communication. There are a number of facilities and communication options available in smartphones that can be used for sharing information, pictures, and videos. A smartphone is a multitasking device that allows users to perform more than one computer task at a time. The use of the social network is increased many folds due to the convenience of multitasking and the portable nature of smartphones. According to the Global social media overview July 2020 by DataReportal up till July 2020, around the world, the total number of social media users accessing through cell phones has reached 3.91 billion which is 99% in terms of the percentage of total social media users accessing via cell phone (Social media use around the World, 2020).

According to a current study (Most Used Social Media Platforms, 2020) the most popular social networks usually display a high number of user accounts or strong user engagement. Worldwide up to July 2020, there were over 2.6 billion monthly active Facebook users. This is an 11 percent increase year-over-year as compared to 2.38 billion in 2019. The first social network to surpass 1 billion monthly active users was Facebook, while Pinterest was the fastest independently launched site to reach 10 million unique monthly visitors. As of June 2018, Instagram has grown to a 1 billion monthly active users, positioning itself as one of the fastest growing social media networks globally in eight years from its launch.



Internet and social media are modern technologies of this era which are so unescapable that it is very hard to put down the smartphone or turn off the laptop even after hours of use. The addictive nature of modern digital technology can be observed from the fact that we cannot imagine living without it. The interesting nature of the internet and social media networks keep its users searching for more and more and a never ending cycle of searching begins. Getting information is not bad but getting too much information is waste of time for students. The nature of social media also urges its users to use more than one utility at a time which is called multitasking. It includes text messaging, emailing, web-surfing, using social media networks and playing games while working, driving, exercising, learning or even while taking class.

Addiction is a complicated brain disease that is exhibited by uncontrollable use of a certain substance in spite of harmful consequences. People with addiction tend to emphasize on the excessive use of certain detrimental substances like drugs or alcohol to the extent that it may take their lives. The worst part is that with the passage of time, people with addiction build up tolerance. Usually people with addictive disorders are totally aware about their condition, but are unable to stop it even if they want to. They



end up suffering from serious health issues along with problems at work and with family members and friends (Addiction and Substance Use Disorders, 2020). Addiction is the uncontrollable desire and need for the substance such as drugs. Dependence is the use of a substance as a response to a certain event or feeling. It can be mental or physical. It triggers desire to use something for mental satisfaction. Dependence with the passage of time develops into addiction.

Social media networks are as addictive as drugs, alcohol, or gambling. Social Media addiction might seem harmless in the beginning but it can lead to significant unforeseen consequences. The virtual world within social networks can all of a sudden make one feel irritable, depressed and unproductive. There may be many signs of social media addiction; for example you get worried when internet connection is unavailable or signals are lagging. This is a sign of dependency same as a chain smoker feels craving sensation between long smoking breaks. Some workplaces have strict cell phone and internet policies which prevents employees to use cell phone during duty timings thus preventing its employees from accessing social media. The employees addicted to social media may take a few extra bathroom trips to check social media updates. Some employees risking their jobs even try to use social media under their desks. It means that such employees who are risking their jobs for nothing are social media addicted. Some social media and Smartphone users are in a habit of immediately checking their phones whenever a social media notification is received, which is also a sign of social media addiction. Refreshing the page repeatedly after posting something to watch the likes go up, this also indicates social media addiction. If someone checks his phone right when he wakes up in the morning and at night right before going to bed, it simply shows that social media is at the top of his priority list. Sadly, social media addiction can even lead to social isolation. The urge to stay connected with the social media world can pull you away from the world around you. You seem way too distant to friends and family members because you're always on social media, even when physically being with them.

Social media platforms produce the same neural circuitry that is caused by gambling and recreational drugs. Studies have shown that constant stream of retweets, likes and shares from these sites have affected that brain's reward area to trigger that same kind of chemical reaction as other drugs such as cocaine. In fact neuroscientists have compared social media interaction to a syringe of dopamine being injected straight into the system. In research from Berry (2019) Dopamine is a type of neurotransmitter which our body produces naturally and is used by our nervous system to conduct messages between nerve cells. It acts as a chemical messenger. It also plays a major role in how we feel pleasure. Drugs like cocaine can bring about a large amount of increase in the dopamine level of our



brain. It gratifies our natural reward system immensely. But frequent usage also raises the threshold for this kind of pleasure. Meanwhile, these drugs reduce our body's natural ability to produce dopamine.

On the whole, this study was conducted to methodically examine the motives behind the use of social media by youth in Karachi and their addiction to it. The age of youth is normally the age of learning and building their carriers and at this stage of their life their time must be devoted towards their studies or in learning something which can be beneficial for their future carrier or life. The reason behind such academic inquiry is to determine some of the major purposes due to which the youth uses social media networks at the cost of their precious time which is wasted while using social media networks.

### **Research Problem**

Nowadays, the usage of social media as channels of communication is a growing trend in Karachi, just like in almost all parts of the world. In Karachi, majority of the people including youth are using social media networks. Meanwhile, Baran (2010, p. 272) debates that "technology can be used in ways beneficial and otherwise technology is a double-edged sword. Its power for good and for bad resides in us." Actually it's the users who determine what they do with technology, and the problems that have arisen are: Which social media networks are mostly used by youth? What are the motives behind the use of social media networks by the youth living in Karachi? Whether the usage of social media has affected the amount of time the youth give to their studies? Is the youth addicted to social media? All these questions make up the core problems that this study seeks to systematically disentangle.

### **Objectives of the study**

The main objectives of this study were:

- 1) To ascertain if the youth are addicted to social media networks.
- 2) To find out reasons behind the usage of social media by the youth in Karachi.
- 3) To determine whether the usage of social media has reduced the amount of time the youth give to their studies.
- 4) To find out which social media networks are used by the youth.



## **Research Questions**

To accomplish the above-mentioned objectives, this study was led by the following research questions:

- 1) Which social media networks are mostly used by the youth of Karachi city?
- 2) Is the youth of Karachi addicted to social media?
- 3) What are the motives behind the usage of social media networks by the youth of Karachi?
- 4) How many productive hours are lost due to social media usage daily?

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on the uses and gratifications theory which describes the usage of media by people to fulfill their needs. People interact, relax, gain knowledge, acquire awareness and get entertained by media which they also use for interpersonal communication as well. The theory is centered upon users and audience approach. This theory is more related to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The audience have full control over the effect of media on them as the effect can be chosen by the audience themselves. If the medium is not delivering the anticipated needs or benefits to the users; the users will surely change the content or medium that does not satisfy them (McQuail, 2010, p. 423). The theory is appropriate for studies where the user has a freewill to choose what is to be used based on predictable advantages from that particular media content. Its appropriateness here originates from the fact that the usage of social media channel is dependent on the user's satisfaction derived from it. Most importantly, the consumer's attention depends on the satisfaction that media production or service offers to its users. Thus the audience actively participates in determining the media content they consume, directly or indirectly.

Human needs and gratification can be divided into five following broad categories:

- 1) Affective needs: It is related to the pleasure one feels by watching movies, TV series and operas.
- 2) Social Interactive needs: Social media is used by an individual to socialize with other people.
- 3) Cognitive needs: News media and internet is used by people to acquire latest news and information to attain one's mental needs.
- 4) Tension free needs: People listen to music as an escape from the harsh realities of life and stressful situations that they do not want to deal with.



- 5) Personal integrative needs: Watching ongoing fashion trends and improved life style tend to lift up ones respect and boost up ones self-esteem.

The main gratifications from media use can be sub-divided into following:

- 1) Lifestyle expression
- 2) Guidance and advice
- 3) Social contact
- 4) Cultural satisfaction
- 5) Information and education
- 6) Value reinforcement
- 7) Filling time
- 8) Emotional release
- 9) Security
- 10) Diversion and relaxation
- 11) Identity formation and confirmation
- 12) Sexual arousal

### **Literature review**

Nowadays, Social Media is considered to be the most popular media for social communication and its popularity continues to increase day by day. In the 21st century, social media networking has turned out to be a vital part of everyday life. It has gained more popularity among people living an urban lifestyle because they don't have enough time to meet or even contact people they know due to their preoccupied routines. Social media helps bridge this communication gap. Millions of people, especially youngsters use social media websites to search for their friends online and to communicate, chat and share content with them. They also use social media to collect the necessary information. (D'Silva, et al., 2011). People from all over the world, regardless of their geographic locations are using social media networks for communication and for getting information.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, pp. 59-68) divided the social media sites on the basis of self-disclosure or self-presentation which refers to the conscious or unconscious revelation of personal information for example thoughts, feelings, likes, or dislikes that are consistent with the image one would like to represent to others. Mazer and others, (2007) stated that Self-disclosure anticipated higher levels of motivation. This means that the user needs to be highly motivated to adopt social media networking as a buying behavior. Based on





the self-disclosure pattern, Kaplan and Haenlein proposed six different types of Social Media. These are collaborative projects, blogs, Content communities, Social networking sites, Virtual game worlds, and Virtual social worlds.

A study in Turkey was conducted to determine the level of social media addiction in young people in Turkey and to make suggestions for the prevention of the addiction. A survey type of research was used in the study. In this study, the addiction factor of the Social Networking Status Scale was used as a data collection tool to measure social media addiction among young people. The scale had three factors addiction, ethics, and convergence. The study was conducted on 271 students between the ages of 13-19 years. It was revealed that gender makes no significant difference in social media addiction while the factors of age, daily time spent on the Internet, and daily frequency of visiting social media profiles make significant differences in addiction level. The results showed that the low addiction level in the 14-year group increases with age up to 17 years, and the level decreases in the 18-year group. Social media addiction level shows a dramatic increase also in the case of daily time spent on the Internet increases. More frequent daily visits to social media profiles increase the addiction as well (Kirik et.al, 2015).

A similar study was conducted in India to analyze social media addiction in the relationship between content viewing, content creation, and YouTube addiction in a survey of 410 student YouTube users. The results of the study demonstrated that content creation on YouTube had a closer relationship with YouTube addiction than content viewing. Furthermore, social gratification was found to have a significant influence on both types of YouTube activities, whereas technology gratification did not significantly influence them. (Balakrishnan, 2017). Peking University conducted a comparative study to examine the relations of social media addiction to college students' mental health and academic performance. A survey method was adopted for this study with a sample of 232 college students of which 117 were males and 115 were females with a mean age of 19.18 years. The study found that social media addiction was negatively associated with the student's mental health and academic performance. (Hou, et al., 2019).

## **Methodology**

As the youth's opinion was the key source of primary data collection; a quantitative survey design approach was implemented for this study which was principally the most appropriate design for this type of study. The population of this study was the youth of both genders who use social media networks. A structured questionnaire including close-ended questions was selected as the instrument for data collection using the non-



probability convenience sampling method. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the data was collected online via google survey forms. The sample size for this study was 100, responses from 147 respondents were collected, two incomplete responses were removed and data from 145 respondents were tabulated and analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages.

## Results & Data Tabulation

<b>Table-1 Age of Respondents</b>						
Age	Male		Female		Total	
(In Years)	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
17-19	1	1.41	5	6.76	6	4.14
20-25	57	80.28	65	87.84	122	84.14
26-29	13	18.31	4	5.41	17	11.72
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00

<b>Table-2 Gender of Respondents</b>		
Sex	Frequency	% Age
Male	71	48.97
Female	74	51.03
Total	145	100.00

<b>Table-3 Educational Qualification of Respondents</b>						
Qualification	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Matric	0	-	1	1.35	1	0.69
Intermediate	35	49.30	42	56.76	77	53.10
Graduate	27	38.03	18	24.32	45	31.03
Masters	9	12.68	12	16.22	21	14.48
M.Phil./Ph.D.	0	-	1	1.35	1	0.69
Others	0	-	0	-	0	-
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00



<b>Table-4 Occupation of Respondents</b>						
Occupation	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Business	2	2.82	1	1.35	3	2.07
Entrepreneur	5	7.04	2	2.70	7	4.83
Government Service	1	1.41	0	-	1	0.69
Housewife	0	-	3	4.05	3	2.07
Private Service	27	38.03	21	28.38	48	33.10
Professional	0	-	0	-	0	-
Student	36	50.70	45	60.81	81	55.86
Teacher	0	-	2	2.70	2	1.38
Others	0	-	0	-	0	-
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00

<b>Table-5 Devices Used by Respondents</b>						
Device	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Computer	16	13.22	12	11.65	28	12.50
Laptop	29	23.97	17	16.50	46	20.54
Smartphone	71	58.68	74	71.84	145	64.73
Tablet	5	4.13	0	-	5	2.23
Others	0	-	0	-	0	-
Total	121	100.00	103	100.00	224	100.00



<b>Table-6 Social Media Networks Used by Respondents</b>						
Networks	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Digg	0	-	0	-	0	-
Facebook	57	16.33	73	19.89	130	18.16
Instagram	59	16.91	52	14.17	111	15.50
LinkedIn	17	4.87	8	2.18	25	3.49
Medium	1	0.29	0	-	1	0.14
Quora	9	2.58	3	0.82	12	1.68
Reddit	3	0.86	0	-	3	0.42
Snapchat	33	9.46	39	10.63	72	10.06
TikTok	16	4.58	21	5.72	37	5.17
Tumblr	2	0.57	0	-	2	0.28
Twitter	23	6.59	29	7.90	52	7.26
WeChat	5	1.43	2	0.54	7	0.98
WhatsApp	61	17.48	72	19.62	133	18.58
WordPress	6	1.72	2	0.54	8	1.12
YouTube	57	16.33	66	17.98	123	17.18
Others	0	-	0	-	0	-
Total	349	100.00	367	100.00	716	100.00

<b>Table-7 Respondents' Daily Time Spent on Social Media</b>						
Time (In Hours)	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Less than 1	1	1.41	1	1.35	2	1.38
1-2	11	15.49	16	21.62	27	18.62
2-4	12	16.90	34	45.95	46	31.72
4-6	33	46.48	12	16.22	45	31.03
More than 6	14	19.72	11	14.86	25	17.24
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00



<b>Table-8 Respondents' Motives Behind Social Media Use</b>						
Motives	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
For getting News	62	15.05	40	11.94	102	13.65
For getting information	66	16.02	38	11.34	104	13.92
For education / learning	40	9.71	51	15.22	91	12.18
To overcome boredom	20	4.85	19	5.67	39	5.22
For socializing with family / friends	32	7.77	41	12.24	73	9.77
For releasing tension / stress/ depression	23	5.58	16	4.78	39	5.22
For relaxing in good mood	20	4.85	24	7.16	44	5.89
For expressing lifestyle (personal / family / friends)	6	1.46	10	2.99	16	2.14
For time killing	11	2.67	9	2.69	20	2.68
For playing games	23	5.58	3	0.90	26	3.48
For motivating yourself	20	4.85	15	4.48	35	4.69
For skill development	20	4.85	26	7.76	46	6.16
For fun	36	8.74	25	7.46	61	8.17
To earn money	7	1.70	3	0.90	10	1.34
For online shopping	13	3.16	9	2.69	22	2.95
Others	13	3.16	6	1.79	19	2.54
Total	412	100.00	335	100.00	747	100.00



<b>Table-9 Feelings of Respondents When Social Media is not Available</b>						
Feelings	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Satisfied	16	22.54	18	24.32	34	23.45
Unsatisfied	23	32.39	20	27.03	43	29.66
Lonely	6	8.45	9	12.16	15	10.34
Useless	6	8.45	3	4.05	9	6.21
Irritable	3	4.23	6	8.11	9	6.21
Sad	5	7.04	6	8.11	11	7.59
Panic	1	1.41	2	2.70	3	2.07
Worried	4	5.63	2	2.70	6	4.14
Violent	1	1.41	2	2.70	3	2.07
Aggressive	5	7.04	5	6.76	10	6.90
Others	1	1.41	1	1.35	2	1.38
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00

<b>Table-10 Respondents Taking Extra Breaks to Check Social Media Updates</b>						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Always	25	35.21	28	37.84	53	36.55
Mostly	8	11.27	9	12.16	17	11.72
Often	18	25.35	25	33.78	43	29.66
Rarely	9	12.68	8	10.81	17	11.72
Never	11	15.49	4	5.41	15	10.34
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00

<b>Table-11 Respondents Anxiously Await an Update for the App to be Available</b>						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Yes	27	38.03	31	41.89	58	40.00
No	26	36.62	27	36.49	53	36.55
To some extent	18	25.35	16	21.62	34	23.45
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00



<b>Table-12 Notification Checking by Respondents whenever a Notification is Heard</b>						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Always	25	35.21	26	35.14	51	35.17
Mostly	29	40.85	28	37.84	57	39.31
Often	14	19.72	16	21.62	30	20.69
Rarely	2	2.82	3	4.05	5	3.45
Never	1	1.41	1	1.35	2	1.38
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00

<b>Table-13 Feelings of Respondents when they get Likes</b>						
Feelings	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Happy	19	26.76	29	39.19	48	33.10
Good	31	43.66	24	32.43	55	37.93
Satisfied	9	12.68	12	16.22	21	14.48
Tense	0	-	0	-	0	-
Bad	0	-	0	-	0	-
Jealous	0	-	0	-	0	-
Nothing	12	16.90	9	12.16	21	14.48
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00

<b>Table-14 Feelings of Respondents when they do not get Likes</b>						
Feelings	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Happy	0	-	0	-	0	-
Good	0	-	0	-	0	-
Satisfied	1	1.41	1	1.35	2	1.38
Tense	16	22.54	18	24.32	34	23.45
Bad	34	47.89	27	36.49	61	42.07
Jealous	18	25.35	26	35.14	44	30.34
Nothing	2	2.82	2	2.70	4	2.76
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00



<b>Table-15 Respondents Checking their Social Media accounts right after waking up</b>						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Always	31	43.66	33	44.59	64	44.14
Mostly	28	39.44	31	41.89	59	40.69
Often	7	9.86	8	10.81	15	10.34
Rarely	3	4.23	1	1.35	4	2.76
Never	2	2.82	1	1.35	3	2.07
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00

<b>Table-16 Respondents Checking their Social Media accounts before going to bed</b>						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Always	30	42.25	33	44.59	63	43.45
Mostly	28	39.44	27	36.49	55	37.93
Often	10	14.08	11	14.86	21	14.48
Rarely	2	2.82	2	2.70	4	2.76
Never	1	1.41	1	1.35	2	1.38
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00

<b>Table-17 Health Issues due to Frequent use of Social Media</b>						
Issues	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Vision Problem	13	18.31	11	14.86	24	16.55
Lack of concentration	5	7.04	4	5.41	9	6.21
Neck pain or backache	26	36.62	29	39.19	55	37.93
Feeling heaviness in brain	8	11.27	9	12.16	17	11.72
No such effect	19	26.76	20	27.03	39	26.90
Others	0	-	1	1.35	1	0.69
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00





<b>Table-18 Effect of Social Media usage on Respondent's Family Relationship</b>						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
Good Effect	4	5.63	3	4.05	7	4.83
Bad Effect	24	33.80	26	35.14	50	34.48
Mixed Effect	27	38.03	30	40.54	57	39.31
No Effect	16	22.54	15	20.27	31	21.38
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00

<b>Table-19 Number of Days Respondents can Live without Social Media</b>						
Duration	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age	Frequency	% Age
One day	19	26.76	24	32.43	43	29.66
One to three days	14	19.72	13	17.57	27	18.62
One Week	10	14.08	8	10.81	18	12.41
One Month	3	4.23	1	1.35	4	2.76
More than one month	1	1.41	1	1.35	2	1.38
Not even a single day	24	33.80	27	36.49	51	35.17
Total	71	100.00	74	100.00	145	100.00

## Discussion

The demographics of the study revealed that 84% of the respondent youth users of social media were within the age group of 20-25 years. Within this age group, male social media users were 80% while female social media users were 88%. In this age group, female social media users outnumbered male social media users. Compared to males in the age group of 17-19 years female youth were more active social media users while in the age bracket of 26-29 years male youth were more active social media users than females (See Table 1).

49% of the youth social media users were male and 51% were female. It means that female social media users are more than male social media users (See table 2).

Regarding educational qualification of the social media users, the study revealed that 31% of them were graduates, 53% of them were intermediate and 14% have completed their education up to master's level. The study further revealed that 38% of male users



were graduates while 24% of the female users were graduates and similarly 13% were males while 16% of females have completed their education up to master's level. It means that the minimum educational qualification of social media users youth was intermediate, majority of them were graduates (See Table 3).

The occupation of 33% of the respondents was private service and 56% of respondents were students (See Table 4).

About using various devices to connect with social media the study revealed that 65% of social media users use smartphones and collectively 33% of them use laptops and computers for social media connectivity. Among them, 72% of female users use smartphones while 59% of male users use smartphones for connecting with social media. It means that smartphones were the most preferred device used by female social media users (See Table 5).

There was a vibrant reply by youth regarding the motives behind using different social media networks. The study explored social media uses and gratification across fifteen different popular social media platforms: Digg, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Medium, Quora, Reddit, Snapchat, TikTok, Tumblr, Twitter, WhatsApp, WordPress, and YouTube respectively. Following is a summary of the study's main findings. Regarding preference for using social media it was revealed by the study that 19% of users used WhatsApp, 18% of users used Facebook, 17% of users used YouTube, 16% of users used Instagram, 10% used Snapchat, 7% of users used Twitter, 5% of users used TikTok, 3% of users used LinkedIn while 5% of users used Quora, WordPress, WeChat, Reddit, Tumblr, Medium collectively as their preferred choice of using different social media. There were no other social media that was used by the youth respondents and nobody was using Digg. It was also found that respondents were using more than one social media networks at a time and on average both male and female respondents were using five different social media network according to their needs and gratification. The study further revealed that among male youth users 17% used WhatsApp, 17% used Instagram, 16% used Facebook, 16% used YouTube, 9% used Snapchat, 7% used Twitter, 5% used LinkedIn, and 5% used TikTok as their choice of social media. The majority of male respondents were using WhatsApp in the first place then Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube in third place, then with a decreasing number of users Snapchat, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok were used respectively. Among the female youth users, 20 % used Facebook, 20% used WhatsApp, 18% used YouTube, 14% used Instagram, 11% used Snapchat, 8% used Twitter, and 6% used TikTok as their preferred choice of social media. It is interesting fact that the majority of male respondents were using WhatsApp in the first place while the majority of female respondents were using Facebook in the first place. In both cases,



the first three most used social media were Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube (See Table 6).

To determine social media addiction among youth the study revealed that 46% of male respondents were using social media for 4-6 hours daily and 46% of females were using social media for more than 2-4 hours daily. It means that male youth were spending more time on social media than female social media users in a day which clearly shows that male youth are more addicted to social media than female youth (See Table 7).

Different motives behind using social media were revealed by the study. Various reasons behind using social media were 14% for getting information, 14% for getting News, 12% for education, 10% for social interaction, 8% for fun, 6% for skill development, 6% for relaxation, 5% for releasing the tension, 5% for eliminating boredom, 5% for motivation, 3% for playing games, 3% for online shopping activities, 3% for killing time, 2% for showing lifestyle, 1% for earning money and 3% for other activities. 16% of male users and 11% of female users used social media for getting information. 15% of male users and 12% of female users used it for getting News. 10% of males and 15% of females used it for educational purposes. 8% of male users and 12% of the female user used it for social interaction. It means that male users were using social media for getting information and news while female social media users were using it for social interaction and educational purposes (See Table 8).

The results of the study regarding social media addiction revealed the feelings of the respondents when social media was not available to them. The majority of both male and female social media users expressed more than one mixed feeling as most of them become unsatisfied and sad when social media was not available to them. Regarding feelings of social media users when social media is not available to them; 23% feel satisfied, 30% feel unsatisfied, 10% feel lonely, 6% feel useless, 6% feel irritable, 8% feel sad, 2% feel panic, 4% feel worried, 2% feel violent and 7% feel aggressive. Gender wise 23% of male youth social media users feel satisfied, 32% feel unsatisfied, 8% feel lonely, 8% feel useless, 4% feel irritable, 7% feel sad, 1% feel panic, 6% feel worried, 1% feel violent and 7% feel aggressive when social media is not available to them. Similarly, 24% of female youth social media users feel satisfied, 27% feel unsatisfied, 12% feel lonely, 4% feel useless, 8% feel irritable, 8% feel sad, 3% feel panic, 3% feel worried, 3% feel violent and 7% feel aggressive when social media is not available to them. It means that male youth becomes more unsatisfied, feel useless, worried, and aggressive than female youth when social media are not available to them.



Similarly, female youth became more lonely, irritable, sad, and violent than male youth when social media is not available to them (See table 9).

The results of the study revealed that overall 37% of youth always, 12% mostly and 30% of the youth often take some break to check the status of their social media accounts. Gender wise 35% of male youth always, 12% mostly and 25% of male youth often take a break to check the status of their social media accounts. Similarly 38% of female youth always, 12% mostly and 34% of female youth often take a break to check the status of their social media accounts. It means that female youth are slightly more anxious about their social media accounts than males. One sign of social media addiction is also that the social addict takes extra breaks while studying or at work to check social media updates otherwise the user will remain anxious and disappointed. If someone is using a smartphone to connect with social media in these restricted places or is using a smartphone to connect with social media is risking his / her job, career, and reputation he /she is social media addicted (See table 10).

40% of the respondents replied that they anxiously await an update for the app to be available and 23% replied that to some extent they anxiously await an update for the app to be available. Gender wise 38% of male youth and 42% of female youth anxiously await an update for the app to be available. Similarly, 25% of male youth and 22% of female youth to some extent anxiously await an update for the app to be available. It means that female youth are slightly more worried about of their social media account than male youth (See table 11).

35% of youth always, 39% mostly and 21% often check their smartphones whenever a notification is received. Hearing a notification stimulates the release of dopamine in our brain which is called the “happy chemical” that makes us feel like we’re getting rewarded. Most addictions trigger the release of dopamine like gambling and smoking. Since one enjoys the sensation, they continue to do so to experience more of it and thus the cycle continues. If we feed into this process by immediately checking social media whenever a notification is received we tend to become addicted to social media (See Table 12).

33% of youth feel happy, 38% feel good and 14% feel satisfied when they got likes on their posts. Gender wise regarding males 27% feel happy, 44% feel good and 13% feel satisfied while regarding females 39% feel happy, 32% feel good and 16% feel satisfied when they got likes on their posts. It is interesting to know that male youth users feel



better than female youth users and female youth users feel more happy and satisfied than male social media users when they receive likes on their posts (See Table 13).

When a youth does not get likes 23% of them feel tense, 42% of them feel bad and 30% of them feel jealous. Gender wise 23% of male youth feel tense, 48% of them feel bad and 25% of them feel jealous when they do not get likes. Similarly, when female youth does not get likes 24% of them feel tense, 37% of they feel bad and 35% of them feel jealous. It means that when male youth social media users do not get likes they feel worse than females while when female youth users of social media do not get likes they feel more tense and jealous than male youth (See Table 14).

In response to the question of checking social media accounts after waking up in the morning 44% of the respondents replied that they always check, 41% replied that they mostly check and 10% replied that they often check their social media accounts after waking up in the morning (See Table 15).

Among respondents of the study 44% replied that they always check, 38% replied that they mostly check, 14% replied that often check and 3% replied that they rarely check their social media accounts before going to bed (See Table 16).

The study reported that the frequent use of social media created health issues in the youth of both sexes. Overall 73% of the users of social media from both sexes have some health issues however 27% of the users have no health issues despite frequently using social media (See Table 17).

Regarding the effect of using social media on family relationships, the study revealed that 5% of the users have a good effect, 34% have a bad effect, 39% have a mixed effect and 21% have no effect of social media usage on their family relationships. If compared with male users, female users feel a worse and mixed effect on their family life than male users (See Table 18).

30% of social media youth users responded that they can live only a single day without social media, 19% of the users responded that they can live from one to three days without social media, 12% of users responded that they can live up to seven days without social media and 35% of the user responded that they cannot live a single day without social media. Gender-wise response of users shows that 27% of male and 32% of female users responded that they can live only for one day without social media. 34% of male users and 36% of female users responded that they cannot live a single day without social



media. It evidently shows the level of intensity of social media addiction by our youth that they cannot live without social media (See Table 19).

## **Conclusion**

The social media networks used by the youth of Karachi in order of their preference are WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, TikTok, and LinkedIn. A small number of social media users also use Quora, WordPress, WeChat, Reddit, Timbler, and Medium. Users were using more than one social media network at a time and on average both male and female respondents were using five different social media networks according to their needs and gratification. Male users were using WhatsApp in the first place while the majority of female respondents were using Facebook in the first place. In both cases, the first three most used social media networks were Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube.

The social media youth users of Karachi are addicted to social media networks because when social media networks are not available to them they feel anxious, sad, and unsatisfied even leading to aggressive behavior. Social media is cutting into their work time and study time, they take extra breaks to check their devices whenever a notification is received, they tentatively monitor their posts to see the number of likes, and they check their social media accounts right before going to bed or first thing once they wake up and social media is also affecting their family lives. It is nearly impossible for social media users' youth to live a single day without social media networks being available to them. Addiction is an urge to do something that is hard to stop.

The different motives behind the use of various social media networks by youth were for getting information and news, for educational purposes or social interaction, for fun, for skill development, for relaxation and releasing tension, for eliminating boredom, for self-motivation, for playing games, for online shopping and for showing lifestyle and to a small extent for earning money. Male youth were using social media for getting news, information, and social interaction, while female youth were using social media for learning, social interaction, and getting information and news.

The productive hours lost by the youth due to the use of social media networks was nearly four to six hours in a day. The time spent using social media networks is mainly for getting news, and information, and for social interaction which is not very important for youth rather these not-so-productive hours could be used for learning new skills or acquiring knowledge that would be beneficial for them in their professional lives ahead.



## **Recommendations**

- 1) Youth must spend some time of the day in physical activities like at least 30 minutes daily brisk walk or spending some time in gyms to avoid continuous sitting in the same postures for hours which is creating backbone and neck issues.
- 2) Excess of anything is bad so there must be some division in sleeping hours, playing hours, working hours, and study hours. Youth must organize their daily routine and choose a healthy life pattern to live a long, happy and successful life.
- 3) A small portion of the day must be spent with family and meet elders of the family during festivals and occasions which is necessary to create mutual understanding and affection.
- 4) Excessive use of social media must be discouraged at all levels of our society because dependence on social media platforms creates an addiction to it and afterward psychological and behavioral issues are developed.

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