

USE OF FACEBOOK FOR INFORMATION SHARING AMONG STUDENTS: A CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF SARGODHA

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Abstract

The present research is designed to assess the use of Facebook for information sharing among students of University of Sargodha, Punjab. A quantitative research method and a survey questionnaire was used to collect data from 394 students enrolled in various faculties of university of Sargodha on self-administrated questionnaire. The findings revealed the use of Facebook for information sharing among students of university of Sargodha. Hence, some hindrance students face while sharing information on Facebook are also unearthed which provide insights for educators, university administration and for other potential stakeholders to consider the potential of Facebook for information sharing and promote the use of Facebook for information proliferation among students.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid change and advancement in computing technologies such as the invention of mobile devices i.e., smartphones, laptops, and other similar devices and cellular networks (e.g., 2, 3, 4, and now 5th generation of networks) has increased the use of social media among individuals and organizations of various types for different commercial and non-commercial activities. It was the invention of the World Wide Web (www) in the 1980s, by Tim Berners-Lee (McPherson, 2009). Later on the development and launching of the very first social networking site on www in 1997 (Kittinger, Correia, & Irons, 2012) promoted the use of social media among the general public. This action created a virtual parallel universe (Bodroža & Jovanović, 2016). Since then, a significant number of social media platforms have been introduced on the internet (Donlan, 2014) and massive growth in social media users has been

recorded globally (social media statistics, April 2024). Modern social media platforms consist of various single and multi-purpose social media sites such as Bebo, Friendster and MySpace, Pinterest, Instagram, Skype, Tumblr, Twitter, YouTube, Soundcloud, TikTok, Snapchat, and so on. Facebook (FB) is one of the most popular social media site initially developed in 2004. Now available and accessible for public since 2006 (Hew, 2011). According to social media statistics, (April, 2024) FB has become a leading social media site (Asante & Nyarko, 2018) with almost 83.2 billion users of various age categories and genders (Hew, 2011; Masiha, Habiba, Abbas, Saud, & Ariadi, 2018; Tariq, Sajjad, Usman, & Amjad, 2017) who use FB for different activities such as for time pass, entertainment and recreation, communication and friendship (SZ, Omar, Bolong, & Osman, 2011), education and learning (Asante & Nyarko, 2018) and

for different service and products related promotions (Thompson, 2018).

Similarly, the use of FB is also very common among students for communication, collaboration, and resource sharing (Mazman & Usluel, 2010) with friends, family, and learning communities (Breines, Madge, & Dalu, 2020). The use of FB is thoroughly investigated by researchers indicating that students pursuing undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels use FB for seeking and sharing personal, political, professional, crisis and health-related information (Malik, Islam, Ahmad, & Mahmood, 2023; Masiha et al., 2018), for finding job opportunities (Bodroža & Jovanović, 2016), promoting their products and sales (Huang et al., 2020), for marketing of their projects (Piranda, Sinaga, & Putri, 2022) and use for research data collection (Schneider & Harknett, 2022). Despite, the advantageous use and application of FB, the study lacks examining the personal, social, and academic use and the use of FB for information sharing among the students of the University of Sargodha, Punjab.

Statement of the Problem

The prior research has underscored the various uses of FB among individuals of varies contexts (Hew, 2011; Mahmood, Jafree, & Sohail, 2022; Malik, Islam, et al., 2023; Yesil, 2014). Likewise, the studies empirically investigated the academic application of FB to strengthen students' academic learning and their personal and professional development (Arif, Qaisar, & Kanwal, 2022; Ivala & Gachago, 2012; Kalpidou, Costin, & Morris, 2011; Salem, Almenaye, & Andreassen, 2016; Sipacio, 2015; SZ et al., 2011). Despite, the plethora of work recognizing the importance of this social media platform, the reference lacks evidence the use of FB for information sharing among these university students and highlighting the hindrance they face while using and sharing information on FB. Therefore, this empirical data-based investigation intended to investigate the use of FB for information sharing among the students enrolled in the University of Sargodha, Punjab to foster their learning and information sharing through FB. This research will achieve the following research objectives (ROs):

Research Objectives (ROs):

- RO1 - To investigate the use of FB for information sharing among these university students
- RO2 - To examine the hindrance students face while using and sharing information on FB

Literature Review

Social Media Sites

The internet and social networking sites has several personal and commercial uses which has attracted many researchers from multiple social, psychological, economic and services providing sectors to undertake the research inquiries to undermine the factors leveraging benefits and addiction of social media and networking sites among individuals such as Weller (2016) investigated the features of Facebook and tweeter social media networks, (Duggan & Brenner, 2013) reported demographics of social media users i.e., gender, ethnicity, age, education, income, urban and rural residence, (Auxier & Anderson, 2021) disclosed the growth of social media users in America, (Beninger et al., 2014) recognized social media users' views for social media awareness, use frequency, their information sharing behavior and engagement in social media, (Chen & Wang, 2021; Karim, Oyewande, Abdalla, Ehsanullah, & Khan, 2020; O'Day & Heimberg, 2021) reviewed the published literature on social media and revealed various potential of social media for physical and mental health related process. Similarly, (Ostic et al., 2021) concluded an indirect relationship between social media and psychological health among individuals.

Use of different Social Media Networks among Students

A large number of social media sites are being used by individuals in different contexts for various purposes. Hence, the literature related to some of the most prominent social networking applications is presented under the following headings:

Whatsapp

Whatsapp is one of the most commonly used social media app among individuals for various activities. However, an evaluation of Whatsapp for academic use by Buriro, Abro, Ahmedani, and Rahoo (2021) revealed that students enrolled in higher learning institutions in Sindh use Whatsapp for different

social and academic activates such as videos and other information content sharing.

Instagram

Instagram social app governed by Meta is used by students regardless of age and gender for socialization and academic activates as Romero-Rodríguez, Aznar-Díaz, Marín-Marín, Soler-Costa, and Rodríguez-Jiménez (2020) found that students' personal variables such as age and gender influence their problematic use of Instagram.

Telegram

Telegram as a substitute for WhatsApp and other social media apps. It has also been investigated by academicians and researchers i.e., Gyane (2021) conducted exploratory research and interviewed 25 students during the COVID-19. The study exhibited that the online easy use of telegram, ease of learning, their satisfaction lead to the use of Telegram among college students.

Snapchat

Snapchat is a multipurpose social media application that has various uses among individuals of varied disciplines. The research assessing the use of Snapchat in academia by Shater et al. (2023) used an intervention method and found that the Snap Chat is used as a media to promote students' social interaction.

TikTok

The launch of Tiktok is a marvelous addition to social media the use of this application is experienced by people across the globe specifically among young students which attracted academicians to understand the academic use of Tiktok. Therefore, a research inquiry conducted by Yélamos-Guerra, García-Gámez, and Moreno-Ortiz (2022) who acquired students' perception of the use of TikTok. The research found the acceptance of Tiktok among students for learning course subjects, a tool for stimulating comprehension and motivating.

Facebook use among Students and Individuals in various Settings

Facebook is the second most popular social medium after Whatsapp engaging millions of users (Malik,

Mahmood, & Islam, 2023). The available literature indiscriminately measured various uses of FB among individuals regardless of context to enhance the positive use of this social media network. An example of a research inquiry is a study by Hew (2011) who conducted a systematic review of the published literature on teacher and student use of Facebook. Similarly, SZ et al. (2011) revealed that Malaysian female students use FB to spend leisure time, communicating with others, making social relations, and for entertainment. Kalpidou et al. (2011) concluded an emotional connection between college students with FB and they spend lots of time using FB. . Sipacio (2015) conducted interviews and acquired feedback form institutional administrators, teachers, and students related to the potential benefits and challenges of FB. Salem et al. (2016) investigated FB addiction among university students and concluded that majority of university students were moderately addictive of FB. Karal, Kokoc, and Cakir (2017) conducted an experimental study by creating a group in FB for discussion and sharing information resources for language learning. This research reached a result that the FB group was beneficial for developing secondary school students' writing, communication, collaboration, and language skills in Turkey. Masiha et al. (2018) revealed that Pakistani youngsters had single accounts on FB, they had been using FB for 6 years, they spent 4 hours daily on using FB, they had more than 1 thousand FB friends and 5 hundred close friends on FB. Toker and Baturay (2019) depicted that college students' autonomy, socialization, academic and psychological needs, their CGPA, and personal use enhance their urge to use FB. Raza et al. (2020) found that social influence, social connections, information-seeking, attitude, and perceived behavioral control had a significant and positive relationship with university students' FB use. Putri and Aminatun (2021) reported students' perception of FB use. The study unveiled that students perceived that using FB increased their reading and writing skills such as reading and writing English captions and comments. . Arif et al. (2022) showed that social media technology (SMT) use intention derived by enjoyment, social norms, and attitude. Furthermore, the study concluded that students use FB, WhatsApp and YouTube for knowledge sharing. Javed, Zahid, and Tauseef (2024)

Revealed that the use of FB predicts high level of anxiety among university students in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Information Sharing on FB

One of the most important features of social media and FB is allowing people to share information and knowledge. Therefore, the researchers attempted to investigate the use of social media for information sharing such as Shafiq and Parveen (2023) revealed that the use of social media i.e., Telegram, YouTube, Facebook, and other educational media sites improves students’ academic performance and knowledge sharing capabilities. A study by Malik, Islam, et al. (2023) found that individuals share COVID-19-related information on FB for status-seeking, socializing, and entertainment. The research further described that individuals’ attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control have a positive relationship with their intentions and COVID-19-related information shared on FB.

Research Methodology

This research adopted a quantitative research method and utilized a survey questionnaire to collect data from 394 students enrolled in different academic faculties at the University of Sargodha, Punjab. The survey method is considered suitable as it allows research to investigate individuals’ attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs regarding certain phenomena (Creswell, 2012; Mertens, 2010). The survey instrument was comprised of 56 items such as 5 items for students personal information, 1 item related to

the frequency of FB use, 7 items related to the features of FB that inspire students to it, 5 items for personal use of FB, 7 items for social use of FB, 10 items for academic use of FB, 13 items for use of FB for information sharing and 9 items for hindrance related to use and information sharing on FB.

Population

The population of the research in hand includes all the 25 thousand students enrolled in various undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate degree programs in 7 faculties i.e., faculty of social science, faculty of natural sciences, faculty of art & humanities, faculty of engineering & technology, medical and health sciences, faculty of agriculture and faculty of pharmacy of the University of Sargodha.

Sample Size and Sampling Approach

However, this research employed the (Yamane, 1967) formula to determine the size of the sample for the collection of research data. Of 25 thousand currently enrolled students, the sample of 394 students was drowned using the Yamane (1967) sampling formula. The calculation of the sample size is done as: The convenient sampling technique was deployed to approach 394 research participants as it suited for the survey lacking the appropriate list of research participants and similar sampling strategies were also used by survey research in the past (Mughari, Naveed, & Rafique, 2023; Mughari, Rafique, & Ali, 2024; Naveed & Mahmood, 2022).

Table 1

Sample Extraction form the faculties (n=399)

Sr#	List of Faculties	Equal-size sampling
1	Faculty of Social Sciences	57
2	Faculty of Natural Sciences	57
3	Faculty of Art and Humanities	57
4	Faculty of Engineering and technology	57
5	Faculty of Medical and health sciences	57
6	Faculty of Agriculture	57
7	Faculty of Pharmacy	57

Research Measures

The development of the scale for measuring the use of Facebook is inspired by (Kim, Lee, & Elias, 2015;

Muliadi et al., 2024; Oji & Lucky, 2014) for the use of FB for information sharing and hindrance while sharing information on FB by (Oji & Lucky, 2014).

Reliability and Validity of the Measures

The validity and reliability of the measures affect the research outcomes (Creswell, 2012). However, in practice, the researchers follow various methods to ensure the reliability and validity of the instruments used in this research. Cronbachs’ alpha is a popular method to determine the reliability of the measures and constructs. Whereas, the validity of the measure examined by field experts.

Reliability results of Pilot testing of the questionnaire

Prior to collecting the data from selected research participants, the researcher used a pilot testing method to ensure the anticipated outcomes of the questionnaire. In this regard, the researcher engaged 25 students from the University of Sargodha to test the reliability of their developed questionnaire. Hence, the assessment of reliability through Cronbach’s alpha was observed to be satisfactory i.e., above 0.7 for all the dimensions of the questionnaire to proceed for further data collection in the field.

Final Reliability Results of the Questionnaire

In this study, the researcher calculated Cronbachs’ alpha to assess the reliability of the scale. The recommended value of alpha is 0.7 and above for quantitative research (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, &

Ringle, 2019). However, the analysis depicted the value of alpha was greater than the proposed threshold in Table 2 for information sharing $\alpha = .786$ and hindrance while using and sharing information on FB as $\alpha = .849$. It depicts that the measures and constructs used in the study are reliable for data collection among the students.

Results

Demographic Information of Research Participants

The analyses related students participating in the study revealed that 190 (47.6%) male whereas, 209 (52.4%) female students took part in this study. The participant reported their age as 161 (40.4%) reported their age between 18 to 20 years, 110 (27.6%) between 21 to 25 years, 95 (23.8%) between 26 to 30 years, 27 (6.8%) 31 to 35 years and only 6 respondents reported their age 36 and above years. Further, 122 (30.6%) reported their 1st year of study, 80 (20.1%) 2nd year, (20.1%) 3rd year, 88 (22.1%) 4th year and 31 (7.8%) had 5th year of their study. Moreover, 72 (18.0%) students were enrolled in undergraduate study programs, 171 (42.9%) in graduate and 156 (39.1%) were pursuing their postgraduate studies in the university of Sargodha.

Table 3

Demographic information of Research participants

Sr#	Category	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	190	47.6
		Female	209	52.4
2	Age	18 to 20	161	40.4
		21 to 25	110	27.6
		26 to 30	95	23.8
		31 to 35	27	6.8
		36 and above	6	1.5
3	Year of Study	1 st year	122	30.6
		2 nd year	80	20.1
		3 rd year	78	19.5
		4 th year	88	22.1
		5 th year	31	7.8
4	Enrolment in the study program	Undergraduate	72	18.0
		Graduate	171	42.9
		Postgraduate	156	39.1

Frequency of FB use

The frequency-related analysis exhibited that 28 (7.0%) responding students use FB rarely, 32 (8.0%) use it monthly, 60 (15.0%) use it daily and the majority of 278 (69.7%) use FB many times in a day in the Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency of FB use

Sr#	Frequency of FB use	Frequency	Percentage
1	Rarely	28	7.0
2	Monthly	32	8.0
3	Daily	60	15.0
4	Many times in a day	278	69.7

RO1 – Information Sharing on FB

Likewise, students’ use of FB for information sharing was evaluated using 13 items through a five points Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 showing strong disagree to strongly agree related to students' use of FB for information sharing. Table 9 demonstrates that students responded agree or strongly agree on statements such as they share information with others using FB (M = 3.55; SD = 1.105), they share information related to social events, reports, products,

services, sales, advertisement, entertainment, news quotes, stories and facts using Facebook (M = 3.58; SD = 1.280), share information on FB because it does support multiple formats i.e., doc., website links, audios and videos (M = 3.76; SD = 1.159), share information related to sports (M = 3.88; SD = .982) and also share information using FB as it allows students to share information on multiple social media platforms (M = 3.58; SD = 1.124).

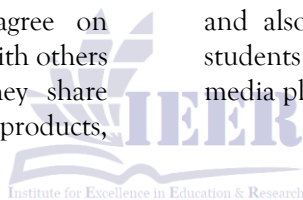


Table 9

Information sharing on FB

Sr#	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	I share information with others using Facebook	3.55	1.105
2	I share information related to different social events, reports, products, services, sales, advertisements, entertainment, news quotes, stories, and facts using Facebook	3.58	1.280
3	I share information on Facebook because it supports multiple formats i.e., doc., website links, audio, and videos	3.76	1.159
4	Audio and video call features of Facebook allow me to share information and discuss with others conveniently	3.56	1.169
5	I share information in different Facebook groups	3.79	1.158
6	I prefer sharing information on Facebook because it allows me to create a virtual space where I can engage others in sharing information	3.80	1.155
7	Sharing information on Facebook increases my confidence to participant in community	3.48	1.217
8	Sharing information on Facebook enables me to collaborative learning to complete my academic assignments	3.85	1.152
9	I use Facebook as a medium to share information related to social topics such as politics, the economy, etc	3.95	1.076

10	I use Facebook as a medium to share information related to academics	3.67	1.183
11	I use Facebook to share information related to my activities and achievements	3.70	1.165
12	I use Facebook to share information related to sports	3.88	.982
13	I use Facebook because it allows me to share information on multiple social media platforms such as WhatsApp and email	3.58	1.124

Note: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

RO2- Hindrance Students Face while Using and Sharing Information on FB

Moreover, the students were asked for hindrances related to using and sharing information on FB on 9 items carrying a five points Likert scale the instant scale includes 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3= Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 =Strongly Agree. The analysis of students’ responses revealed that slow internet connection (M = 3.77; SD = 1.042), teachers’ dislikeness for sharing academic posts on FB (M =

3.60; SD = 1.102), irrelevant comments, emojis by other students discourage them to share information through FB (M = 3.55; SD = 1.152), sometimes Meta AI responds incorrectly on share information (M = 3.96; SD = 1.032) and students’ unawareness pertaining benefits of Meta AI for sharing information on FB includes the hindrance for students to use and share information on FB.

Table 10

Hindrance while Using and Sharing Information on FB

Sr#	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Slow internet connection	3.77	1.042
2	Teachers often dislike posting academic information on Facebook	3.60	1.102
3	Other class fellows' behavior i.e., irrelevant comments, emoji discourage me from sharing information through Facebook	3.55	1152
4	My other class fellows do not post academic information on Facebook	3.65	1149
5	Camouflage/fake IDs are threatening to my privacy on Facebook	3.83	1122
6	Other people ignore the important information shared with them on Facebook considering it usual peace of information shared on different social media	3.83	1116
7	Unwanted advertisements related to products and sales make me irritate while using FB	3.93	.988
8	Sometimes Meta AI responds incorrectly to share information	3.96	1.032
9	Most of my class fellows do not have an understanding of the beneficial use of Meta AI for information sharing on FB	3.77	1.043

Note: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Discussion

This research examined the use of FB for information sharing and the hindrances students face while using and sharing information on FB at the University of Sargodha. The findings concerning the use of FB exhibited that these students use FB for sharing

information in groups pertaining to different social events, reports, products, services, sales, advertisements, entertainment, news quotes, stories, and facts, sharing information in multiple formats i.e., doc., website links, audios, and videos, engaging others to share information, increasing their confidence for participating in a community, for

collaborative learning to complete my academic assignments, share information related to social topics such as politics, economy, academics, etc., for their activities and achievements, sports and for sharing information to other social media sites/application such as Whatsapp and email. These findings are corroborated by the findings of Malik, Islam, et al. (2023) who unearthed that students use FB for sharing information related to personal status, socializing, and entertainment among individuals. The results of this study appeared to agree with the results of Pander, Pinilla, Dimitriadis, and Fischer (2014) who reported that that students use FB for sharing academic resources, medical case discussions, and face-to-face exchange information and for exam preparation. Similarly, Ramaswami, Murugathan, Narayanasamy, and Khoo (2014) supported these results finding that students in Singapore share entertainment, food, mobile reviews, sports, and hobby-related information on FB.

The findings intended to unearth the hindrances for using and sharing information on FB revealed that slow internet connection, teachers' restriction for sharing academic information on FB, discouraging behaviors of other class fellows, lack of response from others on shared information, irrelevant information sharing by others, inaccurate response from Meta AI and unawareness of Meta AI feature of FB among students are the major barriers/hindrances for students to use and share information on FB. These findings are the same as the findings of Al-Mashaqbeh (2015) who recruited computer science students in a Malaysian university and their analysis revealed that internet unstable connection, inadequate time for learning management, and security-related issues are the major challenges for the use of FB in higher education learning.

Limitations of the research

Besides the several strengths, this investigation has certain limitations that may be understood. First, the use and information sharing on FB by students were assessed using a self-assessment method which most of the researchers criticize as the honesty in the response and data incumbents upon individuals to provide the information for certain phenomena (Mertens, 2010; Mughari et al., 2023). Second, the students pursuing their studies at various undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels in other institutions excluding the

University of Sargodha are not the past of this research and it may be considered another limitation of this research. Third, the students tend to have high FB use and they share various information on FB. However, their actual use of FB and information shared on FB may be re-verified using other qualitative or mixed research methods to validate the results of this study.

Conclusion

This investigation intended to explore the use of FB for sharing information among the students of the University of Sargodha. To achieve the objective, this research adopted a quantitative research method and survey questionnaire to collect the data from 399 students on a self-developed reliable, and validated questionnaire. The findings demonstrated that these students have a high use of FB for various information sharing related to events, trends, and academic and personal information. Further, these students face some hindrances while using and sharing information on FB.

Implications

Theoretically, the proposed research adds a significant contribution in existing literature on social media specifically on FB. There was a need for an empirical research study to undermine the personal, social, and academic use and use of FB for information sharing among the students of the University of Sargodha, Punjab. Moreover, this research corroborated and validated the references of past studies. Practically, the findings of this study provide important insight for university authorities, IT administrators, academicians, researchers, FB controlling agents, and social media developers to understand the personal, social, and academic use of FB. In this regard, the university authorities should take measures to ensure the fair use of FB for students' personal, social, and academic activities. Further, the IT administrators, FB controlling agents, and social media developers should consider the integration of the findings of this study in the design and development of FB and other social media apps. Moreover, academicians need to encourage students to use FB for their learning, personal, and professional development as it has the potential to foster students' development in desired areas i.e., academic, social, and academic learning.

Furthermore, the researchers should undertake studies like this to assess from time to time the use of FB for information to ascertain the changes in students' behavior related to the use of FB.

Future Research Directions

This research was limited to the students enrolled in the University of Sargodha, however, future research may consider widening the scope of their research by investigating the use and information share among students enrolled across the country. Further, future studies may also consider re-conducting the same study after some time to validate the results of the present research. Moreover, this investigation undertook the use and information sharing on FB, However, the upcoming studies may investigate the factors that influence individuals to use and share information on FB in different contexts. Similarly, future studies may also investigate the connection of information share with certain phenomena.

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