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## Social networking patterns among students of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences 2015

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### ABSTRACT

Social networks are popular among people these days. Especially among students. Today social networks has an important role in human's life. Investigate the pattern of social network usage among students in Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. This cross-sectional study was conducted on 242 students of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. Data were collected through a checklist designed by the researchers. Then the data were analyzed by SPSS v.19 through descriptive statistics and chi square test. The mean of age was  $21.34 \pm 1.97$  among respondents. 75 were in semester 1 up to 3 (33.5%), 80 were in semester 4 up to 6 (35.7%) and 69 were in 7 up to 12 semester (30.8%). There was a significant relationship between kind of device used for getting online and how much time which students were online ( $p=0.02$ ). 104 of respondents were member of social networks before coming to university (46.4%), 74 got member of them in first year of entering university (33%) and 46 got member of them after first year of entering university (20.5%). Almost all of the respondents were member of social networks. What's app had the highest number of members among students. Given that social networks are a recent technology, conducting studies on other effects of this technology on student's life such as mental health, life quality and educational burnout.

### INTRODUCTION

Social networks are cyberspaces which people contact each other inside it (1). Social networks are popular among people these days. Especially among students (2). Today social networks has an important role in human's life (3). Millions of people are member of social networks in all around the universe. These days so many activities such as social, cultural, political and economic activities are done through social networks by people (4). The results of Schneider's study had shown that 85% of college students are member of Facebook (5). This statistic is right for other social networks such as YouTube etc. (6). Smart phones had concerned academic environments today. Because they can easily get access to social networks. The results of Hernandez's study stated that 49% of students had a smart phone in 2010. They could access to social networks with these devices easily (7). According to the increasing rate of social network users among students Authorities are concerned about their educational performance and their academic burnout (8). The students themselves actually do not know how much time have they been in the social networks and what can this time spending do to their educational performance (9). Today social networks are an important part of communication all around the world. They are popular among people and useful for them (10). For so many people using social networks is such as an ordinary daily task such as drinking a cup of coffee (11). Studies had shown that social networks could directly affect student's educational performance and rate of study (12, 13).

According to the results of a study number of Iranian social network users are increasing extremely. Some reports stated that 0.3% of Iranian population had a Facebook account in 2010 (14, 15). But also social networks can be

useful in educational processes if we use them in a good way (16). People usually use them for communication with others (17), learning social rules (18), vacation and fun and using others experiences in different fields (19).

Krishner and Karpinski had reported that Facebook users had a low GPA and studied their lessons less than other students (13). According to effects of social networking on student's educational performance and academic burnout we decided to conduct this study to investigate the pattern of social network usage among students in Zahedan University of Medical Sciences.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross-sectional study was conducted on 242 students in Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. Data were collected through a checklist designed by the researcher. This checklist included 15 questions about times spent in social networks, time of getting member of social networks, type of social network etc. Validity of this checklist was approved by ten faculty members and expert panel at the university. Its reliability was calculated by Cronbach's alpha 0.80. The researcher went to the dormitories for data collecting and after getting the consent of students, gave them the checklists. Completed questionnaires were collected by the researcher. Then the data were analyzed by SPSS v.19 through descriptive statistics and chi square test.

## RESULTS

The respondents were males 107 (47.8%) and 117 (52.2%) were females. The mean of age was  $21.34 \pm 1.97$  among respondents. 75 were in semester 1 up to 3 (33.5%), 80 were in semester 4 up to 6 (35.7%) and 69 were in 7 up to 12 semester (30.8%). 122 respondents (54.5%) were online in social networks less than 3 hours a day and 102 of them (45.5%) were online more than three hours a day. 102 respondents had educational activities less than one hour a day, 65 had between 1 to 3 hours a day and 57 had more than 3 hours a day. 67 respondents (2.9%) used a personal computer for getting online and 157 (70.1%) used a smart phone.

There was a significant relationship between kind of device used for getting online and how much time which students were online ( $p=0.02$ ). The pattern of social network usage among students in Zahedan University of Medical Sciences is shown in table 1.

**Tabl1. The pattern of social network usage among students**

Social network	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	23	10.3
What's app	166	74.1
Linked in	26	11.6
Instagram	66	29.5
Telegram	100	44.6

There was a significant relationship between sex and Facebook usage ( $p=0.001$ ). Males used Facebook much more than females. 104 of respondents were member of social networks before coming to university (46.4%), 74 got member of them in first year of entering university (33%) and 46 got member of them after first year of entering university (20.5%).

Finally at all 212 (94.6%) of the respondents were member of social networks in this study.

**Table 2: Frequency of reasons which students use the social networks**

Reason of usage	Frequency	Percentage
Relation with relatives	111	49.6
Vacation and fun	79	35.3
Following news	34	15.2

## DISCUSSION

More than 90% of respondents were member of social networks in this study. What's app had the highest number of members among students. This result was not consistent with Javadinia and colleagues study which was conducted on 401 students in Birjand (2). This high rate of social networking can be cause of this that the students are far from their family and they feel home sick so then they get member of these social networks to contact their family as half of the students stated that they use these social networks to contact their family.

Also so many other respondents used social networks for fun and vacation. Given that social networks can affect student's educational performance (21) and their learning abilities (24, 22) and also cause of this that some studies had shown that social networks could make anxiety and Stress (25) for them, the authorities must plan to teach the students how to use social networks in a proper way and also make different vocational programs to reduce social network usage among students.

Almost half of respondents spent 3 hours a day in social networks. Almost half of them spent less than an hour a day for their educational activities. The results of a study conducted in abroad had shown that the mean usage of social networks among students is 30 minutes a day (26). The results of a study showed that persons who used social networks further, they had weaker educational performance (27). However, information and communication technology (ICT) is now common place at the university environment. ICT is an indispensable part of the contemporary world and it expected to affect all aspects on human life(28).

High rate of social networking can result in nutritional problems, headaches, introspection, getting far from the society, and burnout among students (29-32).

### CONCLUSION

Almost all of the respondents were member of social networks. What's app had the highest number of members among students while the study of Arbabisarjou et al. demonstrated that watching movies was the foremost reason for using social networks (27). Considering that social networks are a recent technology, conducting studies on other effects of this technology on student's life such as mental health, life quality and educational burnout. Also according to the results a high number of students use social networks more than an hour a day. So then holding workshops for teaching proper usage of social networks seems necessary for students.

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