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IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES OF ADVANCED LEVEL STUDENTS

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Abstract

The research strives to understand the impact of social media engagement, its impact on the Advance Level student's examination performance. It is an established fact that Social Media has a positive and negative impact on its youngsters. But social media is here to stay and will be a mainstream communication channel of mankind. The researcher reviewed the literature with authoritative sources to understand how Social Media impacts the education of the youth and to determine how the over-use of social media, has an impact on students' academic performances particularly that of Advanced Level Students. The researcher used the Mixed Method Approach of Data Collection, Quantitative and qualitative information collection was undertaken. Data were collected from three groups, the advanced level students of Sri Lanka from Kurunegala District. Parents of such students participated in a face to face interview to collect rich information. Furthermore, a focus group discussion was carried out to collect information from Principals, Vice Principals, and sectional heads of schools in the Kurunegala District to test if there is a negative or positive impact on the advance level students' examination results if they indulge in social media engagement and networking.

Keywords

Social Media, Academic, Internet, Sri Lanka

1. Introduction

Technology is accelerating swiftly thus changing the fabric of every sphere such as business education, society, economics and the way man lives on earth is changing, these changes are here to stay. The growing importance of the Internet of Things (IOT), Information Technology and Communication, (ITC), Robotics, Mobile technologies, Artificial Intelligence, Social Media Automation, and Mass production will influence the world as we know in the next decade or two. Therefore business and government leaders should know what is happening and also start preparing for its impact. The relentless parade of technologies that are blossoming on numerous fronts with almost everything marked as a breakthrough, the list is growing longer (Manyika, et al, 2013). These changes not only influence developed economies but emerging and less developed economies.

Even in developing countries such as Sri Lanka is not spared by the influence of changing technologies and disruptive technologies in business and government sectors. These changes have the potential to reshape the world we live and work.

1.1 Education in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's education system has a rich and diversified history. The Constitution of Sri Lanka makes it mandatory for children below the age of 14 to be in schools and education as a fundamental right. Sri Lanka's population has a literacy rate of 92%; it has the highest literacy rate in South Asia and overall, one of the highest literacy rates in Asia. Education plays a pivotal role in the life and culture of the country. The total number of students is 4.3 Million (Ministry of Education, 2018). Annually approximate 650,000 students sit for the GCE Ordinary Level that's about the average in the last three years (Gunsekera, 2018). The government of Sri Lanka provides free education in public schools. It is the view of the students that failing the O/L and A/L is the end of life; suicide of student is not uncommon and has been reported in the press. A report in 2010 suggests that there were anxiety levels that were mild to high and depression too mild to high was not uncommon among students in O/L and A/L in a study conducted in Rathnapura districts in Sri Lanka (Rodrigo, et al, 2010). It is further suggested that there are very few studies done in the area of pediatrics mental health on the Island.

1.2 Social Media and Adolescence

This study reviews, analyses, and evaluate the pros and cons of the impact of social media among young school students between the ages of 12-21 years old in Sri Lanka. There is limited

data on the impact of social media among undergraduates and university students in Sri Lanka but lack of academic research among school students of the age category studied herein in. It is believed that there is a negative impact on school children in the use of social media in Sri Lanka. This study reviews the impact of social media among school students in academic grades and performance. It is common to observe students; instead of reading their books or learning indulges spending their time chatting and making friends via social media and the question arises whether this has influenced their academic performance.

In Sri Lanka, it is not uncommon to see students chatting insensitive and highly organized places like temples, churches, mosques, and lecture venues. Some are so carried away that even as they are walking along the highway, they keep chatting. It is a common sight to see youngsters in public places too busy with social media; inside trains, buses, on the roads, hotels, restaurants, parks, young people browsing the internet, mostly using Facebook or Whatsapp group chatting or watching videos on YouTube. It justifies the statement in the study by Lau (2016) that “social media have penetrated the lives of many young adults”

Many academics, pedagogy experts are questioning the impact of social media on the young generation in Sri Lanka as scholars are of the view that the availability of multiple platforms has complicated the issue. The attention of young people has shifted from ventures such as leisure, learning, interpersonal relationship with face-to-face contact to mere sending and receiving messages, responding to notifications, and the need for instant gratification via social media than writing, learning, reflecting, and the process of knowledge gaining. Therefore, academic activities are stifled, attention spans are reduced. (Alwagait et.al 2014).

Weerasundera (2014), states in his work ‘the impact of social media in Sri Lanka: issues and challenges in mental health’, suggest that in Sri Lanka, with a population of 21 million, 2.3 million are the users of social media and over 60% of the male. It is estimated that on average they spend about 34 minutes a day on social media. Suggesting that these may increase in the future and therefore a study of the impact of social media on youngsters should be evaluated stringently from a scholarly perspective. Such studies particularly among the *schooling-age population* are lacking in Sri Lanka.

2. Research Methods

The research methodology is the cornerstone of an excellent research paper has it increases the credibility of the study. In this research, the research will use primary and secondary data in

analyzing the problems concerned with the use of social media among school children. While it is considered for now a mixed-method approach to research will be undertaken this will be reinforced as the research further advances. Hence, for now, it is considered important to look at qualitative research, based on surveys, the use of focus group discussion will be used to collect information. While it is considered important to review the research from a qualitative and quantitative approach, scholars are of the view that social phenomenon has to study ideally from a qualitative approach, however often researcher also quantifies such analysis (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The quantitative process is difficult to prepare the data but easy to analyze. In the qualitative process, data collection is easy but the analysis is complex (Hallebone, 2009, Saunders, et al, 2012).

What has not been considered at present is if data has to be collected from school administrators and pedagogy experts an important consideration to be decided as the research further advances to reinforce the finding derived from the survey of students.

2.1 Impact of Social Media on School Going Youngsters

Scholars are of the view that social media is used by students for socializing activities and not for academic purposes and one study suggests that the majority of students are of the view that these platforms have a positive impact on academic growth (Oye, et al, 2012). Others suggest that Facebook users often experience poor academic performance (Mensah, 2016). Studies conducted by scholars among undergrads and their academic performance suggest that there is a negative impact on learning and studies. Reinforcing the view suggested by Alwagait et al, (2014) that increases the use of social media networks decreases the academic performance of students and that they are not satisfied by the findings and further research may be necessary.

The use of social media among students has reached high levels and has affected their study time, poor grammar, and wrong spellings when socializing on social media as well as diverting their attention from their studies (Ndaku, 2013). Students spend much of their study time on social networks than in their academic undertakings and it has affected their Grade Point Average (GPA).

3. Literature Review

The literature review is based on research articles from expert sources, published journal articles, and academic sources. Epistemology in business research as a branch of philosophy takes into consideration the sources of knowledge. Specifically, epistemology is concerned with possibilities, nature, sources, and limitations of knowledge in the field of study herein the researcher is reviewing the impact of social media on young school goers. Alternatively, epistemology can be

branded as the study of the criteria by which the researcher classifies what does and does not constitute the knowledge (Blaikie, 2010). In other words, epistemology focuses on what is known to be true. It is a way of thinking opposite to ontology (Bryman, 2012).

Therefore “Authoritarian Knowledge” will be considered from scholar work. Authoritarian knowledge depends on information that has been derived from books, research papers, and experts in this study. On the other hand, the question is if we should take into consideration logical knowledge is the creation of knowledge through the application of logical reasons in the absence of research of the social media impact on youngsters of school-going age (Blaikie, 2018).

However, scholars and researchers are of the view that the creation of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Google Plus, Pinterest, Myspace, What’s App, Youtube, Twitter, and others has brought about massive online connectivity in the everyday lives of people. Most of these platforms are free or require minimal investment thus eliminating a potential barrier to adoption (Brown 2010).

It is vital to bring in authoritative knowledge on the subject at this point to enhance the theories and concepts that the research reviews in the literature. In this chapter therefore the researcher strives to bring authoritative sources of knowledge via scholarly work and that of authoritative sources to support the findings. Such theories are reviewed, critically analyzed, and evaluated in this chapter to ensure a high degree of validity to meet the stringent standards of the University.

The literature suggests that social media is an important communication channel for the society as it may address issues that traditional channels such as newspapers, TV, print media which is always considered cooked information dissemination channel with views and biases included to ensure monetary objectives of commercial media moguls rather than sharing the truth. Therefore it is assumed that social media may be having an enhanced sense of credibility in audiences. This is reflecting interestingly from scholarly comments even though social media communication channels lack far greater shortcomings and biases and inaccuracy of information shared. Academics suggest that social media platforms are used for discussion of burning issues, overlooked, there is a craze among youth and it has created a host of problems and questions regarding its impact on young people. Social Media influences young people’s lifestyles and it’s a dynamic evolutionary process to striving to identify the nature of its influence on people and society particularly the youth and youngsters (Halakerimath, and Danappagoudra, 2017,) Social media has a multitude of applications in the contemporary world and its importance in business cannot be

underscored (Kumudha, and Thilaga, 2016). Its importance has blossomed due to its flexibility and versatility of use as it enables texting, image sharing, audio, and video sharing and swift publication and its iniquitousness attract large crowds. The other characteristics of social media are either it's free or its low cost, swift it's not bound by time and boundaries and not limited to demographics (Halakerimath, et al, 2017). As other scholars suggest that driving force for adaptation of social media, therefore, is the convenience, functionality, flexibility, and ubiquitous access to social media (Brown, 2010). Scholars, education experts, pedagogy professionals universally agree that social media is influencing youngsters and youth worldwide, there is consensus that its influence has the negative and positive impact of youngsters and youth (Kolan, and Dzandza, 2018; El-Badawy, & Hashem, 2015)

3.1 Impact of Social Media on Educational Performance

The literature review provides inadequate research findings on the impact of Social Media on academic performances despite the negative impact of social media and problems related to such platforms worldwide. Scholars are of the view that there is no impact on scholastic grade and social media (Egedegbe, 2013). Other academics are of the view that there is an impact of social media on reading, writing, spellings, and attention span of students (Rideout, 2012). While teachers and pedagogy experts are of the view that there is a positive grade of students' academic work in Maths, English, and Science when students had reciprocal friends in social media platforms (Lavy, and Sand 2012). Some other experts are of the view that there was an impact of social media in communication among students in the manner and style in which they spoke, the use of slang, usage of abbreviations (Mingle and Musah, 2015). All of these suggest that the findings are a mixed bag and conclusive evidence cannot be drawn. What is agreeable is that there is a negative impact by way of online harassment, bullying, sexting, sexual harassment, pornographic material, identity theft, fake accounts, falsification of facts and personal information, email harassments and bullying (O'Keefe and Clakepearson, 2011: Trevathan and Myers, 2012: Huffington Post 2009). There is global evidence that students and teenagers were involved in debasing, sexually-oriented, and relationship problems that had increased suicides among youths worldwide including in Sri Lanka. (Colombo Page, 2018; Hiru news, 2016).

3.2 Online Platforms and Social media in Schools in Sri Lanka

While Sri Lankan Schools have modern IT-based facilities such as digital classrooms, social media has not influenced the classroom yet, even in the government universities while they have ITC, websites they are yet to implement social media platforms. The prevailing social media

platforms in Schools and Universities are limited to Alumni, past student bodies that are yet not part of the mainstream pedagogy material or educational tool used by students for sharing and networking and group work as part of the curriculum. However, students, undergraduates have groups, social media platforms of their own which they use for learning purposes. It's a natural progression in the development and adaptation of social media. However private universities in Sri Lanka have adopted these platforms, online platforms as part of the student processes among their students and faculty.

3.4 Sri Lanka Cyber-Crime, Social Media

In Sri Lanka, there are laws and regulations to deter cyber-crime handled by the cyber-crime unit of the Sri Lanka Police department. Some of the problems were phishing, abusing privacy, malware, email harassment, fake accounts (Facebook), Child pornography, phishing, website hacking, and e-mail harassment. These are a few of the types of cases reported from the Cyber-Crime Unit of the police (Jayasekara and Rupasinghe 2015). Scholars suggest while normal crimes have reduced, cyber-crimes have increased in Sri Lanka. The use of mobile devices for cheating in GCE Ordinary Level and Advanced Level has increased over the past few years. This year, the commissioner of examinations, in a bid to prevent cheating in examinations employed the services of the Sri Lanka Army at the GCE Advanced Level Examination using jamming devices at exam centers (Colombo Page, 2018 Aug). In December 2018 a student and a teacher were taken into custody over charges of cheating at the O/L examination in Sri Lanka. (Hiru news, 2018). On the issues of Facebook, bullying, sexting, and other crimes in Sri Lanka, a Teenager committed suicide in 2014, the reason being the school principal warned the child in the presence of the parents wherein her boyfriend has posted her pictures in FB. The teenager has lapsed to depression over this issue and committed suicide (Daily Mirror, 2014). There have been several other documented incidences in Sri Lanka over which teenagers have committed suicide, and deaths of youngsters while taking selfies on mobile phones like two young people were overrun by a train. The popular newspaper 'Daily News' reported in 2017 that in Sri Lanka, over 20 individuals have died in railway roads taking selfies including a Chinese tourist in a train attempting to take a Scenic Selfie (Nafeel 2017). The report further continued that two teenagers drown while taking a selfie in Oman, both were Sri Lankans. Therefore it's not only Social Media but mobile devices to are creating negative impacts because such pictures are used in social Media and this circulates among a larger population, thereby putting the teenager's life at risk in attempting to take similar dangerous selfies.

4. Data Analysis

In the final analysis, it was decided not to take into consideration the individual-specific information of the respondents, such as name, age, or the demographics as it's anyway dealing with youngsters between the age of 18-20 year advanced level students male and female.

As this study is reviewing the usage of social media among students its impact on examination performance, highly advanced statistical analysis is not used, as what is required is to understand:

1. Usage habits of different platforms.
2. The amount of time spent online.
3. What kind of instruments such as Mobile Phones, Tabs, Laptops, and PC's used to be online surfing and interacting on various social media platforms?
4. If the social media interaction behavior having an impact on the examination results of the advanced level students?
5. If there are the negative or positive impacts of the use of social media on Students' examination results?

4.1 Survey Data Analysis A

In phase 1 of the project, primary data was collected from 68 students male and female in the advanced level class in schools in Kurunegala. 15 schools were targeted. A highly structured questionnaire was administered among the students via the school administrators.

4.1.1 General usage of social media

This was the topic of interest and accordingly the survey was conducted under various subtopics

1. What Social Media Platform Do You Use?

As to what social media platform is used by the students, the data collected were tabulated and given below in Figure 1. Accordingly, advanced level students use Facebook (42%) as a popular platform along with Whatsapp (40%).

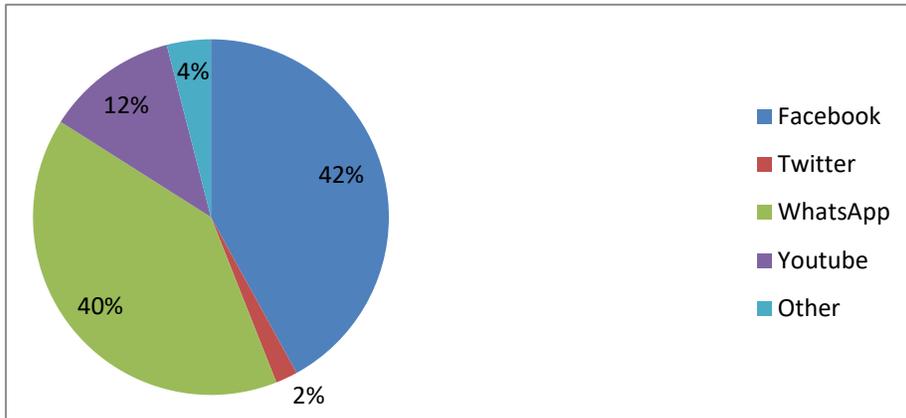


Figure 1: *The Percentage of Students using Various Platforms among the Target Audience*

2. What Type Of Content Do You Like To See On Social Media?

An analysis of the content that youngsters in the 18-20 year old students interact in the social media platforms are analyzed for both Male and Female students in Sri Lanka. The results are given below in Figure 2.

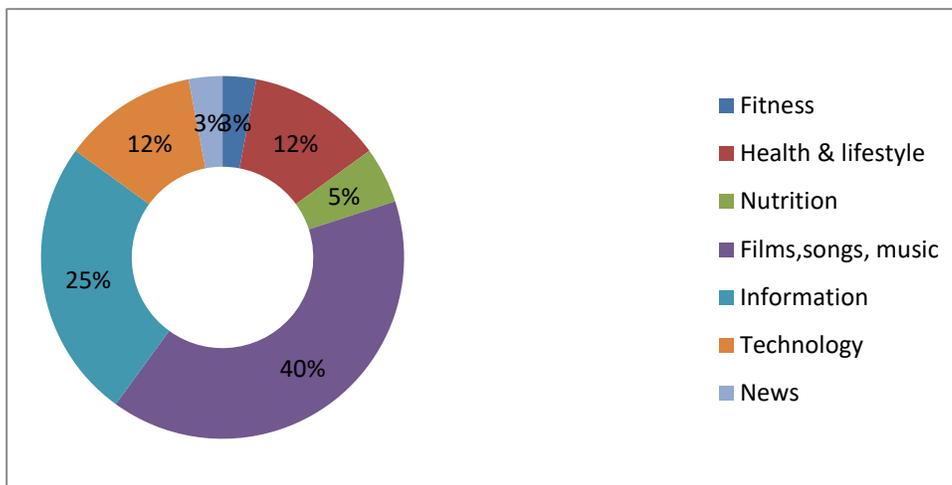


Figure 2: *The Percentage of the Type of Content Students Interact on Social Media*

In the context of Content, the students showed notable interest in Films, Song, and Music Category. 40% of the students, male and female showed interest in the ‘Film’ (Movie) category. 25% of Male and Female Students prefer “Information”. In the category, ‘Health and lifestyle’, male and female students showed interest in this category of content at 12%. In the ‘Technology’ category large interest was shown by males and few females students showed interest at 12 % The Category ‘Nutrition’ was mostly preferred by female students. The category titled ‘Other’ was avoided by the students.

3. What is the Preferred Method of Engagement?

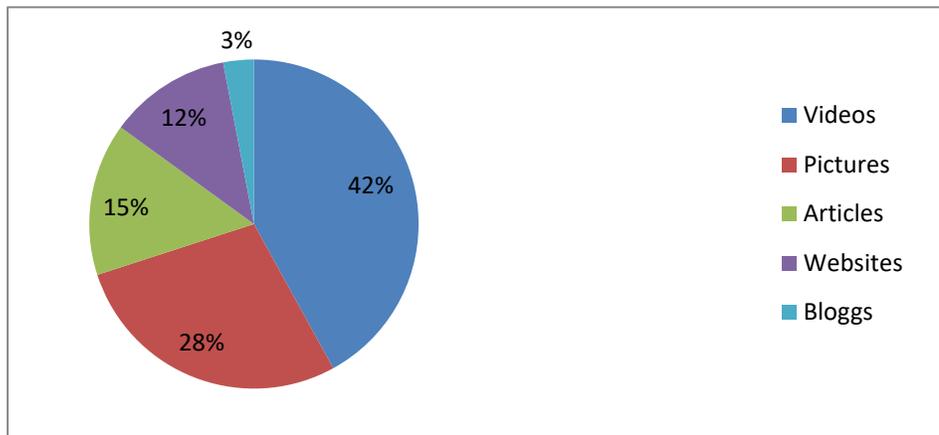


Figure 3: *The Percentage of the Preferred Method of Social Media Engagement*

As shown in figure 3, 42% of males and females preferred videos and 28% preferred pictures among Males and Females. 15 % of the respondents preferred reading articles. 12% preferred websites and blogs came in last at 3%. Further research is needed to understand why blogs were not popular. Furthermore, the ‘other’ category was unspecified and many said they prefer websites browsing

4. Preferred Time of Engagement

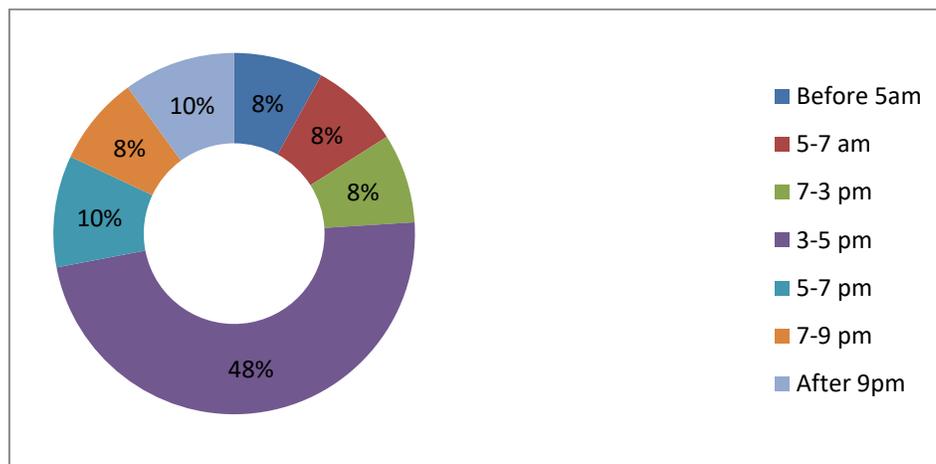


Figure 4: *The Percentage of the Preferred Time of Engagement*

It seems from the data collected, as shown in figure 4, most male and female respondents (48%) prefer to engage in social media activity between 3-5 pm which is after school time when they are outside school premises or at home. 10 % of the respondents preferred time frames between 5-7 pm or after 9 pm again highlighting it’s the break away from studies or study schedules. Further information collected suggests that they prefer to engage in social media seven

days a week. Female students suggested further research it was a hobby or relaxation activity or a networking activity away from study time.

5. How long have the Students used Social Media?

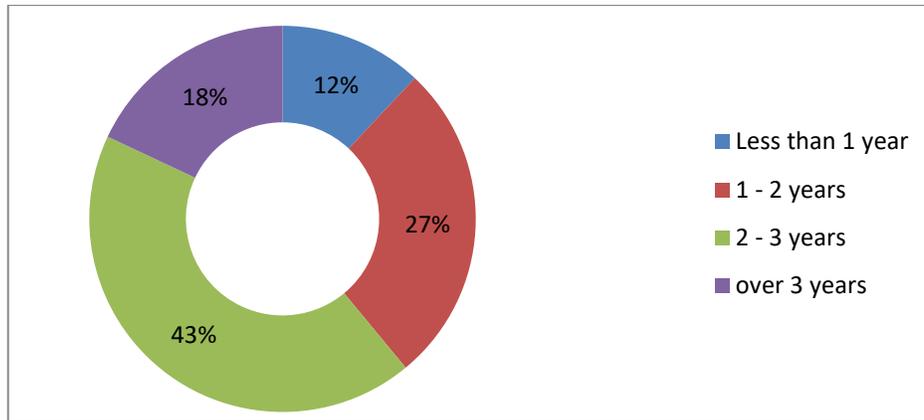


Figure 5: *The Percentage representing the Duration of Social Media Use*

The data collected for social media engagement (as represented in Figure 5) suggest that most students have used social media between 1-3 years, a staggering 70% of the students belong to this class. 12% of the students have been using social media for less than a year. 18% has been using social media for more than three years, suggesting social media has been available for over a decade in Sri Lanka and students have had access to social media in Sri Lanka. Further research is needed in this area to determine at what age young people engage in Social Media in Sri Lanka. Perhaps it is necessary to also study the socio-economic factors of the students to understand their engagement on social media, an area not reviewed in this study.

4.2 Survey Data Analysis B

In Analysis B, of the questionnaire, the following results were derived from the students for the below-given questions:

4.2.1 What is Social Media used for?

All respondents ticked all columns, suggesting that they use social media for a variety of purposes including 1. Chatting, 2. Instant Messaging, 3. Networking via Facebook, 4. Internet TV, 5. File Sharing, 6. Web browsing, and 7. Music suggesting that online platforms are used by students for a variety of purposes. The respondents also added IMO, Viber, and Whats App for chatting and calls on the list. The entire target sample suggested using all of the above.

4.3 Students' Opinion of Social Media? Consisting of 9 questions.

The responses of 68 students for 9 questions given below:

4.3.1 Addiction to Online Social Networks is a Problematic Issue that affects my Academic

Of the 68 respondents 32% of the respondents 'Agreed' to this question while 58% 'Disagreed' to the question and 10% of the respondents said 'Not Sure'? Suggesting that 32% did think its negative while and 58% didn't think its impacts academic and a small percentage of 10 % was not sure

4.3.2 Hours Spent online can never be compared to the Number of Hours I spend Reading

Of the 68 respondents, 13% of the respondents 'Agreed' to this view, 65% of the respondents disagree, and the rest of the respondents were not sure.

4.3.3 There is no Improvement in my Grades since I Engaged in these Social Networking Sites

Of the 68 respondents 30% 'Agreed' to this view, while 61% 'Disagree' and was of the opinion that there was an improvement to the grades through engagement in social networking. 9% of the respondents were 'Not Sure' if the grades were improved.

4.3.4 I usually have Unlimited access to Facebook and this has affected my Academic Performance negatively.

Of the 68 respondents 26% 'Agreed' that they don't have unlimited access to Facebook, 54% Disagreed to this question suggesting that they had some kind of access to Facebook and 20% were 'Not Sure' meaning that some level of access was available to Facebook.

4.3.5 I engage in Academic Discussions on Social Media and this has Improved my Academic Performance

Of the 68 respondents, 47% 'Agreed' that they had an academic discussion on Social Media and had improved academic performance. 40% 'Disagreed' to this opinion and 13 % of the respondents were 'Not Sure' of this view.

4.3.6 I make use of Whatsapp to disseminate Knowledge to my Classmate.

Of the 68 respondents 42% were 'Agreed' that they had academic dissemination of knowledge with their classmates, 28% 'Disagreed' with this view. 10% of the respondents were no 'Not Sure'

4.3.7 I will not perform well in my Academics even if I stop using Social Media.

Of the 68 respondents, 20% were of the view that their academic performance will be while using social media. While 60% were of the view that they will perform better without social media. 20% were 'Not Sure' if their performance would be better with or without using social media.

4.3.8 Access to Wifi (ADSL) or Data Packages

I have access to Wifi (ADSL) devices: 23 students said yes, 35 students said they have access to mobile data of the 68 students and 10 students didn't have access to both of these.

4.3.9 Access to PC, Laptop, Tab, or Smart Phones

Of the 68 respondents, 18 Students had access to all devices PC. Laptop, Tab and Android Phones, & students had access only to a PC, 50 students had access to PC and Android Phones, and 10 students didn't have access to any of these devices.

5. Discussion

This chapter strives to interpret the findings of the mixed-method approach applied in this study to collect data and information on the light of the literature review to reinforce the findings, views, and opinions from authorities' sources and arrive at the objectives of the study.

5.1 Social Media Platforms in Sri Lanka

Based on the quantitative and qualitative finding there are several social media platforms in use in Sri Lanka by General Certificate Education- advanced level students they are in the order of popularity based on the data collected as follows 1. Facebook, 2. Youtube, 3. Instagram, Twitter, and others such as Pinterest, Google Plus, Whats App, Linked In, Baodoo, Tumblr,

All of the social media platforms use video, pictures, music, text, articles to share information among account holders and all of them are free. Scholars suggest that social media has influenced the lives of all youth Lau (2016). The data finding reinforced that school children in Sri Lanka are not allowed to bring phones, tabs, tablets, laptops to school premises, and also indulge in any online platforms. Scholars reinforce this view that schools have regulations of social media usage in many countries in the world. Schools follow a regulation sent out by the education ministry and therefore public government schools don't allow any of the said device possession by school students. Schools themselves limit their online presence to websites if social media platforms exist they are part of the school past student alumni. However, private schools are flexible on this policy of the possession and usage of various mobile devices and phones this is perhaps because they are based on the international circular of British syllabus in Sri Lanka and further the socio-economic standing of these students are middle class and upper-middle-class wherein much of the parents are in the dual-income category and working professionals.

In the analysis it was found of the 68 participants seven didn't own any device, as suggested by one school principal possibly because they are students of low-income groups. This is also

reinforced by the survey questionnaire wherein 12% of the participants didn't own any mobile or telecommunication, tab or tablets, and PCs or laptops and didn't have access to data packages and or either Wifi access.

Based on the five-point survey questions that the students answered in the survey it was found that most students' opinions were not negative in the use of social media, reinforcing the scholars' views that social media doesn't have a negative impact on students' performance. Research suggests that engagement in social media has shown improvements in language skills and Maths (Rideout, 2012). However, students interviewed shared mixed results neither did they consider social media as negative nor did they see this as having a positive impact and influence on them about the students in the advanced level class. Scholars also share similar views that there is no impact on academic grade from engagement in social media (Egedegbe, 2013)

5.2 School Policy on Devices

Parents were familiar that schools had a policy of no possession of various devices such as mobile phones, tab, tablet, PC and Laptop in Sri Lanka among the public schools as in other countries in the world. This, however, conflicted with the prime minister's view of creating a smart classroom and he is espousing the view that students from grade ten onwards should be given tabs free and that traditional classrooms should now be converted to digital classrooms in keeping with the government's policy of education modernization program of the government of Sri Lanka. In other countries too there is such a ban on the use of mobile devices and social media in the school environment suggest (Ahn, 2010).

Private schools' principals and parents in Sri Lanka are of the view that children should be allowed to use mobile devices and that they have a positive impact on the academic performance of students and these devices are also considered important for the security of students to track there were about by Parents.

5.3 Schools and Social Media Usage

School principals of private schools were of the view that use of social media among students is beneficial for examination performance of advanced level students as they have a plethora of educational tools, study material and therefore assist students to gain better at the examination and these principals reinforce this view citing that Sri Lanka international circular students perform better at Advance Level examinations.

Public school principals and parents are of the opinion that the use of social media is minimal the only online platform in the school is the website and use of social media such as

Facebook, Instagram, What App is limited to past student alumni. Scholars reinforce this view that standards of pedagogy are dwindling due to the influence of social media (Alwagait et al, 2014; Weerasundera, 2014)

These Public-school principals in Sri Lanka didn't consider that social media platforms contribute to better results in Advance Level examinations as these are conducted in Sinhala media and there is a shortage of educational material such as notes in the popular social media. Furthermore suggested that social media and mobile devices are not allowed to the school as a policy decision by the government of Sri Lanka (Weerasundera, 2014)

5.4 Impact in the use of Social Media among Students in Sri Lanka

While all principals suggested that there is an impact on language skills particularly in English Language speaking and writing abilities of students. The findings were mixed while there was an impact on students such as distraction, spending more time on social media than average school hours (Mensah, 2016; Rideout, 2012) in her survey and research shared similar views that social media has become more than even a full-time job in that youngsters spend more time 24/7 on social media.

Perhaps Sri Lankan students are also using social media extensively as it was uncovered in the survey, the participants didn't consider it negative and didn't consider social media had an impact of their grade at schools. Scholars are of the view that the iniquitousness, flexibility versatility of social media platforms and its ability to integrate images, sharing, audio, video, and texting makes its popular source of engagement and entertainment herein lies the dangers of social media to the student (Halakerimath, et al, 2017; Brown, 2010).

Other researchers suggest that increasing the use of social media can distract students and therefore their grade fall (Alwagait et al, 2014). Academics and pedagogy experts suggest that social media diverts the attention of Students (Ndaku, 2013)

There is an agreement that there are positive and negative aspects of the use of social media among school children in the advanced level class among school principals hence there are mixed views on the impact of social media among students. This is a globally shared view among academics, school administers, and others that there are negative and positive outcomes of the use of social media (Kolan, and Dzandza, 2018; El-Badawy, & Hashem, 2015).

Private school principals show this as a definite benefit in performance at examinations of students using social media where better at English, Language comprehension, and learning overall for better results. Scholars share similar views they suggest that social media can have positive

outcomes on students (Oye, et al, 2012). Scholars suggest that establishing a framework to use social media as part of the institution needs to enhance education and learning and have positive results for the participants or students. (Subrahmanyam and Greenfield, 2008).

Hence private school principals through the students spent more time online in social media while it has a positive impact on education. It may also have an impact by way of distraction and more time spent away from studies by the students as a result.

5.4 Social Media Challenges, Crime in Sri Lanka

Parents, Principals of Schools agree that there are problems, challenges, and Crimes, committed by participants in Sri Lanka and among teenage school going students. Some of the challenges include Fake Accounts, Identity Thefts, Hacking, Sexting, Sexual context, pornographic content, cyberbullying, cheating at examinations, Suicide among school children, Pedophiles, and other criminal elements. Scholars reinforce this view of the challenges and problems of crime cyber-bullying via social media. (O'Keefe and Clapepearson, 2011): Trevathan and Myers, 2012).

All participants in the Focus Group Discussion and parents who participated in face to face interviews are concerned about these issues. They consider that these challenges can cascade down to the youth knowingly or unknowingly and there would be legal implications and criminal charges by the cyber police department. The survey, research, and popular press reinforce these views two girls were arrested for posting a nude picture on Facebook (Huffington Post, 2009). On the other hand, there have been relationship problems anxiety, Stress, depression, and other mental health problems. Furthermore, issues of the need for instant gratification, wrong friends, and relationships that could harm the youth are among the concerns of contemporary children. There have been documented cases of Cheating at exams in Sri Lanka, the Suicide of a teenage girl due to the posting of pictures on Facebook, Globally children have been charged for posting sexual material and nude pictures (Nafeel, 2017; Colombo Page, 2018 Aug). On the other hand, there is also the problem of intellectual property and copyright issues in posting in all platforms

In conclusion, the findings are a mix in that there is no conclusive evidence that children using social media is beneficial to them, there are also negative findings. On the other hand parents, school, and education professionals are of the view that there is no direct link to examination performance and social media influences and impact on advanced level students and there is no research evidence of academic or scholarly nature in Sri Lanka. At the same time, there are negative issues related to social media usage in Sri Lanka and these crimes are increasing swiftly among the community and them cascading to schools as principals pointed out. Furthermore, it is suspect there

are no results among social media usage and examination results as most students in the Advance level class in government schools are studying in Sinhala language and there is a shortage of knowledge-based study material among students. Schools don't encourage the use of social media among particularly public schools. Private schools are in favor of social media in schools. The prime minister is in favor of social media, mobile devices usage, issuing of tabs among students.

6. Conclusion

The objective set out in doing this research has been achieved in that, the researcher wanted to determine if social media usage and engagement have a negative and positive impact on students of the advanced level class. It was established that there is both a positive and negative impact on the use of social media amongst youngsters in advanced level classes in Sri Lanka. The study reinforced the fact that many popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Twitter, WhatsApp, Pinterest, Snapchat, Tumblr are used by schoolchildren for instant messaging, chatting, social networking, gaming, listening to music, watching movies, and videos. It was established that social media's negative aspects are creating challenges and problems for the youth, their parents, school authorities and criminal elements are cascading down to school level such as fake social media accounts, identity theft, sexting, pornography, and sexual content, Harassment and Cyberbullying, phishing, hacking are all common (O'Keeffe, and Clake-pearson, 2011).

On the other hand, students have resorted to harassing, posting sexually-oriented pictures on Facebook and other social media. There have been incidences of examination cheating using mobile phones and other devices and they have been taken into custody. There has been an increase in the number of (but few) suicides among female students in Sri Lanka recently reported in popular media and news channels (Colombo Page, 2018 Aug: Daily News, 2017; Hiru news 2018). However, the students themselves have given mixed responses in the survey, they believe that social media doesn't affect their studies and doesn't influence the results of examinations. In fact, they are of the opinion that social media has positive contributions. Some school principals of private schools are of the view that engagement in social media leads to better results at examinations and skills development such as reading, writing, and comprehension. Academics share such mix reviews on the engagement of social media by students (Rambe, P. 2011).

6.1 No Phones and Mobile Device Policy of the Schools

Schools have a policy of 'No' Phones and Mobile devices in the government public schools policy which means students cannot bring phones (Normal or Smart), mobile devices such as laptops. Phones, Tabs, tablets or PC's in Sri Lanka. It seems that this policy is strictly enforced by school administrators.

6.2 Social Media is not beneficial to students

A large proportion of school principals, sectional heads of the advance level section who participated in a focus group discussion are of the view social media is not beneficial to advance level students as the study material in social media are in English and the public school circular is in Sinhala and hence there is a shortage of intellectual material, notes and sharing of information within the social media platforms. On the other hand, certain school principals and sectional heads were of the view the students who get the best results are from below middle-class homes and the children of the middle class and upper-middle-class homes are subject to excessive use of social media and therefore they are distracted from studies.

On the other hand, Private school principals and parents think otherwise and are of the opinion students who are actively engaged in social media perform better at language skills, comprehension, reading, and gain better results in advanced level class than students who don't participate in social media. Scholars also suggest where there are like-minded friends (in social media), students are likely to share and learn better via social media

6.3 Crimes and Challenges of Social Media

Furthermore, some principals, sectional heads, and some parents are of the view social media is a negative influence on the students and they spend more time on social media than in school and studies hence students are distracted. Therefore they considered social media as a negative impact on students in Sri Lanka additionally citing the recent cheating at examinations, bullying incidences, the suicide of a girl, and such challenges. They (parents and principals) are of the view there can be unsatisfactory friendships and relationship that have a negative impact on students, therefore, social media engagement should be controlled using such tools as 'parental control' but the fear is that now that there are free hotspots in many cities and public places and as such students can access the internet, therefore, can engage in social media in Sri Lanka freely. Although such places are few in Kurunegala but on the rest of the Island, there is quite a number of such places.

6.4 Recommendations

It is recommended to the Ministry of Education of the government of Sri Lanka to expedite a comprehensive study on the impact of social media on school children between 12-19 and make available the findings to the public including parents, teachers, and students in the public domain by 2025.

It is also recommended that the Ministry of Education should undertake surveys on the impact of social media on schools on a zonal basis as a policy decision to support education professionals to find ways and means to assist students to guide them and achieve better academic grades at public examinations to enhance the human capital of Sri Lanka.

It is recommended that smart classroom projects should be commencing soon and digitalization of school circular and educational material should be made available for General Certificate of Education Ordinary and advance Level students to access freely in various online platforms to create a knowledge-based nation. Furthermore, there should be a national policy on online educational knowledge-based established by 2025 from the government of Sri Lanka

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