

# High School Students as Snappers and Instagramers, and Their Academic Performance

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## ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the phenomenon of social media usage has been obvious among people from different generations. However, using social media has become very prevalent among students. This research focuses on the correlation between the frequent use of social media, especially Instagram and Snap chat, and Saudi high school students' academic attainment. More specifically, it investigates the use and the amount of time devoted to using Snap chat and Instagram by the high school students. It also examines to what extent that amount of exposure to such social media influences the students' academic achievement. The data of this study comes from Saudi high school students' responses of the web-based questionnaire. The results of this study demonstrate that using Snap chat and Instagram has a positive influence on the academic attainment. Snap chat and Instagram can be employed to achieve academic purposes. However, such use also impacts negatively the students' academic achievement. Addiction, absence from school, and coming late to school are examples of the negative consequences of using Snap chat and Instagram for long time. Additionally, the extensive use of Snap chat and Instagram results in having a low GPA. The less time students spend on using Snap chat and Instagram, a high GPA they can attain. Thus, the management of time that is spent on Snap chat and Instagram is considered as the most important factor to avoid a low academic performance.

**Keywords:** *Social media, snap chat, instagram, academic attainment.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social media becomes a part of people's lives. It is the platform that offers people the opportunity to communicate with each other easily (El-Badawy & Hashem 2015). Examples of Social media applications are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap chat and WhatsApp. Through these platforms, users can create accounts and receive followers. Also, they find spaces to express their views and beliefs without restrictions and make friendship from the entire world. Globally, Instagram and Snap chat are the most used types of social media. The former is an application where people can share photos and videos, which have been posted on the users' profiles. According to Mobile Messaging and Social Media (2015), the majority of Instagram users are between the ages of 18 to 29, representing 55% (25% are high school graduates). The latter is "a photo-sharing service with one key distinguishing feature: the photos you send disappear. Seconds after opening "snaps," users can no longer access them and the images are deleted from the company's servers. Snap chat is an ephemera generating and sharing machine." (Madrigal 2015). The followers only have almost 10 seconds to see the photos or videos before they disappear (shah, 2015) if they are not posted on the story. Statistically, the most Snappers are between the ages of 13 to 25. However, the 18-year-old snappers are highly engaged per a day (Business Insider (BI) Intelligence, in Ember).

Such applications have not only been used in the home environment. Nowadays, the adaption of social media within educational process has grown dramatically. It becomes very integrated in the classroom and as a result, it has a huge effect on the students' social and educational development at school.

In this current research, we focus on the relationship between the social media usage, especially Instagram and Snap chat, and high school students' academic attainment in Saudi Arabia. I examine to what extent the amount of exposure to social media affects negatively or positively academic performance of high school students.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a brief background about what social media and academic achievement mean.

Additionally, it highlights some previous studies that have addressed the relationship between the social media usage and the academic attainment of students focusing particularly on the positive and negative outcomes of the utilization of social media.

### 2.1 Social Media and Academic Achievement

'Social media' has become a study topic for last ten years. Many researchers have defined social media. One of the most known definitions is as follow:-

Web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellyson, 2007, Para. 4).

People are able to access to social media at any time and at any place. Ahn (2011) points out that "emerging studies find that youth spend a considerable portion of their daily life interacting through social media" (p.1435). Nowadays, Snap chat, Twitter, Instagram have become the most popular applications

used by teenagers (Curtis 2013).

## 2.2 The Use of Social Media and Its Relation to Student's Academic Achievement

The amount of time devoted for using social media by students (among 8 to 18 year olds) is more than twice the average amount of time they spend in school (National Center for Education Statistics 2007–2008, Kaiser Family Foundation 2010, in Common sense media 2012). The impact of such use of social media on the academic achievement of students has been recently a more debated issue that has received much attention from a myriad of researchers in the field of education.

However, the focus of most researchers has been on the university students' academic attainment (e.g. Fu-Yuan & Chiu 2012, Asemah, Okpanachi & Edeogoh 2013, Al-Menayes 2014, 2015) and on the use of Facebook, while the current study concerns about high school students' academic performance and the use of the two applications: Instagram and Snap chat.

## 2.3 The Positive Impact of Social Media on the Academic Achievement

The involvement in social media has its positive effects upon students' grades. According to Common Sense Media (2012), the varieties of social media options provide their users with benefits and challenges. Using these varieties as 'educational tools' within classrooms or for homework purposes "offer exciting and important possibilities" (p.21) for students. Additionally, social media enables the young users to make connections and be "content creators as well as consumers" (p.21). In the same vein, in her paper, Al-Tarawneh (2014) surveys the literature about the impact of social media, especially Facebook, on the performance of high school students.

She concludes that "improving productivity, communication, and collaboration" (p.204) and adding the fun atmosphere to the educational process are the advantages of the social media use, whether at home or in classrooms. Additionally, another benefit of social media is that high school students can use it as a means to get "information and resources for graduation preparation and future planning" (Boyd & Ellison 2007, in Flad 2010, p.25). For instance, Instagram "provides an unfiltered look at a campus via filtered photographs-in contrast to the often highly curate pictures on a school's official Instagram feed." (Stampler 2015).

Moreover, Instagram can also be used for other academic purposes. In her article, Hudson provides several good ways to use Instagram in the classroom, such as displaying students' works, posting photos for their class parties and trips to be shared with other students, documenting the academic progress, and sharing the best recommended readings. Snap chat also can be used positively for the purpose of engaging with students.

According to Ember, "Snap chat gives you an opportunity to not only showcase the true culture of your

school but build an even stronger culture by engaging with your students outside of the classroom. With storytelling, behind the scenes, candid moments, contests and more, snap chat is a great way to talk to students in "their language." Everyone likes to feel like they're part of something special and selective. Students who have added your school on Snap chat can receive exclusive sneak peeks behind the scenes of school events and happenings".

## 2.4 The Negativity of Social Media Use in Regard to the Academic Achievement

The negative outcomes of the intensive use of social media have also been proved by the majority of studies. Al-Tarawneh (2014) mentions that there are also negative effects of social media on students' performance including "addiction, wasting time, information overloaded, and isolation from physical society" (p.204).

Furthermore, Naizabekov (2012) demonstrates that using social media leads to 'academic procrastination' since students spend more time on using social media for 'non-academic' purposes. The loss of motivation is also one of the negative results of social media because it "distracts students from using SNS for academic purposes even though these websites may provide such opportunities" (p.11). What is more is that using social media in educational process causes what is known as multitasking (doing several academic activities at the same time) that have the negative results such as cheating (Naizabekov 2012). Additionally, Burak (2012) points out that engaging in classroom multitasking results in having a low GPA.

In their study, Asemah et.al (2013) found that students' access to social media is very high. In their survey's results, the majority of students affirmed that the social media affect their academic performance negatively. Asemah et.al conclude that "students who spend more time on social media are likely to perform poorly in their academics" (p.94). Similarly, in a recent study, Al-Menayes (2015) investigated such influence based on three factors; usage, engagement, and addiction.

He found that "the more time one spends using social media, the worse their academic performance" and "the more a person shows symptoms of addiction, the worse their grades" (p.92). However, engaging alone in social media does not influence the academic attainment.

Neutrally, El-Badawy and Hashem's recent study (2015) demonstrates that there is no relationship between both the amount of exposure to social media and the overall average of students' grade. Although students spend hours on social media, they still maintain and devote their time to study, and obtain good grades.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Participants

Having a clear image and understanding about

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the influence of social media on the students' academic attainment, I collected my data from high school students who are males and Saudis. The number of the students who participated is 10. They are third grade students who are studying at one of the Saudi high school. Their ages are between 17 and 18.

**3.2 Date Collection**

As the main focus of this research is on the relationship between the use of social media and the academic attainment, students are considered as the most important source of data. The web-based survey was used to gather data from the students. The survey comprised four main questions, which were asked to elicit the students' use and attitude towards social media usage and its effect on their academic achievement. In the given survey, the students were asked first if they are users of Snap chat and Instagram. If yes, then they were asked to provide information about their use of social media such as the length of period they spend on using Snap chat and Instagram. The main format of the survey was multiple choices. The choice of the students who participated was random. The students filled out the survey anonymously at school to ensure confidentiality. Completing the survey has taken five to eight minutes. Finally, their answers were studied and analyzed.

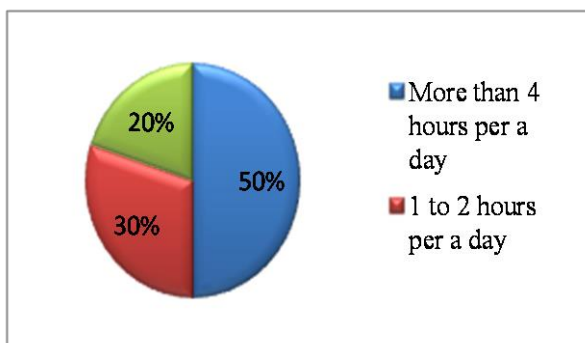
**4. RESULTS**

**4.1 Students' Use of Snap Chat and Instagram**

**Table 1:** Times of use of Snap chat and Instagram

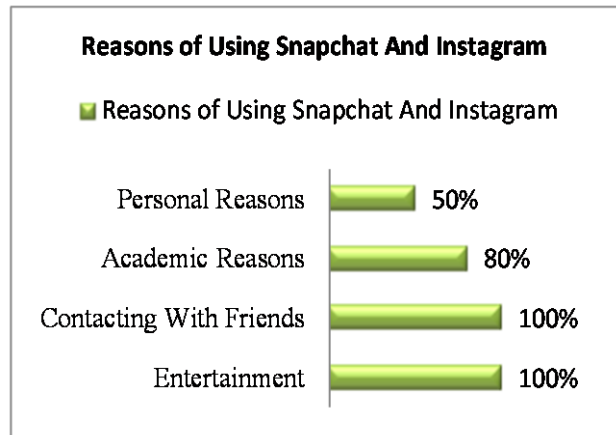
Use of Snap. And Insta.	The number of Students	Percentage
One a week	-	0%
Twice a week	1	10%
Daily	9	90%

Table 1 shows the number of times of Snap chat and Instagram use within a week by the participants. The majority of the participants, representing 90%, use the two platforms, Snap chat and Instagram, daily. While 10% of the participants prefer to use them twice a week. However, as shown in the table above, no one uses them only one time in a week.



**Figure 1:** The amount of time that student spend on using Snap chat and Instagram

Concerning the amount of the time students devote to use Snap chat and Instagram, figure1 demonstrates that out of 100%, 50% of participants have access to Snap chat and Instagram for more than four hours per a day and all these participants, in fact, use them daily. While 30% use Snap chat and Instagram for the average of 1 to 2 hours per a day. Out of 30%, 10% uses them twice a week. The remaining participants, representing 20%, spend less than 1 hour on using Snap chat and Instagram daily.



**Figure 2:** Reasons of using Snap chat and Instagram

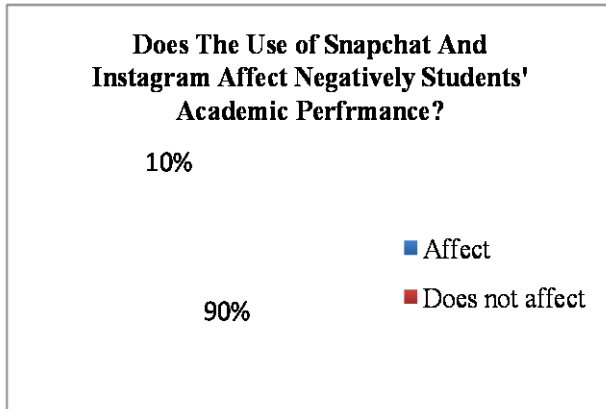
Figure 2 shows the reasons behind using Snap chat and Instagram. Most students use them for multiple purposes. The two main reasons that were mentioned by all participants (100%) are entertainment and contacting with their friends. Moreover, most students (80%) added that they use them for academic purposes such as creating an online group or an account to share and exchange information, that are related to their lessons, with their classmates, through posting photos or commenting on the photos, using them as a reference for some information that are related to their class projects, contacting with their teachers, and displaying their academic activities.

Additionally, the reasons that are related to their personality were mentioned, representing 50%. Some said that Snap chat and Instagram affect them positively. One pointed out that through using Snap chat and Instagram, I become more sociable, outgoing, and educated.

Others mentioned that they use these platforms to follow those who have a positive influence on them and who contribute to develop their personality and education.

For example, one mentioned that I follow one of the most popular Snappers who is a professional speaker of English because I want to develop my English

#### 4.2 The Negative Effect of Snap Chat and Instagram on the Academic Performance



**Figure 3:** The negative effect of using Snap chat and Instagram on Academic Performance

As shown in figure 3, the majority of the participants (90%) agreed the idea that the use of Snap chat and Instagram have a negative influence on the academic performance as a consequence of lack of ability to control and manage their time. Out of 90%, 50% admitted that their use of Snap chat and Instagram lead them to be an addictive and impact negatively their academic attendance and performance. All these (50%) participants, in fact, spend more than four hours per day on using Snap chat and Instagram. The remaining participants (40%) pointed out that using Snap chat and Instagram does not affect their GPA as they have not spent more time on using them. On the other hand, only one participant (10%) did not agree that using Snap chat and Instagram affect negatively the academic achievement, believing that there is no relation between the use of Snap chat and Instagram and the poor academic performance.

#### 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current research mainly investigated the relationship between the social media usage, especially Instagram and Snap chat, by Saudi high school students and their academic attainment, and examines to what extent the amount of exposure to social media could affect negatively or positively the academic performance of the high school students. Based on the data represented so far, it can be seen that Snap chat and Instagram can be used for multiple purposes and one of these purposes that is related to this study is the academic one, which was mentioned by the majority of the participants. The high school students can use snap chat and Instagram for contacting with their classmates and teachers, displaying their class projects, and searching for information. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of Snap chat and Instagram has a positive influence on their academic performance.

However, it was also found that using Snap chat and Instagram has a negative impact on the academic attainment. Addiction, absence from school, and coming late to school are examples of the negative consequences

of using Snap chat and Instagram for long time.

Additionally, the extensive use of Snap chat and Instagram results in having a poor GPA. The less time students spend on using Snap chat and Instagram, a high GPA they can attain. And that has been supported by other researchers (e.g. Naizabekov 2012, Asemah et. al 2013, Al-Tarawneh 2014, Al-Menayes 2015). Based on the participants' self-assessment of their academic performance and its relation to the use of Snap chat and Instagram, it can be concluded that the management of time which is spent on Snap chat and Instagram is considered the most important factor to avoid low academic performance.

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