



# The Wired Generation among University Students in Malaysia

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the usage of social media among foundation students and to show how the usage of social media in a campus environment can produce outcomes for the students. Two variables were used; usage and outcomes. Relationships between the usage of social media and gender were also examined. In this study, a survey was administered to a sample consisted of 185 foundation students at KUIS on social media usage, the purpose of social media usage and the outcomes of social media in academic performance. The results indicated that all of the sampled foundation students used at least one form of social media website. The findings disclosed that a positive relationship exists between the purpose of social media usage and its outcomes on students' academic performance.

**Keywords:** Wired generation; social media; foundation students

## 1. Introduction

Social network is an electronic administration that permits a person to build an open or semi-open profile inside of a limited framework and lucid a rundown of different clients with whom they share a connection (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). It is an important tool to stay connected with everyone without geographical barriers. Social networking marvel has developed in the course of recent years. Along that time, social networking sites have developed from a niche to a mass online interaction, in which a huge number of Internet clients are locked in, both in their relaxation time and at work (Cachia, 2008). It is normal for everyone to own more than one social networking account nowadays. People use online networking locales, for example, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to create profiles, sharing photos, post what they are doing at any given time and send individual or open messages to whomever they pick, and also to make and sustain relationship with family, companions, and even outsiders (Boyd & Ellison, 2007 & Lenhart et al., 2010).

Social media usage is not limited. Nowadays, university students actively join, spectate, comment, upload and share all the manner of social media to facilitate their academic success. Along these lines, it can be said that university students are those majority of social media users and online networking systems. It is a common sense that a major drawback of this social media usage is the amount of time spent with it (Wang, Chen & Liang, 2011). In fact, it is not surprising that social media has changed the pattern and the scene of people communication, from face-to-face communication to computer-mediated communication (CMC). Social media has turned out to be more than exactly how individuals stay in contact with their companions online rather it has changed the way individuals convey and how they go about their day by day lives. The utilization of social media offers a variety of outcomes, including the opportunities, threats, interactive and the likes. Thus, social media is considered as a class of online talk as well as a category of online discourse where people make substance, create content, share it and bookmark it.

This paper investigates the outcomes of social media used among university students who are labeled as the wired generation. Ali Salman, Mohd Yusof Abdullah, Mohd Safar Hasim and Latiffah Pawanteh (2010 as cited in Saodah Wok et. al., 2012) indicated that the young generation is heavily gratified to social media because they might think that social media benefited them in various aspects, either positive or negative. Thus, the purpose of this research is to examine the social media usage among university students and to show how social media usage in a campus environment can produce outcomes for the students. Moreover, in order to make comparisons, students' gender is also explored.

Therefore, the following research questions are to be answered:

RQ1: What is the extent of social media usage among university students?

RQ2: What are the outcomes of social media on students' academic performance?

## 2. Literature Review

Social network is one of the most crucial used communication media between individuals, and organizations across the world today, as a medium of sharing and disseminating information. Basically, these sites enable any information sharing activities such as sharing interests and current issues (Saodah Wok et al., 2012). In view of the insights, Facebook and Myspace report that there are in overabundance of 70 and 50 million dynamic guests, individually, on a month to month premise to their sites (Johnson, 2009). These social networking sites have pulled in a large number of users, a large portion of whom have coordinated these locales into their everyday rehearses (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p.9). Therefore, what is the relationship between social networking sites and academic performance among college youth? Academic performance means that productive students that are produced by the quality of education that will lead to the prosperity of their respective educational institutions and subsequently are proved as strong contributors to the national well-being. Performance implies the obvious exhibit of comprehension, ideas, abilities, thoughts and learning, skills and knowledge of a person and proposed that grades clearly depict the performance of a student.

Therefore, their academic performance must be overseen effectively by keeping in view every one of the components that can absolutely or adversely influence their academic performance. Internet is considered as one of the most important factors that can bring impact to academic performance of a student either positively or negatively (Ahmed & Qazi, 2011). There are a number of studies mentioned that there is no relation between computer use and academic performance. For example, according to Hunley, Evans, Delgado-Hackey, Krise, Rish, and Schell (2005), there is no relationship between the amount of time spent on computer at home and GPA in a sample of adolescents. However, there are researchers who found that recreational Internet is strongly correlated with impaired academic performance (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2009). Relative to all these issues, SNS plays an important role in the media and they had influence a lot of people, especially the youths. Today, facebook offers an online platform on which users create profiles, leave comments, generate and share ideas, and interact with others (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Since its inception in 2004, Facebook has quickly become a fundamental tool for social interaction, personal identity and the development of networks among students.

Besides, the prevalence of social networking sites for example, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blog and others gives an effort to develop an appropriate local social network that suits the content and users in Malaysia (Siti Eizaleila and Azizah, 2010). This provides a new alternative in the interaction and communication through virtual space. Generally, the existence of social networking sites has been used by all strata of society, including students, teachers, housewives, and workers in the public or private sectors. For example, as stated by Rashid, Rahman and Rahman (2016), teachers' postings on social networking sites are more than just an account of mundane teaching-related experiences, but serve as a mechanism for them to obtain social support to help them reflect on their practice and cope with the emotional turmoil arising from day-to-day challenges at school. This indicates a very advanced development of new technological innovations whenever there are positive reactions and supports from users of the Internet, particularly social media. Furthermore, Rosmawati (2011) explained the advantages of social networking sites that make it a choice of Internet users today, which is due to creating personal information in each user profile easily, as well as communication with various activities. This allows users to be active in virtual communication and share ideas individually. In addition, the user is free to express their thoughts and ideas through their writings on social sites.

### 2.1 Social Media and Wired Generation

As indicated by Jacobsen and Forste (2011), the present undergrad populace is more digitally dynamic than any past era. They are joined with one another through electronic media, for example, the utilization of email, texting (IM), mobile phone communication, social networking sites (SNSs), video or online games, and TV or motion picture seeing.

Thus, it is undeniable to say that the use of social media is also very much related to youth and college students because they are the wired generation. This is correlated with Kohurt et al. (2011), in which they indicated that the Generation Next includes Americans between the age of 18 and 25 years old. Therefore, youths at this age are the people who are engaged with electronic media, specifically social media.

Meanwhile, youths in Nigeria also use social networking to suffice their social needs like friendship. They are motivated and goal-oriented to preserve their self-confidence. Their main sharing activities are mostly on entertainment and friendship. From the statistics, about 1.7 million Nigerians are on Facebook. From most of the research, it could be concluded that Facebook is currently among the most preferred social media site for youth (Anderson, Fagan, Woodnutt, & Chamorro-Premuzie, 2012 as cited in Saodah Wok, 2012). In Malaysia, studies show that Malaysian youths primarily share thoughts and feelings through social media sites. A study by Saodah Wok et al. (2012) also indicated that almost all youths who have social media sites (95.3%) are subscribed to Facebook, followed by Yahoo Mail (75.1%) and Skype (42%). This means that the most popular new social media among youth is Facebook.

On the other hand, according to Barnes (2009), social media also has changed the pattern of college admission. The present era moving on from secondary school has been presented to the Internet since youth, and as being what is indicated, has been named as the "wired era." Be it wired or wireless, those somewhere around 16 and 24 years of age

today are continually joined, connected to music players, mobile phones, the Internet, texting, maybe all on the same gadget. This universe of intelligence and hyper-communication has on a very basic level changed how adolescents and youthful grown-ups receive and process information.

Other than that, a study by Jacobsen and Forste (2011) with respect to the wired era and the utilization of electronic media additionally demonstrated a significant result. They found that the utilization of online networking gives an effect on academic performance among university students. About two-third of the students were accounted for utilizing electronic media while in class, studying, or doing homework. This multitasking is likely expanded diversion, in which something earlier research has indicated to be unfavorable to students' performance (Jacobsen and Forste, 2011). Indeed, access to online networking and mobile phone additionally gives students more prominent access to social situation in general. They give students with extra instruments to meeting new people, keeping in touch with friends and update contacts.

### 3. Research Methodology

Responses from 185 foundation students were obtained through a survey using questionnaires. It was distributed to all courses at Kolej Universiti Islam Selangor (KUIS), Malaysia. All respondents from different backgrounds which included different gender, age and place of residence were given the questionnaire to be answered. This study involved 67% of female students and 33% of male students, somewhat more 19 years old students (66%) and fewer Communication and Information & Technology students (0.5% and 4.3% respectively). Convenience sampling technique was used for sampling in this study. It is easier to collect the data for this research and it will also be much more convenient as this research is conducted in a university college where students are all around the campus. This type of sampling was chosen because it is very beneficial in documenting a particular quality of a substance or phenomenon that occurs within a given sample (Castillo, 2009). Furthermore, it is a technique that is least expensive, less time-consuming and most convenient (Wilson, 2010). Moreover, self-administered questionnaire was chosen to collect the data for this study. Questionnaire covered on specific areas: demographics, purposes of social media usage, and social media outcomes. Descriptive statistics and t-test of SPSS were used to analyze the data.

### 4. Results

#### 4.1 Demographic

Table 4.1 Demographic information of sample (N=185)

Items	Information	n	%
Gender	Male	61	33
	Female	124	67
Age	18	3	1.6
	19	122	65.9
	20	38	20.5
	21	13	7.0
	22	2	1.1
	23	6	3.2
	24	1	0.5
Academic background	Foundation of Islamic Studies	45	24.3
	Foundation of Communication	1	0.5
	Foundation of Management	82	44.3
	Foundation of Arabic Language	49	26.5
	Foundation of Information Technology	8	4.3
Social Media register	Facebook	170	91.9
	Instagram	5	2.7
	Twitter	4	2.2
	Flickr	2	1.1
	Myspace	1	0.5
	LinkedIn	1	0.5
	Others	2	1.1

The results showed that 185 respondents responded to the questionnaire in this research. The demographic information of the respondents is shown in Table 4.1. Almost two-third of the respondents was female students (67%) aged about 19 years old. With regards to the foundation university students sampled, 44% were management students. Facebook is currently the most commonly registered social media among students (92%), followed by Instagram (3%), Twitter

(2%), Flickr (1%), Myspace (0.5%) and LinkedIn (0.5%). We had conducted an independent t-test to compare the usage of social media in a campus environment and the outcomes of social media usage towards male and female students. Out of 49 items, 17 items were related to the purpose of using social media and 32 items were related to the outcomes of social media. The results are explained in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3.

#### 4.2 The purpose of usage of social media among students

Table 4.2 The purpose of using social media among students

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig.
Latest news update	Male	61	4.03	1.224	.007	.931
	Female	124	3.86	1.192		
Communication	Male	61	4.03	1.238	1.018	.314
	Female	124	4.00	1.141		
Finding social contacts	Male	61	3.67	1.151	.902	.343
	Female	124	3.48	1.055		
Updating status	Male	61	3.23	.844	7.319	.007
	Female	124	3.33	1.102		
Checking out what is happening with friends	Male	61	3.80	.980	.397	.529
	Female	124	3.71	1.088		
Online learning	Male	61	3.79	1.199	1.914	.168
	Female	124	3.82	1.082		
Research work	Male	61	3.95	1.189	.328	.567
	Female	124	4.06	1.185		
Finding communities	Male	61	3.92	1.159	.304	.582
	Female	124	3.82	1.141		
Sharing links	Male	61	4.13	5.284	2.168	.143
	Female	124	3.44	1.061		
For passing time	Male	61	3.34	.873	9.550	.002
	Female	124	3.45	1.164		
Leisure/fun/entertainment	Male	61	3.77	.902	1.708	.193
	Female	124	3.66	1.066		
Finding part-time jobs online	Male	61	3.25	1.105	.268	.606
	Female	124	3.20	1.051		
Earning money	Male	61	3.21	1.097	.084	.772
	Female	124	3.09	1.104		
Advertisement	Male	61	3.44	.940	.000	.994
	Female	124	3.12	1.009		
Tagging related resources	Male	61	3.49	.942	1.950	.164
	Female	124	3.10	.909		
Marketing products	Male	61	3.41	1.202	.553	.458
	Female	124	3.28	1.137		
Playing games	Male	61	3.57	1.204	.885	.348
	Female	124	3.12	1.173		

Based on Table 4.2, reasons for using social media varied. 44% of the respondents indicated that research work was the top choice among students using social media. Another 42% used the sites for communication whereas 41% used the sites to update the latest news. Additional reasons reported included finding communities (36%), online learning (32%), checking what is happening with friends (27%), leisure (24%), finding social contacts (22%), playing games (20%), and other reasons such as for passing time (19%), marketing products and sharing links (17%) and updating status (13%). The data indicate that updating status ( $t=7.319$ ,  $p=.007$ ) and for passing time ( $t=9.550$ ,  $p=.002$ ) are significantly different for both genders. When the mean scores are compared, it is found that female students are more responsive towards the usage of social media.

## 4.3 The outcomes of social media among students

Table 4.3 The outcomes of social media among students

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig.
Use social media in class & while doing assignments	Male	61	3.44	1.073	1.200	.275
	Female	124	3.19	1.234		
Helps in course assignments	Male	61	3.87	.922	.660	.418
	Female	124	3.99	3.764		
Used as an educational tool	Male	61	3.62	.897	3.247	.073
	Female	124	3.63	1.040		
Can develop connections with peers	Male	61	3.56	.742	6.902	.009
	Female	124	3.56	.981		
Contribute and participate actively with others	Male	61	3.51	.698	4.201	.042
	Female	124	3.34	.927		
Increase GPA	Male	61	3.33	.769	.032	.858
	Female	124	3.09	.893		
Make students addicted to it	Male	61	3.79	.915	1.073	.302
	Female	124	3.60	1.058		
Creating anxiety	Male	61	3.51	.887	.002	.963
	Female	124	3.27	.957		
Forced to study much faster	Male	61	3.28	1.002	.154	.695
	Female	124	3.05	.978		
Forced to do more work than students can handle	Male	61	3.30	.972	1.998	.159
	Female	124	3.02	.906		
Forced to work with tight schedules	Male	61	3.03	.752	12.375	.001
	Female	124	2.85	.971		
Forced to change study habits	Male	61	3.02	.885	2.126	.147
	Female	124	2.93	.981		
Made students less productive	Male	61	3.07	1.078	.034	.854
	Female	124	3.43	.947		
Have to miss study	Male	61	3.10	1.044	1.994	.160
	Female	124	2.89	1.184		
Hard to concentrate on study	Male	61	3.03	1.016	2.637	.106
	Female	124	2.96	1.212		
Tension weakens ability to do assignment	Male	61	2.97	1.016	.808	.370
	Female	124	2.92	1.159		
Difficult to balance online activities and academic preparation	Male	61	3.41	1.055	.020	.887
	Female	124	3.47	1.055		
Interfere responsibilities at campus	Male	61	3.33	.944	.400	.528
	Female	124	3.02	1.040		
Have to put off doing things at college	Male	61	3.66	3.966	2.534	.113
	Female	124	2.81	1.164		
Spend less time with family and friends	Male	61	3.13	1.024	4.217	.041
	Female	124	2.84	1.258		
Sacrifice vacation and weekend time	Male	61	2.97	1.291	.580	.447
	Female	124	2.55	1.232		

Table 4.3 shows the outcomes of social media on foundation students' academic performance and personal development. With regard to the sample, they stated that foundation students can be affected with social media sites, both positively and negatively. The positive outcomes are social media helps in course assignments (24%), used as an educational tool (24%), can develop connections with peers (18%), used in class and doing assignments (16%), contribute and participate actively with others (10%), and increase GPA (9%). Meanwhile, the negative outcomes are social media made students addicted to it (25%), difficult to balance online activities and academic preparation (19%), creating anxiety (14%), made students less productive (13%), have to miss study (11%), hard to concentrate on study (11%), spend less time with family and friends (11%), forced to study much faster (10%), tension weakens the ability to do assignment (10%), interfere responsibilities at campus (10%), forced to do more work than students can handle (8%), sacrifice vacation and weekend time (8%), forced to work with tight schedules (4%), forced to change study habits (4%) and have to put off doing things at college (0.5%). The result illustrates that the outcomes such as can

develop connections with peers ( $t=6.902$ ,  $p=.009$ ), contribute and participate actively with others ( $t=4.201$ ,  $p=.042$ ), forced to work with tight schedules ( $t=12.375$ ,  $p=.001$ ), things are not completed due to demands of social media ( $t=3.979$ ,  $p=.048$ ), spend less time with family and friends ( $t=4.217$ ,  $p=.041$ ) are significantly different for both genders. When the mean scores are compared, male students are more responsive towards social media conflicts and outcomes.

## 5. Discussion

Engaging with social media has been proven as an increasingly important communication and creative activity, especially in the lives of young people. Social media and youth cannot be separated. It is believed that social media is not just increasingly important in Malaysia, but also all around the globe. The findings on gender in this study are similar in their use of social media. Data collected of this study proposed that practically all foundation students used the same usage of social media. As indicated by Lenhart et al. (2010), 71% of adolescents have a Facebook account. This concurs that Facebook indeed is the most preferred and commonly used social media (Saodah Wok, 2012). Due to the prevalence of social media sites, students are increasingly aware of others' values by accessing friends' posts and profile information.

Therefore, we provide numerous motives as to why the undergraduates used media networking. Interaction with closed relatives and peers was the prior reasons to them. With friends and family living all over the world and having busy lives, communicating via a computer is a more convenient option. Searching for latest news and new communities was also a prominent reason for using social media. This indicated that undergraduates used media networking as a main medium for leisure and interaction. Sharing their information and status updates at their wall posts are the collective ways to communicate. Apart from that, undergraduates still sent messages in private and forwarded pictures. The students spend a majority of their time on social media looking at others' profiles, wall posts, and photos. As this information is readily available, it is possible that others' values as expressed in social media can be adopted as the standards in which users judge themselves. This is true as Rosmawati (2011) explained the advantages of social networking sites that make it a choice of Internet users today, which is due to easily creating personal information in each user profile, as well as communication with various activities. This suggests that the values displayed on others' profile pages can influence their friends' attitudes. In short, foundation students felt convenience to interact and share information with closed relatives and peers via social media. Jacobsen and Forste (2011) found that social media also provide as a medium to keep connection among users.

In terms of the level of social media usage, since the results showed that many foundation students used social media daily, it proves that social media indeed gives huge outcomes to them. They are students who cannot live in peace without browsing social media sites right after they wake up from sleep. They think that they have to log into social media sites daily because they need to know about the current status of their friends. The popular positive outcomes that are noticed among foundation students are to develop connections with peers and also to contribute and participate actively with others. They love to share notes on religious values, to share academic-related news and to share latest photos. However, there also negative outcomes, such as the social media forced them to work with tight schedules, they cannot get things done due to the demand of social media and they spent less time with family and friends.

In recent years, social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have expanded impressively and enabled millions of users of all ages to develop and support personal and professional relations. These social media act to fulfill undergraduates' leisure time that is not filled with organised tasks such as class discussion and assignments. The use of social media facilitates offline social interaction. These were due to the fact that undergraduates could do several activities at one time such as to send and receive messages or to make plans with peers for dating, hanging out, or socialising. By accessing to social media, undergraduates able to meet new people and keep in touch with peers. Furthermore, students use social media of different kinds social media, for instance to check Facebook while interacting via instant messaging (IMing). Such social media usage may affect to its meaning as filler for leisure time. For instance, the time they spent to watch television would replace the time spent to go out with peers since they used to fulfill leisure time. Social networking able to effect undergraduates' lifestyle and this related with lesser quality interaction with closed relatives and peers Our findings indicate that almost two-third of the foundation students used social media when they are in the campus.

In sum, the results of this quantitative study suggest useful information on the social media usage among foundation students in Malaysia. It is reported that foundation students use social media with diverse purposes with diverse outcomes.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study showed that the most popular social media among foundation students is Facebook. The population that has been studied used Facebook shows that Facebook will be using more in the near future. Therefore, most students are involved in social media. Almost 92% of the respondents in this research would sign up Facebook account. Because of that, students log into social media sites almost daily. Besides, most of the respondents agree that they are somehow addicted to social media. This is because the Internet and social media present a means of communicating, sharing and providing fast and easy access to information by removing time and space constraints. It is important to behave carefully and economically about the time spent for these time-consuming virtual environments to receive the benefit from today's technologies efficiently and not to be captured by social media. Furthermore, the

findings showed that social media did not affect students' lifestyle. If they are studying or doing something that are related to academic, they will not be interrupted by social media activities.

Moreover, the attitudes and behaviors of students in the study are more to the positive side. They are confident about the adequacy of their academic skills and abilities and they have performed well academically as they anticipated they would even though they used social media for non-academic purpose. Social media is a new platform for students to express their true self and share information relevant to their daily activities. The use of positive outcomes should be fostered and inculcated into the minds of Malaysian students. However, negative outcomes are bad for students. Students should take heed of this issue. Nevertheless, the decision is still in their hand. This suggests that these foundation students still need to be educated about the possibilities and risks of social media.

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