“The Darker Side of Social Media: Addicted Youth of Pakistan”

BY:

ANAM AAMIR ***01-221141-037***

SUPERVISOR:

Omar Sajid

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Department of Management Sciences (GS)

Bahria Institute of Management and Computer Sciences

Bahria University Islamabad

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my parents for providing me with their unwavering love and support in every way possible and my aunt for loving me like a daughter, supporting and helping me withevery single thing, to my cousins, friends and supervisor for being a great help throughout and giving me the motivation and encouragement to complete my thesis. This would not have been possible without any of these people, and I am forever indebted and grateful to them.

ABSTRACT

The Internet has an unimaginable power to connect, mobilize and influence the current population. Social network sites, video and picture sharing sites, online games and gadgets such as iPods and cell phones are now permanent fixtures of youth culture. They have proliferatedthe lives of the youthso much that it is now hard to comprehend that less than a decade ago, technologies like these barely existed. Youth nowadays may be coming of age and struggling for identity and autonomy just like their predecessors, but they are doing so in the midst of a new world for technology communication, friendship, play, and self-expression. Social media in today's world has become a quick way to get information and explore content created by some of the most extraordinary minds of our time, but it has been proving to be detrimental to multiple aspects of today's youth. This thesis is an exploratory study abouthow the youth has become so preoccupied and obsessed with social media that it has become a source which distracts them from engaging in the real world. While most youngsters engage in some form or the other of social media (including Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter etc.) and consider it to be a daily part of their lives, the Social Media Addiction amongst the youth is characterized by the level of its usage being so extreme that it negatively affects the responsibilities and relationships in their lives.It has also become common for the youth to view and take part in their real experiences, with a concern of how it can appear in the social media world, as opposed to just being present and living the moment, in what they are doing. While some level of their need to record their experience is understandable, but too much of this concern and constantly searching for ways of convincing their social media audience of a certain self-image is worrisome. Social media has rapidly taken over many of the youngster's social lives, impacting social skills, self-esteem and emotional health. For so many youngsters that already experience their life as being full of pressures to be 'good enough' in many different ways and struggle with making sense of their own

identities, we find that the excessive use of social media is confusing and distracting them further, as well as having a negative impact in various other aspects of their lives. This research is an exploratory one in nature and aims to explore the various negative impacts on a youngster's life, resulting from being addicted to social media. A qualitative method of research is adopted in this study, and data is collected through interviews. Findings counsel that most of the youngsters do exhibit addictive behaviors with regard to social media, which is impacting multiple aspects of their lives negatively. To minimize or offset this addiction, some recommendations are listed in this study, which will slowly but surely help in making a difference and will help to overcome the social media addiction amongst youngsters.

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