

Academic Learning via Social Media among University Students in Lahore

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Abstract

This study investigated “Academic Learning through Social Media among University Students in Lahore,” specifically how they have experienced satisfaction when using Wikipedia, WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube information for their academic learning. With the help of convenience sampling, a sample of 500 students from The University of Lahore and The University of the Punjab were chosen and a quantitative survey was created to gather information from them. The findings showed that most students utilize social media for academic reasons, value it highly, and view it as a reliable source of knowledge and information. The most significant and concluding finding was that adopting social media for academic learning could put universities at risk for significant problems in the future. According to the report, higher education institutions should instead provide opportunities to give students the skills needed to evaluate the quality of material.

Keywords: Wikipedia, Social Media, Academic learning & University Student.

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1. Introduction

One of Albert Einstein’s quotations reads, “Once you stop learning, you start dying.” Learning is the process of studying, doing, being taught, and experiencing anything in order to gain new skills, information, and understanding. Learning has a significant influence on human behavior since humans learn from birth until death. Since learning enhances the development of skills, moral judgements, concepts of justice and injustice, and other ideas, it serves as the foundation for maturation as well. In fact, it would be accurate to say that education affects every aspect of our lives (physicscatalyst 2021). Formal and informal learning can be separated into two main groups. Informal learning is defined as “learning that occurs as a result of regular activities that are related to work, family, or pleasure but do not frequently result in certification.” In contrast to informal learning, formal learning is “education that is delivered by a training or educational institution and leads to certification” (Assad and Samy 2017).

Today, the world is rapidly changing due to social media as it is widely used and has taken off globally. As a result, it becomes an essential component of our life that cannot be removed from us. We cannot ignore social media in our daily lives because it is the most significant, powerful, and influential tool for communication and one of the most crucial tools in the learning process in the emerging world. Social media is a computer-based technology and a collective term for websites and applications. Social media is a platform where users may create and exchange content, including ideas, interests, information, and other forms of expression. Social media also has a lot of opportunities to meet the expanding needs and expectations of its users. In order to better serve its users and meet the needs and demands of broader audiences, social media has increased its wide range of possibilities, such as information and entertainment. Social media has influenced the globe in a variety of ways, including entertainment, information, and guiding people. Social media is quickly changing society and establishing new trends because of how simple it is to use and how quickly it does so. The use of social media for learning and knowledge acquisition has become routine, in addition to using it to communicate with friends, classmates, and family.

Social media provides advantages for both teachers and students since it encourages them to communicate and engage with one another in constructive ways. Social media is almost often utilized to

announce events, such as when we will be doing something or when our lecturers will be posting their lecture schedules, etc. The quality of education will also contribute to the improvement of the learning process; but, technology alone won't revolutionize the way people learn. Social media platforms give users the ability to set up online accounts, post, write, and share content like photographs and videos, which encourages free exchange of ideas. Additionally, it supports collaborative content production and sharing, as well as intriguing and cutting-edge approaches to teaching, learning, and research.

Social media is a powerful educational tool in the modern era that can be used to improve teaching and learning in underdeveloped countries, and young people today are no longer restricted to the traditional classroom's four walls because modern education has shifted to a more student-centered model. These new technologies could help and enhance teaching and learning in higher education. Social media has been embedded in every area of our lives, and mobile technology and web 2.0 have made education linked with studying whenever, wherever, and from any device. Students were using these technologies for their education, and they wanted teachers to include social media tools into their lessons. They demonstrated extremely positive attitudes, high motivation, and a strong need to integrate and incorporate social media into their academic lives in order to take advantage of the benefits of new technologies, which students strongly believed outweighed the negatives. This led to the conclusion that social media is an effective educational tool for anytime, anywhere, mobile learners and that those working in the educational field need to pay it more attention.

Since the internet became accessible in Pakistan in the early 1990s, there are now a large number of internet users there. Pakistan has been building a quick and functional internet since 2007. With 118.8 million users, Pakistan currently has the eighth-highest number of internet users worldwide (pta 2021). Social media Platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Wikipedia are thought to have allowed young people in Pakistan, where social media usage has surged, the courage to publicly share their ideas on a variety of social and political matters. Social media has increased user involvement and made it feasible for people to both create and consume content. WhatsApp and YouTube are two examples of social media platforms that have made great strides in the communication system that enhances learning. These platforms also include many capabilities that work as a vehicle for social change and quick information transfer.

Lynn and Morrison saw social media as a game-changer for education and thought social media will revolutionize education (Mowafy 2018). When compared to other countries, it is found that relatively less research has been done on social media as a tool for research and learning. However, some schools are looking at the success stories of those who have used social media in the classroom. Due to these tactics, new research has been started to investigate the glaring contradiction between higher education and social media (Amin 2018). According to a study, using social media for learning can lead to chances for learning that are only available "online" and not in "real classrooms" (Blin and Munro 2007). Nowadays, most colleges and universities have a specific page or group on at least one social media platform where staff, teachers, and students can interact and share content. Social media can support educators' use of the inquiry-based method and foster communication between educators and students.

Since students utilize social media to improve their learning process, communicate more effectively with one another, find out about university-related issues, and gain other crucial information, students have come to view it as a very useful tool for their academic work or courses. In other words, college students seemed to be utilizing social media as a form of contemporary instruction. They also admit that excessive social media use is a problem since it wastes their time and money, but the negative effects of their use seemed to be much less severe than the good ones. The use of social media in the classroom has long been a topic of discussion. Facebook may be a useful tool in academic contexts but many parents and teachers are concerned about the effects of social media use in the classroom. It makes it possible to incorporate multimodal content into a platform that many students are already accustomed to, such as student-made images, videos, and URLs to other literary works. Additionally, it allows students to ask more frivolous questions that they might not normally feel inspired to ask in person during office hours.

Governments were required to maintain distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Public institutions have embraced social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp as well as other digital communication technologies like Microsoft Teams and Zoom for teaching and learning. It has been observed that students' use of social media and Microsoft Teams has improved their access to knowledge and learning resources, had a positive impact on their capacity to create knowledge and engage in critical reflection, and enhanced their learning experiences. However, some students expressed dissatisfaction with the evaluation

and feedback received for courses that made use of social networking sites.

Google Slides and WhatsApp, among other online tools and social media platforms, are used for online teaching and learning, according to the HEC (Higher Education Commission) of Pakistan. Due to WhatsApp's widespread use nowadays, anyone with a smartphone can use it to stay in touch with those close to them as well as those who are far away by using it to communicate. However, in this contemporary era and the context of COVID-19 in all of the world's educational systems, the HEC (Higher Education Commission) of Pakistan also issues strict directives to all educational institutions to prepare an online learning management system (LMS) that must have the capability to accept various types of content, including documents, PDF files, audio files, and recorded lectures. In addition, the HEC permits the use of WhatsApp for academic purposes. On its website, HEC provides a tutorial on how to make the most of this useful tool for academic study. Students can talk about their issues with their teachers on WhatsApp by calling them on audio or video, leaving voice messages and notes, and sharing photographs or files. HEC continues by stating that YouTube may be used for both academic and non-academic learning. Videos on the natural sciences, coding, virology, literature, critical thinking, and more can be found on the TED-ED channel on YouTube. Additionally, they provided a link to a discussion with worldwide experts on topics including science, politics, government, and more. HEC shows its concern for instructors by providing YouTube links for their mental health (HEC 2020).

Objectives of the study:

- To find out the frequency of social media usage in academic learning of university students in Lahore.
- To discover the gratification that students get by learning from social media as compared to defined curriculums in the universities of Lahore.
- To investigate the challenges that the universities can face in future, due to the usage of social media in academic learning among university students of Lahore.

Research Questions:

RQ1: To what extent do the university students of Lahore use social media in academic learning activities?

RQ2: What type of gratification do university students get by learning from social media as compared to defined curriculums in the universities of Lahore?

RQ3: What kind of challenges in future the universities can face due to the usage of social media in academic learning among university students in Lahore?

Research Hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant relationship between academic learning and usage of social media among university students of Lahore.

H2: There is a significant relationship between academic learning and gratification that university students get by learning from social media.

H3: There is a significant relationship between the education challenges of universities and students' adaptability to social media in their academic learning.

2. Literature Review

Social Media

Web-based technology and a category of internet-based applications known as social media have highly

interactive platforms that allow individuals and groups of individuals to trade, discuss, and change views, interests, information, and other forms of expression. The word “social media” that is commonly used is a website that interacts with us while still providing us with information, so it is more than just that. The term “social media” can also apply to a system that allows people to communicate with one another by creating, sharing, and trading material across numerous networks. The rising use of social media on mobile devices, which has now become one of the key debate platforms, has created new opportunities for browsing browsing (Kausar 2019). Furthermore, Buettner defines social media as a “computer-mediated tool” that allows individuals, businesses, or organisations to generate, disseminate, and exchange information, ideas, photographs, videos, and other types of content (Destiny Oberiri 2016).

When social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter initially became available, the globe was separated between online and offline zones. Social media platforms are online tools that allow individuals interact and create relationships both locally and globally. It enables us to communicate with one another on a global scale, as well as listen to music, read books, see photos, and do a variety of other activities. Social media has simplified and connected our lives. The concept of a global village has become a reality thanks to social media, where millions of people communicate, and numerous benefits have been realized as a result of its use realized (M. Talaue, et al. 2018).

Social Media in Pakistan

Pakistan now has the eighth-largest internet user population in the world, with 118.8 million users (pta 2021). Social media has a tremendous impact on us and is gradually becoming a part of our daily lives. As more people of all ages use internet-capable devices such as mobile phones, iPads, and tablets, an astonishing increase in internet usage, particularly on social media networking sites, has been noted in Pakistan. They utilize social media for connection, entertainment, and information. The most popular social media sites for these activities are Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube activities (Zaheer 2018).

It should be noted that social media is primarily used in Pakistan for social contact and political debate. However, social media is also used for e-commerce, social and political discussions, and social involvement. According to reports, the arrival of social media has enabled Pakistani youth to publicly express their thoughts on a variety of social and political issues. In comparison to previous generations, today’s youth are significantly more expressive and connected. In reality, social media use has exploded in Pakistan. According to GeoNews, there are over 44 million social media accounts in the country, with Facebook having the most users (30 million across the country) (Zaheer 2018).

Students addictiveness to social media

Students increasingly use smartphones to access Facebook and other social media sites, despite the hazards to their academic and professional activities. Social media addiction is created by an individual utilizing the internet excessively and failing to exhibit self-control, which can severely impact a person’s life. Some young individuals are so socially obsessed that they have isolated themselves from reality and created a fantasy world for themselves. Parents have complained that it was difficult to keep their children’s attention since they were so absorbed in the fascinating world of social networking. Although the cause of students’ poor academic performance is obvious nowadays, the quality of lecturers and lectures is usually blamed (Peter 2015).

According to a survey, young people are regularly seen conversing in highly private and formal settings such as churches, mosques, and lecture halls. However, some people are so reliant on it that they carry on a conversation while walking down the street, causing them to lose focus on their visible companions and jeopardies vital duties like studying and writing. Many people who believe in learning new things and improving their talents are currently concerned about it (Destiny 2016).

A study was conducted to analyze social media use and the prevalence of social media addiction among undergraduate students. It was discovered that social media addiction is not gender or age dependent. All very dependent students and 70.6% of moderately addicted students believed that social media had a negative impact on their overall academic performance. These data imply that there may be a negative relationship between social media usage and school performance (Beyene 2018).

It is undeniable that social networking sites are becoming a reliable and popular means of

communication. Teenage students are increasingly using social networking sites (SNSs), and this use has a wide-ranging impact on them. A study found that, while social networking sites enhanced many things, such as studies and teen relationships, they also had some negative consequences, such as time wasting, an increase in crime and immoral behavior, and an increase in monthly spending (Parvez, et al. 2019).

Social media in academic learning

Students appeared to regard social media to be a very useful tool for their academic work or courses since they utilize it to improve their learning process, communicate more effectively with one another, learn about university-related problems, and gain other relevant information. In other words, college students appeared to exploit social media as modern teaching tools. They admitted that excessive social media use is harmful since it wastes their time and money, but the negative implications appeared to be far less severe than the good ones. Professors, faculty, and other social media users, particularly Facebook page owners, are encouraged to offer valuable content that assists students to expand their knowledge and information. Furthermore, no link was established between students' use of social media, both positively and negatively, and their academic success (Deen 2019).

Ahmed Hasanein's research examines how students respond to COVID-19 courses that use Microsoft Teams and social networking sites as their exclusive distance learning tools. The findings revealed that students' use of social networking sites and Microsoft Teams improved their ability to access information and learning resources, had a positive impact on their ability to construct knowledge and engage in critical reflection, and improved their overall learning experiences. However, they complained about poor evaluation and feedback for SNS-enabled courses. Several implications for academics, policymakers, and educators were provided to improve learning experiences and deal with pandemics or other emergencies, especially pertinent to universities that lacked adequate facilities (Hasanein, Elnasr and Sobaih 2020).

Because modern education has grown more student-centered, our children are no longer confined to the four walls of the traditional classroom. These new technologies have the potential to help and improve teaching and learning in higher education. As social media has become embedded in every part of our lives, mobile technology and web 2.0 have made education synonymous with studying anytime, anywhere, and on any device. According to Duah Kwaku Stephen's study, which looks at how social media technologies are used in higher education teaching and learning, social media is a very successful educational tool that may be used to improve teaching and learning in developing nations. Participants indicated exceptionally positive views, a great readiness, and a strong desire to adopt and incorporate SNS into their schooling in order to reap the benefits of these technologies. According to the study's conclusions, social media is a valuable educational resource for anytime, everywhere mobile learners, and those working in the education sector should pay more attention to it (Stephen and Nelson 2021).

A study that assessed the impact of social media sites on young people's quality of life across several dimensions discovered that social networking is changing how children interact with their parents, peers, and technology. The study's key findings revealed that social media has a substantial impact on the lives of young people. Social networking sites attract their attention and direct it toward inappropriate actions, resulting in youth distraction from studies and poor academic achievement, despair, anxiety, and other physiological concerns (Aatiqa, et al. 2022).

3. Theoretical Framework

The theory of uses and gratification is pertinent to the current study as it suggests "what people do with media" NOT "what media do to people". The current study illustrates how university students utilize social media sites like YouTube, WhatsApp, and Wikipedia only to meet their cognitive needs (need of learning) to acquire knowledge. To put it another way, users select media based on how well it satisfies their own needs or desires. According to the second assumption, media is chosen in the belief that it will suit the specific wants and preferences of the targeted audiences, this theory takes us in the direction of the phenomenon of what university students or clients do with media to meet their needs.

Social learning theory is relevant to this study as it focuses on the adoption of behaviors by keen viewers of a certain activity and suggests the process of learning by observing how others interact with one another in

public. For example, a child may use what they have learned by observing a sibling respectfully ask for and receive a treat. Today’s university students see their peers and course mates with smart phones, tabs, laptops, etc. with internet access and do many activities on social media such as gathering information about universities, sharing information about lecture that their class mates did not attend, finding information about topic that they did not understand in class, etc. By seeing these activities, the other students also follow this to stay updated as their class mates and friends do.

4. Methodology

The necessary information was gathered online using Google Forms. This study’s population consisted of all students at The University of Punjab and The University of Lahore. Convenience sampling, a type of non-probability sampling approach, was chosen for this study. This sampling strategy was used because it allows the researcher to collect the necessary data at his leisure. Through convenience selection, a total sample size of 500 students was chosen. The Cronbach Alpha test was used to assess the questionnaire’s reliability, which resulted in a value of 0.84, which is deemed good. A questionnaire was utilized to collect the essential data from the pupils. Section A: Demographic Data, Section B: Social Media Usage Information, and Section C: Research Questions comprise the questionnaire. The study’s research design was a survey. The collected information was analysed using frequency count and percentage descriptive statistics.

5. Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do the university students of Lahore use social media in academic learning activities?

Table 4.1: Frequency of Using Social Media

S/N	Statements		SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1	The use of social media for academic purposes is essential.	Frequency	284	183	28	5		500
		Percent %	56.8	36.6	5.6	1		100
2	My use of social media has a good impact on my academic learning.	Frequency	189	246	47	16	2	500
		Percent %	37.8	49.2	9.4	3.2	0.4	100
3	In comparison to academic learning, I spend more time on social media for idle or entertaining purposes.	Frequency	128	146	59	106	61	500
		Percent %	25.6	29.2	11.8	21.2	12.2	100
4	Since I began using social media, my academic learning has improved.	Frequency	195	231	53	20	1	500
		Percent %	39	46.2	10.6	4	0.2	100
5	I normally have unrestricted access to Facebook, which has improved my academic learning.	Frequency	181	243	43	30	3	500
		Percent %	36.2	48.6	8.6	6	0.6	100
6	I use YouTube as a helping tool for my academic learning.	Frequency	326	161	7	5	1	500
		Percent %	65.2	32.2	1.4	1	0.2	100
7	WhatsApp allows me to contact friends who live far away to ask for assistance with my studies.	Frequency	355	137	3	4	1	500
		Percent %	71	27.4	0.6	0.8	0.2	100
8	There are various social media forums that provide useful study material, and these are the best sources of knowledge and information for me.	Frequency	246	240	11	3		500
		Percent %	49.2	48	2.2	0.6		100
9	For me, Wikipedia is the most effective academic learning tool.	Frequency	218	241	33	7	1	500
		Percent %	43.6	48.2	6.6	1.4	0.2	100
10	Wikipedia helps me to find out fresh and updated information.	Frequency	328	161	5	6		500
		Percent %	65.6	32.2	1	1.2		100
Total		Frequency	2450	1989	289	202	70	5000
		Percent %	49	39.78	5.78	4.04	1.4	100

The figure 4.1 shows to what extent do the university students use social media for their academic learning in which forty nine percent participants responded Strongly Agree, thirty-nine-point seven eight percent participants responded Agree, five-point seven eight percent participants responded Neutral and four-point zero four percent participants responded Disagree while only one-point four percent participants responded Strongly Disagree that they are frequently used social media.

Research Question 2: What type of gratification do university students get by learning from social media as compared to defined curriculums in the universities of Lahore?

Table 4.2: Student’s gratification

S/N	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
11	Social media use in the classroom increases my involvement and satisfaction.	Frequency 204 Percent % 40.8	251 50.2	35 7	10 2		500 100
12	I am satisfied with the information available on Wikipedia.	Frequency 262 Percent % 52.4	199 39.8	35 7	3 0.6	1 0.2	500 100
13	I use Wikipedia just to get general ideas.	Frequency 340 Percent % 68	151 30.2	7 1.4	2 0.4		500 100
14	I feel satisfied by seeking information from social media.	Frequency 227 Percent % 45.4	237 47.4	30 6	5 1	1 0.2	500 100
15	I accomplish my tasks exclusively from Wikipedia, without checking any other sources.	Frequency 273 Percent % 54.6	201 40.2	13 2.6	12 2.4	1 0.2	500 100
16	Learning from social media enhances and develops my understanding about a specific topic.	Frequency 284 Percent % 56.8	210 42	3 0.6	3 0.6		500 100
17	Learning from Wikipedia enables me to finish responsibilities like homework and projects faster.	Frequency 290 Percent % 58	202 40.4	5 1	3 0.6		500 100
18	Social media learning is superior to university curriculums.	Frequency 267 Percent % 53.4	215 43	11 2.2	7 1.4		500 100
19	It does not take much effort or time to learn from Wikipedia.	Frequency 296 Percent % 59.2	195 39	6 1.2	3 0.6		500 100
	Total	Frequency 2443 Percent % 54.29	1861 41.36	145 3.22	48 1.06	3 0.07	4500 100

The figure 4.2 shows the gratification of students which they get by learning from social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Wikipedia in which fifty four point two nine percent participants responded Strongly Agree, forty one point three six percent participants responded Agree, three point two-two percent participants responded Neutral and one point zero six percent participants responded Disagree while only zero point zero seven percent participants responded Strongly Disagree that students get gratification by using social media in academic learning.

Research Question 3: What kind of challenges in future the universities can face due to the usage of social media in academic learning among university students in Lahore?

Table 4.3: Challenges faced by Universities in Future

S/N	Statements		SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
20	Due to using social media in academic learning, the universities will lose their importance.	Frequency	303	164	4	28	1	500
		Percent %	60.6	32.8	0.8	5.6	0.2	100
21	Universities will lose their previous learning atmosphere.	Frequency	297	160	5	37	1	500
		Percent %	59.4	32	1	7.4	0.2	100
22	Future students will not take admissions to universities due to the use of social media in academic learning.	Frequency	300	154	4	40	2	500
		Percent %	60	30.8	0.8	8	0.4	100
23	Due to fewer admissions, universities will face a financial crisis.	Frequency	300	154	3	40	3	500
		Percent %	60	30.8	0.6	8	0.6	100
24	Because of the poor state of the economy, investment in new institutions will decline, resulting in low literacy and the closure of all universities.	Frequency	328	125	3	43	1	500
		Percent %	65.6	25	0.6	8.6	0.2	100
Total		Frequency	1528	757	19	188	8	2500
		Percent %	61.12	30.28	0.76	7.52	0.32	100

The figure 4.3.3 shows the challenges that could be faced by universities in future in which sixty one point one two percent participants responded Strongly Agree, thirty point two eight percent participants responded Agree, zero point seven six percent participants responded Neutral and seven point five two percent participants responded Disagree while only zero point three two percent participants responded Strongly Disagree that Universities can face risky challenges in the future due to the usage of social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and Wikipedia in academic learning.

6. Discussion

Today, the vast majority of students utilize Wikipedia for academic learning and regard it as an effective tool. As the studies have shown that the majority of university students utilize Wikipedia content frequently or regularly for academic and course-related work (Kim, Joanna Sin and Yoo-Lee 2014, Alison and Eisenberg 2017, Amina, Warraich and Malik 2021). In the current study, a considerable number of respondents had favourable impressions about Wikipedia and considered it as a dependable source of information because it allows them to acquire current and correct information. The study’s findings demonstrate that, even knowing that Wikipedia contains inaccuracies, most students still exclusively read Wikipedia articles. They do not edit, amend, or add as much as they gather information.

The study’s findings showed that social media has become a key part of students’ lives, with the majority of students stating that it is important for academic learning. YouTube and WhatsApp are the most popular sites among university students in Lahore, with YouTube being the most used for academic learning. Most respondents utilize YouTube more frequently for academic learning. The findings suggest that the majority of students are satisfied with the use of social media in the classroom, as it allows them to interact and improve their participation. Additionally, they are satisfied when they seek knowledge from social media, which improves and develops their comprehension of a certain issue.

The majority of students believe that if students continue to use social media for academic study, colleges will lose their value. This is due to the loss of the environment that they had previously, such as books in libraries not being suggested by lecturers, the value of lectures provided by instructors not remaining, and students not listening to them as they did previously. Additionally, new university comers’ students will not seek admission to universities due to the use of social media in academic learning, leading to financial issues and reduced investment in new colleges and campus branches, resulting in poor literacy and a negative impact on literacy on a national scale.

7. Conclusion

This study found that the majority of students use social media for academic learning. Students thought that Wikipedia is a valuable source of knowledge and information, but it is not a trust worthy or recommended source of information. Members of higher education should provide the finest rules for using Wikipedia rather than fully prohibiting its use. Additionally, students utilize Wikipedia to learn about the context of their research, particularly in the early stages. Students are social media addicts, and there is a significant link between academic learning and social media usage among university students in Lahore.

The study's findings show that students like using social media, and should not be discouraged from doing so, especially on campuses. It has made it possible for individuals to participate freely in group discussions and seek their peers for assistance on a particular topic. However, using social media for academic learning satisfied them because they had no difficulty finding information on Wikipedia or lectures on YouTube. They also rely on Wikipedia content to accomplish their coursework and other academic tasks, improving and expanding their knowledge on a given issue.

The study found that the majority of students believed that universities would become less important due to students using social media to achieve academic learning objectives or prescribed curriculum. This is because students join in colleges and universities to learn and enhance their knowledge and abilities, and if this goal is not met, they will leave those institutions. Additionally, universities will lose their previous learning atmosphere and future students will not seek admission to colleges due to high tuition rates. Additionally, universities will face financial crisis due to fewer admissions which become a cause of poor economy and will result in less investment for new institutions. These circumstances lead to low literacy and no new universities being created.

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