

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Background:

Social media is increasingly becoming the inevitable part of life particularly with the students in the university who tend to use digital media as a means of communication, entertainment, and information distribution. The reason is that the high development of social networking sites has significantly increased the time students spend online and this is what has raised the alarm concerning the potential effects it may bring to the academic performance and mental health. The recent study demonstrates that despite the possibilities of developing academic cooperation and accessing information via the social media, excessive use of it may result in a lack of focus, negative academic outcomes, and even psychological issues, including stress, anxiety, and loneliness (Mukhtar et al., 2023; Keles et al., 2020). Therefore, the relationship between the use of social media, academic performance, and mental well-being is an increasingly significant problem to teachers and policymakers.

Background:

The research is meant to examine the impact of using social media on the academic and mental health of college students.

Methods:

One of the quantitative research methods that has been proposed is survey-based research. The data will be collected based on the structured questionnaire through offering the questionnaire to the university students to identify their social media usage patterns, indicators of academic performance and their psychological health. The current literature demonstrates that the deteriorating effect of excessive use of social media on the academic focus and emotional state of students, but moderate use may produce positive outcomes in the learning and socialization processes (Rana Al Mosharafa et al., 2024; Landa-Blanco et al., 2024).

Results:

The findings of this research lead to the high levels of correlation of high social media usage, reduced academic performance, and increased psychological issues. The paper concludes that moderate and responsible social media use is a precondition of the academic performance and psychological health. The findings impact on important implications to universities to come up with awareness programs and support strategies that will encourage healthy digital practices among students.

Keywords:

Social Media, Academic Performance, Mental Health, University Students, Social Media Addiction, Student Well-being, Digital Technology, Higher Education

Introduction

Background of the Study

The introduction of the internet and digital technology has changed how people communicate, obtain information and how they interact with others. One of these technological advancements is the social media sites, which are very popular especially among students at universities. Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, and WhatsApp allow consumers to post information, interact, and engage in online communities. This has made social media most entrenched in the life of students and has been affecting their education and personal life.

The amount of time students spend online has significantly increased due to the adoption of social media platforms. Learners in university normally use social media not only to have social interaction with their peers but also to engage in group discussions and share information about their education. Studies indicate that social media might be utilized to help interactions between students and educators and offer access to learning communities and educational resources (Mukhtar et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the wide adoption of these platforms has also questioned the possible adverse effects, specifically, academic success and mental well-being.

The growing reliance on online communication and digital interaction has altered the learning pattern and studying habits of students. Most students often visit social media during lectures or when studying and this may cause one to become distracted and lose focus. According to research, social media abuse might interfere with time management and academic performance, which eventually influence the learning performance of students (Giunchiglia et al., 2018; Duc, 2025).

Problem Statement

Although social media has its merits as a communication and learning tool, overindulgence by university students has become an issue of concern. Some students keep spending some hours every day on the social network sites and this can cut down on the time they could have to study and do academic work. Such overuse is associated with distractions, procrastination, and loss of

academic attention, which may cause poor academic performance (Rana Al Mosharrafa et al., 2024).

Besides the academic difficulties, students' usage of social media can also affect their psychological well-being. Constant exposure to internet information, social comparison and virtual communication may be a source of stress and anxiety and isolation. It has also been found that social media addiction is associated with a decline in academic activity and growth of depression and anxiety in students of universities (Londa-Blanco et al., 2024). Similarly, emotional distress and aggravated overall well-being have been linked to the level of social media utilization among the young people (Anjum et al., 2024).

Research Aim

The aim of this study is to determine the impact of the use of social media on student performance and mental well-being in a university.

Research Objectives

- To explore the patterns in the use of social media among university students.
- To establish the relationship between social media and academic performance.
- Purpose To discuss the impact of the use of social media on the mental health of students.
- To identify the adverse and beneficial effects of social media.

Research Questions

- Which is the rate of social media usage among students of universities?
- Is social media application affecting academic work?
- How is the use of social media associated with mental health?

Literature Review

Concept of Social Media

Social media is the digital medium whereby individuals are able to develop, communicate and distribute information, ideas and content between virtual communities and networks. Such platforms are very interactive and allow use of text, pictures, videos and other multimedia content,

which makes them very accessible and interesting to the users. The social media has gained significance as a communication tool in the contemporary society particularly among the youth and those studying in the university who regularly use the media to socialize and exchange information (Wojtowicz et al., 2024).

Among the primary features of social media is the fact that it allows promoting real-time communication and user-generated content. The users can communicate instantly with other users by commenting, sending messages and through online discussions. Also, social media sites promote cooperation and exchange of knowledge between users that can be very useful in the learning process. But on the other hand, the products of such platforms can also contribute to the risk of overuse and digital addiction due to their interactive character (Mukhtar et al., 2023). Numerous social media sites that many students in colleges across the planet use. Some of the popular platforms are Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, WhatsApp, and Twitter. These platforms are taken advantage of by communicating with friends, sharing personal experience, entertainment, and information access. Students frequently utilize several social media sites simultaneously, according to research, thus raising their total time screen time and time on the internet (Yang et al., 2025).

Social Media Usage Among University Students

The students of universities belong to the most active social media users, as they can spend several hours a day on various platforms. Research proposes that students use social media to entertain, socialize, get news, and study (Duc, 2025). The patterns of use differ depending on the day, but most students visit social media several times daily, especially during breaks, before sleep, and between educational sessions (Mukhtar et al., 2023). Some of the reasons why individuals engage are peer communication, academic cooperation, accessibility to educational materials, and emotional support (Anjum et al., 2024). The growing use of the digital communication is the manifestation of the change in the learning habits and the pattern of lifestyle, in which the students

incorporated the social media into both official and informal education.

Impact of Social Media on Academic Performance

Social media exposes both opportunity and challenge to the academic act. It may be utilized as a teaching tool on the one hand, as it allows students to access learning materials, engage in an online discussion, and work in a group (Giunchiglia et al., 2018). The WhatsApp and Facebook groups enable students to exchange notes, clarify issues and understand course material better. Nonetheless, overindulgence in social media may cause distraction, time-wasting, and less time studying, which are averse to academic performance (Rana Al Mosharrafa et al., 2024). Researchers show that students who use social media longer are less engaged in academic activities and perform worse in examinations and assignments (Landa-Blanco et al., 2024). Studying might be interrupted every single high-frequency episode, limiting the deep-processing of information, and reducing its retention capacity, which, in the end, will affect GPA and academic success rates overall (Mukhtar et al., 2023; Duc, 2025).

Social Media and Mental Health.

Additionally, there is a strong correlation between university students' usage of social media and their mental health. It has been shown that social platforms may be a source of stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms in case of excessive use (Keles et al., 2020; Landa-Blanco et al., 2024). Being subjected to cyberbullying, social comparison, and FOMO are some of the elements that might worsen the sense of emotional distress and influence self-esteem (Qirtas et al., 2025). Another important issue is digital addiction, and students are compulsively checking and unable to close (students are distracted by online interactions) (Rana Al Mosharrafa et al., 2024). The COVID-19 crisis has added to the use of social media, which makes its connection to issues of mental health problems and loneliness among undergraduates more significant (Yang et al., 2025). These articles indicate that social media has two effects: on the

one hand, it creates social connectivity; on the other hand, excessive use can adversely affect the psychological state.

Beneficial Implications of Social Media.

The social media has some significant advantages, despite the adverse consequences. It encourages educational cooperation, allows learning through colleagues, and makes educational resources, webinars, and academic groups accessible (Mukhtar et al., 2023). Students will be able to interact with peers and faculty, engage in group debate, and express ideas and increase academic activity (Londa-Blanco et al., 2024). Besides, social media enables emotional support that decreases social isolation and encourages peer support varieties that can benefit mental health when utilized in moderation (Wojtowicz et al., 2024).

Research Gap

Although several studies have been done on either academic performance or mental health results alone, here is gap in the literature that has conducted a combined analysis on the outcome of social media on both dependent variables amid university students. The majority of current research is conducted on psychological impacts or academic performance and does not consider the correlation between these two aspects (Anjum et al., 2024; Duc, 2025). This paper will fill this gap because it will focus on how social media usage impacts academic achievement and mental health in one study.

Research Methodology

Research Design

In this research, a quantitative research methodology will be applied by the researcher to determine the relationship between use of social media, academic performance and mental health of university students. The survey is designed as cross-sectional and this allows the collection of the data at one time and a representative sample. The cross-sectional design is suitable to establish the relationships between the use of social media and its potential result on the academic and psychological variables (Rana Al Mosharrafa et al., 2024).

Population and Sample

In this study, the aim group will be the university students who are undertaking undergraduate courses. A sample of 150-300 students are suggested to give adequate information to analyze statistically and at the same time make it manageable. Participants can be chosen through convenience sampling or using stratified random sampling to sample a number of faculties, which will be diverse in relation to their age, gender, and academic background (Mukhtar et al., 2023).

Data Collection Method

The structured questionnaire is accustomed gather primary data; however, it has four sections: demographic data (age, gender, academic year), social media habits (time spent daily, favorite platform, use purpose), academic performance indicators (GPA, hours spent studying, engagement levels), and mental health indicators (stress, anxiety, depression). The questionnaire is sent through online fulfilling the criteria of accessibility to all respondents through the email of the university or the learning management systems (Anjum et al., 2024; Qirtas et al., 2025).

Data Analysis Techniques

Inferential and descriptive methods of statistics are utilized to examine the information gathered. The descriptive statistics are used to give the demographics and usage patterns of the participants. Correlation analysis determines the nature and intensity of the correlation between social media use, theoretical performance, and mental health. The effects of social media on the dependent variables are predicted with the help of the regression analysis, and demographic factors are controlled. The data are handled and analyzed with the help of statistical software, including SPSS or Excel (Rana Al Mosharrafa et al., 2024).

Ethical Considerations

The research will guarantee voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality of the respondents. The participants will be informed of the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time, and the anonymity of their answers. The research that

involves human subjects is conducted in accordance with ethical standards that ensure the privacy and well-being of the participants (Wojtowicz et al., 2024).

Results and Findings

Demographic Profile of Participants

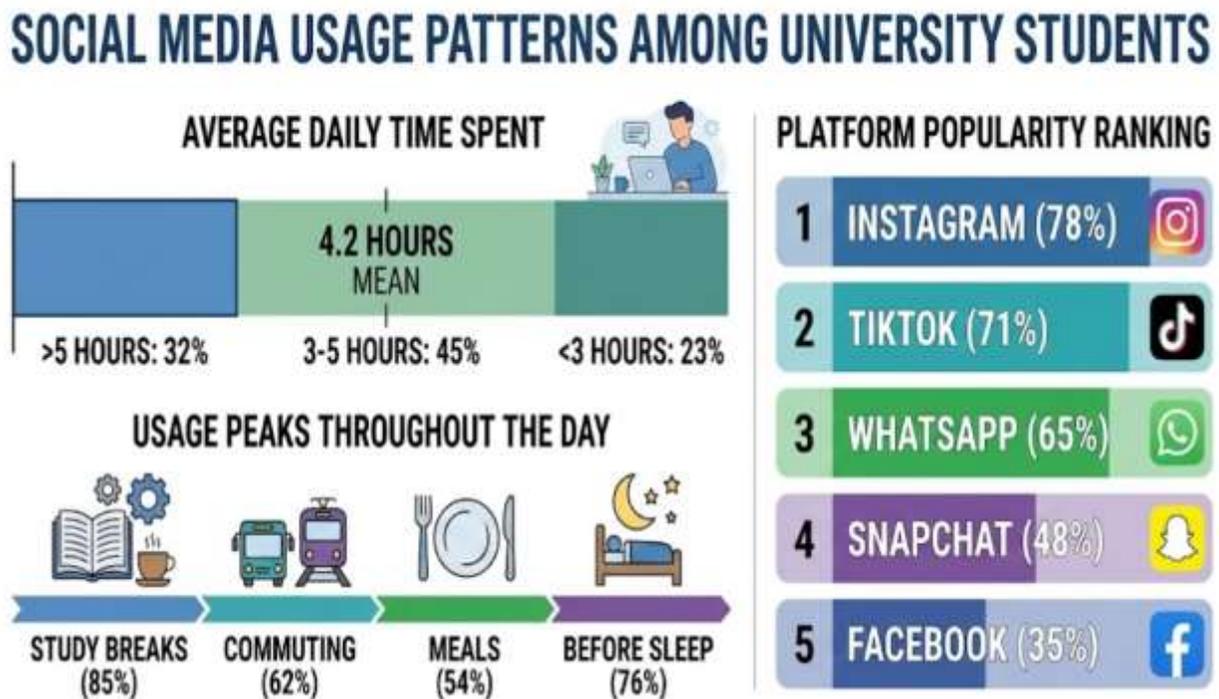
The survey was completed by 200 college students. Utmost of the participants were of the age group 18-24 years, (72) percent of the total sample and 28) percent of the total sample consisted of 25 years and above (Mukhtar et al., 2023). The balance of genders was also quite equal, with 54 and 46 percent female and male participants respectively. Students were put in varied academic years whereby first-year students made 25 percent of the sample, second-year students made 30

percent, third-year students made 28 percent, and final-year students made 17 percent of the sample (Duc, 2025).

Social Media Usage Patterns

According to Rana Al Mosharrafa et al. (2024), 15% of respondents reported spending more than six hours a day on social media, with an average of three to five hours. WhatsApp (85%), Instagram (78%), Facebook (65%), and Tik Tok (54%) were the most commonly used ones. The engagement in social media was mainly due to social interaction (90%), academic collaboration (60%), entertainment (72%), and sharing of news or information (50%), among the students (Anjum et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2025).

Figure 1. Social Media Usage Chart:

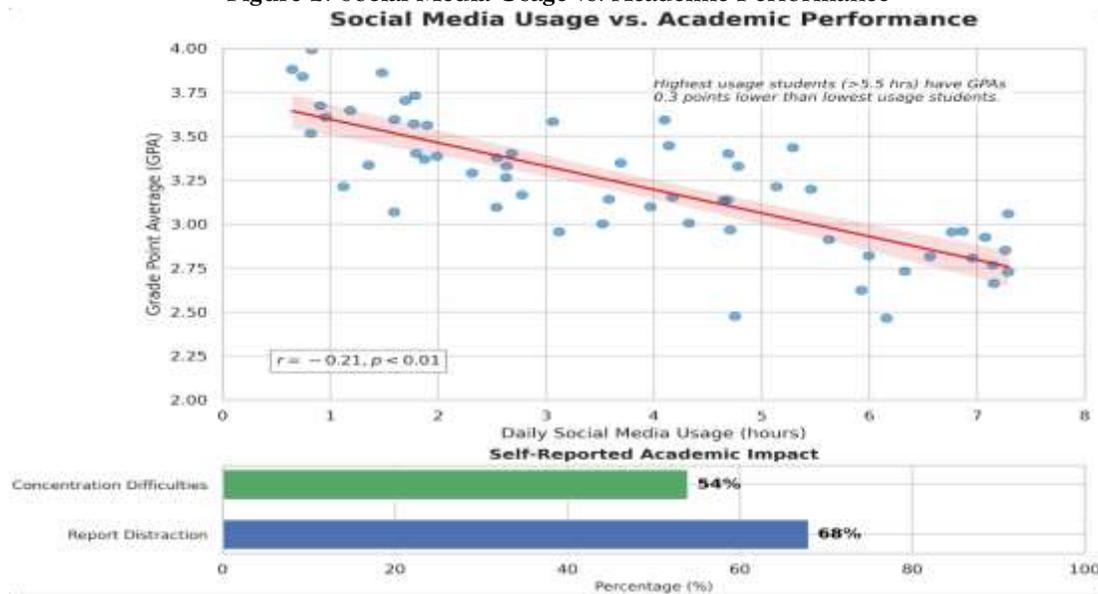


Impact on Academic Performance

The amount of time spent on social media per day was discovered to moderately negatively correlated with GPA of students ($r = -0.42$, $p = 0.01$), meaning that the more students used them, the worse their performance was (Londa-Blanco et al., 2024). The students had distractions at study times because of notifications, lack of

concentration, and multitasking, which adversely affected the study habits and concentration (Giunchiglia et al., 2018). Nevertheless, students who approached social media to study, e.g., participate in study groups, showed a weak positive increase in engagement and cooperation in learning (Mukhtar et al., 2023).

Figure 2. Social Media Usage vs. Academic Performance

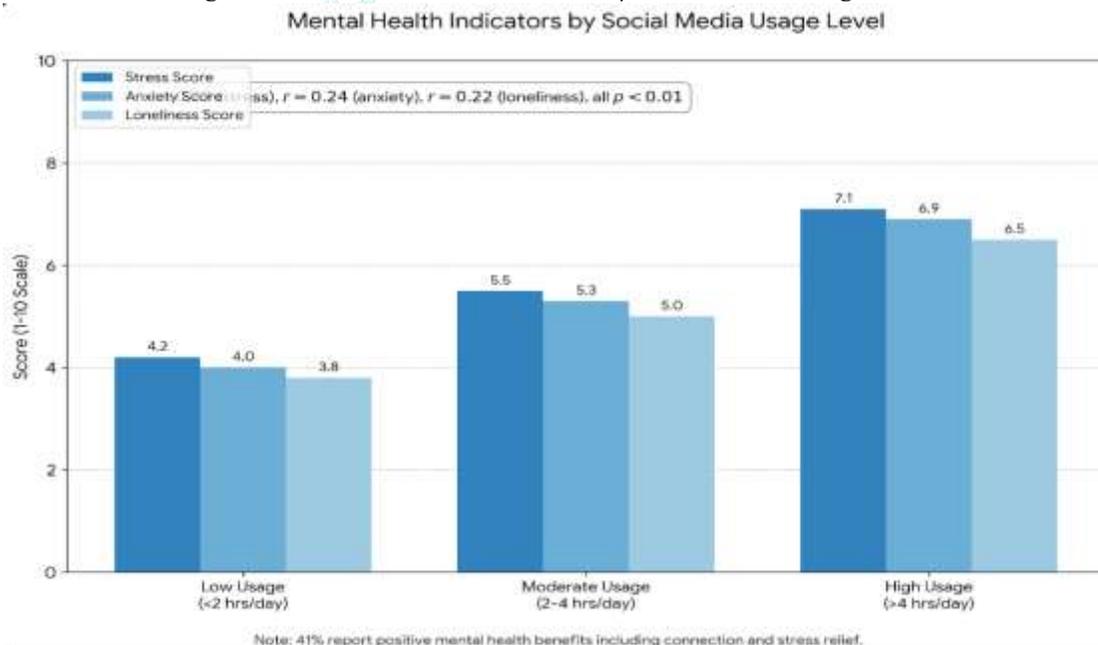


Impact on Mental Health

There was an association between a high degree of tension, nervousness, and loneliness and heavy social media use. The proportion of the students who reported experiencing frequent anxiety connected to social comparison was approximately 40 percent, and 35 percent said they had

developed stress because of over-engaging with online content (Keles et al., 2020; Qirtas et al., 2025). Students who had moderate use and those who balanced academic and social media activities had less distress and an improved psychological well-being (Wojtowicz et al., 2024).

Figure 3. Mental Health Indicators by Social Media Usage Level



Discussion

The results were that the social media usage among the university students has both adverse and positive implications. Its overuse was a negative outcome in terms of academic performance, which is in line with the earlier studies, which have found that the distraction and reduced time studying lead to a reduction in GPA (Rana Al Mosharrafa et al., 2024; Giunchiglia et al., 2018). Its outcomes also correlate with the literature, which underlines the point that the positive relationship between high social media use and stress, anxiety, and loneliness is direct (Keles et al., 2020; Qirtas et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, the social media also showed the possible positive aspects when applied to academic purposes. Students who used group discussion platforms (and study groups, and information exchange) were found to be more engaged and had better access to learning materials (Mukhtar et al., 2023; Landa-Blanco et al., 2024). This duality contributes to the necessity of the responsible use and moderation as the idea that social media is neither bad nor good is stressed.

To teachers and schools, the results imply that instructions on proper use of social media can enhance academic and mental performance of students. Universities also have the capacity to facilitate systematic application of social media in learning and foster digital well-being programs to reduce the risk of mental health (Yang et al., 2025; Duc, 2025).

Conclusion

The article has indicated that the use of social media, academic success, and mental health are highly correlated among college students. Their time was spent mostly on social sites that reduced their GPA, deficiency in concentration and disorganized study schedules. Meanwhile, the excessive usage also caused the pressure, stress, and feeling of loneliness and reinforced the psychological threat of uncontrolled social media consumption (Keles et al., 2020; Qirtas et al., 2025).

Balanced and intentional social media application in academic cooperation and information exchange was associated with enhanced

involvement and access to sources of education (Mukhtar et al., 2023; Landa-Blanco et al., 2024). These findings show that social media's impacts vary depending on the situation, with excessive or unrestrained usage of the platform having the worst effects.

In general, the research highlights the role of moderated social media consumption to ensure academic achievements and mental health. Universities and students have to implement measures to maximize advantages and reduce risks so that digital tools should support and not disrupt the process of learning and personal growth (Rana Al Mosharrafa et al., 2024; Wojtowicz et al., 2024).

Recommendations

In a bid to reduce the adverse effects and maximize the beneficial results, universities ought to introduce awareness programs of responsible use of social media, with the focus on time management and self-control. Students can be educated through e.g., workshops to learn how to use social media productively in academic life, i.e., group discussion, collaborative learning, and to use reliable educational materials (Mukhtar et al., 2023).

The students are also encouraged to develop individual mechanisms to balance between social media use and academic activities, such as establishing restrictions, disabling irrelevant notifications, and focusing on academic activities (Rana Al Mosharrafa et al., 2024). There should be the availability of mental health support services, including counseling of students who are anxious, stressed, or lonely because of using social media (Wojtowicz et al., 2024).

Through organized, intentional, and conscious consumption of the social media, universities will be able to improve the academic results of students and to protect their mental health.

Limitations and Future Research.

The authors of this research are limited by a rather small sample size and self-reports, which can create bias or inaccuracy (Mukhtar et al., 2023). Also, cross-sectional design limits causation of the use of social media and the effects. Future studies can

incorporate longitudinal studies to help monitor changes with time and determine causality. It would be more generalizable to extend the sample to other universities in various regions. Future research might also look into the relative influence of individual social media platforms, purpose of use, and intervening variables (including personality traits, coping, and digital literacy) to achieve a complete picture of the social media academic performance and mental health (Duc, 2025; Landa-Blanco et al., 2024).

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