

Social Media and Students: Exploring the Link Between Usage, Academic Performance and Mental Health

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Abstract:

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, deeply influencing various societal sectors, including education. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are not only avenues for communication and social interaction but also provide students with opportunities for information sharing and learning. With the increasing prominence of these platforms, the impact of social media on academic performance has garnered significant attention. While it offers potential benefits, such as facilitating collaborative learning and easy access to educational content, it also presents challenges, including distractions, procrastination, and a potential decline in academic engagement (Junco, 2012). This paper investigates several questions related to linkage between Social Media Usage, Academic Performance and Mental Health. The research work has been carried out to study the impact of Social Media on the Academic Performance and Mental Health of the students in Bhiwani District of Haryana, India. A sample size of 60 was taken for the study from Postgraduate Students studying at University Teaching Departments of Chaudhary Bansi Lal University (CBLU). The main findings of the study show that Social media is beneficial for connecting with friends and family, finding information and resources, and networking for career opportunities. Social media can lead to academic distractions, feelings of inadequacy, cyber bullying, and mental health concerns. It also contributes to sleep disturbances and the pressure to maintain a positive online image. The need to take breaks from social media to maintain mental health is widely recognized among students.

Keywords: *Social Media Usage, Social Networking Sites, Academic Performance, Mental Health, Academic Distraction*

INTRODUCTION

Social Media has become an integral part of modern life, deeply influencing various societal sectors, including education. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are not only avenues for communication and social interaction but also provide students with opportunities for information sharing and learning. With the increasing prominence of these platforms, the impact of social media on academic performance has garnered significant attention. While it offers potential benefits, such as facilitating collaborative learning and easy access to educational content, it also presents challenges, including distractions, procrastination, and a potential decline in academic engagement (Junco, 2012). The advancement of social media has taken over almost all spheres of human endeavors despite negative implications.

Recent studies have examined the impact of social media on students' academic performance, revealing mixed results. While some research suggests a positive association between social media use and academic performance (Goet, 2022), others indicate a negative impact (Dhiman, 2022). Social media has become an integral part of students' lives, occupying a significant portion of their free time (Talaue et al., 2018). Students typically spend between 30 minutes to 3 hours daily on social media platforms, primarily accessing them through mobile phones (Dhiman, 2022). Some studies highlight the potential benefits of social media for student development, including enhanced communication, socialization, and access to educational resources (Goet, 2022; Talaue et al., 2018). However, excessive use of social media can negatively affect academic performance, suggesting a need for responsible usage (Dhiman, 2022; Talaue et al., 2018). To mitigate potential negative effects, researchers recommend encouraging students to utilize social media for educational purposes and to balance their time between online activities and traditional learning methods (Dhiman, 2022). Social media serves as a platform where people from all over the world can connect and interact with each other. It is an online platform where people use to build social networks or social relations based on similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds, or real-life connections (Akram, 2017). According to Das & Sahoo (2010), people consume additional time interacting with their friends and sharing information on social media websites, leading them to become addicted to checking their own status multiple times a day.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Khanna (2021) conducted a study on social media Academic Performance and Psychosocial Risk of Young college students who uses internet in Assam, India. Social media and internet help students in excelling their study and communication. It has made our world a micro village. Just sitting in a class room, a student can access various information about their subjects and increase their knowledge about the topic concerned. But the studies and

experiences show problematic internet and social media use can affect academic performance of the students. As noted by Lau (2017), "Using Social Media for academic purposes did not significantly predict academic performance. Social Media Multitasking and Social Media usage for non-academic purposes, especially video gaming, significantly negatively predicted academic performance". Alwagait & Shahzad et al (2015) found that there is no linear relationship between Social Media usage per week and GPA scores. However, these authors have identified Time Management as an important factor which affects the academic performance of the students adversely. The findings of the studies by Giunchiglia, Zeni et al (2018) shows that the different patterns of influence were observed between social media usage and academic activities. They highlighted the importance of controlling smartphone usage in educational institutions. Social media impacted academic performance of university students positively and significantly through collaborative learning and engagement with peers and teachers (Al-rahmi & Othan, 2013). The students are spending excessive time in Social Media platforms. The study by Owusu & Larson (2015) shows that students spent between 30 minutes to 3 hours per day using social media on their phones. The use of social media sites had a negative impact on academic performance of tertiary institution students. Weekly social networking site usage significantly affects academic performance, while age, prior achievements, and daily usage have little impact. This highlights the need for strategies to enhance students' time management and multitasking skills for better academic outcomes (Magableh, Rajab et al, 2015)

Kaur and Dhillon (2020) conducted a study on the impact of social media on academic performance and mental well-being among university students in India. Their research found a complex relationship where using social media too much can harm both students' grades and their mental health. For instance, students who spent a lot of time on social media often found it harder to concentrate on their studies, leading to lower academic achievement. Additionally, excessive use of social media was linked to higher levels of anxiety and depression among students. These findings highlight the need to encourage students to use social media responsibly. By promoting healthy social media habits, universities can help students avoid these negative effects and improve both their academic performance and mental well-being.

Kumar (2020) conducted a study on the effect of social media on the academic performance of students in Cuddalore District. Using random sampling, the study surveyed 1,000 students. The goal was to examine how students' use of social media impacts their academic performance. The study found that most students had mobile phones with internet access and were aware of social media. It was observed that students who spent between 5-6 hours a day on social media performed better academically than those who spent less time. Additionally, students who used their spare moments on social media also had better academic performance.

WhatsApp was particularly beneficial for academic performance. Students who used WhatsApp for educational purposes showed higher academic achievements than those who used it for non-academic purposes. The study highlighted that when students used social media positively and for academic reasons, it had a beneficial impact on their education. Most students used social media to chat about academic topics, which helped improve their academic performance. Kumar's study shows that social media can be a powerful tool for learning if used properly.

Chatterjee and Kar (2019) conducted a study on college students in Eastern India, revealing diverse patterns of social media usage characterized by frequent engagement for purposes such as social networking, information dissemination, and entertainment. Their findings underscored the ubiquitous presence of social media platforms in the lives of Indian youth, highlighting the need for further exploration into its ramifications.

Singh and Rana (2019) did a study to learn about how using social media affects the minds of Indian teenagers. They found that it can lead to more stress, anxiety, and problems with self-esteem. This happens because of things like comparing themselves to others and being bullied online. But they also discovered that teenagers have ways to deal with these problems, like talking to friends and spending less time online. Understanding these findings can help create programs to make teenagers mentally stronger and happier.

Research Objectives

1. To study correlations between social media usage and academic performance among postgraduate students.
2. To explore the psycho-social implications of social media usage on the mental health of postgraduate students.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design has been used for this research. The study was done to know the Impact of social media on the Life of Postgraduate students. The universe of the study was postgraduate Students studying of various departments studying at Chaudary Bansi Lal University, Bhiwani in Haryana. Chaudhary Bansi Lal University (CBLU) is a state university in the city of Bhiwani, Haryana. University was established by the Government of Haryana in 2014 under Act 25 of 2014 and recognized by the University Grants Commission under 2(F) and 12B. At present the University offering various postgraduate courses under 22 department of teaching. A sample size of 60 Students was taken from various postgraduate course of Chaudary Bansi Lal University, Bhiwani for the survey.

Primary data was acquired from Students through sampling by using a Google Form. The

researcher prepared Questionnaire and created google form. The link of google form was shared with students. The students were contacted face to face to fill the google form. The collected responses were cross- checked and ensured that all entries were made genuinely by the respondents. MS- Excel and Google form were used for tabulation and data analysis.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's findings. To address the objectives, percentages were calculated and organized into tables. The research focused on evaluating the linkage of Social Media, Academic Performance and Mental Health among Youth. The survey included male and female students from various age groups. The demographic information such as Gender, Age Groups, Residence, Annual Level etc, was collected from the respondents. The demographic characteristics of the postgraduate students surveyed are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
- Male	32	53.3
- Female	28	46.7
Age Group		
-Early 20s: 20-23	41	68.3
-Mid 20s: 24-26	18	30
-Late 20s: 27-30	04	1.7
Resident		
- Rural	42	70
- Urban	18	30
Income (Annually)		
-Below 1 lakh	21	35
-1 lakh to 3 lakh	24	40
-3 lakh to 5 lakh	4	6.7
-More than 5 lakh	11	18.3

(n=60)

Gender Distribution

The sample consisted of 53.3% male students ($n = 32$) and 46.7% female students ($n = 28$). This near-even gender distribution provides a balanced perspective on how social media impacts both male and female students in terms of their academic performance and psycho-social well-being.

Age Groups

The majority of the participants (68.3%, $n = 41$) were in their early 20s (20–23 years), followed by 30% ($n = 18$) in their mid-20s (24–26 years). A smaller proportion, 1.7% ($n = 4$), were in their late 20s (27–30 years). This range of ages provides a comprehensive view of how social media impacts students at different stages of their postgraduate studies.

Residential Background

Regarding their residential background, 70% ($n = 42$) of the students were from rural areas, while 30% ($n = 18$) were from urban areas. This shows that most of the students in the study live in rural areas.

Annual Family Income

The annual family income distribution revealed that 35% ($n = 21$) of respondents reported income below 1 lakh, 40% ($n = 24$) fell within the range of 1 to 3 lakhs, 6.7% ($n = 4$) had income between 3 to 5 lakhs, and 18.3% ($n = 11$) reported income exceeding 5 lakhs. This demographic profile provides a contextual understanding of the sample, offering insights into their diverse backgrounds, which may influence their social media usage and its subsequent impact on academic performance and mental health. In the second part of the questionnaire, questions related to the social media usage were asked from the respondents.

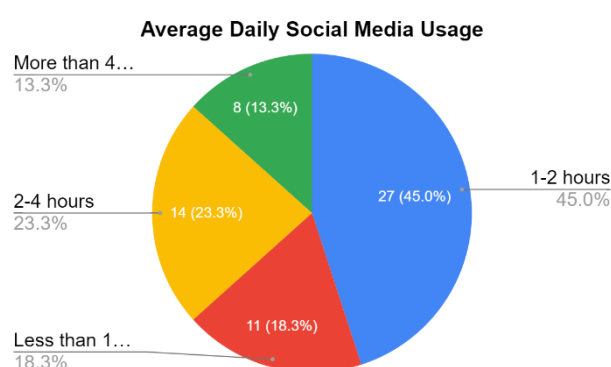


Figure 1: Average Daily Social Media Usage

Out of the 60 postgraduate students surveyed, the majority spend 1-2 hours (45%) on social media each day, followed by 2-4 hours (23.3%), less than 1 hour (18.3%), and more than 4 hours (13.3%). This data reveals how students allocate their daily time to social media, which can have both positive and negative effects on their academic performance and mental well-being.

Table 2: Analysis of Social Media Usage and Its Perceived Positive and Negative Effects on Students

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage(%)
Social Media Platform		
-Facebook	2	3.3
-WhatsApp	20	33.3
-Instagram	17	28.3
-YouTube	17	28.3
-Snapchat	4	6.7
Perception regarding Positive Impact of Social Media on Student's Life		
-Strongly agree	9	15
-Agree	21	35
-Neutral	26	43.3
-Disagree	3	5
-Strongly disagree	1	1.7
Perception regarding Negative Impact of Social Media on Student's Life		
-Strongly agree	4	6.7
-Agree	23	38.3
-Neutral	28	46.7
-Disagree	5	8.3
-Strongly disagree	0	0

(n=60)

Table 02 depicts that WhatsApp emerged as the most frequently used social media platform, with 33.3% of respondents indicating it as their primary choice. Instagram and YouTube are equally popular, each being the preferred platform for 28.3% of the students. Snapchat is used by 6.7% of the respondents, while Facebook is the least frequently used platform, with only 3.3% of students reporting it as their primary social media platform. This distribution shows a

clear preference for instant messaging and multimedia sharing platforms among postgraduate students in Bhiwani district, Haryana.

15% strongly agree that social media has a positive impact on their lives, while 35% agree. A significant portion, 43.3%, is neutral, meaning they don't see social media as either particularly positive or negative. Meanwhile, 5% of students disagree and 1.7% strongly disagree that social media has a positive impact. This shows that while many students see benefits in social media, a large number are unsure about its impact.

Perceived Advantages of Social Media Usage Among Students

Based on the responses of 60 postgraduate students, social media positively impacts their lives in several ways:

- 48.3% use it for connecting with friends and family.
- 71.7% use it for finding information and resources.
- 30% use it for networking and career opportunities.
- 36.7% use it for entertainment and relaxation.

These findings indicate that social media serves as a valuable tool for communication, information gathering, networking, and leisure activities among postgraduate students.

Perceived Negative Impact of Social Media Usage Among Students

It was found that social media negatively impacts lives of students in several ways. First, 66.7% reported being distracted from their studies or work due to social media. Additionally, 23.3% felt inadequate because of comparisons made on social media. Furthermore, 30% experienced cyber bullying or negative interactions online. Lastly, another 30% mentioned that social media had a negative impact on their mental health. These findings highlight the diverse challenges that students face due to social media use, including academic distractions, negative emotions, cyberbullying, and mental health concerns.

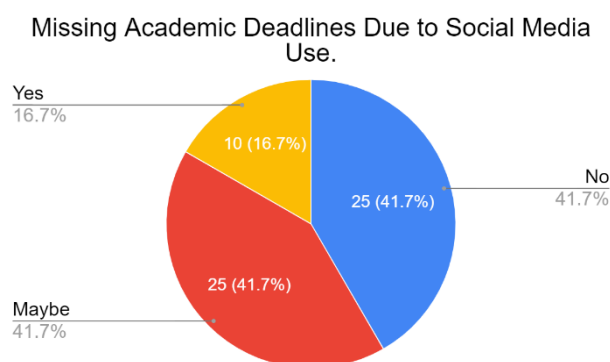


Figure 2: Missing Academic Deadlines Due to Social Media Use

Among 60 postgraduate students, about 16.7% admit that they've missed academic deadlines because of social media. On the other hand, 41.7% say they've never missed deadlines due to social media, while another 41.7% are unsure if social media affects their timeliness with

academic tasks. This shows a mix of experiences and awareness regarding the impact of social media on meeting academic deadlines.

Table 3: Students' Perceptions of Social Media's Role in Academic Distractions and Improvement Strategies

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Distraction from Academic Tasks Due to Social Media		
-Always	7	11.7
-Often	10	16.7
-Sometimes	25	41.7
-Rarely	13	21.7
-Never	5	8.3
Engaging in Meaningful Discussions or Debates on Social Media		
-Always	6	10
-Often	10	16.7
-Sometimes	24	40
-Rarely	14	23.3
-Never	6	10
Limiting Social Media Usage to Improve Academic Performance		
-Strongly agree	5	8.3
-Agree	23	38.3
-Neutral	27	45
-Disagree	4	6.7
-Strongly disagree	1	1.7

(n=60)

Table 3 shows that 11.7% reported always feeling distracted from academic tasks due to social media, while 16.7% said they often feel distracted. Additionally, 41.7% sometimes feel distracted, 21.7% rarely feel distracted, and 8.3% never feel distracted by social media. This shows that social media is a significant source of distraction for many students, affecting their ability to concentrate on their academic work.

Few respondents (10%) reported always engaging in meaningful discussions or debates related to their academic field on social media. Additionally, 16.7% said they often do so, 40% sometimes engage, 23.3% rarely participate, and 10% never engage in such discussions on social media. This suggests that while some students actively use social media for academic discourse, a significant portion does so only occasionally or not at all, indicating varying levels of involvement in scholarly conversations online.

An opinion on the impact of limiting social media use on academic performance were mixed. Approximately 38.3% agreed that reducing usage would be beneficial, with 1.7% strongly agreeing. A significant portion, 45%, remained neutral, indicating uncertainty about its effectiveness. Conversely, 6.7% disagreed, and 1.7% strongly disagreed, suggesting they believed limiting social media would not enhance their academic performance. These findings highlight diverse perspectives among students regarding the role of social media reduction in academic success.

Table 4: Need to Take Breaks from Social Media for Mental Health

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
-Very Often	11	18.3
-Often	11	18.3
-Sometimes	31	51.7
-Rarely	6	10
-Never	1	1.7

(n=60)

Among the 60 postgraduate students surveyed, many feel the need to take breaks from social media to maintain their mental health. About 18.3% feel this need very often, and another 18.3% feel it often. The majority, 51.7%, sometimes feel the need to take breaks. Meanwhile, 10% rarely feel the need, and only 1.7% never feels the need to take breaks. This shows that most students recognize the importance of taking breaks from social media for their well-being.

Table 5: Anxiety or Stress When Unable to Access Social Media

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
-Yes, Often	7	11.7
-Yes, Sometimes	32	53.3
-No, Rarely	15	25
-No, Never	6	10

(n=60)

Among the 60 postgraduate students surveyed, many experience anxiety or stress when they cannot access social media. About 11.7% feel anxious or stressed often, and 53.3% feel this way sometimes. On the other hand, 25% rarely feel anxious or stressed, and 10% never feel this way. This shows that while some students frequently experience anxiety or stress when they can't use social media, others feel it only occasionally or not at all.

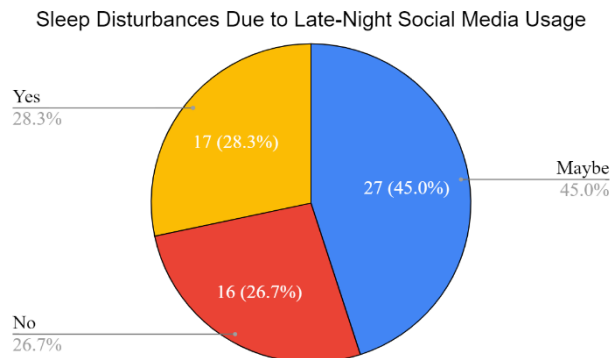


Figure 3: Sleep Disturbances Due to Late-Night Social Media Usage.

Among the 60 postgraduate students surveyed, 28.3% reported experiencing sleep disturbances due to late-night social media usage. Conversely, 26.7% stated that they have not encountered such disruptions. Interestingly, 45% of respondents were uncertain or suggested a potential for experiencing sleep disturbances from late-night social media use. These findings highlight the potential impact of late-night social media use on students' sleep patterns, with a notable portion acknowledging disturbances and others expressing uncertainty about its effects.

CONCLUSION

The research conducted on the impact of social media on the lives of postgraduate students reveals a complex interplay of both positive and negative effects. The study indicates that while social media serves as a valuable tool for communication, information gathering, and networking, it also poses significant challenges related to academic distractions, negative emotional impacts, and potential mental health issues. The near-even gender distribution of respondents provides a balanced perspective on social media's impact, highlighting its significance across both male and female students. The diverse age range and socioeconomic backgrounds of the students suggest that social media's impact is multifaceted, influenced by various demographic factors. A vast majority of students are familiar with and regularly use social media, with platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube being the most popular. Social media is beneficial for connecting with friends and family, finding information and resources, and networking for career opportunities. Social media can lead to academic distractions, feelings of inadequacy, cyber bullying, and mental health concerns. It also contributes to sleep disturbances and the pressure to maintain a positive online image. Students' perceptions of social media's effect on their academic performance are mixed, with some reporting positive impacts, others negative, and a significant portion seeing no impact at all. The emotional response to social media use varies, with some students feeling happy, while others experience anxiety, depression, or frustration. The need to take breaks from social media to maintain mental health is widely recognized among students.

It is suggested that educational programs need to be organized to promote responsible social media usage, prevent cyberbullying, and manage mental health among postgraduate students. Advocacy for time management strategies, access to counseling services, and the development of institutional policies to mitigate the negative impacts of social media is much needed. Additionally, further research is encouraged to explore platform-specific effects, demographic differences, and long-term implications on academic and career outcomes.

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