



A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, social media has woven itself into the fabric of students' everyday lives, greatly affecting how they communicate, manage their time, and approach their studies. This study delves into the connection between social media use and academic performance among university students. We gathered data through a structured questionnaire from 200 undergraduate students across different fields of study. The results show a negative link between heavy social media use and academic performance, especially for those who spend over three hours a day on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat. On the flip side, the research also points out that when social media is used in moderation for educational purposes, it can have a neutral or even beneficial effect. This paper emphasizes the need for digital discipline and offers strategies for balanced social media use to boost academic success.

INTRODUCTION

In the last ten years, social media has completely transformed the way we communicate, share information, and enjoy our leisure time. For college and university students, platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become integral to daily life. These sites provide numerous benefits, including instant access to information, educational resources, group discussions, and a way to keep in touch with friends and teachers.

But it's not all sunshine and rainbows. Many students find themselves spending hours on social media each day, often during study sessions or late into the night. This can lead to issues like poor time management, difficulty concentrating, and even sleep disturbances—all of which can take a toll on academic performance. Additionally, some students have mentioned feeling anxious or distracted after spending too much time online.

1.1 HISTORICAL DATA

Social media really started to take off in the early 2000s, with MySpace and Facebook leading the charge. Facebook, which launched in 2004, quickly became the go-to platform for college students, initially requiring a university email to join. As mobile technology advanced, other platforms like Twitter (2006), Instagram (2010), and TikTok (2016) also gained massive popularity, particularly among younger audiences.

With the rise of these platforms, their impact on student behavior and academic life became more pronounced. In the late 2000s and early 2010s, researchers primarily focused on Facebook, finding that students who spent more time on the site often had lower GPAs. A notable 2009 study by Karpinski and Duberstein revealed that Facebook users tended to perform worse academically than their non-user peers.

As we moved into the 2010s, the research scope broadened to include platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat. Some studies during this time began to shed light on the positive sides of social media, such as peer learning, collaboration, and access to educational resources. Still, concerns about addiction, shorter attention spans, and mental health issues continued to dominate the conversation.



1.2 BACKGROUND

Over the last ten years, social media has completely transformed the way we communicate, share information, and enjoy our leisure time. For students, particularly those in college and university, platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become integral to daily life. These sites provide numerous benefits, including quick access to information, educational resources, group discussions, and a way to keep in touch with friends and teachers.

But with these perks come some drawbacks. Many students find themselves spending hours on social media each day, often during study sessions or late into the night. This can lead to issues like poor time management, difficulty concentrating, and even sleep disturbances—all of which can negatively impact academic performance. Some students also mention feeling anxious or distracted after spending too much time online.

Research on this topic has produced mixed findings. Some experts believe that social media enhances students' learning and collaboration skills, while others argue it leads to lower grades and diminished focus. Given these differing perspectives, it's crucial to delve deeper into the relationship between social media use and student performance

Key Terms

- **Social Media** – These are online platforms where users can create and share content or engage in social networking, like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.
- **Academic Performance** – This refers to how well students do in their educational pursuits, usually measured by grades or GPA.
- **Time Management** – This is all about planning and controlling how much time to dedicate to different activities, especially when it comes to balancing study time with social media use.
- **Digital Distraction** – These are interruptions from digital devices or platforms that can hinder focus and productivity.
- **Educational Content** – This includes information or materials found on social media that aid in learning, such as tutorials, academic discussions, and study tips.
- **Student Behavior** – This term describes the habits or patterns exhibited by students, particularly regarding their social media usage.
- **Survey-Based Research** – This is a method for gathering data from participants by asking questions to gain insights into their experiences and opinions.
- **Entertainment Use** – This refers to the way people use social media for fun, like watching videos, scrolling through memes, or chatting with friends.
- **Academic Engagement** – This indicates how involved and interested a student is in their academic activities.
- **Digital Discipline** – This is the ability to use technology and online platforms in a thoughtful, controlled, and productive manner.

Research Gap

While a lot of studies have looked into how social media affects students' academic performance, there are still quite a few areas that haven't been thoroughly explored. Most of the existing research has zeroed in on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, which aren't as popular with students anymore. There's a noticeable lack of updated studies that take into account newer platforms like TikTok and Instagram, which come with different formats, features, and ways of engaging that could influence academic behavior in fresh ways.

Moreover, many earlier studies mainly highlight the negative impacts of social media, overlooking the potential academic benefits it can offer, such as facilitating group work, providing access to learning resources, or connecting with educational communities.

This study aims to fill those gaps by examining current social media trends among college students and looking at both the upsides and downsides of usage. It also seeks to provide practical tips on how students can better manage their online time to minimize distractions while boosting their learning.



Research Objectives

The main goal of this research is to dive into how social media affects college students' academic performance. More specifically, the study will focus on a few key areas:

- First, we'll look at how much time students are spending on different social media platforms each day.
- Next, we'll pinpoint which platforms are the most popular and what students are using them for—whether it's for fun, learning, or staying in touch.
- We'll also investigate how these social media habits relate to students' grades, like their GPA.
- Additionally, we'll see if using social media for educational purposes has a different impact than using it for entertainment.
- Finally, we aim to offer some practical tips to help students balance their social media use in a way that supports their academic goals.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, we took a quantitative research approach by distributing structured surveys to gather data from college students. Our goal was to dive into their social media usage habits and see how these habits connect to their academic performance.

2.1 Participants

We had 200 undergraduate students from different academic backgrounds at a local university join our study. To make sure we had a good mix, we randomly selected participants, taking into account their gender, year of study, and area of study.

2.2 Data collection tool

We created a questionnaire that was shared both online and in person, featuring a mix of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. The survey aimed to gather insights on:

- How much time people spend on social media each day
- The social media platforms they use the most
- Why they use social media (like for entertainment, education, or communication)
- Their self-reported academic performance, measured through GPA ranges
- If students tend to use social media while studying

2.3 Data Analysis

We took a close look at the responses we gathered, using descriptive statistics to uncover any patterns and connections between social media habits and academic performance. To make the findings easy to understand, we presented the results in tables and graphs. We also compared the social media usage patterns of high performers with those of low performers.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The analysis revealed some interesting insights:

- Students who spent over three hours a day on social media tended to report lower academic performance.
- The platforms that saw the most activity were Instagram and TikTok, primarily used for entertainment.
- Interestingly, those who engaged with social media for educational purposes or academic discussions didn't experience a significant decline in their performance.
- A small group of students mentioned that they managed to juggle both social media and their studies effectively by setting time limits for themselves.

These findings indicate that while social media can be a distraction, its effect on academic performance largely hinges on how and why students engage with it. Excessive and unstructured use can negatively impact study habits, whereas thoughtful and educational use might even enhance learning.

CONCLUSION

Social media isn't strictly good or bad for academic performance; it really depends on how students choose to use it. This study revealed that those who spend excessive time on social media just for fun tend to face more academic challenges. Conversely, students who use it wisely—particularly for educational purposes—can actually reap some



benefits. It's essential for educators and students to collaborate on fostering better time management and digital discipline, ensuring that social media serves as a useful resource instead of a distracting obstacle.

3.1 Key Findings

- Excessive Usage Affects Grades: Students who spent over 3 hours a day on social media noticed a dip in their academic performance.
- Entertainment is the Primary Use: Platforms like Instagram and TikTok are mainly used for fun, rather than for learning.
- Educational Use Has Neutral Impact: Students who turned to social media for academic reasons didn't see their grades drop.
- Time Management Matters: Those who managed their time well and set boundaries found a way to juggle social media and their studies effectively.
- Purpose of Use is Crucial: The effect on academic performance hinges more on how and why social media is used, rather than just the frequency of use.

3.2 Implications

The results of this study carry some significant implications for students, educators, and academic institutions alike. To start, they underscore the importance of being aware of how excessive social media use can affect academic performance. Schools and universities have a great opportunity to step up by providing workshops or resources focused on digital wellness and effective time management.

Moreover, the research indicates that social media isn't necessarily a bad thing—it all comes down to how it's used. Educators might want to think about integrating academic content into popular social media platforms or encouraging students to engage with educational pages and groups, which could make their online time much more beneficial.

Lastly, this study reveals that teaching students to manage their online habits can lead to better academic outcomes and enhance their overall well-being. Parents and academic advisors can play a crucial role by promoting balanced routines and sharing practical tips for minimizing distractions.

REFERENCES

Karpinski, A. C., & Duberstein, A. (2009). *A study on how Facebook usage impacts academic performance for both undergraduate and graduate students. Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association.*