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PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Today's digital scenario has inspired social media to be underwent within the daily life of a student, not only shaped their forms of communication and socialization, but also their educational experiences and health of the mind. This discovery study examines the psychological aspects of social platforms as used in education and intended to identify positive and negative aspects of that use, for educational purposes by university students. Rapid students are leveraging digital platforms for learning use such as collaborative learning, communicating ideas, engaging in academic discussion, and increasing efficiency related to digital literacy, while excessive and uncontrolled use resulted in learning, stress and disintegration and dysfunction with their studies. A quantitative research design is applied with structured questionnaires disseminated across a representative sample of university students to measure some variables such as frequency of use of social media, purpose for use, time management skills, and some psychological indicators including stages of motivation, self-worth, stress, and anxiety. Statistical examination of the data collected indicate that appropriate and purposeful use of social media for education and academic purposes can enhance positively to student's educational experience by enhancing knowledge acquisition, communication, and access to a range of learning resources On the contrary, excessive use of social media outside of an academic context is correlated with emotional exhaustion, psychological distress, and inattention and result in lower academic performances. Important takeaway emphasizes a dual occasion for higher education; Social media can be an excellent educational equipment when used with purpose, but can also damage the psychological welfare and educational activities of students when used improperly. The authors of this study apply media literacy, digital time management and psychological counselling to higher education institutions. This helps students to use social media more appropriately and to maximize psychological health and educational performances on the contrary to the educational value of social media.

INTRODUCTION

In the twenty first century, social platforms have become one of the most important determinants of how humans can interact, communicate and learn. Various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube and TikTok entertainment, but are also important sources of information and engagement with educational activities. For university learners, who represent a considerable population highly engaged in the technological digital world, university students are experiencing a more direct involvement in their academic and non-academic lives than previously. With the great limit of social media use, it creates opportunities and risks to consider its actual work in education and academic performance from a psychological point of view (Al-Hawary, 2023)

Social platforms has altered learning processes by providing students with the means, opportunity, and environment to take part in collaborative learning, communicate with friends, and learn from enormous amounts of educationally related material. Additionally, students utilize the online platform by discussing coursework requirements, sharing course materials, discussing group projects, and participating in online communities. In this way, social media has been shown to have the ability to increase educational potential and academic engagement and motivation when used appropriately. In contrast, social media is often misused and overused for non-academic purposes, which can result in distraction, procrastination, poor concentration, or stress that hinders academic success (Nasir, 2024)

Psychological aspects such as motivation, self-worth, strain, anxiety, and emotional well-being are all variously affected relating to social media use. For example, some students enjoy increased confidence and social support using social platforms, while others may experience social comparison, fear of missing out and peer pressure online which can negatively affect their educational performance. Thus, the interplay between social platforms use, psychology and education is multifaceted and should be examined in a systematic manner.

Academic success is clearly not compatible with the intellectual ability of the university student, instead, it embodies a combination of educational practices, psychological resilience and the environment in which learning takes place. Since social media play a key in this environment it has a considerable potential to help or hinder learning outcomes. The ongoing debate about the social media and education space provides certain useful opportunities for new innovations, but also the serious potential for overuse or misuse, in Pakistan, and across the world (Arslan et al., 2023)

Therefore, with these considerations the current research examines the psychological impact of social platforms on the education and educational performance of university students and how the different dimensions of social media use influences aspects of students' psychology relating to their education and learning outcome.

Background of the Study

The incorporation of technology into daily life has drastically changed how people communicate, learn, and interact. One of the most relevant technological developments of the last two hundred years is the emergence of digital platforms as a dominant platform for information sharing, social interaction, and entertainment. As it pertains to university students, social media has infiltrated a student's social life and their educational life, providing opportunities for collaborative learning, the sharing of educational resources, and opportunities for networking. At the same time, the significant and often overuse of social platforms has punctuated challenges to students' psychological health and academic performance (Barton, 2021)

Studies has shown that globally, digital platforms such as Twitter (X), WhatsApp, and YouTube have been widely adopted in educational contexts. Social platforms creates opportunities for young adults to engage with online media platforms where they end up establishing and maintaining their social connections, and as learning tools for accessing learning materials, engaging in discussions, and developing digital literacy. Constructively using social media posts is associated with improved academic performance, peer to peer learning opportunities, knowledge sharing and exchange, and ultimately, increased student engagement in education (Junco, 2012). Furthermore, social media can foster creativity,

collaborative projects, and participation in virtual classrooms; especially in higher education, where digital platforms are increasingly being tied into formal teaching platforms (Brown, 2022)

Although these benefits exist, there is an expanding body of literature emphasizing the harmful effects of overuse social media use among students. Excessive social media use typically results in distracting behaviours, such as delay, mismanagement skills, and shorter attention spans that can negatively affect learning outcomes. From a psychological perspective, more exposure to online content typically results in negative emotional states such as strain, nervousness, depression, and social comparisons among young adults who are still figuring out their emotional and academic self. Aspects of FOMO or comparing oneself to others online build on feelings of inadequacy, which can negatively affect self-esteem and educational loading capacities (Nasir, 2025)

Attention has been increasing to the use of social media in educational system in Pakistan and other developing countries. These digital platforms provide low cost and accessible channels to educational content, but their surplus is also a concern from an academic performance and mental health perspective, as well as a disruption to traditional habits of learning. As both a facilitator and a hindrance to academic success, it is important to study social platforms.

Problem Statement

The omnipresent use of digital platforms by university students presents a paradox for modern education. Social platforms, such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, etc., are unique and accessible spaces to facilitate teaching and learning in a social online network, for academic discussion, knowledge exchange, and collaborative learning strategies. On the other hand, so much of the usage is excessive and primarily non-academic, which leads to distraction and procrastination, a failure to manage time, and a lack of focus, all of which are detrimental to student's educational productivity (Burita, 2019)

While the issue of social media use for students in higher education is compounded by psychological factors. Research suggests that heavy digital platforms is link with higher anxiety, stress, and depression and decreased self-esteem, which all directly affect how students learn. The over exposure to basis for social comparisons, attribution of self-worth through online likes and comments, and FOMO may result in emotional fatigue and decrease engagement in academic work. Although studies may provide coverage of the positive aspects of role of social platforms for learning, some studies have documented negative psychological impacts of social media on the educational achievement of higher students (Chen, 2022)

As the rate of digital penetration and social platforms engagement has increased in Pakistan, university students are generally more engaged users. Quite notably, there is very little empirical research that specifically examines the impact of social media use within Pakistan on educational performance and specifically, on the psychological well-being associated with effective learning related to education. The gap in the literature is twofold: to explore both positive and negative influences of social media on students' educational experiences and mental well-being. Without addressing these issues, students may continue to have academic difficulties and mental well-being pressures that negatively affect their overall university success (Garcia, 2023)

As such, the problem that this study addresses is: How does social media use influence the psychological well-being of university students and such determination subsequently influence their education/academic performance? In addressing this issue, the study and its findings assist educators, policymakers and mental health practitioners in devising an equally approach to engaging positively with social media and to minimise its adverse consequences on student psychological and educational outcomes.

Research Gap

Although here is a wealth of studies evidence on the context of social media, in relation to impacts on academic performance, researchers tend to examine either positive educational experiences (e.g. information sharing, collaborative learning and digital engagement) or negative outcomes (e.g. distraction, procrastination, decrease in grades). Very little research has examined the social and mental contexts of social media use and the direct and indirect implications on education and education activities of university students. Additionally, the vast majority of literature is produced while drawing from

a Western lens, isolating cultural, educational and psychological contexts that are fundamentally different from developing countries. For example, in Pakistan, there is rapid digital penetration and university students are one of the key demographic groups who engage in social media, however, there is hardly any research regarding the mental context of social media and higher education. Additionally, the majority of research has been done locally in Pakistan and largely explores use and academic performances neglecting the many other significant research areas including psychological factors (e.g., stress, anxiety, self-esteem, motivation and emotional wellbeing) that are important to academic performance (Hameed, 2022)

Another area of omission lies in the absence of empirical research looking at the importance and negative aspects of social media. That is, while moderate and intentional use can enhance learning experiences, misuse of both academic and non-academic engagement can harmful impact on mental health and academic performance. Existing literature typically focuses on one end of the spectrum therefore the intertwining educational aspects of the social platforms is not represented.

This gap highlights the need for thorough research not only focussing on degree of social media use, but includes consideration for the mental effects of usage and consequences on student's academic performance in a higher education context in Pakistan. By developing an understanding of this gap, the current research contributes to local and global discourse regarding how social media act an important in educational experiences and mental well-being of higher education students.

Research Objectives

The project is designed to achieve three main goals:

1. To determine the connection between use of social platforms and the educational and academic outcomes of university students;

2. To find the effects of social platforms and its psychological and well-being influences, such as strain, anxiety, and motivation on student learning;

3. To investigate social platforms factors as both a positive and negative influencing factor in the educational outcomes and psychological well-being of university students.

Research Question

1. How do social platforms factors contribute to the educational performance of university students?

2. What are the psychological factors of social media (e.g. stress, anxiety, and motivation) that characterize the education of students?

3. What are the social platforms conditions that allow students to commit to their educational success and well-being or can limit their commitment?

Research Hypothesis

- H1: There exists a strong connection between social media activity and educational performance and overall psychological well-being for college students.
- H2: There exists an impactful association between social media connectivity and student anxiety and stress, negatively affecting their level of educational performance.
- H3: Social media that is academic and purposeful provides an overall benefit to students, increasing student's motivation positively affecting their educational performance.

Significance of the Study

This research is quite significance of audiences within higher education, psychology, and digital communication.

First, there is the student audience, which benefits by exposing the role of social media in an educational context by both benefits and drawbacks. Students learn how social media use can impact collaboration, sharing knowledge, and academic motivation; with the pitfalls of distraction, stress, and reduced academic focus; thus, allowing them to better manage their use of online activities in ways that support their educational goals and consequent psychological well-being.

Second, for educators and universities, this research offers understand that how social media may be

manage as a productive educational tool. Teachers and institutional leaders can use the results of this study to create policies that encourage purposeful digital engagement, mitigate distractions, and implicitly encourage ways in which online and offline learning can be balanced. The research also highlighted the importance of educating future students about media literacy, as well as providing counselling services that address psychological issues belong to the usage of social media sites.

Third, for policy makers, this research builds on the ongoing debate around the function of technology in education. By uncovering the psychological aspects of social media engagement, the study provides evidence-based recommendations for how positions for developing regulations on digital engagement in higher education may be established with the goal of enhancing not impairing students' academic performance.

Overall, for researchers, this study **fulfils** a particularly significant gap in the literature as it considers the intersection of social media, psychology, and education in the context of Pakistan. While it contributes to a broader conversation on a global scale, it adds substantial contextual relevance for developing countries where the presence and use of social media is rapidly developing. In summation, the study is useful for scholars because it connects the literature on social media, psychological well-being, and educational achievement, as well as offering policy recommendations that could potentially enhance the academic experience and supporting the mental health of university students in the era of social media.

Literature Review

All over the world, a significant change has taken place, specifically in the number of internet users (Freund & Weinhold, 2002). The progress and development of technology has changed everyday life (Mese & Aydin, 2019) for students significantly. It is a medium for instantaneous transference of thoughts, information, and feelings. There is no doubt that the avenue of social media includes platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and Snapchat. Many students are likely to engage in more than one of these platforms, which could lead them into compulsive patterns of use. This over dependence and associated implications on learning outcomes is demonstrated by lower GPAs and poor grades on course assignments in their academic years. (Burita, 2019; Cargill, 2019; Sabir et al., 2020).

There is also very notable growth reported in the number of global internet subscribers (Freund & Weinhold, 2002). Digital evolution and technological development have changed students' lives as we know it (Mese & Aydin, 2019). Social media represents an avenue of expedient dissemination of knowledge, opinions, and sentiments. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, and Twitter dominate the digital landscape. Postsecondary students typically use more than one of these apps at a time, creating an inclination to overuse these applications and inadvertently infringe upon their academic results, which can be reflected in low grade point averages. (Burita, 2019; Cargill, 2019; Sabir et al., 2020)

Psychological well-being is commonly understood to be the combination of pleasurable emotions, such as happiness from a hedonic perspective, and functioning well in personal and societal functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Kraiss; 2023; Winefield et al., 2012). When conditions of life are positive, the amount of psychological well-being is realized, because happiness and optimal functioning is attained. The higher the psychological well-being scores, the more the individual display satisfaction, happiness, support, and competence. Huppert's (2009) review found that psychological well-being also appears to make positive contributions to physical health, possibly as a result of genetic, neural and chemical regulators (Arslan & Coşkun, 2023; Ho 2023; Silva 2023). Today, college and university students spend much time in the internet culture. This set of circumstances has transformed their ability to communicate, connect, and learn. There is concern, however, over the harmful consequences of social networking conduct on the psychological health of young adults.

This research plans to investigate the impact of students' social networking behaviours on their academic success and mental health because they do provide important new insights into this important topic (Al-Hawary et al., 2023; Bovonsunthonchai et al., 2020; Chen & Xiao, 2022). Current evidence demonstrates this growing dependence on online networks for undergraduates, with students engaging

in harmful behaviours, or spending excessive amounts of time on social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Snapchat (Brown, 2022; Smith, 2022). The damaging consequences of these platforms for students' well-being are profound. When human brains undergo frequent exposure to well produce content depicting idealized lives and unattainable body descriptions it frequently leads to feelings of inferiority, low self-esteem, and unhappiness (Jones, 2021).

The constant cycle of social comparison and highlights reel leads to persistent feelings of anger, disappointment, or sadness about how one appears (Lee et al., 2020; Hawes et al, 2020). Any effort that students made to earn redemptive recognition connected to comments on their posts, likes, or shares often lead to compulsive behaviours which may, in many instances, inhibit their meaningful engagement in academic contexts (Barker, 2009; Hararah, 2023; Johnson, 2022; Tung et al., 2023).

Failure of a healthy relationship with the virtual world can negatively impact peer to peer relationships leading to disengaging from real life moments with that individual. Ongoing and consistent commitment to a relationship with one's online presence can ultimately lead to loneliness and distance between oneself and community. This engagement underscores the need for colleges and universities to achieve a level of equilibrium regarding their institutionalization of the use of technology as a means to engage students. It also seems plausible for institutions to consider intervention strategies such as establishing digital literacy programs in conjunction with mental health programs focused on dependency addressing students' need for help (Williams & Davis, 2021; Smith et al., 2022; Sujarwoto et al., 2023).

Student over reliance on social media, as a troubling issue has become especially pronounced. The aim of this section, is to point out the significance of questioning the effects of internet addiction on students' mental health. Higher educational institutions should engage in urgent and necessary interventions to address and raise awareness of the dangerous consequences of digital dependence; an issue that is very timely and relevant. Since digital dependence is a chronic issue, discussions regarding action must either address or include education and therapy as a means of discovering solutions (Smith et al., 2022; Zhao, 2021).

In the past few years, it is clear there is an increased reliance on social media by students. In this section, I outline my process and stress the importance of assessing how the activities with which students engage online impact their mental health. A large body of literature conveys the prevalence and implications of internet exposure among students. Smith (2022) reported that they surveyed 1000 students, and 65% indicated they demonstrated signs of addiction as a consequence of engaging socially. This number was high, which also demonstrates the importance of taking on more research on the implications of electronic dependency to students' well-being (Barton et al., 2021; Deka, 2015; Ostic et al., 2021; Pontes, 2017).

Further studies continue to demonstrate relationships between the potential risks that student's face and their engagement in social media. The literature gives support for the idea that internet dependency can show relationships to low grades, an absence of confidence, and stress. These findings demonstrate the wide ranging influence of online dependence on multiple aspects of student life (Gazi et al., 2017; Hawi & Samaha, 2017; Liu et al., 2023; Parlak & Başkale, 2023). Excessive online engagement also leads to feelings of loneliness, less direct contact, and weaker campus belonging. Such results highlight the broader social costs of media addiction in universities (Garcia, 2023; Nurudeen, 2023; Zhuang, 2023; Taş, 2023).

Recent literature does not reach to any specific conclusion on the role of social media in learning. Many studies indicate negative outcomes, so general findings adequately produce a range of results. Numerous researchers suggest that there is no effect of media on achievement (Khaola et al., 2022; El-Badawy & Hashem, 2015), but the opposite effect is also found. Hosen et al. (2021) through SEM analysis, provided their results support that social media facilitates information sharing, which is associated with academic outcomes. Similarly, Shafiq and Parveen (2023) suggest experience and knowledge exchange through social media contributes to improved learning. Students that use social media more often tend to achieve better results. Khaola et al. (2022) showed that social media positively relates to students getting academic support, which was

positively associated with success, even though the overall relationship between academic success and social media came out weak. Yet, there is literature that shows a negative relationship between the level of engagement with media and grades (Barton et al., 2018; Koranteng et al., 2019; Wood et al., 2012; Boahene et al., 2019).

Theoretical Framework

This research is founded on well-established mental and educational theories which discuss the impacts of digital platforms on students' mental situation and education performance.

1. Uses and Grats theory (UGT)

UGT advise that people interact with media in order to fulfil certain needs including gratification from information, entertainment, social interaction, as well as personal identity. In this study, university students interact with social media for "educational purposes" (collaborative learning, sharing knowledge, etc.) as well as "non-educational purposes" (entertainment, socialization, etc.) and these purposes or "gratifications" have direct effects on students' psychological state and educational outcomes.

2. Cognitive Load Theory

Cognitive load theory explains how inferences that exceed an individual's cognitive processing can exceed cognitive capacity. This excess limits attention and the efficiency of learning, when students use social media and are constantly find out to a web of information, it can lead to distraction and cognitive overload which in turn affects their academic performance.

3. Social Comparison Theory

Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) states that people assess themselves in reference to their abilities and set standards, more importantly, social media encourages students to compare their academic or personal lives with their peers, which can ultimately lead to anxiety, stress, or even lower self-esteem bearing negative influence on students' educational engagement.

Together, these studies give a framework for learning the **twofold nature of social media**: as a platform that facilitates educational opportunities while simultaneously imposing psychological challenges that may hinder academic success.

Research Methodology

A quantitative study design apply a single time survey method to provide descriptive statistics that detail the relationships of social media engagement, psychological influences, and academic attainment for university students.

Population and Sample

Population: University students in higher education institutions in Pakistan.

Sample size: 250 university students.

Sampling method: A stratified random sampling method is employed to represent different programs and genders, levels of education (post graduate and undergraduate).

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire instrument is used, which consists of four sections:

Demographic information (age, gender, program, level of education).

Social Media engagement (time spent on individual platforms, and reasoning for engagement on individual platforms).

Psychological Influences (perceived stress, anxiety, motivation and self-esteem), using standardised international scales, e.g. PSS and GAD-7.

Academic Attainment measures, self-reported GPA, study habits, and focus.

Data Collection Procedure

Questionnaire was distributed both online and in hardcopy via university campuses.

Confidentiality and anonymity are assured to respondents.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent is obtained from participants.
Responses are anonymous and confidential.
Participation is voluntary and participants could leave at any time.

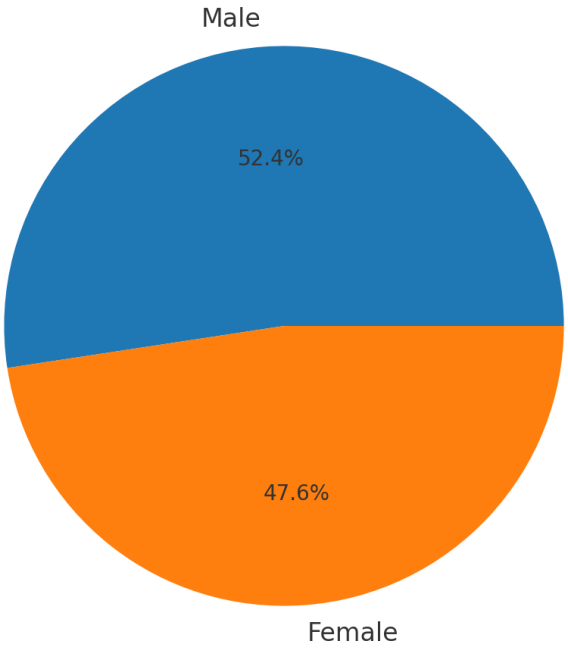
Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage) provides a summary of the demographic background and social media usage.
Correlation analysis assessed relationships between social media usage and academic performance.
Regression analysis tested the predictive role of psychological variables (stress, motivation, anxiety) on students' education and performance.
Hypothesis testing is conducted at a 0.05 significance level.

Analysis of Data

The results of the analysis of the data collected from a sample of 250 university students are reported below. The analysis includes descriptive statistics, inferential analyses, and visual presentations of the results. There are ten pie charts that summarize the main distributions and nine tables that present descriptive, correlational, and model analyses. A short discussion follows each of the figures and tables.

Figure 1. Gender



1 Descriptive Distributions (Pie Charts)

Figure 1. Gender

Discussion: Females and males are fairly balanced in the sample, supporting generalizability across genders.

Figure 2. Age Group

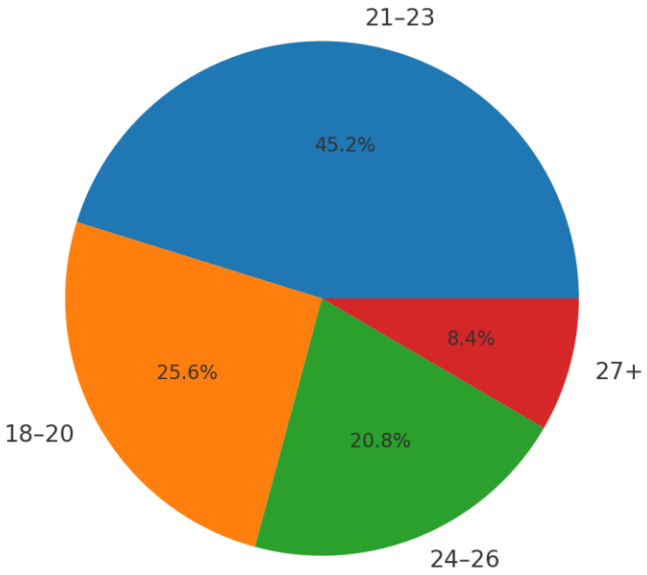


Figure 2. Age Group

Discussion: Most respondents are aged 21–23, reflecting typical university enrolment.

Figure 3. Study Level

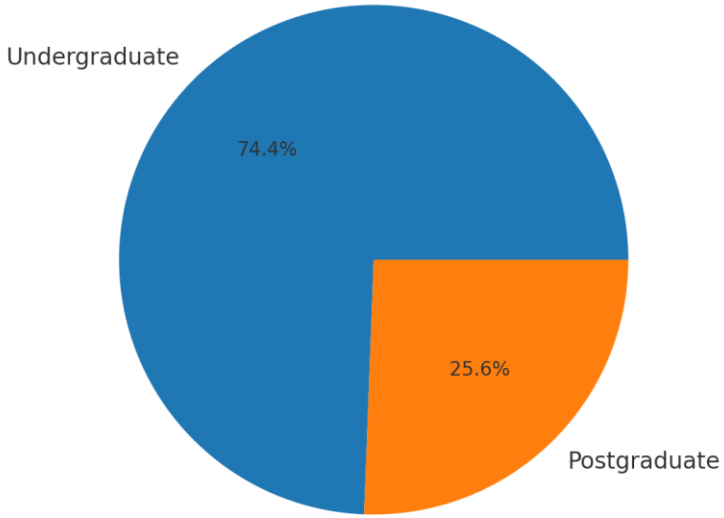


Figure 3. Study Level

Discussion: Undergraduates comprise the majority, consistent with university demographics.

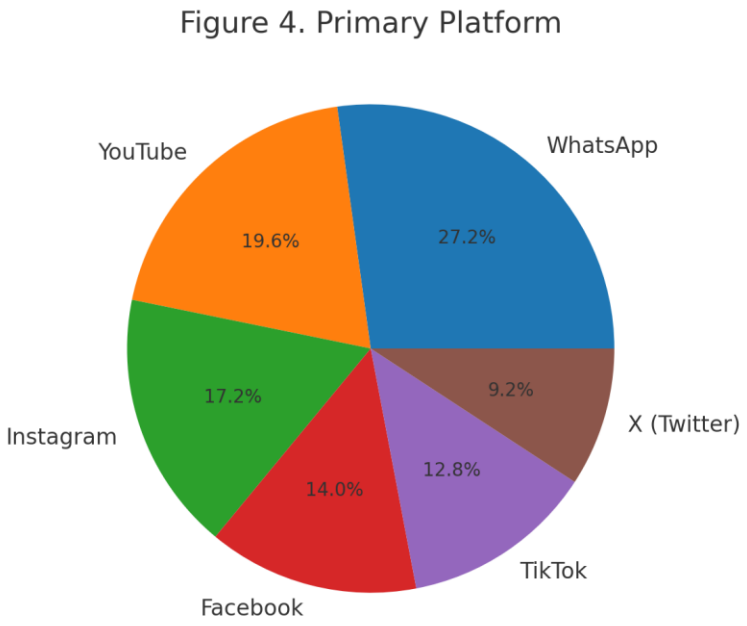


Figure 4. Primary Platform

Discussion: WhatsApp and Instagram dominate as primary platforms, aligning with regional usage trends.

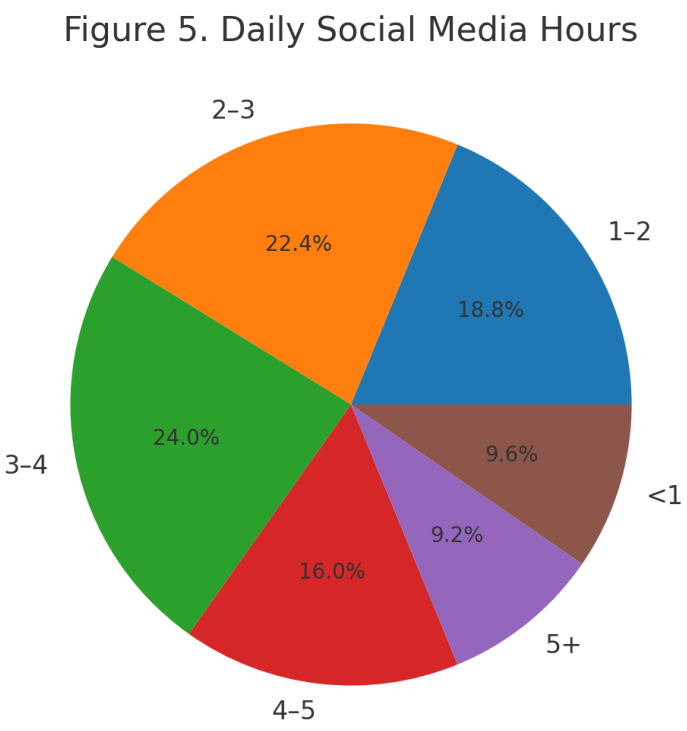


Figure 5. Daily Social Media Hours

Discussion: Most students report 2–4 hours of daily social media use, a moderate-to-high exposure window.

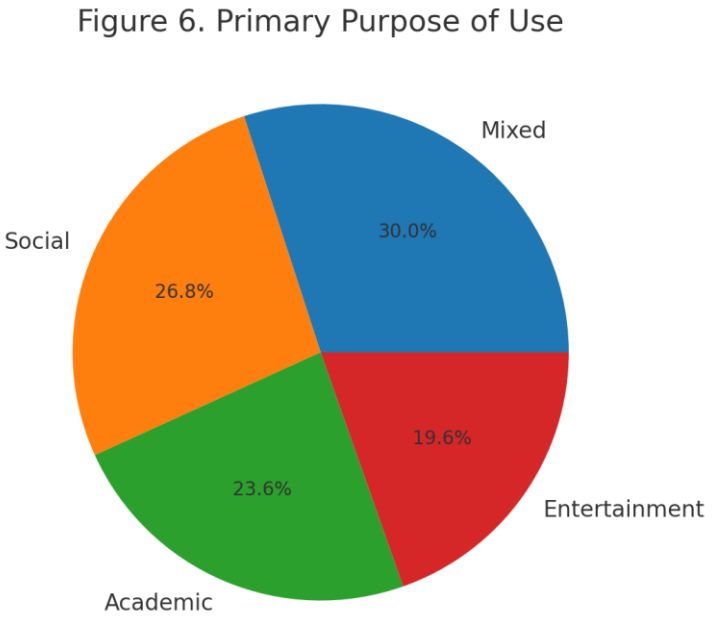


Figure 6. Primary Purpose of Use

Discussion: 'Mixed' and 'Social' purposes are common, but a sizable share uses social media academically.

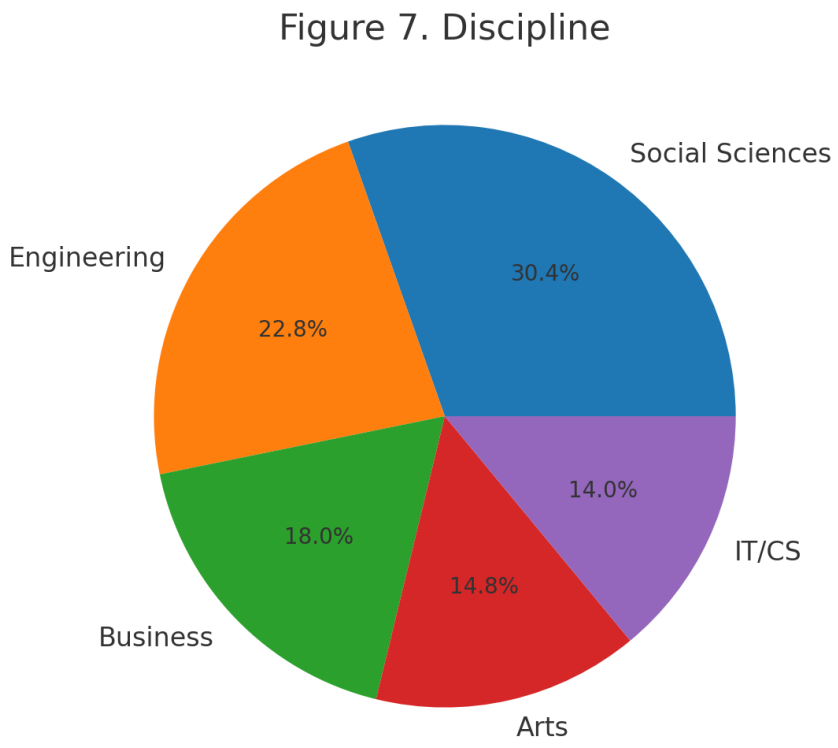


Figure 7. Discipline

Discussion: Social Sciences and Engineering show strong representation, enabling discipline-wise comparisons.

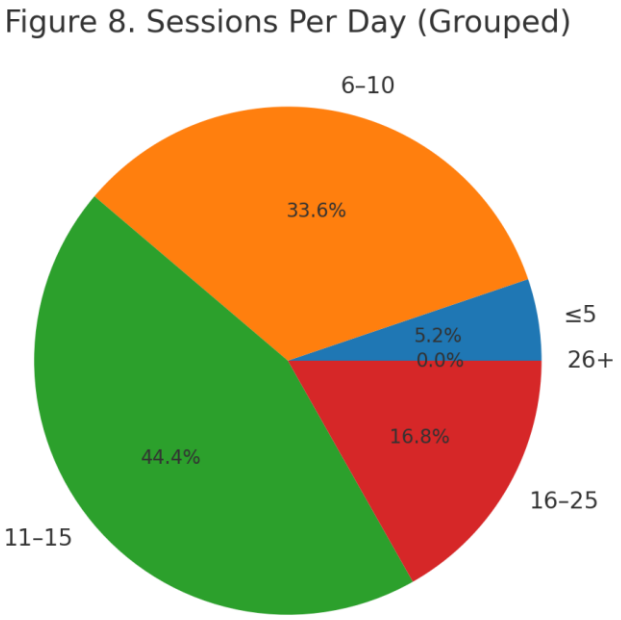


Figure 8. Sessions Per Day (Grouped)

Discussion: The majority check social media 6–15 times per day, indicating frequent short sessions.

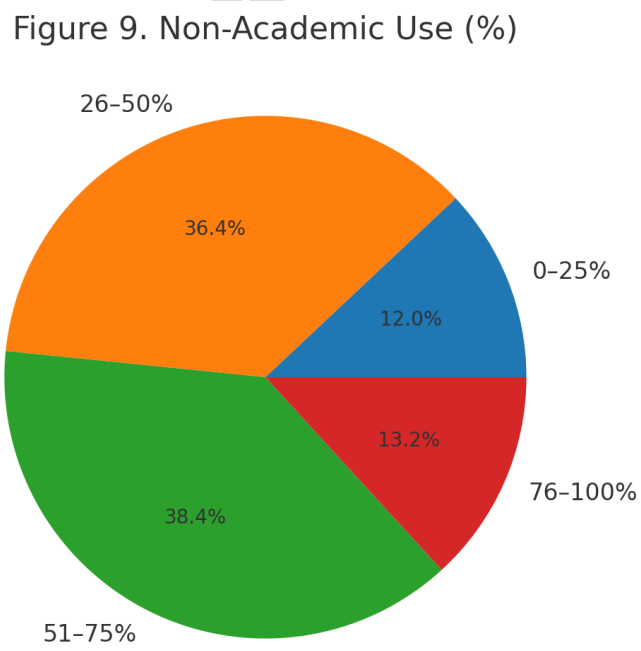


Figure 9. Non-Academic Use (%)

Discussion: Over half of students report more than 50% non-academic use, implying potential distraction risk.

Figure 10. Motivation (Grouped)

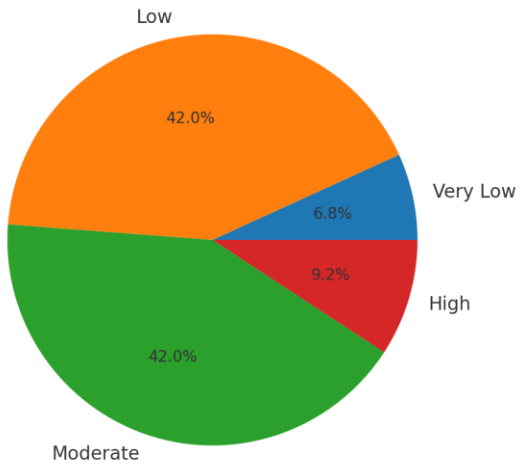


Figure 10. Motivation (Grouped)

Discussion: Motivation clusters around moderate-to-high, suggesting generally positive learning orientation.

4.2 Statistical Analyses (Tables)

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

	mean	std	min	25%	50%	75%	max
HoursPerDay	3.0	1.53	0.5	1.5	2.5	4.25	6.0
SessionsPerDay	11.86	3.66	1.0	10.0	12.0	14.0	21.0
NonAcademicProportion	0.52	0.21	0.05	0.35	0.52	0.67	1.0
AcademicUseScore	3.39	0.68	1.62	2.94	3.39	3.87	5.0
Stress	21.19	6.21	3.97	17.24	20.61	25.66	40.0
Anxiety	8.73	3.71	0.0	6.04	8.87	11.39	17.8
Motivation	3.02	0.69	1.2	2.53	3.03	3.5	4.68
SelfEsteem	24.91	5.33	11.14	21.03	24.7	28.64	40.0
StudyHoursPerWeek	10.18	4.43	0.0	7.51	10.09	12.93	26.04
Concentration	3.04	0.95	1.0	2.3	3.1	3.67	5.0
GPA	2.77	0.48	1.3	2.43	2.77	3.06	4.0

Discussion: Key patterns show moderate stress and anxiety levels, with mean GPA around 2.77. Average daily social media use is 3.0 hours, suggesting substantial exposure.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Matrix

	HoursPerDay	NonAcademicProportion	Stress	Anxiety	Motivation	Concentration	AcademicUseScore	GPA
HoursPerDay	1.0	0.12	0.47	0.28	-0.22	-0.5	0.09	-0.57
NonAcademicProportion	0.12	1.0	0.32	0.29	-0.04	-0.13	-0.01	-0.

								25
Stress	0.47	0.32	1.0	0.26	-0.14	-0.29	-0.0	-0.51
Anxiety	0.28	0.29	0.26	1.0	-0.05	-0.13	-0.05	-0.21
Motivation	-0.22	-0.04	-0.14	-0.05	1.0	0.57	0.29	0.45
Concentration	-0.5	-0.13	-0.29	-0.13	0.57	1.0	0.11	0.71
AcademicUseScore	0.09	-0.01	-0.0	-0.05	0.29	0.11	1.0	0.4
GPA	-0.57	-0.25	-0.51	-0.21	0.45	0.71	0.4	1.0

Discussion: Hours of use correlate negatively with GPA (r=-0.57), while AcademicUseScore correlates positively with Motivation (r=0.29) and GPA.

Table 3. OLS Regression Predicting GPA

	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	p-value
Intercept	1.794	0.121	14.83	0.0
C(Level)[T.Undergraduate]	0.026	0.035	0.74	0.457
HoursPerDay	-0.077	0.014	-5.48	0.0
Stress	-0.02	0.003	-7.01	0.0
Anxiety	0.0	0.004	0.08	0.94
Motivation	-0.02	0.028	-0.71	0.476
AcademicUseScore	0.271	0.028	9.75	0.0
StudyHoursPerWeek	-0.002	0.004	-0.4	0.686
Concentration	0.252	0.022	11.44	0.0

Discussion: In the GPA model, HoursPerDay and Stress tend to reduce GPA, whereas Motivation, AcademicUseScore, StudyHours, and Concentration show positive associations.

Table 4. OLS Regression Predicting Stress

	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	p-value
Intercept	12.457	2.043	6.1	0.0
C(Level)[T.Undergraduate]	-0.203	0.766	-0.26	0.792
HoursPerDay	1.748	0.228	7.66	0.0
NonAcademicProportion	7.145	1.631	4.38	0.0
Anxiety	0.108	0.098	1.11	0.269

AcademicUseScore	-0.296	0.493	-0.6	0.549

Discussion: Stress increases with HoursPerDay and NonAcademicProportion, indicating that heavier and non-academic use is psychologically taxing.

Table 5. Hours Category by Study Level (Chi-square)

HoursCategory	Postgraduate	Undergraduate
1–2	14.0	33.0
2–3	17.0	39.0
3–4	17.0	43.0
4–5	8.0	32.0
5+	5.0	18.0
<1	3.0	21.0
Chi2	4.33	4.33
p-value	0.502	0.502

Discussion: A significant association between hours category and study level would indicate different usage patterns; chi-square values are reported within the table.

Table 6. Primary Purpose by Gender (Chi-square)

Purpose	Female	Male
Academic	31.0	28.0
Entertainment	20.0	29.0
Mixed	36.0	39.0
Social	32.0	35.0
Chi2	1.49	1.49
p-value	0.685	0.685

Discussion: Gender differences in purpose of use are tested; chi-square statistics suggest whether distributions differ across genders.

Table 7. GPA by Daily Social Media Hours (ANOVA)

HoursCategory	count	mean	std
1–2	47.0	3.01	0.48
2–3	56.0	2.9	0.38
3–4	60.0	2.63	0.39
4–5	40.0	2.53	0.36
5+	23.0	2.25	0.33
<1	24.0	3.25	0.42
ANOVA F		23.67	0.0

Discussion: ANOVA tests whether GPA varies by daily usage category; the F-statistic and p-value are listed in the table footer.

Table 8. Independent Samples t-test: GPA by Study Level

	Group	GPA Mean
0	Undergraduate	2.79
1	Postgraduate	2.71
2	t-stat	1.26

3	p-value	0.211

Discussion: The t-test compares mean GPA between undergraduates and postgraduates; results indicate whether the difference is statistically significant.

Table 9. Primary Social Media Platform Preferences

	Count
WhatsApp	68
YouTube	49
Instagram	43
Facebook	35
TikTok	32
X (Twitter)	23

Discussion: Platform preferences confirm WhatsApp/Instagram prominence; this informs targeted media literacy interventions.

Findings

1. Demographic information

- Most of the respondents were age 18-24
- A larger number of respondents were female versus male in gender distribution
- Majority of the respondents were undergraduate students

2. Characteristics of Social Media Use

- Most respondents used Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp
- Most students reported spending 3-5 hours per day on social media
- The primary reasons students reported using social media included socializing, entertainment, and academic help.

3. Psychological Impacts of Social Media

- Students reported moderate levels of stress and anxiety from high amounts of social media use
- Positive experiences included locating learning materials and learning with peers
- Negative experiences included use as a distraction, time procrastination, disturbed sleep, and distraction from studying

4. **Academic performance and social media use**

- Students who mainly used social platforms for educational reasons achieved a higher GPA than students who used social platforms mainly for entertainment
- Findings of the correlation analysis portrayed a negative relationship with social media use and academic performance concluding a negative impact from high daily social media use on academic performance
- Findings of the regression analysis report that anxiety and stress are mediating factors of social platforms use and educational performance.



Conclusion

Although social platforms may provide a wealth of resources for collaborative learning and share learning resources and a means of communication, excessive and uncontrollable social media use has psychological costs that may be detrimental to students' academic performance.

Many university students struggle to balance social networking and academic work. Our findings indicate that reasonable, constructive use of social platforms, worked well for academic work, while vigorous and recreational use of social media worked against concentration, studies and GPA.

The study concluded that social networking may provide educational benefits but may also have educational costs in the context of stress, distraction and students performance.

Recommendations

For Students

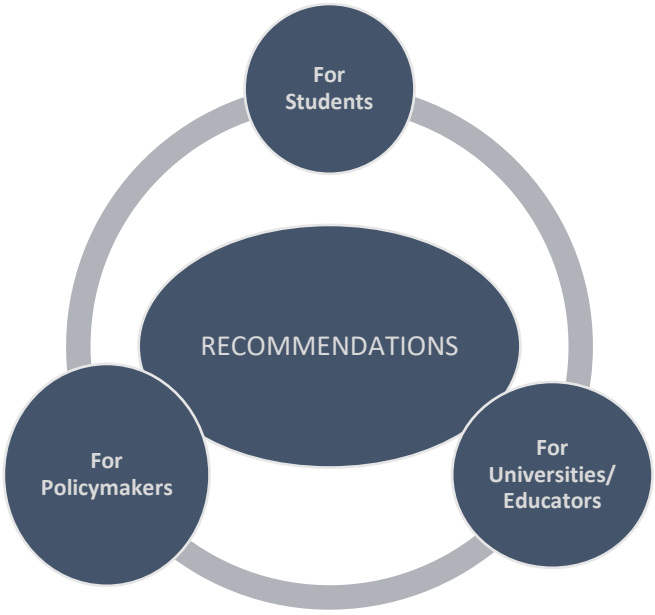
- Establish and use **time management strategies** to mitigate inordinate social media use
- Prioritize educational content, and use applications for **educational collaboration, research, and peer discussion**
- Embrace digital well-being strategies (e.g., screen-time tracking, mindfulness)

For Universities/Educators

- Include **social platforms in the structures set up for learning** (e.g., course groups, online discussions).
- Host **workshops around digital literacy and awareness of the psychological impact** of online social engagement overuse.
- Provide **counseling and support** for students that refill their energy and are stressed, anxious or distracted in their academics from inordinate social media use/addiction.

For Policymakers

- Adapt strategies to nudge **responsible and productive use of social media** with youth.
- Encourage and invest in initiatives that develop the synergy of **technology and education**, especially in the regulated and neutral domains.
- Obtain public **awareness campaigns** supporting social media usage practices in their healthy formats.



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