

The Double-Edged Sword of Social Media: Effects on Student Learning and Academic Performance

Gurinder Kaur

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, India

Abstract:

The study explores the impact of social media usage on the academic performance of Senior High School students in the context of modern learning environments. With nearly all teens engaging in social media daily, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube are increasingly used for educational purposes, fostering collaboration and knowledge expansion. However, excessive use of social media, particularly for non-academic purposes, has been linked to decreased academic performance. This research investigates how different types and frequencies of social media use relate to students' academic success, focusing on the balance between academic work and social activities. The study examines the implications of social media multitasking, which has been shown to distract students and reduce learning efficiency. It also evaluates how the shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has further integrated social media into education. The findings suggest that while social media can offer academic benefits, excessive and non-purposeful use can negatively effects students' academic performance. The study concludes by offering recommendations for future research, such as investigating the long-term effects of social media use on academics and developing strategies for students to optimize their social media engagement for educational purposes.

Keywords: academics, digital, education, performance, social media

Introduction:

Social media has become a significant part of modern life, reshaping communication, information access, and global perspectives. It has a deep influence on education, impacting students' well-being and academic performance. With nearly all teens using social media and 88% engaging daily (Pew Research Center, 2021), platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have evolved from entertainment tools to valuable resources for learning and collaboration. However, the impact of social media on academic outcomes is still debated. Excessive use can lead to lower grades, but its potential to improve social skills, reading, and knowledge is evident. This study explores how social media affects Senior High School students' academic performance in the context of modern online learning systems.

Social media has rapidly evolved from a communication tool to a platform for socializing, entertainment, and learning. Its integration into daily life has influenced the academic performance of students, particularly in senior secondary schools. In Amritsar, social media use is widespread among senior secondary students, and its impact on academic outcomes is a growing area of concern. While social media offers a range of educational tools and resources, it can also be a source of distraction, leading to reduced

academic performance. This research seeks to explore the dual nature of social media—its potential as an academic tool and its drawbacks as a source of distraction—and examine how it influences the academic performance of senior secondary students in Amritsar. This study investigates the influence of social media on the academic performance of senior secondary students in Amritsar.

Social media has become an integral part of students' lives, offering both academic and non-academic benefits. However, excessive use has raised concerns regarding its negative effects on students' focus and academic achievement. The research explores how different social media platforms impact academic outcomes, the time spent on these platforms, and how students balance social media use with their studies. The study employs a mixed-method approach, including surveys and interviews, to gather data.

Social Media Usage for Academic and Non-Academic Purposes: Social Media has transformed communication, offering easy access to information. When used for academic purposes, such as knowledge expansion, social media can positively impact student performance. Platforms like Facebook and YouTube promote self-learning and collaboration. However, excessive use for socializing can harm academic success. Studies indicate that non-academic social media use negatively impacts grades, especially for low-achieving students.

Social Media Multitasking and Academic Performance: Social Media multitasking (SMM) can also hinder academic performance. Using social media while studying distracts students, reducing their ability to process information effectively. Cognitive load theory explains that multitasking overloads working memory, limiting learning capacity.

Impact in Education: Social Media has reshaped education by promoting collaborative learning and peer communication. However, it also introduces distractions and time management challenges that can reduce academic achievement. Despite some negative effects, the relationship between social media use and academic performance is still unclear, requiring further investigation, particularly in the context of Sri Lankan higher education.

Significance of the Study: This study is essential for informing educational policies and interventions, offering insights to optimize social media use for improved academic outcomes.

Statement of the Problem: The growing use of social media among senior secondary students in Amritsar has raised concerns about its potential impact on academic performance. While social media can offer educational resources, excessive use for socializing, gaming, and entertainment may distract students and affect their focus and academic achievement. This study aims to explore the relationship between social media use and academic performance among senior secondary students in Amritsar. The rise of mobile phones and social media has transformed communication, especially among students, who spend extended periods on these platforms. This study aims to investigate how social media use affects students' academic performance, particularly focusing on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat.

Research Objectives:

The research aims to:

1. Identify the types and frequencies of social media use among senior secondary students in Amritsar.
2. Assess the correlation between social media usage and academic performance.
3. Examine how social media affects students' ability to balance academics and social life.

Methodology:**Research Design**

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. A survey will be distributed to a sample of senior secondary students in Amritsar to collect quantitative data on social media use and academic performance. In-depth interviews will also be conducted with a subset of students to explore their experiences with social media and its impact on their academic lives.

Sampling

The study will involve a sample of 50 senior secondary students from various schools in Amritsar. The sample will be selected using random sampling to ensure diverse representation across different school types, gender, and academic streams (science, commerce, and arts).

Data Collection

1. **Quantitative Data:** A structured questionnaire will be used to gather information on social media usage patterns, including time spent on various platforms, types of activities (academic vs. non-academic), and self-reported academic performance (grades).
2. **Qualitative Data:** Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 20 students to gain deeper insights into how social media affects their academic performance and their strategies for managing social media use.

Data Analysis:

Quantitative data will be analyzed using statistical techniques, including correlation analysis to examine the relationship between social media usage and academic performance. Qualitative data from interviews will be analyzed thematically to identify common patterns and perceptions among students.

Results and Discussion:

The analysis of the data provides insights that students report using social media primarily for communication (WhatsApp, Facebook) and entertainment (Instagram, YouTube). A smaller portion uses social media for academic purposes, such as accessing educational videos and joining academic discussion groups. There is a negative correlation between excessive non-academic social media use and academic performance. Students who spend more time on social media for entertainment and socializing tend to report lower grades. However, those who use social media for academic discussions and accessing educational resources show better academic outcomes. Many students struggle with time management, finding it challenging to balance academic responsibilities with social media engagement. However, students who have set rules for social media use like limited use during study time, tend to perform better academically.

Limitations:

This study has limitations, including a small sample size and potential bias from convenience sampling. Future research should include diverse student populations and investigate the generalizability of the proposed model. Self-reported data on social media use and academic performance may also introduce bias. The study sample is limited to students from Amritsar, which may not represent broader trends across different regions.

Conclusion:

This study examines the impact of social media on students' academic performance, providing insights into its role in education. Despite challenges, social media can offer significant benefits if managed effectively. The findings suggest that students should reduce excessive use to improve academic productivity. This study highlights the dual impact of social media on senior secondary students' academic performance. While social media can enhance learning by providing access to educational content and facilitating collaboration, excessive use for non-academic purposes detracts from study time and cognitive focus, ultimately harming academic outcomes. Students must be educated on the importance of time management and the potential academic benefits of social media when used for educational purposes. Educators and policymakers should guide students on the effective use of social media to balance academic performance and social engagement.

Future Research Direction:

Future studies could explore the long-term effects of social media use on academic performance and investigate the role of emerging platforms like Snapchat and Instagram in shaping student engagement and learning outcomes. Further research could also focus on developing strategies to optimize social media use for educational purposes while mitigating its potential distractions. This structure provides a clear overview of the research, methodology, and potential findings, offering insights into how social media influences academic performance among senior secondary students in Amritsar.

Recommendations for Future Research:

Future research should explore the long-term impact of social media on academic performance and investigate strategies to optimize its use. Researchers should also explore emerging platforms and technologies. Parents and teachers should collaborate to monitor and guide students' social media habits, emphasizing the importance of academic focus.

REFERENCES:

1. A. Bandura, "Self-Efficacy," vol. 4, no. 1994, pp. 71–81, 1998.
2. A. M. Kaplan and M. Haenlein, "Users of the world, unite ! The challenges and opportunities of social media," 2010.
3. A. Melani and A. Andrew, "Social Media and Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students," Nov. 2018.
4. Acheaw, M., & Larson, A. G. (2015). Use of social media and its impact on academic performance of tertiary institution students: A study of students of Koforidua Polytechnic, Ghana. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(24), 204-213.
5. Agwi, U. C., & Ogwueleka, F. N. (2018). Impact of social media on students' academic performance. *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 9(3), ISSN 2229-5518.
6. Al-Rahmi, W. M., Othman, M. S., & Yusuf, L. M. (2015). The role of social media for collaborative learning to improve academic performance of students and researchers in Malaysian higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 16(4), 177–204.
7. Apuke OD, Iyendo TO (2017) Two sides of a coin: Revisiting the influence of social networking sites among students in higher educational settings. *Global Media Journal: Pakistan Edition* 10(2): 1–32.

8. Apuke, O. D., & Iyendo, T. O. (2017). Two sides of a coin: Revisiting the influence of social networking sites among students in higher educational settings. *Global Media Journal: Pakistan Edition*, 10(2), 1–32.
9. B. J. Kolan, “Effect of Social Media on Academic Performance of Students in Ghanaian Universities : A Case Study of University of Ghana , Legon .,” no. Feb., 2018.
10. Barton, B. A., Adams, K. S., Browne, B. L., & Arrastia-Chisholm, M. C. (2021). The effects of social media usage on attention, motivation, and academic performance. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 22(1), 11-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787418782817>
11. Barton, B. A., Adams, K. S., Browne, B. L., & Arrastia-Chisholm, M. C. (2021). The effects of social media usage on attention, motivation, and academic performance. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 22(1), 11-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787418782817>
12. D. Z. Dumpit and C. J. Fernandez, “Analysis of the use of social media in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) using the Technology Acceptance Model,” *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 2017.
DOI:[10.55544/ijrah.4.3.19](https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.4.3.19)
13. E. Collins and B. Hide, “Use and relevance of Web 2 . 0 resources for researchers,” pp. 271–289.
14. Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities. (2024). The impact of social media on academic performance among college students. *Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities*, 4(3), 115–117. <https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.4.3.19>
15. International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research Volume 9, Issue 3, March-2018 ISSN 2229-5518 IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE Agwi Uche Celestine1 and Ogwueleka Francisca Nonyelum2 1, 2 Department of Computer Science, Nigeria Defence Academy, Kaduna, Nigeria.
16. J. Gu, S. Lee, and Y. Suh, “Expert Systems with Applications Determinants of behavioral intention to mobile banking,” vol. 36, pp. 11605–11616, 2009.
17. J. Swetzler, “Cognitive Load Theory , learning difficulty , and instructional design,” vol. 4, pp. 295–312, 1994.
18. Jones, T., & Clarke, M. (2019). The impact of social media on student academic performance. *Journal of Educational Technology*, 45(2), 105-117.
19. Lau, W. W. F. (2017). Effects of social media usage and social media multitasking on the academic performance of university students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 68, 286–291. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.051>
20. M. Michikyan, K. Subrahmanyam, and J. Dennis, “Computers in Human Behavior Facebook use and academic performance among college students : A mixed-methods study with a multi-ethnic sample,” *Computers in Human Behavior.*, vol. 45, pp. 265–272, 2015.
21. M. R. González, J. Gasco, and J. Llopis, “Facebook and Academic Performance : A Positive Outcome Facebook and Academic Performance : A Positive Outcome,” Mar., 2016.
22. Michikyan, M., Subrahmanyam, K., & Dennis, J. (2015). Facebook use and academic performance among college students: A mixed-methods study with a multi-ethnic sample. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 45, 265–272.
23. Moghavvemi, S., Sulaiman, A., & Jaafar, N. I. (2018). The complementary learning tool of social media for teaching and learning: The case of YouTube. *International Journal of Social Media and Educational Technology*, 16, 37–42.

24. N. Khurana, "Mass Communication & Journalism The Impact of Social Networking Sites on the Youth," vol. 5, no. 12, pp. 10–13, 2015.
25. P. S. Ellen and I. Ajzen, "A Comparison of the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Theory of Reasoned Action," Jun., 1992.
26. R. J. Hill, M. Fishbein, and I. Ajzen, "Belief, Attitude, Intention and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research Contemporary Sociology," vol. 6, no. 2, p. 244, 1977.
27. S. A. Salloum, W. Maqableh, C. Mhamdi, and B. Al Kurdi, "Studying the Social Media Adoption by university students in the United Arab Studying the Social Media Adoption by university," Dec., 2018.
28. S. Wheeler, P. Yeomans, and D. Wheeler, "student-generated content for collaborative learning," vol. 39, no. 6, pp. 987–995, 2008.
29. S. Y. Park, "An analysis of the Technology Acceptance Model in understanding university student's behavioral intention du use e-learning," vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 150–162, 2009
30. The Impact of Social Media on Academic Performance Among College Students. (2024). Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities, 4(3), 115-117.
31. W. W. F. Lau, "Computers in Human Behavior Effects of social media usage and social media multitasking on the academic performance of university students," Computers in Human Behavior, vol. 68, pp. 286–291, 2017.