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IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Nalbiya S. Johnson

Abstract

The increasing use of social media has significantly reshaped how students interact, communicate, and study. While social networking platforms offer various academic benefits, excessive use can distract students and negatively affect their academic performance. This study investigates the relationship between social media usage patterns and academic outcomes among university students.

Keywords: Social media, Academic performance, University students, Digital distraction, Study habits

Introduction

In the last decade, social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter have become integral parts of daily life for millions of students worldwide. While these platforms facilitate information sharing, group discussions, and peer support, they also pose challenges by consuming significant amounts of students' time and attention. Numerous studies have highlighted conflicting results regarding the impact of social media use on academic achievement. Some researchers argue that social media enhances learning through collaboration, while others emphasize its role in promoting procrastination and distraction. This study aims to evaluate the patterns of social media use among university students and analyze its correlation with their academic performance, measured through self-reported GPA.

Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional survey was conducted between January and March 2024 at three major universities in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. A total of 400 undergraduate students from various faculties voluntarily participated.

Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire that included:

- Demographic information (age, gender, year of study)
- Frequency and duration of daily social media use
- Primary purpose of social media use (academic vs. non-academic)

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- Self-reported cumulative GPA for the last academic semester

Participants were grouped based on their daily social media use:

- **Low users**: less than 2 hours/day
- **Moderate users**: 2–4 hours/day
- **Heavy users**: more than 4 hours/day

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 26. ANOVA and Pearson correlation tests were applied to determine relationships between social media use and academic performance.

Results

Of the 400 respondents, 58% were female and 42% male, with an average age of 21.2 years.

- 24% were low users, 46% moderate users, and 30% heavy users of social media.
- The main platforms used were Instagram (82%), Telegram (76%), TikTok (65%), and Facebook (43%).
- 34% reported using social media mainly for academic collaboration (e.g., sharing notes, group work), while 66% used it primarily for entertainment and social interaction.

The mean GPA was:

- **Low users**: 3.47 ± 0.34
- **Moderate users**: 3.22 ± 0.41
- **Heavy users**: 2.88 ± 0.50

ANOVA results showed a significant difference in GPA across groups ($p < 0.001$). A negative correlation ($r = -0.41$, $p < 0.001$) was found between daily social media use and GPA. Students who used social media primarily for academic purposes had slightly higher GPAs than those who used it mainly for entertainment (3.41 vs. 3.06, $p < 0.01$).

Discussion

This study confirms that excessive use of social media is associated with lower academic performance among university students. The findings are consistent with previous research highlighting that heavy social media engagement contributes to procrastination, reduced study

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time, and divided attention. However, students who strategically use social media for academic collaboration benefit from its connectivity features.

The results suggest that universities should implement awareness programs on digital self-regulation and encourage students to use social media mindfully for educational purposes. Limitations include reliance on self-reported data and the cross-sectional design, which does not establish causality.

Conclusion

Social media is a double-edged sword for university students: it can enhance academic collaboration if used purposefully but may hinder performance when excessively consumed for entertainment. Balancing social media use and study habits is crucial for academic success. Educational institutions should guide students towards productive digital engagement.

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