

Impact of Social Media Addiction on Academic Achievement and Learning Behaviour of College Students

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Abstract: Social media has become an integral part of college students' daily lives, providing opportunities for communication, information sharing, entertainment, collaboration, and academic interaction. However, excessive and uncontrolled use of social networking platforms may develop into addictive behaviour, potentially affecting students' academic achievement and learning behaviour. This review paper examines the relationship between social media addiction, academic performance, concentration, study habits, time management, motivation, classroom engagement, and learning behaviour among college students. The review indicates that moderate and academically purposeful use of social media can support collaborative learning, access to educational resources, peer communication, and knowledge exchange. In contrast, excessive use is frequently associated with procrastination, reduced study time, distraction, sleep disturbance, multitasking, diminished concentration, and irregular learning routines.

The impact of social media addiction is influenced by factors such as duration of use, purpose of use, self-control, type of platform, academic workload, and individual learning characteristics. The paper further highlights the importance of digital self-regulation, awareness programmes, effective time-management strategies, and responsible integration of social media into educational practices. Rather than considering social media entirely harmful, the review suggests that its academic consequences depend largely on patterns, purposes, and intensity of use. Developing healthy digital habits can therefore help college students benefit from social media while minimizing its negative effects on academic achievement and learning behaviour.

Keywords: Social media addiction, academic achievement, learning behaviour, college students, social networking, academic performance, digital distraction, study habits

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of the daily lives of college students, transforming the ways in which they communicate, access information, participate in social activities, and engage with learning. Platforms such as social networking sites, instant messaging applications, video-sharing platforms, and online discussion communities provide students with opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing, academic networking, and access to educational resources. However, excessive and uncontrolled use of social media can develop into addictive behaviour, characterized by persistent engagement, difficulty controlling usage, neglect of academic responsibilities, and continued use despite negative consequences.

Social media addiction may influence students' academic achievement by reducing the amount of time devoted to studying, interrupting concentration, encouraging procrastination, and disturbing regular study routines. Constant notifications, online interactions, entertainment content, and the desire to remain socially connected can create frequent distractions, making it difficult for students to maintain sustained attention during lectures, assignments, and independent study. Moreover, excessive social media engagement may affect learning behaviour by altering students' study habits, motivation, time-management skills, classroom participation, and patterns of information processing.



While social media can support learning when used purposefully, its uncontrolled use may encourage superficial engagement with academic content and reduce students' willingness to engage in prolonged reading, critical thinking, and independent learning.

Previous research has also indicated that problematic social media use is associated with academic procrastination, reduced academic performance, sleep disturbances, and difficulties in maintaining effective study routines (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). The increasing availability of smartphones and affordable internet access has further strengthened students' continuous connection to social media, making the issue particularly relevant in higher education. Therefore, examining the impact of social media addiction on academic achievement and learning behaviour is important for understanding how digital habits influence students' educational outcomes. Such an investigation can help colleges, teachers, counsellors, and students develop appropriate strategies for promoting responsible social media use, strengthening self-regulation and time-management skills, and ensuring that digital technologies contribute positively rather than negatively to the educational development of college students.

II. SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND ADDICTION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Social media platforms have transformed the communication and information-seeking behaviour of young adults. College students commonly use platforms such as social networking sites, instant messaging applications, video-sharing services, and discussion communities for both personal and educational purposes. These platforms allow students to communicate with classmates, participate in online groups, obtain educational materials, discuss assignments, follow academic content, and remain connected with teachers and peers.

At the same time, continuous notifications, entertainment content, social comparison, and algorithm-driven recommendations can encourage prolonged and repetitive use. Social media addiction is generally characterized by excessive preoccupation with social media, difficulty controlling usage, increasing time spent online, and continued use despite negative consequences.

Among college students, academic schedules, relatively independent lifestyles, and extensive smartphone access can create conditions in which social media use becomes difficult to regulate. The distinction between frequent use and problematic use is important because high frequency alone does not necessarily indicate addiction. The purpose and psychological pattern of use are equally significant. Academic use may contribute positively to learning, whereas compulsive entertainment-oriented use can interfere with academic responsibilities. Therefore, understanding social media addiction requires consideration of both the quantity and quality of online engagement.

III. INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Academic achievement reflects students' success in acquiring knowledge and demonstrating learning through examinations, assignments, projects, and other academic activities. Excessive social media use may influence achievement indirectly by reducing the amount of time and attention available for academic work. Students who frequently check social networking applications during study sessions may experience repeated interruptions that make it difficult to maintain sustained attention. Switching between academic tasks and social media activities can also increase cognitive load and reduce the efficiency of studying.

Procrastination is another important pathway through which problematic social media use may affect academic outcomes. A student may intend to spend a short period online but continue browsing, watching videos, or communicating with others for considerably longer than planned.

Consequently, assignments may be completed hurriedly, revision time may be reduced, and preparation for examinations may become inadequate. However, social media can also support academic achievement when students use it purposefully. Online study groups, educational videos, academic communities, peer discussion, and information-sharing networks can provide additional learning resources. Thus, the relationship between social media and achievement is not uniformly negative; rather, problematic and uncontrolled use appears more likely to produce adverse academic consequences.



IV. EFFECTS ON LEARNING BEHAVIOUR AND STUDY HABITS

Learning behaviour encompasses the ways in which students organize, approach, and participate in learning activities. Social media addiction can alter several components of this behaviour, including concentration, study regularity, time management, motivation, note-taking, reading habits, and completion of academic tasks. Students who frequently engage with social media while studying may develop fragmented attention and may find extended periods of reading or problem-solving increasingly difficult. Continuous online interaction can also encourage a preference for short and rapidly changing information, potentially making sustained academic activities feel less attractive.

Another concern is the displacement of productive study time. Time that could be devoted to reading, revision, laboratory preparation, or independent learning may instead be spent on social networking and entertainment.

Night-time social media use may additionally interfere with sleep routines, which can subsequently affect alertness and classroom participation. Nevertheless, social media may positively influence learning behaviour when integrated deliberately. Students can exchange notes, discuss difficult concepts, collaborate on projects, seek feedback, and access supplementary learning materials. Therefore, the educational impact depends considerably on whether social media functions as a learning resource or as a source of persistent distraction.

V. FACTORS DETERMINING THE ACADEMIC IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

The effect of social media addiction on students is influenced by several interconnected factors. Duration of use is important because longer periods of non-academic engagement increase the possibility of academic displacement. Purpose of use is equally significant; educational use may provide learning benefits, whereas entertainment-oriented or compulsive use may interfere with study. Self-regulation determines whether students can restrict unnecessary checking and return their attention to academic tasks.

Time of use also matters, particularly when social media activity continues late into the night and affects sleep. Individual differences such as motivation, personality, academic discipline, and existing study habits may further determine how strongly social media affects academic performance. The academic environment is another important factor. Students with supportive teachers, structured learning schedules, and effective academic guidance may be better positioned to use digital platforms constructively. The following table summarizes major factors discussed in the literature.

Factor	Possible Positive Influence	Possible Negative Influence
Purpose of use	Access to educational resources and peer learning	Entertainment and non-academic browsing
Duration of use	Quick communication and information access	Loss of study time
Self-regulation	Controlled and purposeful digital use	Compulsive checking and dependency
Study environment	Online collaboration and group discussion	Frequent digital distractions
Time of use	Flexible access to learning materials	Late-night use and reduced sleep
Academic motivation	Increased access to academic communities	Reduced motivation for independent study
Type of content	Educational videos and academic information	Short-form entertainment and distracting content
Peer interaction	Knowledge sharing and collaborative learning	Social pressure and excessive interaction

VI. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS AND RISKS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media should not be viewed exclusively as a harmful influence on college education. When appropriately used, it can extend learning beyond the traditional classroom. Students can participate in academic communities, share resources, communicate about assignments, attend online discussions, and obtain explanations through multimedia content.



Teachers and educational institutions can also use social platforms to disseminate announcements, learning materials, and opportunities for collaboration. These advantages demonstrate that social media itself is not necessarily responsible for poor academic outcomes.

The major concern arises when recreational or compulsive use becomes dominant and begins to replace academic activities. Excessive dependence can produce distraction, procrastination, reduced face-to-face interaction, sleep disruption, and difficulties in maintaining consistent study routines. The challenge for higher education is therefore not simply to eliminate social media but to promote responsible and purposeful use. Digital literacy programmes can help students recognize problematic usage patterns, manage notifications, establish study periods without social media, and distinguish reliable academic information from misleading content. Faculty members can further encourage structured educational applications of social media while emphasizing academic integrity and responsible digital behaviour.

VII. STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND LEARNING BEHAVIOUR

Reducing the negative academic consequences of social media addiction requires coordinated efforts by students, teachers, colleges, and families. Students can begin by monitoring their daily screen habits and identifying situations in which social media interferes with academic responsibilities. Establishing specific periods for study without social media, disabling unnecessary notifications, keeping smartphones away during intensive study, and using planned breaks can improve concentration. Time-management techniques can help students allocate adequate periods to reading, assignments, revision, recreation, and online communication.

Colleges can conduct digital-wellbeing and awareness programmes that explain the relationship between problematic social media use, concentration, sleep, and academic performance. Teachers can encourage students to use social media for clearly defined educational activities rather than unrestricted browsing. Academic counselling may be useful for students who experience persistent difficulties controlling their online behaviour.

At the institutional level, future research should employ longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to examine how social media patterns change over time and how different types of platforms affect learning. Overall, the literature suggests that balanced and purposeful social media use is more beneficial than unrestricted use. Developing self-control, digital literacy, healthy study routines, and responsible technology practices can enable college students to gain the educational advantages of social media while minimizing its potential negative effects on academic achievement and learning behaviour.

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