

The Impact of Social Media on the Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students

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Abstract:

Social media has become one of the most effective means of connection, communication, and information sharing in the twenty-first century. Almost every element of daily life is impacted by its ubiquitous effect, especially for teenagers, who are frequently the most frequent users. Young people can now share experiences, develop networks, and access educational content in virtual worlds made possible by social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube. Though these platforms have many advantages, they also provide difficulties and possible hazards to a number of developmental areas, including academic achievement. Academic performance is a critical measure of students' intellectual growth, learning outcomes, and future opportunities. It shows how well students learn, use their cognitive abilities, and score on standardized tests. Academic achievement is influenced by a wide range of intricate and multidimensional factors, from personal motivation and mental health to the home environment and the calibre of the school. Social media's explosive growth in recent decades has given this environment a new dimension, leading academics, educators, parents, and legislators to look at how social media impacts students' capacity for concentration, memory, and academic success.

Keywords: intellectual growth, learning outcomes, Instagram, Snapchat, Academic performance, cognitive abilities.

INTRODUCTION:

This section examines the extensive and varied effects of social media on teenage academic achievement, going over psychological mechanisms, influencing factors, positive and negative consequences, and actual research findings. In order to maximize learning outcomes in a digitally connected society, it also looks at the practical ramifications and suggestions for teachers, families, and students. Over the past 20 years, the quick development of digital technology has drastically changed how people engage with the outside world, communicate, and obtain information. The rise of social media platforms, which are now profoundly ingrained in young people's everyday lives, is one of the most significant trends. One of the most active user groups on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and YouTube is secondary school students. These platforms are informational, collaborative, and educational resources in addition to being means for communication and enjoyment.

The secondary school years are crucial for kids' intellectual and personal growth. During this time, students acquire fundamental knowledge, form study habits, and get ready for further education or careers. Exam results, classroom performance, ongoing evaluations, and total grade point averages are frequently used to gauge academic success at this level. Future

educational options, employment prospects, and socioeconomic mobility can all be impacted by secondary school success. Therefore, it is crucial for researchers, educators, parents, and policymakers to comprehend the elements that influence academic accomplishment.

Social media's increasing influence on students' lives has sparked intense discussion over how it affects learning outcomes. On the one hand, social media provides chances for skill improvement, academic networking, collaborative learning, and immediate access to educational materials. Students can use digital resources that enhance classroom instruction, view educational videos, engage in academic debates, and join study groups. These characteristics imply that social media may improve academic achievement and engagement when used properly.

However, there have been worries expressed over the possible drawbacks of using social media excessively. Reading, revision, and assignment time may be diminished by time spent posting, browsing, or participating in online discussions. In addition to interfering with focus and encouraging multitasking, frequent notifications and online interactions may also hinder deep learning and recall. Additionally, problems like social comparison, cyberbullying, and online addiction may make secondary school students feel more stressed and less focused on their studies.

Given these divergent viewpoints, it is imperative to conduct a critical analysis of the connection between secondary school students' use of social media and academic success. It's doubtful that the effects will be consistently favourable or bad; instead, they may vary depending on things like usage frequency, engagement goal, self-control, parental supervision, and school regulations around digital technology. A thorough examination of these factors can yield important information on the ways in which social media affects students' academic achievement.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the degree to which social media influences secondary school students' academic performance, identifying both positive and negative effects. Through behavioural ramifications and scholarly findings, the study seeks to advance knowledge of how internet connection influences academic achievement in the modern day.

Defining Social Media

Internet-based systems intended for interactive communication, teamwork, and the sharing of user-generated material are referred to as social media. Social media, in contrast to traditional media, enables users to create and modify material, participate in live conversations, and establish online communities. Important characteristics include: Instant contact with live broadcasting, comments, and messaging User-generated material includes blogs, status updates, images, and videos. Making connections with peers, mentors, and interest groups is known as networking. Likes, shares, comments, and online conversations are examples of interactive involvement. These platforms allow for continuous interaction in a variety of scenarios and can be accessible through computers, tablets, or cell phones.

A transitional stage of life between childhood and adulthood, adolescence usually lasts from the ages of 10 to 19, while some studies believe it can last until the early twenties. Rapid

changes in the body, mind, emotions, and society are characteristics of this time. Teenagers depend on their peer interactions for emotional support, want autonomy more and more, and form a sense of self. Their brains are still growing, especially the areas in charge of impulse control, emotional regulation, and decision-making. Teenagers are therefore more susceptible to peer pressure and social cues, which are the precise characteristics that make social media so alluring. They use digital networks for social affirmation, self-expression, and belonging in addition to amusement. But these platforms also bring up issues with academic performance, attentiveness, reward systems, and mental wellness.

Social Media Use and Academic Performance: A Theoretical Framework

It is beneficial to take into account a number of theoretical stances in order to comprehend the connection between social media and academic achievement: According to the cognitive load theory, human working memory has a finite amount of space. Effective information processing and consistent focus are essential for academic achievement. Teenagers' cognitive load rises when they multitask, such as by using social media while studying, which impairs recall and slows comprehension. According to this hypothesis, people deliberately select media to meet particular requirements, such information seeking, amusement, or social engagement. Teenagers may use social media to meet their social requirements, but they might not always think about how it can help them learn. The social learning theory states that people pick up new skills by seeing how others behave. Teenagers are exposed to peer behaviours, norms, and values through social media, which can influence their attitudes toward education, involvement in class, and study habits.

The motivating pillars of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are highlighted in this paradigm. Social media can increase one's sense of competence and connection, but it can also cause one to become more motivated by rapid gratification and social acceptance than by scholastic objectives.

Social media offers a number of educational advantages, even though the majority of the discussion centres on its detrimental effects. A wide variety of scholarly content can be found on social media networks. For instance: Math, physics, language, and history are all explained by educational YouTube channels. Instagram accounts featuring learning infographics, study advice, and inspirational quotations Facebook groups for resource sharing, debate, and peer study Creators of "Edu-Tok" on TikTok are sharing brief courses and lessons. Learning is contextualized, flexible, and visually appealing thanks to these materials.

Academic Networking and Peer Collaboration Students can share notes, ask questions, and discuss course content in online study groups made possible by social media. Real-time communication is made possible by apps like Discord and WhatsApp, which improve problem-solving and cooperative learning.

Learning can be made more interesting by using interactive materials like challenges, instructional games, and quizzes. Pupils who have pleasure in their studies are more likely to maintain concentration, engage fully, and pursue their academic objectives with internal drive.

Academic settings can be demanding and competitive. Peer support, encouragement, and

accomplishment acknowledgment are all provided by social media, which can increase self-esteem and promote academic resilience. Regular social media use can improve digital literacy, critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills—all of which are important for academic research, presentations, and digital assignments.

Psychological Mechanisms Explaining the Impact

We must investigate psychological and cognitive neuroscience-based mechanisms to comprehend how social media impacts academic performance. Dopamine is released in the reward areas of the brain in response to social interactions and notifications. A pleasure feedback loop is produced, much like in other addictive activities. Due to their heightened sensitivity to social validation, adolescents find it more difficult to avoid checking frequently, frequently at the sacrifice of study time. The prefrontal cortex of adolescents, which is in charge of inhibition, impulse control, and planning, is still growing. During difficult academic assignments, frequent social media disruptions impair sustained focus and make one more prone to distraction.

Teenagers' lives are significantly impacted by social media. Its impact on academic achievement is a continuum that is influenced by usage habits, purpose, self-regulation, support networks, and instructional methodologies rather than being either positive or bad. Intentional, purposeful use of social media can enhance learning experiences, but excessive, unstructured, or entertainment-only use might hinder academic endeavours. Instead, then trying to ban social media, educators, parents, and legislators must help teenagers use it in ways that promote both their academic performance and general well-being. We may use social media as a positive teaching tool rather than a deterrent to academic success if we comprehend its psychological underpinnings, empirical impacts, and real-world applications.

Results and Findings

The study's main conclusions about the impact of social media use on secondary school students' academic performance are presented in this section. The results are arranged based on usage trends, behavioural impacts, measures of academic achievement, and the connection between students' academic performance and social media use.

Students in secondary school who were in the adolescent age group participated in the study. Students from various grade levels, both male and female, were included in the sample. The majority of respondents said they frequently used the internet at home and had cell phones. The vast majority of respondents said they actively use at least one popular social media site, including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or Snapchat. According to the research, a significant percentage of students spent three to five hours online each day, with daily social media usage ranging from one hour to over six hours.

The findings showed a statistically significant correlation between students' academic success and the amount of time they spend on social media. Students who reported using social media for more than four hours a day typically had poorer average marks and reported having trouble turning in assignments on time. Students who utilized social media primarily for academic support, especially those who spent less than two hours a day, often performed better

academically and had better study habits. According to the research, while modest and intentional usage of social media may not substantially impair performance, excessive use is inversely correlated with academic achievement.

Conclusion:

This study looked at the connection between secondary school students' use of social media and their academic performance. The results indicate that social media has a substantial and complex effect on students' academic performance. The impact varies greatly depending on how, why, and for how long it is used; it is neither totally positive nor totally negative.

The findings showed that poorer academic achievement is linked to excessive and uncontrolled social media use. Students that use social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and other platforms for fun and non-academic purposes for extended periods of time often have lesser study time, poor focus, procrastination, sleep difficulties, and eventually worse results. It was also discovered that frequent multitasking between social media use and academic assignments had a detrimental impact on comprehension and memory.

Nonetheless, the study also finds that, when used sensibly and with intention, social media can enhance academic performance. Students can gain better comprehension of the material and greater academic engagement by using these platforms for educational purposes, such as watching tutorial videos, joining academic discussion groups, working with classmates, and asking questions about assignments. Social media can be used in this way to supplement classroom instruction as a learning aid. Additionally, the results show that the degree to which social media influences academic achievement is highly influenced by self-discipline, time management abilities, parental supervision, and school policy. Students are less likely to suffer detrimental academic effects from social media use if they exhibit good self-regulation and adhere to organized study schedules.

In summary, social media has a significant impact on secondary school students' academic lives. Its influence on academic performance is mostly based on usage habits rather than access alone. It can impede educational advancement when abused or overused, but it can improve learning opportunities when handled sensibly and integrated in a positive way. Therefore, rather than letting social media become a distraction from their educational objectives, stakeholders—including educators, parents, and legislators—should concentrate on promoting responsible digital practices, encouraging balanced usage, and assisting students in using social media as a productive academic resource.

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