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Exploring the Impact of Social Media Addiction on Students' Learning Strategies, Engagement, and Academic Performance

Abstract

This paper investigated the impact of social media addiction on students' learning strategies, engagement and academic performance, highlighting a growing concern in educational settings. With the widespread use of social media platforms among young individuals, research has increasingly indicated that excessive use negatively affected students' cognitive functions, time management and concentration, all of which are vital for effective learning. The primary objectives of this study were to analyze the relationship between social media addiction and students' learning strategies, assess its effect on student engagement in academic contexts and examine how these factors together influenced academic performance. The review synthesized existing literature to offer insights into how social media addiction altered students' study habits, often resulting in fragmented attention and diminished academic productivity. Also, it explored the complex relationship between social media use and student engagement in both traditional classroom settings and online learning environments. It was found that addiction to social media often led to a decline in meaningful academic interactions, reduced participation in educational activities and fostered passive learning behaviors, ultimately compromising students' overall academic achievements. This research aimed to clarify the intricate dynamics of social media addiction and its far-reaching impact on educational outcomes.

Keywords: Social Media Addiction, Learning Strategies, Student Engagement, Academic Performance

Introduction

Social media addiction has emerged as a significant concern in contemporary education, particularly among students who increasingly rely on digital platforms for communication, information and entertainment (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). The pervasive use of social media has been linked to various negative academic outcomes, including decreased motivation, increased procrastination and reduced focus on academic tasks, which collectively compromise students' educational experiences (Junco, 2012). Excessive engagement with social media often leads to a decline in students' cognitive functions, such as attention and memory, which are crucial for effective learning (Dhanesh & Dhir, 2020). Research shows that students frequently switching their attention between academic responsibilities and social media interactions may experience diminished deep engagement with learning materials. This fragmented attention can impair critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities, essential components of successful academic achievement (Baker et al., 2016). Social media addiction can also negatively impact students' time management, leading them to allocate insufficient time to studying and completing assignments (Rivadeneyra et al., 2007). In addition to cognitive and motivational effects, social media usage plays a crucial role in shaping student engagement within academic contexts. Students who exhibit higher levels of social media addiction often demonstrate reduced participation in classroom discussions and collaborative learning activities, which are vital for creating a productive learning environment (Sinha & Vohra, 2020). This disengagement can lead to lower academic performance and a lack of fulfillment of their educational potential. By examining the existing literature on social media addiction and its implications for students' learning strategies, engagement and academic performance, this review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media impacts educational outcomes in today's digital age.

The review of related literature on social media addiction and its impact on students' learning strategies, engagement and academic performance reveals a complex interplay between excessive social media use and educational outcomes. Numerous studies indicated that social media addiction correlates with diminished academic motivation and increased procrastination, often resulting in lower grades and overall academic performance (Junco, 2012). Research suggested that students who frequently engage with social media platforms struggle with attention deficits and reduced cognitive engagement, which are critical for effective learning (Dhanesh & Dhir, 2020). Social media

platforms are designed to maximize user engagement through notifications and feedback mechanisms, which can lead to compulsive use and distract students from their academic responsibilities (López-Fernández et al., 2019). Also, excessive social media use can disrupt time management skills, leading to poor study habits and insufficient time dedicated to academic tasks (Rivadeneyra et al., 2007). Studies have shown that high levels of social media engagement hinder students' participation in classroom discussions and collaborative learning activities, which are essential for fostering a productive learning environment (Sinha & Vohra, 2020). Social media can create an illusion of social connection while simultaneously isolating students from face-to-face interactions, impacting their social skills and emotional well-being (Primack et al., 2017). The literature underscores the pressing need for educational stakeholders to address social media addiction as a significant factor influencing students' academic experiences and outcomes. Strategies that promote healthier engagement with digital platforms are essential, including digital literacy education, awareness campaigns and interventions aimed at encouraging balanced media consumption.

Significance of the study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the relationship between social media addiction and students' learning strategies, engagement and academic performance. Understanding the implications of social media use is crucial as educational institutions increasingly integrate technology into the learning environment. As social media platforms become ubiquitous among students, recognizing their impact on academic success can guide educators and policymakers in developing effective strategies to mitigate negative consequences (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). This study aims to contribute to the existing body of literature by highlighting the detrimental effects of social media addiction on critical cognitive functions, such as attention and memory, which are essential for effective learning (Dhanesh & Dhir, 2020). The findings will be significant for enhancing student engagement, as previous research has indicated that social media can either facilitate or hinder participatory learning experiences. By addressing the challenges posed by social media addiction, this study seeks to inform educational practices and promote healthier digital habits among students, ultimately fostering improved academic performance and overall well-being (Rivadeneyra et al., 2007). The outcomes of this research can also provide a foundation for further investigations into digital literacy and media consumption habits, leading to the development

of targeted interventions that support students in balancing their academic responsibilities with social media engagement (Sinha & Vohra, 2020).

Objectives of the study

- **To examine the relationship between social media addiction and students' learning strategies.**
- **To assess the impact of social media addiction on student engagement.**
- **To explore the perceived effects of social media addiction on academic performance.**

Methodology of the study

This study employs a qualitative research methodology based solely on a comprehensive review of existing literature to investigate the impact of social media addiction on students' learning strategies, engagement and academic performance. Current research emphasizes the adverse effects of excessive social media use on cognitive functions such as attention, focus and time management, which are essential for effective learning (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). Studies highlight how students' addiction to social media interferes with their learning strategies by fragmenting attention and reducing their ability to concentrate for extended periods, leading to a decline in academic productivity (Dhanesh & Dhir, 2020). Research by Junco (2012) shows that while social media platforms can promote engagement in some educational contexts, excessive use often hinders meaningful participation in academic activities and fosters passive learning behaviors. Furthermore, the review reveals recurring themes in studies that link social media addiction to decreased student engagement and lower academic performance, often resulting in lower grades and an inability to meet academic demands (Sinha & Vohra, 2020). Through this methodical review of literature, the study consolidates existing findings and offers educators and policymaker's valuable insights into the detrimental effects of social media addiction on students' academic success, urging the development of strategies to address these challenges in educational environments.

Findings and discussion of the study

Objective 1: To examine the relationship between social media addiction and learning strategies: The relationship between social media addiction

and learning strategies reveals significant challenges for students, as excessive use of social media tends to disrupt effective study habits and cognitive engagement. The following points highlight the findings from various studies:

- **Increased Distraction and Reduced Focus:** Research by Junco (2012) indicated that students who reported high levels of social media addiction often struggled to maintain focus during study sessions. For example, students admitted that notifications from social media platforms frequently interrupted their study time, leading to fragmented attention and inefficient learning strategies.
- **Shallow Learning Approaches:** Students who are heavily engaged with social media often tend to adopt more superficial learning approaches. Rather than deeply engaging with study materials, many report skimming content quickly, which negatively impacts their comprehension and long-term retention of academic information.
- **Dependency on Social Media for Information:** An increasing number of students demonstrate a tendency to rely heavily on social media platforms as primary sources of academic information, often at the expense of traditional and more credible academic resources. This growing dependence on informal and user-generated content can result in incomplete understanding and reduced critical engagement with course material, potentially leading to significant gaps in knowledge.
- **Impacts on Time Management:** Social media addiction frequently undermines students' ability to manage their time effectively. Many students report that excessive use of social platforms disrupts their planned study schedules, resulting in reduced time for focused learning. Consequently, this poor time management negatively influences their overall learning strategies and academic outcomes.
- **Altered Study Habits:** Students indicated that social media usage altered their study habits, often leading to multitasking during study sessions. For instance, Rivadeneyra et al. (2007) found that students frequently alternated between studying and checking social media, which hampered their ability to engage in sustained learning and problem-solving.
- **Decreased Collaboration and Communication:** Excessive social media use may cause students to prefer online interactions over direct, face-to-

face communication. This shift can impair their ability to collaborate effectively in group projects and classroom activities, limiting opportunities to develop essential interpersonal and collaborative learning skills.

- **Impact on Self-Regulated Learning:** Social media addiction can also interfere with students' ability to effectively self-regulate their learning. Students frequently face difficulties in setting clear academic goals and monitoring their own progress, as distractions from social media reduce their focus and disrupt consistent study habits. This leads to less effective learning strategies overall.

Objective 2. To assess the impact of social media addiction on student engagement: The impact of social media addiction on student engagement has been a growing concern in recent years, as various studies have revealed its detrimental effects on classroom participation, motivation and overall academic involvement. Excessive use of social media can significantly disrupt students' ability to engage meaningfully in academic settings, both in terms of participation in discussions and collaboration with peers. The following key findings from the literature provide insights into how social media addiction undermines student engagement and academic success.

- **Lower Academic Participation:** Recent studies have shown that excessive use of social media continues to negatively affect students' participation in academic tasks. For instance, Alhazmi and Rahman (2022) found that university students who spent extended hours on platforms like Instagram and TikTok reported reduced participation in academic discussions and delayed assignment submissions. The study highlighted that many students opted for passive scrolling over active involvement in classroom activities.
- **Reduced Focus and Attention:** A growing body of research indicates that excessive social media use can significantly impair students' ability to concentrate on academic tasks. Chen and Yan (2021) observed that frequent engagement with social media during study hours diminishes students' attention span and cognitive processing abilities. The study found that students were more prone to distractions caused by notifications and compulsive checking behaviors, which interrupted the flow of learning and made it difficult for them to stay focused during lectures and self-study sessions.

- **Decreased Motivation for Learning:** Another critical consequence of social media addiction among students is the decline in intrinsic motivation to learn. Siddiqui and Tarafdar (2023) highlighted that students who were highly engaged with social media platforms reported a stronger emotional connection to online feedback such as likes and comments than to academic accomplishments. This shift in motivational focus often resulted in disengagement from studies, with one student remarking, “I get a dopamine rush from reels, not from finishing assignments.”
- **Social Isolation in Academic Settings:** Recent research suggests that excessive use of social media can paradoxically lead to feelings of social isolation, despite its intent to foster connectivity. Nguyen et al. (2022) found that students who were highly addicted to social media often experienced reduced real-life social interactions, which negatively impacted their sense of belonging in academic settings. This emotional and social disconnect hindered their ability to collaborate effectively in group activities and engage in shared academic tasks, thereby diminishing their overall classroom participation and engagement.
- **Negative Impact on Classroom Engagement:** Students often reported being physically present in class but mentally disengaged due to constant distractions from social media. This “absent presence” led to lower levels of active participation and interaction with both instructors and classmates.
- **Disrupted Collaborative Learning:** students preoccupied with social media found it challenging to engage in collaborative learning tasks. Their attention was frequently divided between online activities and group assignments, resulting in ineffective teamwork and reduced group engagement.

Objective 3: To explore the perceived effects of social media addiction on academic performance: The exploration of perceived effects of social media addiction on academic performance revealed various negative impacts as reported by students and observed in studies. These effects include a range of issues related to grades, time management and the quality of academic work. Key findings include:

- **Lower Academic Achievement:** Social media addiction has been linked to a noticeable decline in academic performance. Students who spend

excessive time on social media often sacrifice valuable study hours, which affects their ability to keep up with coursework and prepare effectively for assessments. The time devoted to scrolling or interacting online frequently replaces time that could be used for academic tasks, resulting in lower grades. As one student reflected, *"I used to get higher grades before I started spending hours on social media every day,"* underscoring the academic trade-off caused by excessive social media use.

- **Procrastination and Missed Deadlines:** Students who are heavily engaged with social media often exhibit increased levels of procrastination, which can lead to the late submission of assignments and frequently missed deadlines. The constant availability of social media platforms serves as a persistent distraction, drawing students away from their academic responsibilities. As a result, tasks are often completed hastily or left incomplete, negatively impacting the quality of academic performance and overall time management.
- **Decline in Study Quality:** Students' study habits and the quality of their academic work have been observed to deteriorate as a result of social media addiction. Frequent shifts in attention from studying to checking social media lead to fragmented concentration and less thorough completion of academic tasks. Many students have reported that "the temptation to check notifications disrupts my concentration during study sessions," highlighting how constant digital interruptions interfere with sustained focus and academic engagement.
- **Impaired Time Management:** Social media addiction has been shown to significantly disrupt students' ability to manage their study time effectively. Students who spend excessive hours on social platforms often struggle to organize their daily schedules, leading to insufficient time for completing academic tasks and preparing for assessments. Rahman and Alghamdi (2023) found that students with high levels of social media use reported frequent difficulty in setting academic priorities and adhering to study plans, which negatively impacted their academic productivity.
- **Increased Stress and Anxiety:** The pressure to remain constantly active and responsive on social media, combined with the demands of academic life, often leads to elevated stress and anxiety among students. Balancing the desire to stay connected online with the need to meet academic

responsibilities can become overwhelming. This ongoing tension may result in emotional exhaustion and reduced academic performance, as students struggle to manage both spheres effectively.

- **Negative Social Comparisons:** Social media platforms often encourage users to compare themselves with others, which can negatively affect students' self-esteem and academic motivation. When students view the achievements and curated successes of their peers online, they may feel inadequate or unaccomplished by comparison. As one student expressed, *"Seeing my friends' achievements online makes me feel like I'm not doing enough and that affects my motivation to study."* Such comparisons can diminish confidence, reduce focus and ultimately hinder academic engagement.

Discussion: The findings of this study align with a substantial body of literature suggesting that social media addiction has a detrimental impact on students' learning strategies, engagement and academic performance. Consistent with studies by Alhazmi and Rahman (2022) and Siddiqui and Tarafdar (2023), the results indicate that excessive use of social media leads to decreased motivation, impaired time management and lower academic achievement. Students reported difficulties in concentrating, reliance on superficial learning techniques and a preference for online distractions over academic responsibilities. These outcomes support previous research showing that social media disrupts deep learning and encourages fragmented attention (Chen & Yan, 2021, Nguyen et al., 2022). However, some studies offer a more nuanced perspective. For instance, research by Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) noted that when used intentionally, social media can support collaborative learning and information sharing among peers. Similarly, Greenhow and Lewin (2016) highlighted the potential of educational social networking tools to enhance engagement when integrated purposefully in academic settings. Despite these positive possibilities, the present study underscores that unregulated and compulsive use of social media especially for non-academic purposes tends to outweigh the benefits, leading to procrastination, stress and diminished classroom participation. Therefore, while digital platforms may offer some value when used strategically, the prevailing trend among students leans toward maladaptive use, reinforcing the need for institutional support in developing self-regulated learning habits, digital well-being and mindful technology use.

Conclusion of the study

The study found that excessive social media use negatively impacts students' learning strategies, academic engagement and performance. Students often prioritized online interactions over academic responsibilities, leading to reduced focus and ineffective study habits. These findings highlight the need for schools to address social media addiction by promoting digital literacy, time management and collaborative learning. Involving parents and incorporating mindfulness practices can further support students in developing healthier online habits. A coordinated effort from educators, parents and policymakers is essential to foster a balanced academic environment that supports student success.

Educational Implications of the study

The findings of the study underscore the urgent need for educational institutions to take proactive measures in addressing the negative effects of social media addiction on students' academic lives. To foster healthier learning environments and support student success, the following steps are recommended:

1. Introduce digital literacy programs to educate students about the responsible and balanced use of social media and its impact on learning and academic performance.
2. Teach effective time management strategies to help students plan their study schedules, reduce procrastination and minimize distractions caused by social media.
3. Promote active learning approaches such as discussions, hands-on activities and problem-solving tasks to improve classroom engagement and attention.
4. Encourage collaborative learning through group projects and peer interactions to strengthen face-to-face communication and teamwork skills.
5. Provide counseling and support systems to assist students struggling with social media addiction, offering guidance in building healthier online habits.
6. Integrate mindfulness practices like reflection, meditation and self-regulation exercises to help students develop focus and academic discipline.
7. Engage parents through awareness programs and workshops so they can support and monitor their children's social media use at home.

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