



A Study of the Impact of Social Media on the Scholastic Achievement of Adolescent Students in Secondary School

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Abstract

Social media has both positive and negative impacts on the scholastic achievement of adolescent students in secondary school. On the positive side, it offers access to educational resources, facilitates peer collaboration, develops digital literacy, and provides motivational support. Social media platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp allow students to supplement classroom learning and work together on assignments. It also helps develop important digital and communication skills that benefit academic performance. However, the negative effects include distraction, time displacement, sleep deprivation, and mental health issues such as anxiety from cyberbullying or social pressure. Excessive use of social media for non-educational purposes often leads to lower grades, procrastination, and decreased focus. It can also reduce face-to-face communication skills, which are crucial for group work and class participation. The impact of social media on academic achievement depends on how it is used, the amount of time spent, and the guidance provided by parents and teachers. Encouraging responsible and balanced use, while leveraging its educational benefits, can help minimize its negative effects and improve student performance.

Keywords: *Social Media, Scholastic Achievement, Adolescents, Secondary Schools, Academic Performance.*



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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an indispensable part of modern society, especially for adolescents. The rapid proliferation of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and Snapchat has transformed the ways in which young people communicate, socialize, and access information. While social media offers opportunities for students to connect with peers, share ideas, and gain knowledge, its impact on their academic performance is a subject of growing concern. The scholarly discourse on the relationship between social media use and

scholastic achievement of adolescents in secondary school is divided, with some researchers suggesting that social media can have both positive and negative effects.

This essay explores the complex relationship between social media use and academic performance among secondary school students, examining the factors that influence this relationship, including the frequency and purpose of social media use, time management, emotional and psychological effects, as well as the role of teachers, parents, and peers. By reviewing empirical research, theoretical frameworks, and

case studies, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media impacts scholastic achievement in secondary schools.

2. UNDERSTANDING SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

Scholastic achievement, in the context of secondary education, refers to the level of success or proficiency a student attains in academic activities. This includes performance in subjects such as mathematics, sciences, languages, and social sciences, usually measured through grades, standardized test scores, and other evaluative tools. A student's scholastic achievement is shaped by numerous factors, including cognitive ability, motivation, parental involvement, teaching quality, socio-economic status, and increasingly, the influence of digital media such as social networking sites (SNS).

Given that adolescence is a developmental phase marked by rapid cognitive, emotional, and social changes, students in secondary school are particularly susceptible to external influences, including media consumption. Social media, in particular, holds sway over many aspects of adolescents' lives, affecting how they learn, socialize, and perceive themselves.

3. POSITIVE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

3.1. Access to Educational Resources - One of the most notable advantages of social media is the unparalleled access to educational resources it provides. Platforms like YouTube, Khan Academy, and educational Facebook groups allow students to access tutorials, instructional videos, and study materials at their convenience. Students can use social media to supplement classroom learning, especially when they encounter difficulties in grasping concepts. In subjects like mathematics and science, where many students struggle, educational content on social media can clarify difficult topics. YouTube channels, for instance, offer step-by-step tutorials on solving algebraic equations, while science-focused Instagram pages share engaging experiments and facts that enrich learning. By providing these resources, social media can help enhance students' understanding of complex concepts, thereby improving their academic performance.

3.2. Peer Collaboration and Group Learning

Social media platforms are essential for fostering peer-to-peer learning. Secondary school students frequently collaborate on group projects, assignments, and study sessions through platforms like WhatsApp, Google Classroom, and Facebook Messenger. These tools enable students to share notes, discuss complex topics, and help each other understand challenging subjects. Group learning is an effective educational strategy that can enhance comprehension and retention. For instance, a study group of students preparing for an exam can use social media to share resources, test each other's knowledge, and clarify misconceptions in real-time. Such collaboration encourages active learning and critical thinking, ultimately contributing to improved scholastic achievement.

3.3. Development of Digital Literacy Skills

Another positive impact of social media use is the development of digital literacy skills. In today's digital age, the ability to navigate, evaluate, and create information using digital technologies is an essential skill for both academic and career success. Social media exposes students to different forms of communication, enhancing their digital literacy and information literacy skills. For example, students who actively participate in online discussions learn to articulate their ideas clearly, critique information sources, and engage in constructive debates. These skills are transferable to academic tasks, such as writing essays, conducting research, and presenting arguments in class. In this sense, social media serves as a tool for developing essential 21st-century skills that positively impact academic performance.

3.4. Motivational Support and Emotional Well-being

Social media platforms can offer emotional and motivational support, which indirectly enhances scholastic achievement. Adolescents often turn to social media for encouragement, whether from friends, teachers, or mentors. Positive reinforcement from peers in the form of "likes" or supportive comments can boost self-esteem and motivation to succeed academically. Furthermore, some students use social media to follow educational influencers, motivational speakers, or academic role models, who provide advice on studying techniques, time management,

and goal-setting. This exposure to motivational content can help students develop a more disciplined and focused approach to their studies.

4. NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

Time Displacement and Distraction - One of the most significant negative impacts of social media on academic performance is time displacement. Adolescents often spend a considerable amount of time on social media, engaging in non-educational activities such as chatting, sharing memes, or watching entertaining videos. This time spent on social media can interfere with study time, homework completion, and preparation for exams. The addictive nature of social media, with its continuous stream of notifications and updates, often leads to procrastination and a lack of focus. Students who habitually check their social media accounts during study hours are less likely to retain information, leading to lower academic performance. Research has shown that students who spend excessive time on social media tend to have lower grades and less engagement with their schoolwork.

4.1. Sleep Deprivation - The use of social media, particularly late at night, has been linked to sleep deprivation among adolescents, which can have a direct impact on their academic performance. Many students stay up late scrolling through their social media feeds, which reduces the amount of sleep they get each night. Inadequate sleep negatively affects cognitive function, memory, attention span, and overall academic performance. Research has demonstrated that students who do not get enough sleep are more likely to struggle with concentration in class, feel fatigued, and perform poorly on assessments. The allure of social media as a source of entertainment and social connection often overrides the need for sufficient rest, thereby contributing to academic decline.

4.2. Exposure to Cyberbullying and Negative Mental Health Impacts - While social media provides a platform for connection and collaboration, it can also be a source of stress and anxiety for adolescents. Cyberbullying, which involves harassment or bullying through digital platforms, is a pervasive issue that affects many

students. Adolescents who experience cyberbullying may suffer from anxiety, depression, and a lack of self-esteem, all of which can negatively impact their academic performance. Additionally, social media's portrayal of idealized lifestyles and body images can contribute to feelings of inadequacy and poor self-worth among adolescents. The pressure to fit in or live up to unrealistic standards can lead to emotional distress, making it difficult for students to focus on their studies and succeed academically.

4.3. Reduction in Face-to-Face Communication Skills - Another downside of social media use is its potential to reduce face-to-face communication skills, which are essential for academic success, especially in environments that require presentations, group discussions, and active participation in class. Over-reliance on digital communication can result in poor social skills, making it difficult for students to engage effectively with teachers and peers in real-world academic settings. For instance, students who communicate primarily through social media may struggle to express their ideas clearly in a classroom discussion or work collaboratively on group projects. This lack of real-life communication skills can hinder academic performance, particularly in subjects that require oral participation and teamwork.

5. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

5.1. Purpose of Social Media Use - The purpose for which students use social media plays a crucial role in determining its impact on scholastic achievement. While social media can be used for educational purposes, such as accessing learning resources or collaborating with peers, many students use these platforms primarily for entertainment or socializing. When social media is used predominantly for non-educational purposes, it is more likely to have a negative impact on academic performance. In contrast, students who use social media strategically for educational purposes can experience enhanced learning outcomes. For instance, students who follow educational accounts or participate in academic discussion groups tend to benefit from the additional knowledge and resources available online.

5.2. Frequency and Duration of Social Media Use

The frequency and duration of social media use also significantly affect its impact on academic achievement. Research indicates that moderate use of social media for educational purposes can positively impact learning. However, excessive use, especially when it interferes with study time and sleep, tends to have detrimental effects. Students who spend several hours per day on social media are more likely to experience negative academic outcomes, including lower grades, poor time management, and decreased concentration. Balancing social media use with academic responsibilities is key to preventing negative effects.

5.3. Parental and Teacher Guidance - The role of parents and teachers in guiding students' social media use is essential. Parents who set boundaries on screen time and encourage responsible use of social media can help their children maintain a healthy balance between online activities and academic responsibilities. Similarly, teachers who integrate social media into the learning process can create an engaging educational environment that harnesses the positive aspects of these platforms. Incorporating social media into classroom activities, such as creating class groups on Facebook or using Twitter for educational discussions, can encourage students to use social media productively. Teachers can also educate students on digital literacy, critical thinking, and the importance of using social media responsibly.

6. CONCLUSION

The impact of social media on the scholastic achievement of adolescent students in secondary school is multifaceted, with both positive and negative dimensions. While social media provides access to educational resources, facilitates peer collaboration, and enhances digital literacy, it also poses challenges related to time management, distraction, sleep deprivation, and mental health. The extent to which social media affects academic performance largely depends on how it is used, the amount of time spent on it, and the presence of parental and teacher guidance. To harness the benefits of social media while mitigating its negative effects, students, educators, and parents must work together to promote responsible and balanced use of these platforms. By doing so, social media can be transformed from a potential

academic hindrance into a valuable tool for enhancing scholastic achievement in secondary schools.

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