



UNIVERSITY OF NATIONAL AND WORLD ECONOMY
International Economic Relations & Business Department

**PROCEEDINGS OF FIRST-YEAR
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS STUDENTS'
RESEARCH PAPERS**

on the topic:

**HOW SOCIAL MEDIA AFFECTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY**

Course: Academic Ethics

Academic Year: 2024/2025

Editor: Assoc. Prof. Monika Moraliyska, PhD

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INTRODUCTION

This collection of research papers presents the work of the first-year students (academic year 2024/2025) in the major “International Economic Relations taught in English” at the University of National and World Economy (UNWE). The topic “*How Social Media Affects Academic Performance – An Empirical Study*”, examines the diverse ways social media influences university students’ academic lives. Through empirical research (students’ own surveys), and literature reviews, the papers explore topics such as concentration, study habits, mental health, career readiness, and time management. This compilation highlights the students’ analytical skills and their ability to address critical issues in modern academic environments.

This proceedings document presents a comprehensive exploration of the impact of social media on academic performance, as investigated by first-year students in the “International Economic Relations” major at the “International Economic Relations and Business” Department, UNWE. Each research paper delves into a unique aspect of the broader theme, collectively offering a multidimensional understanding of how social media shapes the academic experiences of university students.

The objectives of these studies center on identifying both the opportunities and challenges presented by social media in the context of academic performance. Common themes include the influence of social media on focus, time management, study habits, mental health, and career readiness. The students aimed to answer pressing questions, such as whether social media can be leveraged as a tool for academic success or whether its distractions outweigh its benefits.

In terms of methodology, most papers employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. Surveys were the predominant tool, with many studies using platforms like Google Forms and Microsoft Forms to gather data from student populations aged 18–25. The sample sizes varied, with some groups reaching over 70 participants, ensuring robust and representative findings. Additionally, several papers incorporated literature reviews, synthesizing existing studies to contextualize their results within broader academic discourse.

The findings reflect the complex and multifaceted relationship between social media and academic performance. For instance, several papers highlight how excessive time spent on platforms like Instagram and TikTok can lead to procrastination, reduced concentration, and poor time management. Others point out the potential benefits of social media when used for academic purposes, such as accessing educational resources or networking for professional development. A recurring theme across the studies is the dual nature of social media: it can act as both a valuable tool and a significant distraction, depending on how it is used.

This collection underscores the importance of fostering mindful social media usage among students and provides actionable insights for educators and policymakers. By addressing both the opportunities and challenges posed by digital platforms, these papers contribute to a deeper understanding of how social media influences the academic environment in the 21st century.

PAPER 1

HOW DOES SOCIAL MEDIA COMPARISON INFLUENCE MENTAL HEALTH AND ACADEMIC MOTIVATION?

Authors: Damyan Yanchev, Kaloyan Popov, Zlatomir Stoyanov

Abstract

This paper explores the impact of social media comparisons on the mental health and academic motivation of university students. Social media platforms, while providing opportunities for connection and engagement, often foster environments of comparison that can lead to decreased self-esteem, heightened anxiety, and diminished academic drive. Using a survey of university students aged 18–25, the study examines the frequency and effects of comparison behaviors, highlighting how exposure to curated content influences emotional well-being and academic aspirations. Findings reveal that excessive comparisons often correlate with lower academic motivation and higher stress levels, emphasizing the need for strategies to promote healthier online habits.

Keywords: Social media, Comparison, Mental health, Academic motivation, University students, Emotional well-being

PAPER 2

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCREEN TIME AND SLEEP QUALITY?

Authors: Boris Metodiev, Evtim Dimitrov, Georgi Kovachev

Abstract

This paper investigates the relationship between screen time and sleep quality among university students. With the rise of digital devices and social media, students increasingly spend extended hours in front of screens, particularly in the evening. The study examines how this behavior affects sleep patterns, sleep duration, and overall sleep quality, using a survey conducted among students aged 18–25. Results indicate a significant negative correlation between high screen time—especially before bedtime—and sleep disturbances. The findings emphasize the need for increased awareness of healthy screen usage and the implementation of guidelines to improve sleep hygiene and academic performance.

Keywords: Screen time, Sleep quality, University students, Sleep patterns, Digital devices, Sleep hygiene

PAPER 3

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Authors: Elena Katrandzhieva, Elena Semkova, Gizem Sadak

Abstract

This study examines the influence of social media influencers on the lifestyle choices of university students, particularly regarding academic focus, health habits, and consumer behavior. By analyzing survey responses from students aged 18–25, the research highlights the extent to which influencers are perceived as credible sources of advice and role models. Findings reveal that while influencers can inspire positive behaviors such as self-improvement and healthy lifestyles, they can also contribute to unrealistic expectations and distractions from academic priorities. The paper underscores the importance of critical thinking and media literacy in navigating influencer-driven content.

Keywords: Social media influencers, University students, Lifestyle choices, Academic focus, Health habits, Consumer behavior

PAPER 4

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PRODUCTIVITY AND STUDY HABITS

Authors: Kristiana Tsvetkova, Paulina Pesheva

Abstract

This paper explores how social media usage affects the academic productivity and study habits of university students. Through surveys conducted among students aged 18–25, the study investigates patterns of multitasking, time management, and concentration during study sessions. Results indicate that excessive social media use often leads to procrastination, fragmented attention, and reduced study efficiency. However, the findings also highlight potential benefits when social media is used for educational purposes, such as accessing resources or collaborating on group projects. The study calls for strategies to minimize distractions and promote more mindful social media use to enhance academic outcomes.

Keywords: Social media, Academic productivity, Study habits, Time management, University students, Procrastination, Multitasking

PAPER 5

EFFECTS OF SMARTPHONE USE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE DURING STUDY HOURS

Authors: Kalina Slavcheva, Melanie Petrovska, Monika Vasileva

Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of smartphone use on academic performance during study hours among university students. By analyzing survey responses from students aged 18–25, the research identifies key patterns of smartphone usage and their effects on focus, task completion, and overall productivity. The study highlights that frequent smartphone use for non-academic purposes, such as social media or entertainment, significantly disrupts concentration and prolongs study sessions. Conversely, purposeful smartphone use, such as accessing educational tools, shows potential for enhancing productivity. The findings underscore the importance of balancing smartphone usage to improve academic performance during study hours.

Keywords: Smartphone use, Academic performance, Study hours, Concentration, Productivity, University students, Digital distractions

PAPER 6

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CAREER READINESS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Authors: Viktoria Simeonova, Martin Rachev, Martina Alexandrova

Abstract

This study examines the role of social media in shaping the career readiness of university students. Social media platforms, particularly LinkedIn and Instagram, are increasingly used for networking, professional development, and skill-building. By surveying students aged 18–25, this research explores how social media engagement influences their career goals, academic motivation, and readiness to transition into the workforce. Findings reveal that while strategic use of social media can enhance networking opportunities and skill acquisition, excessive use for non-professional purposes may detract from career preparation. The study advocates for integrating social media literacy into academic programs to maximize its career benefits.

Keywords: Social media, Career readiness, University students, Professional development, Networking, Skill-building

PAPER 7

HOW RELIANCE ON DIGITAL NOTE-TAKING AFFECTS INFORMATION RETENTION?

Authors: Vasilena Vasileva, Victoria Novoselska, Yana Naydenova

Abstract

This paper explores the impact of digital note-taking on information retention among university students. The research compares digital methods, such as using laptops and tablets, with traditional pen-and-paper approaches, focusing on their effects on memory and comprehension. Survey data from students aged 18–25 highlight preferences for digital tools due to convenience and organization but reveal concerns about their impact on deep learning and long-term retention. Findings suggest that while digital note-taking offers efficiency, it may hinder the cognitive processes associated with understanding and recalling information. The study emphasizes the importance of balancing digital convenience with effective learning strategies.

Keywords: Digital note-taking, Information retention, Learning strategies, University students, Cognitive processes, Academic performance

PAPER 8

THE IMPACT OF CONSTANT NOTIFICATIONS ON FOCUS AND PRODUCTIVITY

Authors: Dimitar Rachev, Martin Valkanov

Abstract

This paper examines the effects of constant notifications from smartphones and social media on students' focus and productivity. Using surveys conducted with university students aged 18–25, the research highlights how frequent interruptions from notifications disrupt concentration and increase task-switching, leading to reduced efficiency and prolonged task completion times. The study also explores emotional responses, such as stress and anxiety, caused by the persistent need to check notifications. Findings emphasize the importance of strategies like muting notifications or using “Do Not Disturb” modes to mitigate distractions and improve focus during academic activities.

Keywords: Notifications, Focus, Productivity, Smartphones, Social media, University students, Task-switching, Academic performance

PAPER 9

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND STUDY HABITS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS?

Authors: Georgi Vichev, Ralitsa Dimitrova

Abstract

This paper investigates the relationship between the amount of time university students spend on social media and their study habits. The research uses survey data from students aged 18–25 to assess how social media usage impacts time management, focus, and academic routines. Findings indicate that excessive time on platforms like Instagram and TikTok is linked to procrastination, reduced study efficiency, and fragmented concentration. However, when used for educational purposes, social media can support learning and collaboration. The study highlights the need for balanced usage and awareness of how social media affects academic behaviors.

Keywords: Social media, Study habits, Time management, Academic routines, Procrastination, University students, Educational resources

PAPER 10

HOW SMARTPHONE USAGE DURING STUDY HOURS IMPACTS CONCENTRATION AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Authors: Beatris Gologanova, Denislav Georgiev, Sofia Stoykova

Abstract

This paper explores the effects of smartphone usage during study hours on concentration and academic outcomes among university students. By analyzing survey responses from students aged 18–25, the research identifies a strong link between frequent smartphone use for non-academic purposes and reduced focus, increased distractions, and lower academic performance. The study also examines the dual role of smartphones, showing that when used strategically—for accessing educational resources or organizing tasks—they can support productivity. The findings emphasize the need for managing smartphone use effectively to mitigate its negative impact on academic results.

Keywords: Smartphone usage, Concentration, Academic outcomes, Study habits, Productivity, Distractions, University students

PAPER 11

THE IMPACT OF NOTIFICATIONS ON ACADEMIC FOCUS AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Authors: Alexander Yosifov, Danail Voykov, Nikita Balew

Abstract

This paper investigates how constant notifications from smartphones and social media platforms influence academic focus and time management among university students. Through surveys of students aged 18–25, the study highlights how frequent interruptions reduce the ability to concentrate on tasks, leading to inefficient use of study time and increased procrastination. The research also explores the psychological impact, including stress and anxiety, caused by the pressure to respond to notifications. Recommendations include implementing strategies such as muting notifications, scheduling focused study sessions, and using digital tools to limit distractions, improving both focus and time management.

Keywords: Notifications, Academic focus, Time management, Smartphones, Social media, Procrastination, University students, Digital distractions

PAPER 12

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCREEN TIME, SLEEP QUALITY, AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Authors: Nikola Kolev, Nikolay Zhekov, Viktor Hadzhiyski

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between screen time, sleep quality, and academic performance among university students. The increasing reliance on digital devices has raised concerns about the effects of prolonged screen exposure on students' sleep patterns and academic success. The research explores how blue light exposure, screen habits near bedtime, and the primary purposes of screen use (e.g., social media, streaming, academics) influence sleep quality and cognitive function. Findings reveal that extended screen use, particularly close to bedtime, disrupts sleep cycles, resulting in reduced sleep duration, fragmented rest, and increased daytime fatigue. These disruptions directly impair academic performance by affecting focus, memory consolidation, and productivity. The study underscores the need for effective strategies to limit screen use, prioritize sleep hygiene, and balance academic responsibilities with digital habits for improved well-being and academic outcomes.

Keywords: Screen time, Sleep quality, Academic performance, Blue light, Digital devices, Sleep hygiene

PAPER 13

THE IMPACT OF DAILY SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Authors: Alexander Kirev, Alex Gertsov, Vasil Petkov

Abstract

This study explores the effects of daily social media usage on the academic performance of university students. Social media has become an integral part of students' lives, offering both opportunities for learning and communication as well as challenges related to distraction and time management. Through a survey of 33 students, this research examines the frequency, purpose, and perceived impacts of social media use on academic outcomes. The findings reveal that while social media can enhance peer communication and access to educational resources, its excessive use, particularly for entertainment purposes, often leads to reduced focus, procrastination, and lower academic performance. The study emphasizes the need for balanced social media habits and institutional interventions to minimize distractions and support students' academic success.

Keywords: Social media, Academic performance, University students, Distraction, Procrastination, Peer communication, Educational resources

PAPER 14

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE, STUDY HABITS AND ACADEMIC PRODUCTIVITY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Authors: Ivan Georgiev, Nikola Bobchev, Plamena Ganeva

Abstract

This research examines the influence of social media usage on the study habits and academic productivity of university students. With platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube dominating students' daily routines, the study investigates how time spent on social media correlates with study hours, platform preferences, and overall academic performance. Survey data from 63 students aged 18–25 reveal that excessive time on platforms designed for entertainment significantly reduces time allocated to studying and impacts focus and productivity. While social media offers opportunities for academic collaboration and resource sharing, its overuse often hinders time management and study efficiency. The study highlights the importance of balanced social media use and advocates for institutional strategies to integrate educational tools within these platforms to maximize their academic potential while minimizing distractions.

Keywords: Social media usage, Study habits, Academic productivity, University students, Time management, Instagram, TikTok, Educational tools

PAPER 15

FORMS ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLES AND STUDY HABITS

Authors: Alex Georgiev, Silvia Slavcheva, Viktoria Valchanova

Abstract

The increasing prevalence of video-sharing platforms such as YouTube and TikTok has significantly influenced students' learning styles and study habits. This study examines the role of these platforms in academic learning, highlighting how students utilize educational content for self-directed learning, knowledge retention, and motivation. The research, based on a survey of 75 university students, explores the extent to which video-based learning affects their study routines and academic performance. Findings suggest that educational content on social media enhances comprehension, provides flexible learning opportunities, and complements traditional study methods. However, potential distractions and overreliance on digital resources may pose challenges. The study underscores the importance of integrating video-based learning into academic environments while maintaining a balanced approach to education.

Keywords: Video-based learning, Social media education, Learning styles, Study habits, Digital learning platforms

PAPER 1

HOW DOES SOCIAL MEDIA COMPARISON INFLUENCE MENTAL HEALTH AND ACADEMIC MOTIVATION?

Damyan Yanchev, Kaloyan Popov, Zlatomir Stoyanov

Introduction

In today's digital age, social media has become an integral part of daily life for university students. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat offer a window into the lives of peers, influencers, and celebrities. While these platforms provide opportunities for connection and inspiration, they often foster a culture of comparison—where users measure their self-worth against the curated highlights of others' lives. This phenomenon has sparked growing concern among psychologists, educators, and students themselves about its impact on mental health and academic motivation.

This research paper argues that social media comparison significantly affects university students' mental health and academic motivation, often in detrimental ways. By examining current research and case studies, we will uncover the psychological mechanisms at play and suggest strategies for mitigating these effects, empowering students to navigate social media with greater awareness and resilience.

Research Questions

This academic paper seeks to explore two critical questions:

1. How does the practice of comparing oneself to others on social media affect the mental health of university students?
2. In what ways does this comparison influence academic motivation, either positively or negatively?

Literature Review

The advent of social media has created a new environment where university students can observe, compare, and evaluate their own lives against the curated images and achievements of others. This phenomenon, known as social comparison, has become a frequent subject of psychological research due to its significant influence on mental health and motivation, particularly among young adults who are highly active on these platforms. This review synthesizes current literature on how social media comparison affects both the mental health and academic motivation of university students, examining the mechanisms behind these effects and highlighting areas that require further research.

Theoretical Framework: Social Comparison Theory

Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) provides the foundation for understanding how individuals evaluate themselves in relation to others. Research suggests that social media platforms facilitate both upward comparisons (comparing oneself to those perceived as better off) and downward comparisons (comparing oneself to those perceived as worse off), both of which can impact mental health and motivation in different ways. While upward comparison often correlates with negative mental health outcomes, some studies suggest it may also motivate students academically by providing aspirational examples (Vogel et al., 2014).

Social Media Comparison and Mental Health

Negative Psychological Outcomes: Numerous studies have shown that upward comparisons on social media are linked to decreased self-esteem, increased anxiety, and depressive symptoms among university students. For example, a study by Appel et al. (2016) found that students who frequently engaged in upward comparison reported lower levels of well-being and higher levels of stress and depression. Social media tends to present idealized portrayals of life, fostering a perception that others lead more successful and fulfilling lives, which can lead to feelings of inadequacy and loneliness.

Impact on Self-Esteem and Body Image: For many students, social media comparison affects self-esteem, especially in relation to body image. Studies have found that students who frequently compare their appearance to others on social media experience lower body satisfaction and are more likely to develop eating disorders and body dysmorphic tendencies (Fardouly et al., 2015). This negative impact on body image and self-esteem is particularly strong among female students, though it affects male students as well.

Buffering and Moderating Factors: Some studies suggest that personal factors, such as high self-esteem and strong social support networks, can mitigate the negative effects of social media comparison on mental health. However, the buffering effect of these factors remains inconsistent across different studies (Chen et al., 2016). Understanding the nuances of these moderators is essential for developing interventions to reduce social media's harmful effects.

Social Media Comparison and Academic Motivation

Impact on Academic Self-Efficacy: Social media comparison has complex effects on students' academic motivation and self-efficacy (belief in one's ability to succeed academically). While some students may feel inspired by seeing peers' achievements, research shows that constant exposure to academic successes can cause others to experience academic burnout and decreased motivation. This is often because students feel pressured to match the perceived successes of their peers, leading to heightened stress and potential procrastination (Lup et al., 2015).

Influence on Goal Setting and Performance: The effect of social comparison on academic performance is mixed. Some studies indicate that upward social comparison can increase students' motivation to work harder, with a desire to achieve similar successes (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). However, other studies warn that constant exposure to idealized portrayals of academic achievement may lead to goal disengagement among students who feel unable to attain similar success. This discrepancy underscores the importance of individual differences in responses to social comparison, such as personality traits and resilience levels.

Impaired Focus and Academic Stress: Excessive time spent on social media can result in a decrease in students' ability to concentrate on academic tasks, as the urge to check and compare oneself becomes distracting (Yang et al., 2020). This distraction contributes to academic stress, with students often comparing their own academic workload or perceived lack of productivity with peers who seem to be excelling. Research has highlighted that this dynamic can negatively influence academic motivation by increasing pressure without enhancing focus (Meier et al., 2012).

Implications for University Support Systems

Given the significant impact of social media comparison on mental health and academic motivation, universities have a vested interest in supporting students in managing these effects. Mental health counseling services, peer support programs, and educational workshops on media literacy have been recommended as effective measures to help students build resilience against the negative impacts of social media comparison (Ponnusamy et al., 2018). Furthermore, some studies

suggest that digital literacy training can help students approach social media more critically, reducing the likelihood of harmful comparisons (Huang, 2018).

Gaps in the Literature and Future Research Directions

Although the existing literature provides valuable insights, several gaps remain. Firstly, most studies focus on cross-sectional data, which limits the ability to make causal inferences about the long-term effects of social media comparison on mental health and motivation. Longitudinal studies are needed to better understand these long-term impacts. Additionally, cultural differences in social media usage and comparison behaviors have been underexplored. Future research should investigate how these effects vary across cultural contexts to develop a more comprehensive understanding.

Furthermore, while some studies have examined protective factors, such as social support and self-esteem, more research is needed to explore effective coping strategies that students can use to minimize the adverse effects of social media comparison. Identifying and promoting these strategies could be essential for university support programs aiming to improve students' resilience.

Methodology

Research Design

To determine the extent to which social media comparison affects the mental health and the level of academic motivation of university students, this study was carried out using quantitative survey methods. We used cross-sectional design, which utilized an online questionnaire developed with the Microsoft Office Forms application. This method enhanced the collection of data and helped us determine the relationships among the variables of the study.

Participants

The participants were mainly undergraduates with the majority coming from the University of National and World Economy (UNWE) in Bulgaria. More than 30 people responded to the survey. The strategy of collecting the sample was very informal as we recruited through a circle of friends and university colleagues in order to increase the level of accessibility and involvement.

Materials and Tools

An online questionnaire was the main method of collecting the data. It consisted of well-defined questions that aimed at gathering information on the social media habits of students, their experiences with social media and social comparison, some variables of mental health, and the motivation to learn. Microsoft Forms was used in conducting the survey and websites such as Google scholar, Google search and Chatgpt were also used in conducting additional research.

Ethical Considerations

The survey was designed to be anonymous, with no identifiable data collected. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed that their data would be used for research purposes only.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were exclusively gathered through an online survey. The responses have been analyzed using statistical tools and techniques to identify correlations among social media comparison,

mental health, and academic motivation. Microsoft Forms has been used to organize the data, and ChatGPT for the interpretation of statistics and trend identification.

Results and Discussion

Our survey of university students, primarily from UNWE in Bulgaria, sheds light on the complex effects of social media comparison on mental health and academic motivation. The majority of respondents or around 70% reported spending 2–4 hours daily on social media, predominantly using Instagram (83%). While entertainment was the primary content consumed (27%), many participants also engaged with motivational or self-improvement content, reflecting a dual-purpose usage pattern.

Comparing with others on social media was well represented, as 55% of participants could testify to such behavior. Reactions emotionally range from relaxing-71%, anxiety-19%, and sadness-10%, showing the diversity of impacts that are there on the mind. These findings back up studies showing that upward comparisons often harm self-esteem and increase stress (Appel et al., 2016), though they can also provide aspirational value for some (Vogel et al., 2014).

Regarding academic motivation, 45% of respondents admitted to neglecting work due to social media, while others found inspiration in peers' successes, the necessity of a greater future (23%) or motivational posts. This aligns with literature showing social comparison's dual effects: it can inspire goal-setting or lead to academic burnout when perceived benchmarks feel unattainable (Lup et al., 2015).

A high percentage, 65%, demonstrated skepticism toward social media influencers, reflecting broader trends of a loss of confidence in such content. Nevertheless, 45% found influencers and motivational content inspiring, illustrating individual differences in how social media shapes academic and personal aspirations.

The results emphasize that social media's effects are highly individualized, influenced by factors like self-esteem and support networks (Chen et al., 2016). Universities can mitigate negative outcomes through mental health resources, media literacy workshops, and peer support initiatives to encourage healthier social media use.

This study's small sample size and informal recruitment limit its generalizability, and future research should explore cultural differences and long-term impacts of social media comparison to better understand its role in student life.

Conclusion

This research showcases the extent to which social media comparison impacts the mental health and academic motivation of university students and demonstrates its dual nature-both the harmful and helpful dimensions. On one hand, curated, idealized content common on platforms such as Instagram encourages negative psychological results, including heightened anxiety, low self-esteem, and academic burnout. On the other hand, exposure to motivational or aspirational content sometimes inspires students by encouraging goal-setting and persistence. This duality demonstrates the complicated nature of social media when it comes to shaping experiences within the students.

Data from this survey indicate that most participants tend to compare themselves with others online regularly while acknowledging the unrealistic portrayal of life online; yet they are influenced by what is shown on social media. This paradox indicates a disconnect between students' cognitive understanding and emotional reactions, a phenomenon that needs further exploration. Notably, significant numbers of respondents reported neglecting academic responsibilities due to social media distractions, aligning with existing research that links excessive social media use to impaired focus and productivity.

It is time that universities addressed these challenges with appropriate interventions. For example, media literacy workshops, mental health counseling, and support programs led by peers will increase students' awareness of social media and build resilience among them. Communities embracing the diverse and authentic experiences of their students may provide a counterbalancing force to the comparison induced by social media.

Although this study provides some useful insights, its small sample size and informal recruitment procedure limit generalizability. Future studies should involve larger and more diverse populations and also use longitudinal designs to examine long-term effects of social media comparison.

In conclusion, social media comparison is an arena that presents both risks and opportunities for university students. By adopting a critical and reflective approach to social media use, supported by institutional resources, students can mitigate negative effects while harnessing its potential to inspire and motivate. This kind of balance is crucial for supporting mental well-being and academic success in the digital era.

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PAPER 2

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCREEN TIME AND SLEEP QUALITY?

Boris Metodiev, Evtim Dimitrov, Georgi Kovachev

Introduction

In today's digital world, university students are increasingly exposed to prolonged screen time due to academic, social, and recreational activities. Electronic devices, such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets, have become integral tools for studying, networking, and leisure, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when online learning surged globally. While these technologies have enabled unprecedented access to information and collaboration, their pervasive use has raised concerns about their impact on sleep quality and academic performance.

Sleep plays a pivotal role in maintaining cognitive functions, emotional regulation, and overall well-being. It is essential for memory consolidation, learning processes, and sustained attention, all of which are critical for academic success. However, the prevalence of sleep disturbances among university students has been linked to increased screen time, particularly in the evening hours. This paper investigates the relationship between screen time, sleep quality, and academic performance among university students, focusing on the mechanisms underlying this relationship and its broader implications.

Research Questions:

1. How does screen time influence the sleep quality of university students?
2. How do sleep disruptions caused by screen time affect students' academic performance?

Thesis Statement: Prolonged and poorly timed screen exposure adversely affects sleep quality among university students by disrupting circadian rhythms and increasing cognitive stimulation, which, in turn, hampers their academic performance and overall well-being.

Literature Review

Impact of Screen Time on Sleep Quality

Research consistently demonstrates a negative correlation between screen time and sleep quality. According to Carter et al. (2016), increased screen exposure delays sleep onset, reduces sleep duration, and compromises sleep efficiency. This phenomenon is primarily attributed to the blue light emitted by screens, which suppresses melatonin—a hormone critical for regulating the sleep-wake cycle. The effects are particularly pronounced when screens are used in the evening or before bedtime, as this coincides with the body's natural preparation for sleep (Chang et al., 2015).

Behavioral factors exacerbate the problem. Exelmans and Van den Bulck (2017) observed that university students often use screens for activities like social media, gaming, or streaming, which increase cognitive and emotional arousal. This stimulation prolongs wakefulness and delays the onset of deep sleep. Moreover, multitasking on screens—switching between academic work, social media, and entertainment—further disrupts pre-sleep relaxation.

Link Between Sleep Quality and Academic Performance

Adequate sleep is essential for cognitive processes, including memory consolidation, problem-solving, and sustained attention. Lo et al. (2016) highlighted that students with consistent and sufficient sleep performed better academically compared to their sleep-deprived peers. Sleep deprivation, on the other hand, impairs executive functions, reduces information retention, and increases daytime fatigue, leading to diminished academic outcomes.

Okano et al. (2019) investigated the impact of sleep quality on college students and found that inconsistent sleep patterns negatively affected their GPA. Furthermore, students experiencing poor sleep quality often reported heightened stress levels and decreased motivation, compounding the challenges to academic success.

Screen Time as a Mediator

Screen time acts as a mediator between lifestyle behaviors and academic outcomes. Yeo et al. (2023) observed that students who frequently engage in late-night screen activities reported poorer sleep quality and, consequently, reduced academic performance. This is particularly evident during exam periods, when screen use for academic purposes often extends into the early hours, disrupting circadian rhythms and diminishing cognitive efficiency.

Research Gaps

While the literature extensively documents the negative effects of screen time on sleep and academic performance, gaps remain in understanding effective interventions. Studies on the efficacy of blue light mitigation tools, such as night mode filters and screen-free routines, are limited. Additionally, individual differences—such as resilience to sleep deprivation and adaptability to screen use—require further exploration.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a survey-based approach to investigate the relationship between screen time, sleep quality, and academic performance. The survey was distributed to university students, capturing quantitative and qualitative data on their screen habits, sleep patterns, and academic outcomes.

Participants

A sample of 200 university students aged 18-25 participated in the study. Participants were recruited through social media platforms and university mailing lists to ensure diversity in academic disciplines and screen usage habits.

Data Collection Tools

The survey, designed using Google Forms, included structured questions to assess:

- Average daily screen time.
- Timing and frequency of screen use (e.g., before bedtime).
- Self-reported sleep quality and duration.
- Academic performance indicators, such as GPA and study productivity.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained from all respondents. The survey was anonymous to protect participants' privacy, and ethical guidelines were adhered to throughout the research process.

Results and Discussion

Findings

1. Screen Time and Sleep Patterns:

- 40% of participants reported using screens for more than 6 hours daily.
- 75% engaged in screen use within one hour of bedtime, with 35% admitting to “always” doing so.
- 60% rated their sleep quality as “poor” or “very poor.”

2. Academic Impacts:

- 70% of students experiencing poor sleep quality reported frequent daytime fatigue.
- 50% rated their academic performance as “average” or “below average,” citing tiredness and difficulty concentrating as primary challenges.

Comparison with Literature

These findings align with existing research. For instance, Exelmans and Van den Bulck (2017) found that evening screen use significantly disrupts sleep, leading to poor academic outcomes. Similarly, Okano et al. (2019) emphasized the link between consistent sleep patterns and higher GPA. The results of this study reinforce the conclusion that prolonged and poorly timed screen use detrimentally impacts both sleep and academic performance.

However, some participants noted positive effects of educational apps and digital tools. For instance, 20% reported using apps like blue light filters and bedtime reminders, which they found helpful in mitigating sleep disturbances. This observation aligns with recent research suggesting that not all screen time is equally detrimental, and its impact may depend on the type and purpose of screen use (Przybylski et al., 2019).

Implications

The findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions to address the adverse effects of screen time on sleep and academic performance. Universities can implement several measures, including:

- Awareness Campaigns: Educating students about the impact of screen use on sleep and cognitive functions.
- Digital Tools: Promoting the use of blue light filters, screen time trackers, and sleep management apps.
- Policy Changes: Encouraging screen-free periods before bedtime and providing resources for stress management to reduce reliance on screens for relaxation.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, and the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causality. Additionally, the sample size, while adequate, may not fully capture the diversity of university populations. Future research

should consider longitudinal studies and include larger, more diverse samples to enhance generalizability.

Conclusion

This research highlights the intricate relationship between screen time, sleep quality, and academic performance among university students. Excessive and poorly timed screen use disrupts sleep patterns, leading to cognitive impairments and diminished academic outcomes. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including individual behavioral changes and institutional support.

Future studies should explore the long-term effects of screen time on sleep and academic performance, as well as the efficacy of intervention strategies. By adopting evidence-based practices and fostering a culture of digital mindfulness, universities can empower students to optimize their sleep and achieve their academic potential.

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PAPER 3

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' LIFESTYLE CHOICES

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n Introduction

a Being created with the aim to serve the community in terms of easy, effective and accessible communication, the social media has become something much bigger than that. In recent studies it has been discovered that out of 8.12 billion people in the world, 63.7% of the population use social networks, regardless of age or internet access. This leads us to the assumption that, with its ubiquitous access, convenience, functionality and flexibility, the social media attracts more and more users, and definitely plays a vast and influential role, not only in young people's life, but elderly people, too.

a There have been a number of discussions in regards to what kind of affect social media influencers and content creators have on university students' lifestyle choices and academic focus.

d Many are of the belief that social influencers are viewed as trustworthy and credible sources of information, as well as active endorsers of products and services (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

i According to Ahmad (2021) there is a significant relationship between subjective norms and behavioral intent.

v Others consider the idea of four major advantages of social media use, especially in higher education, which include enhancing relationship, improving learning motivation, offering personalized course material and developing collaborative abilities.

l In accordance with our survey, held in November 2024, among university students, in between the ages of 18 and 25, we have come to the conclusion that the usage of social media, its affect and influence on university students' lifestyle choices and academic performance is beneficial as well

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S Literature Review

S Beyond doubt, individuals around the world today use social media applications to communicate and exchange information as mass communication channels like the television, newspapers and radio are no longer serving for information.

k Nowadays, people are more dependent on the online personae – social media influencers (SMIs), for information like lifestyle, food, technology, beauty and so on (Yuan & Lou, 2020). According to a research, the social media influencers are known as celebrities and role models among people (Gleason et al., 2017).

Gizem Sadak influencers are viewed as trustworthy and credible sources of information, as well as active endorsers of products and services (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

t According to Ahmad (2021) there is a significant relationship between subjective norms and behavioral intent. His study shows that “The construct of attitude is positively and moderately correlated with behavioral intent. This indicated that there is a relationship between the attitude of students on social media influencers towards their behavioral intent on their dietary choices, however, the relationship indicates only a moderate relationship between the variables. ”

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According to Wang et al. (2017), the fact that social media influencers disseminate has potential to impact people's behaviors and attitudes. However, in the research of Ahmad (2021), findings indicated that social media influencers do not have enough impact on the attitude of the final year Communication students in University Malaysia Sabah regarding their dietary choices.

Studies (Kennedy et al., 2009) examined the general usability of social media among young students in higher level of education. Similarly, Hemmi.A, Bayne.S & Land.R. (2009), examined the use of social media and maintain that the appropriation of social technologies is not an easy and straight forward process. At higher level of education more complex academic tasks are handled and the new generation of students is perceived to understand that social media and social technologies are influential to learning. A number of earlier studies have shown evidence that efforts are required in order to start using social media in order to influence educational activities.

Furthermore, instructors have reported that using online technologies can encourage online discussion among students outside the classes, beyond the traditional class setting (Gray.K., Chang.S., & Kennedy.G., 2010). Inside the situation of internet sites or blogs, when students update their user profiles and personalize their unique pages, they could provide comprehensive particulars about themselves (e.g., full title, date of birth, address, educational background, and hobbies). The academics that are using such technologies inside their class will have a way to discover much more about the students they train simply by viewing the students' profiles (Griffith.S. & Liyanage.L., 2008).

There are benefits and risks associated with using any social network. There have been reports regarding its effect on students' academic performance. Some researchers investigated the end result of social networking usability among College students' and with their academic performance. They found a poor effect and influence when the media is over use in such a way that do not academically improve learning or its process (Wang, Chen & Liang, 2011), (Stollak, Vandenberg, Burklund & Weiss, 2011), (Rouis, Limayem & Salehi-Sangari, 2011), (Canales, Wilbanks & Yeoman, 2009).

Methodology

The format of the survey was a Google Forms document, so that it can be easily accessible to be opened, done and sent for all students. The survey included 16 questions with multiple choice from which the students had to choose the most accurate answer for themselves. The main focus of the questions was put on the influence social media and influencers have on their lifestyles, such as daily social media screen time, most used applications, what kind of content is the most consumed, quantity of influencers they follow, influence on purchasing decisions by content creators, the amount of time spent engaging in physical activity weekly, average number of hours of sleep on a day-to-day basis, smoking and drinking habits, comparison of their abilities with those of people online, impact on academic performance, distraction from studies if social media is added to academics, motivation for more studying and participation in academic activities and attention span and focus.

Secondly, this format facilitated the collection of data because the answers, people, participating in the survey, gave, were transformed into pie charts simultaneously with the submission of the form. This was an effective approach because it was clear what percentage chose a specific answer or how many people are included in the percentage. This way, the creator of the form can track effortlessly the results from the survey and report to their team due to the evident changes that are made by every submission.

By doing this, from the 75 people participating in the research, we were able to extract the targeted group which we needed to put under observation, which was from 18 to 25-year-olds.

Results and Discussion

Our online survey was completed by 75 individuals, the majority of whom are females (72%) between the ages of 18-25 (92%).

According to the end results, the most consumed categories of content are self-development (30.7%) and beauty (29.3%), while the most used social media apps are Instagram (46.7%) and Tik Tok (34.7%). A greater part of the respondents reported to have more than 2.5 hours of weekly physical activity (Table1).

There was no association found between spending 3 hours or more of social media time with risk factors related to behavior and lifestyle.

Around (49.3%) reported sleeping on average more than 7 hours per day, which is relatively a good amount of sleep.

Individuals who spent 3 hours or more time on social media, reported drinking alcohol less (32.7% vs. 50%), while they reported smoking in the past week more (41.8% vs 30%) although these differences were found statistically insignificant (Table2).

(49.1%) of participants with longer social media usage answered “Yes” to the question of the negative effect of unlimited social media use on academic performance, in comparison to the other 35% with less usage of it. However, the answer of both of the groups was negative to the question about the effect of social media used during academic lessons.

Additionally, participants with higher consumption of social media (more than 3 hours a day) confessed being “sometimes” (50.9%) and “often” (30.9%) distracted by it. While the other part’s response (less than 3 hours usage daily) was “sometimes” (65%) and “often” (10%). Judging by these results, it is undeniable that the social media, no matter how much is used, has an effect on the concentration levels of university students, which is definitely not positive. Despite this, a significant part of the respondents answered relatively equally to whether they get motivated by social network – their answer was positive, “sometimes” (60%) and “often”.

In compliance with the final results, the majority of the participants responded negatively (56.9%), (29.2%) felt neutral, while only (13.9%) agreed to the question of following too many influencers.

(59.7%) of respondents said their purchasing decisions “sometimes” gets affected by influencers, (36.1%) said it “never happened”, while the rest said it happens “often” (4.2%).

Table 1	<3H/Day (N=20)	≥3H/Day (N=55)	Overall (N=75)
Age			
<18	2 (10.0%)	3 (5.5%)	5 (6.7%)
18-25	17 (85.0%)	52 (94.5%)	69 (92.0%)
>40	1 (5.0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.3%)
Gender			
Male	4 (20.0%)	17 (30.9%)	21 (28.0%)
Female	16 (80.0%)	38 (69.1%)	54 (72.0%)
Weekly Physical Activity			
<2.5 Hours	9 (45.0%)	15 (27.3%)	24 (32.0%)
>2.5 Hours	11 (55.0%)	40 (72.7%)	51 (68.0%)
Most Watched Category			
Beauty	2 (10.0%)	20 (36.4%)	22 (29.3%)

Table 1	<3H/Day (N=20)	≥3H/Day (N=55)	Overall (N=75)
Travel	4 (20.0%)	4 (7.3%)	8 (10.7%)
Politics	3 (15.0%)	3 (5.5%)	6 (8.0%)
Self development	7 (35.0%)	16 (29.1%)	23 (30.7%)
Technology	0 (0%)	3 (5.5%)	3 (4.0%)
Food	2 (10.0%)	4 (7.3%)	6 (8.0%)
Health	2 (10.0%)	2 (3.6%)	4 (5.3%)

Others	0 (0%)	3 (5.5%)	3 (4.0%)
Most used App			
Facebook	1 (5.0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.3%)
Instagram	9 (45.0%)	26 (47.3%)	35 (46.7%)
Pinterest	1 (5.0%)	1 (1.8%)	2 (2.7%)
Tik Tok	7 (35.0%)	19 (34.5%)	26 (34.7%)
YouTube	2 (10.0%)	8 (14.5%)	10 (13.3%)
Instagram and Tik Tok	0 (0%)	1 (1.8%)	1 (1.3%)

Table 2	<3H/Day (N=20)	≥3H/Day (N=55)	Overall (N=75)	P-value
Weekly Physical Activity				
<2.5 Hours	9 (45.0%)	15 (27.3%)	24 (32.0%)	0.347
>2.5 Hours	11 (55.0%)	40 (72.7%)	51 (68.0%)	
Average Sleeping Hours				
<7H/Day	9 (45.0%)	29 (52.7%)	38 (50.7%)	0.839
>7H/Day	11 (55.0%)	26 (47.3%)	37 (49.3%)	
Alcohol Drinking				
Yes	10 (50.0%)	18 (32.7%)	28 (37.3%)	0.393
No	10 (50.0%)	37 (67.3%)	47 (62.7%)	
Smoking				
Yes	6 (30.0%)	23 (41.8%)	29 (38.7%)	0.649
No	14 (70.0%)	32 (58.2%)	46 (61.3%)	

Conclusion

The survey did not show significant results and the respondents did not provide answers with major percentage gaps, yet there were slight tendencies among few answers. The numbers in the questions for difficulty of focusing during classes and the one that investigates the motivation that social media can provide for participation in the academic life, we observe a confirming percentage

for a certain impact of social media presence in the everyday life of university students. The participants that took part in this survey are not characterized by some atypical behaviors and do not reveal exceptional patterns that could be used for certain scientific conclusions.

Acknowledgements

This material is based upon a work by Journal of Information Systems Research and Innovation (JISRI) and our survey. Any opinions findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those from the authors and us/our survey, and do not necessarily reflect on the views of the Journal of Information Systems Research and Innovation (JISRI).

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PAPER 4

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PRODUCTIVITY AND STUDY HABITS

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S Introduction

t In today's tech-driven age, social media continues to transform how individuals connect, communicate, and access information, becoming an integral part of university students' daily lives. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube enable students to network, collaborate, and engage with peers, but their widespread use often overlaps with academic tasks, creating a trend known as social media multitasking. This behavior involves simultaneously engaging in study-related activities while interacting with social media, raising critical questions about its implications for productivity, focus, and study habits.

T The dual nature of social media multitasking makes it a complex development. On one hand, it can provide opportunities for accessing academic resources, brainstorming creative ideas, and fostering collaboration through online communities. On the other hand, frequent task-switching may hinder concentration, increase cognitive load, and lead to inefficient time management, which could negatively impact academic performance. These contrasting effects underscore the importance of understanding how multitasking behaviors shape students' engagement with their academic responsibilities.

O This case study aims to examine the effects of social media multitasking on university students' productivity and study habits. Additionally, it investigates how multitasking influences students' overall approach to academic work, exploring its potential to enhance or disrupt their ability to learn and perform effectively. By analyzing patterns of multitasking behavior and their consequences, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive and balanced understanding of both its advantages and drawbacks.

Research question: What are the effects of social media multitasking on university students' productivity and study habits?

Literature Review

Multitasking's relation to cognitive tasks

Multitasking is one of those terms that can be difficult to define. The traditional cognitive psychology laboratory study of "multitasking" would require that a participant perform two tasks simultaneously. Each task would have a clearly defined goal that is distinct from the other task. In many cases, the tasks would be simplified versions of basic cognitive tasks – so simple that it is rare that people make mistakes. (Carrier, 2015)

Nevertheless, when applied to studying and academic tasks, one might find that the complexity of managing their attention on the academic task and the correspondence with peers on social media increases significantly. This can be stated on grounds of knowing that academic work requires critical thinking, persistent engagement, creative troubleshooting and cognitive control. Occupying oneself with social media in a study session lead to frequent change of focus and brain exhaustion that creates difficulty when it comes to processing information. Additionally, multitasking can

result in ineffective approaches to studying – students ought to start easily losing their train of thoughts, which may cause deeper cognitive impairment and problems with their attention span in the long term. That would lead to unhealthy study habits, which will result in the students' academic performance and overall quality of their work.

Theories of attention

According to the bottleneck theory of attention, attention can be allocated to only one task at a time. Thus, multitasking is a myth; instead, the mind switches between tasks. Stimuli arrives at a processing 'bottleneck,' at which only one item can be processed at a time (Broadbent, 1958; Maslovat et al., 2013). Because attentional resources are limited, filtering of stimuli must occur. The bottleneck postpones aspects of processing of the secondary task until the primary task is completed. Van der Schuur and colleagues (van der Schuur et al., 2015) suggest two opposing consequences of media multitasking with regards to cognitive control, which they referred to as the scattered attention and trained attention hypotheses. According to the scattered attention hypothesis, long-term media multitasking may lead to disrupted cognitive control in which the individual gravitates towards the preferred task rather than maintaining focus despite attentional distractions (van der Schuur et al., 2015). However, this theory could be tackled, because other research, concerning today's youth has shown that college students are capable of maintaining equal focus to both of the tasks they are doing. For example, a student can write their thoughts down, while listening to music, podcast or any kind of background that includes speech, and still follow their thought and engage in what their hearing and remember what is said.

Multitasking's effects on college students' productivity

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation (2010), media use is the dominant way adolescents and young adults spend their time, averaging more than 7.5 h of use daily—almost the equivalent in length of a full work day (Roberts, Foehr, & Rideout, 2010). Students increase media absorption by using two or more mediums simultaneously via media multitasking, experiencing 10 h and 45 min of media content within their daily 7.5 h. This behavior carries into college, where media use is largely unregulated. College students commonly but erroneously report that multitasking increases productivity (Lin, Cockerham, Chang, & Natividad, 2015). Other students multitask on a situational basis according to motive. A student with a specific goal and sufficient motivation, such as studying for an upcoming exam in a difficult class, is less likely to multitask. On the other hand, students with less consequential goals, such as communicating with friends for leisure via Facebook or email, are more likely to multitask. Our survey has shown the same exact results, leading to accepting the fact that the data of the study are subjective, as the motive and the type of work is in relevance.

Multitasking outside of class and study habits

Laptops and mobile phones are particularly distracting while studying or doing coursework outside of class, as students can easily access alternate media sources such as email, Facebook, or Instant Messaging (IM). Much of the research to date primarily assessed the impact of media multitasking on in-class activities, such as test performance. Few studies have examined the role of media multitasking on assignments outside of class, such as homework or studying. A survey study of 1839 students revealed that using Facebook while doing schoolwork was negatively predictive of overall semester GPA. (Junco, 2012). Junco and Cotten (2012) surmised that Facebook or texting while completing schoolwork may tax students' capacity for cognitive processing, inhibiting deeper learning. According to one experimental study, the more time participants reported spending on IM in class, the lower their self-reported GPA. (Fox, Rosen, & Crawford, 2009). Outside of the classroom, mobile phone use is negatively associated with

academic performance. Texting while studying was significantly and negatively associated with college GPA after controlling for demographic variables, self-efficacy for self-regulated learning, self-efficacy for academic achievement, and high school GPA (Junco, 2012; Junco & Cotten, 2012; Lepp, Barkley, & Karpinski, 2015). The amount of texting and texting while multitasking was negatively predictive of overall GPA for U.S. students (Karpinski, Kirschner, Ozer, Mellott, & Ochwo, 2013). Students who did not text while studying had a higher GPA than those who did text. Furthermore, GPA was higher for those who spent fewer minutes texting per day.

Methodology

In order to find out and analyze how social media multitasking affects student's productivity and study habits we have collected data using a survey. This design was chosen due to its ability to record noticeable trends and behaviors in a large number of students. Because the research is quantitative, statistical analysis is possible, which makes it possible to find patterns and connections in the data that was gathered. This methodology guarantees an organized and methodical exploration of the research inquiries.

Participants

The participants in this study comprised 37 university students from various academic years with the majority coming from University of National and World Economy, moreover from New Bulgarian University and Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. Most respondents were in their first year of university, while smaller groups included students in their fourth year, second year, and third year. This distribution provides a predominantly first-year perspective on the effects of social media multitasking on productivity and study habits, with additional input from upper-year students for a broader understanding.

Data collection

The data for this research was collected through an online survey distributed via Microsoft Forms. The survey was disseminated to university students through email and social media platforms, ensuring broad accessibility and participation. It consisted of multiple-choice and Likert scale questions, designed to gather insights into multitasking frequency, its perceived effects on concentration, and students' study habits. The survey was conducted anonymously to maintain confidentiality and encourage honest responses, ensuring the reliability of the data collected.

Data Analysis

The data collected from 37 university students reveal both the challenges and strategies associated with social media multitasking during study sessions.

- **Year of University**

Most respondents (about 75%) were first- and second-year students. This shows that multitasking behaviors might be more common among younger students who are still figuring out how to manage their time and study effectively.

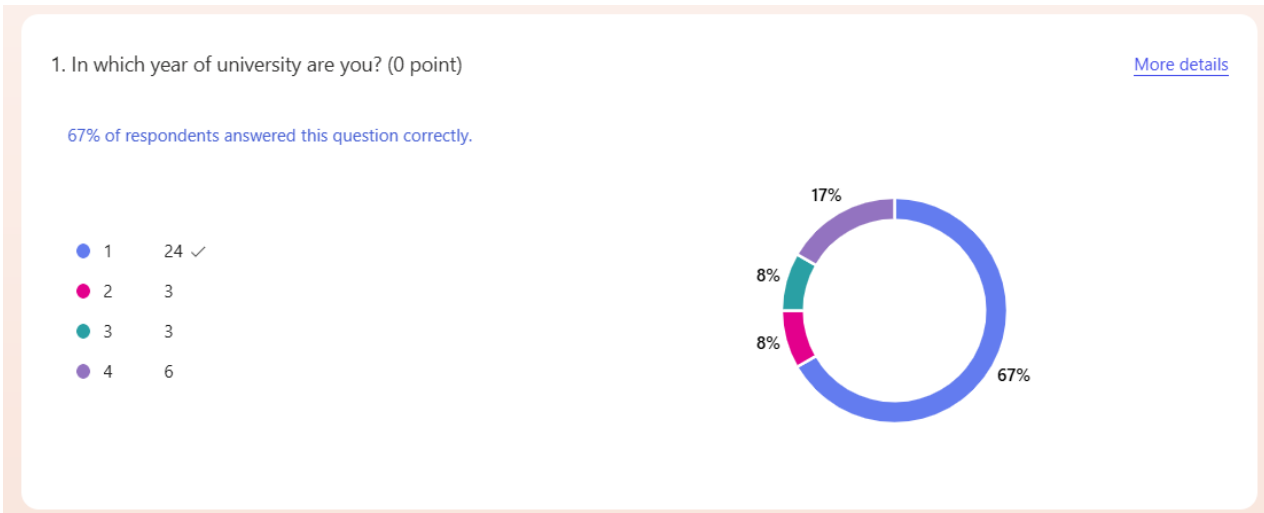
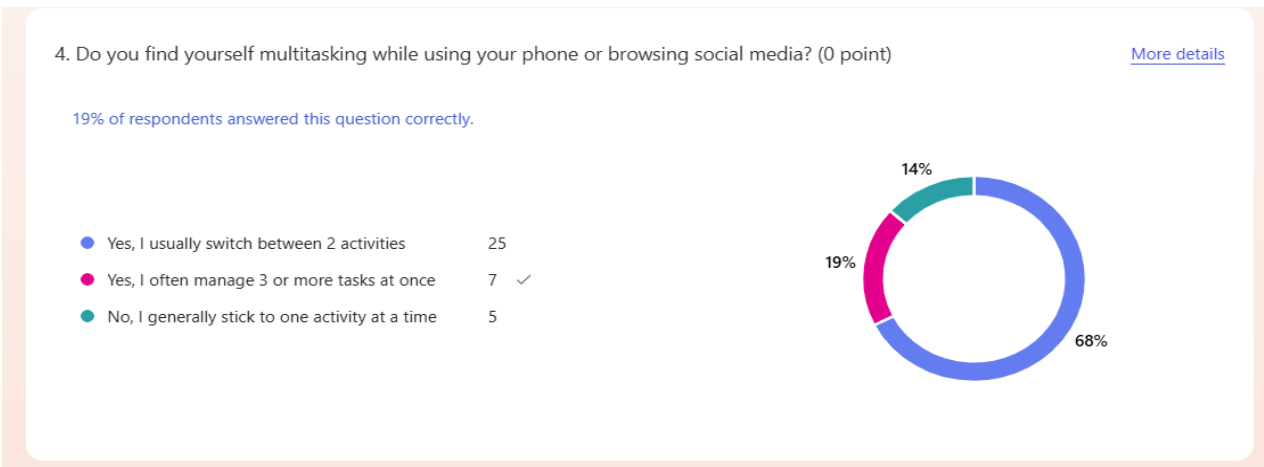
- **Effect on Focus**

A large majority—76% (28 out of 37)—said that social media multitasking reduces their focus, making it harder to concentrate on their studies.

A few students reported that multitasking had no impact, which shows that its effects can vary depending on the person.

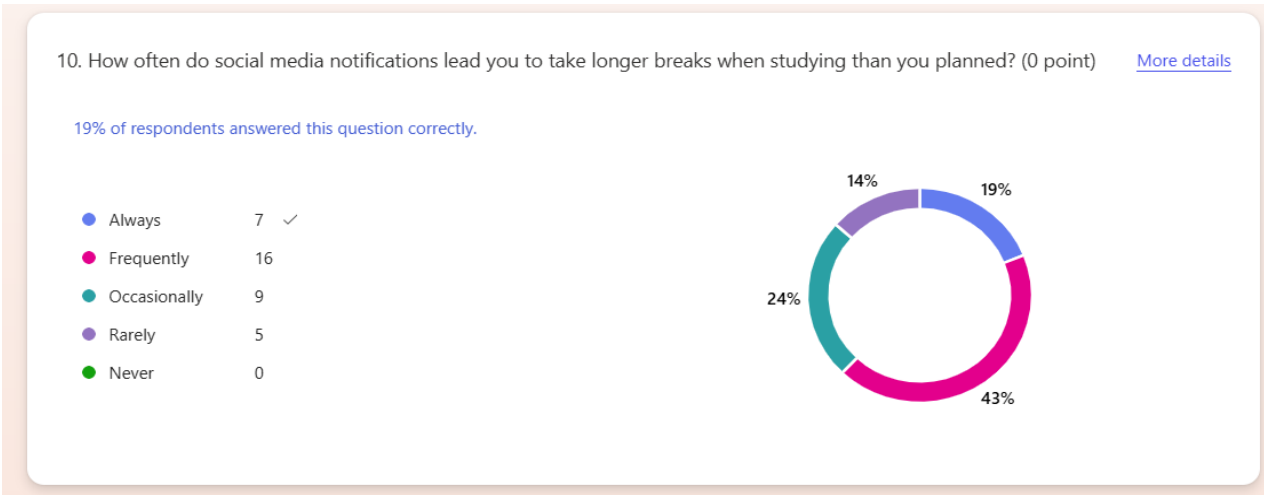
- **Notification Breaks:**

Social media notifications were a big issue for many students. Around 43% said they frequently ended up taking longer breaks than planned because of notifications, and 27% said this happened all the time. This shows how distracting notifications can be when trying to study.



Social Media Integration About 30% of students said they often switch between studying and social media. Others mentioned that they only check social media during breaks or use it as a reward after finishing a task. This shows that students have different ways of balancing social media and studying.

Results and Discussion



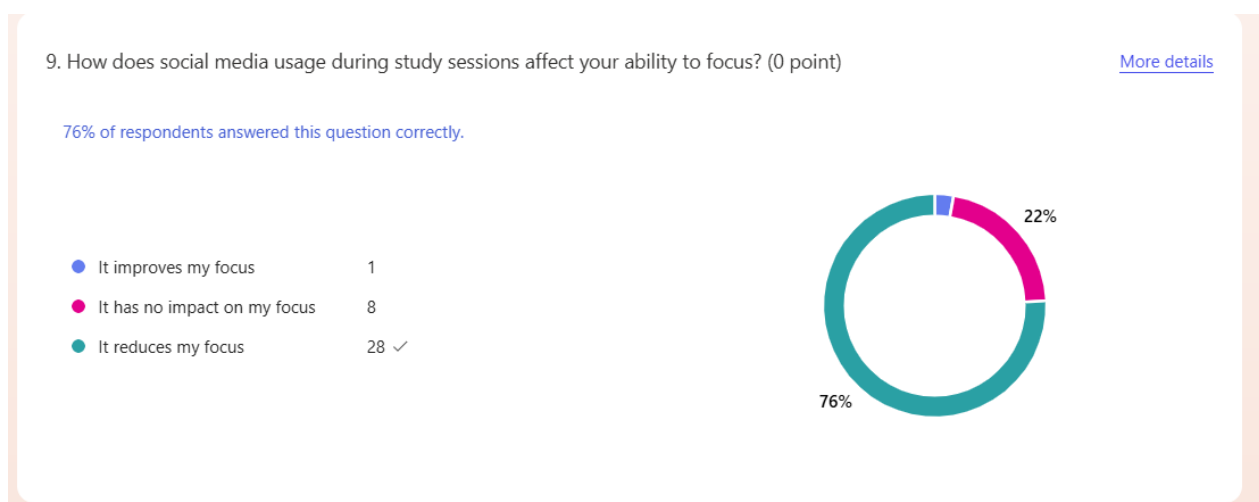
The data collected from 37 university students provide valuable insights into the dual nature of social media multitasking during study sessions, highlighting both the difficulties students face and the methods they use to manage this behavior. On one hand, the results reveal that social media multitasking often poses significant challenges, such as reduced focus, extended breaks due to distractions, and inefficient time management. These challenges can disrupt the learning process and lead to lower productivity during study periods.

On the other hand, the findings also show that some students leverage social media multitasking in positive ways. For example, they use social media as a tool for collaboration, accessing study resources, or staying motivated by taking structured breaks. This suggests that when used thoughtfully, social media can complement study routines rather than hinder them. However, the balance between these positive and negative effects depends on individual approaches, such as how often students check notifications or whether they set boundaries for their social media use during academic tasks.

Focus issues

A significant 76% of respondents reported that social media multitasking reduces their focus during study sessions. This highlights the challenges of frequent task-switching, as students constantly shift attention between academic tasks and social media, which can disrupt deep concentration. Research on the “task-switching cost” supports this, showing that such interruptions increase the time and effort needed to refocus, potentially leading to longer study sessions and reduced retention of material.

However, not all students are equally affected. A small percentage reported no impact on their focus, suggesting that some individuals may effectively manage distractions through self-regulation strategies, such as silencing notifications or using productivity tools. These findings emphasize the importance of minimizing interruptions and adopting structured approaches to social media use to enhance focus and study efficiency.



Notifications and Disruptions

Social media notifications were a major source of disruption, with 43% of respondents stating they frequently took longer-than-planned breaks due to notifications, and 27% reporting this happened all the time. These interruptions often break the flow of study sessions, making it harder for students to maintain focus and complete tasks efficiently.

The habit of checking notifications can lead to prolonged distractions, as one brief interruption often escalates into extended social media use. This highlights the importance of managing notifications, such as silencing alerts or using “do not disturb” modes, to minimize interruptions and maintain a more productive study environment.

Different Approaches to Social Media Use

Students reported varied strategies for incorporating social media into their study routines. While 30% frequently switched between studying and social media, others preferred structured approaches, such as using social media during scheduled breaks or as a reward after completing tasks.

These differences suggest that the impact of multitasking depends on how social media is integrated into the study process. Students who plan their use may balance its benefits, such as staying connected or reducing stress, with the need to remain productive. This highlights the potential for structured strategies to mitigate the negative effects of multitasking.

Year of Study Matters

The majority of respondents (about 75%) were first- and second-year students, suggesting that social media multitasking may be more common among those in the earlier stages of university. Younger students might be adjusting to greater independence, relying on social media to maintain connections, or facing challenges in managing their time effectively.

This highlights the need for early interventions, such as workshops on time management and focus strategies, to help students develop healthier habits and minimize the negative impact of multitasking as they progress in their academic journey.

Conclusion

From one angle, social media can provide benefits like collaboration, access to resources, and motivation, it also creates major challenges, such as reduced focus, inefficient time management, and frequent disruptions from notifications. While the effects of social media multitasking on college students are strongly individual, our research shows that there is a tendency for younger students multitasking more, whereas students in their late years of college are more prone to managing their time efficiently which leads to better productivity. The positive and negative aspects truly depend on the student’s capacity to discipline and focus.

Overall, the study has demonstrated that a variety of surveys, studies, and research have found that the impacts vary depending on the situation, the students' motivations, and the type of multitasking they are engaging in. Therefore, these findings suggest that social media multitasking is a real challenge, but it doesn’t have to be all bad. By finding the right balance, students can use social media as a helpful tool rather than a distraction.

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PAPER 5

EFFECTS OF SMARTPHONE USE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE DURING STUDY HOURS

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i Introduction

n In the 21st century, the use of technology has become an unavoidable part of our life, leading to **as** addiction and the creation of harmful habits associated with its excessive use. Nowadays, smartphones have become an effective and indispensable tool, allowing students to quickly and **s**asily access a large amount of information. The smartphone application can be both a media and **a** learning resource. As it can be used for communication, it can also be used for easy and quick access to information that students need to write their homework. Using smartphones while **a** students are studying negatively affects students' concentration. Furthermore, using smartphones **d**uring study sessions causes frequent interruptions, divided attention, along with diminished focus. **N**otifications, social media updates, as well as entertainment apps can distract students from their **a**cademic tasks, which may lower the quality and efficiency of their study efforts. The topic is **i**mportant as it shows how many students balance enjoying smartphone benefits along with **r**educing distractions. To devise strategies that optimize study habits, improve learning outcomes and promote a healthier approach to technology use in educational settings, one must understand **a**this relationship.

M This research paper argues that smartphone use during school hours has a negative impact on **e** students' concentration and academic performance. Through research and various sources, we will **p**rove why smartphones have a negative impact on students' concentration during study hours and **p**ropose solutions to deal with this problem.

n

i Research Questions

e This academic paper seeks to explore several critical questions:

1. What cognitive processes are most disrupted by smartphone usage during study hours, and **h**ow do these disruptions manifest in students' ability to concentrate?
2. How do notifications and multitasking with smartphones affect students' short-term **m**emory retention while studying?
3. In what ways do social media platforms accessed via smartphones impact students' focus **r**compared to other smartphone applications?
4. What psychological and environmental factors influence the relationship between **o** smartphone usage and students' concentration during study hours?
5. How do self-regulation and time-management skills mediate the impact of smartphone **s** usage on academic performance?
6. What role does the type of study task (e.g., reading vs. problem-solving) play in moderating **a** the impact of smartphone usage on focus and outcomes?
7. How has the frequency of smartphone usage during study hours evolved among university **v** students from 2015 to 2024?
8. What patterns exist in academic outcomes (e.g., grades, test performance) among students **w**ho frequently use smartphones while studying versus those who limit usage?
9. Are there differences in the effects of smartphone use on concentration between STEM **s**tudents and humanities students?

10. How has research on the impact of smartphones on academic outcomes changed since the introduction of screen time monitoring tools in 2018?

11. What role have advancements in educational technology (e.g., study apps) played in shaping perceptions of smartphones as both tools and distractions?

Thesis statement: Constant phone use during study negatively affects students' concentration, which negatively affects information retention and poor academic performance. The presence of social medias such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, the huge variety of games, etc, quickly distract students, causing them to lose focus, motivation, and interest in the learning process.

Literature Review

The widespread use of smartphones has transformed how we access information and communicate. Nevertheless, their influence on students' attention and academic success, especially during study periods, has become a key topic of academic discussion. This literature review explores existing research on the impact of smartphone use on students' concentration and educational outcomes. Although smartphones can significantly improve learning experiences, their excessive and improper use during study times has sparked considerable worries regarding their effects on students' ability to concentrate and their academic success. This literature review investigates the complex relationship between smartphone use, attention, and educational results, examining both negative impacts and potential benefits.

Effects of Smartphone Distractions on Concentration

A common thread in the research is the detrimental effect of smartphone distractions on students' focus. Findings have repeatedly indicated that smartphone notifications, such as text messages, social media updates, and app alerts, cause interruptions in cognitive functions. Excessive smartphone usage can have a detrimental effect on students' sense of academic control. Various studies indicate that frequent interruptions from smartphones lead to task switching, which diminishes both the time spent and the depth of focus on academic assignments. Research by Rosen et al. (2013) reveals that students who often check their smartphones while studying exhibit lower levels of sustained attention, negatively impacting their ability to retain information.

Impact on Academic Performance

Research also reveals the connection between smartphone use during study periods and academic performance. A study conducted by Kuznekoff and Titsworth (2013) showed that students who utilized smartphones for non-educational purposes during lectures or study times achieved lower scores on comprehension and retention assessments. Similarly, Lepp, Barkley, and Karpinski (2015) found a negative correlation between the time spent on smartphones and students' GPAs, highlighting that excessive usage can hinder academic success.

For instance, staying up late using smartphones has been connected to REM sleep which is essential for retaining newly acquired knowledge and skills. Moreover, excessive smartphone use while studying has been linked to decreased focus test scores, as well, as overall poorer academic performance. In a research over time it was noted that constantly looking at smartphones in class had an impact, on academic performance because more usage was linked to reduced concentration. Research indicates that smartphones stimulate pleasure centers in the brain which can lead to difficulties, in controlling usage among students and disrupt their study schedules.

Nonetheless, it's crucial to acknowledge that not all smartphone usage is harmful. When utilized for educational purposes, such as accessing online materials, engaging with learning apps, or collaborating with classmates through communication tools, smartphones can improve the

learning experience. For example, research by Sung and Mayer (2013) indicates that mobile devices, when used appropriately, can facilitate active learning and enhance academic outcomes. This contrast emphasizes the need to differentiate between constructive and unproductive smartphone activities.

Psychological and Behavioral Factors

Constantly receiving notifications quickly distracts the student and makes them forget about studying, thus losing concentration. Even if they take a moment to check who wrote to them, they get carried away and start using the phone for a long time, but not for educational purposes, but for entertainment. In this way, they quickly lose interest and motivation to study. Additionally, excessive smartphone use can impair academic performance by causing distraction, decreased concentration, and persistent procrastination. Social media, games, and other non-academic activities found on smartphones take up a lot of time, which often leads to less time spent studying and, consequently, poorer grades. The physical environment in which students study can play a significant role in how smartphone use affects concentration. An environment with many distractions, such as noisy rooms or public spaces, can make it more tempting for students to check their phones. In contrast, quieter places like libraries, outdoors in nature, or parks can minimize the urge to engage with smartphones.

Constantly receiving notifications often interrupts the learning process, causing students to drop their learning and focus on the notification, which in turn causes them to lose focus and motivation to learn. The time of day when students study also plays a role in how smartphone use affects concentration. According to various studies, fatigue sets in after long academic lectures, especially in the evening, making students more likely to use their phones for relaxation or distraction. In the late afternoon or evening, students may find it harder to resist the urge to check their phones because their mental energy is depleted. Learning is more effective in the early hours of the day, as the brain remembers more of the information and students are not tired. Uncontrolled use of smartphones for non-academic purposes can reduce productivity, worsen academic success, and make it difficult to concentrate on important academic activities. This interruption in focus can make it difficult for students to concentrate in the future, understand difficult concepts, and remember knowledge, which consequently negatively impacts their academic development. Smartphone use can have a negative impact on both students' physical and mental health. Excessive screen time can lead to a sedentary lifestyle, lack of physical activity, and potential health problems.

According to various sources, overexposure to blue light emitted from smartphone screens is linked to sleep problems, a constant feeling of fatigue, and reduced cognitive function, all of which are associated with poor academic performance. Thanks to access to the Internet, various e-books, etc., students get quick access to a variety of information that can be useful for academic activities, but the presence of social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, the huge variety of games, etc, quickly distract students, causing them to lose focus, motivation, and interest in the learning process. Constant distraction leads to less retention of information, which has been shown to negatively impact the brain. Constantly looking at the phone while a student is studying leads to a very low rate of memorising information from the learning material. The brain gets tired faster by doing two different activities, studying and looking at the phone, which leads to a decrease in concentration and productivity. The uncontrolled use of smartphones during the learning process negatively affects concentration.

Negative correlation with performance

Research indicates that smartphone use during study time negatively impacts students' concentration and academic success. This relationship suggests that as students spend more time or use their smartphones more frequently while studying, their ability to concentrate on educational

tasks and their overall performance tends to suffer. A significant factor contributing to this negative correlation is the distracting qualities of smartphones. With constant alerts from social media, messaging platforms, and other digital services, smartphones can easily pull students' focus away from their studies. According to Journal of MDPI, 2024, excessive smartphone use has been linked to lower academic performance.

In addition, excessive smartphone usage can diminish cognitive abilities related to critical thinking and problem-solving. Studies indicate that simply having a smartphone nearby can impair working memory and cognitive function, as part of the student's mental resources are dedicated to resisting the urge to use their device. Regarding academic performance, students who frequently engage with smartphones during study hours often struggle to retain information and excel in tests or assignments.

Additionally, overusing smartphones can interfere with sleep patterns, particularly when utilized late into the night, leading to lower energy levels and impaired cognitive function during the day. A lack of sleep negatively affects learning and academic success.

Procrastination

Procrastination refers to the tendency to delay or defer tasks or responsibilities, often to the extent that it adversely impacts one's effectiveness, ambitions, and overall well-being. It is a prevalent behavior experienced by many individuals, particularly when confronted with assignments that seem challenging, unpleasant, or overwhelming. Procrastination can result in significant repercussions, both academically and professionally. For students, delaying assignments or preparation can result in unsatisfactory grades, missed chances, and excess stress. Although procrastination is a widespread and often exasperating issue, recognizing its roots and effects can empower individuals to take action to combat it. By enhancing time management abilities, establishing clear objectives, and tackling emotional obstacles, it's feasible to break free from the habit of procrastination and boost productivity, concentration, and overall health.

Methodology

Research design

This research will utilize a quantitative approach to evaluate the effect of smartphone use during study sessions on students' focus and academic performance. We used Microsoft Office Forms application to examine what impact does smartphone usage during study hours have on students' concentration and academic outcomes. This method helped us understand that phone use has a negative impact on students' concentration.

Participants

The participants in the survey were students from University of National and World Economy (UNWE) in Bulgaria. There were over 20 participants, whose answers were varied.

Materials and tools

An online platform (Microsoft Office Forms) was the main method of collecting the data. The survey contains both open and closed questions. The purpose of the questions was to understand how phone use affects students' concentration and to understand some methods for dealing with

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Ethical considerations

The answers to the survey are anonymous to protect participants' privacy and all those who participated in it are volunteers and the answers are individual for each of them.

Data collection

The survey consisted of the following questions:

1. How often do you use your smartphone during study sessions?
2. How often do you get distracted by non-academic content while using your smartphone for study purposes?
3. How would you rate your concentration level while studying without using your smartphone?
4. Do you find it challenging to refocus on study material after checking your smartphone?
5. How would you describe the impact of smartphone use during study on your academic performance?
6. Do you believe that using your smartphone during study sessions has affected your grades?
7. In your opinion, what could help students better manage smartphone usage during study sessions?

These are some of the questions our anonymous participants answered.

Results and discussion

Thanks to the answers of our participants, we understood what impact does smartphone usage during study hours have on students' concentration and academic outcomes and we understood, also, how our participants control themselves not to use it. The majority of participants (47.8%) use their phone frequently during a study session, spending about 30 minutes on it, mainly using social medias like Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok and so on, which is equal to 73.9%. However, very few participants use academic apps like Quizlet, Google Scholar, etc. during study session.

To the next question on the survey, how often do you get distracted by non-academic content while using your smartphone for study purposes, the majority or 47% of participants answered occasionally and the least (8.7%) answered rarely. Furthermore, a large part of participants has a high level of concentration without using their phone while studying, which equates to 47.8% of respondents. This is proof that the smartphone negatively affects concentration during study.

According to 39.1% of participants, find it challenging to refocus on study material after checking their phones. To the next key question to gathering information, most participants or 48% answered that the use of smartphone during study impacts slightly negative on students' academic performance. According to 65.2% of participants believe that using their smartphones during study sessions has not affected their grades.

To understand how to deal with excessive phone use, we asked a question what strategies you use to limit smartphone use during study hours and 78.3% answered that they are turning off notification. This turns out to be the best method for dealing with the problem. Although most participants answered the open-ended questions in the same way, there were many varied responses. Some students control themselves and use their phones only for study purposes, while others use them to distract themselves and thus quickly lose concentration.

According to the 2015 Census, 86% of university students owned smartphones. By 2021, access was widespread for nearly everyone. Students became inextricably connected to their smartphones, using them for reading course materials, watching videos, collaborating on assignments, and so on. During the pandemic, 61% of students reported increased use of smartphones for study-related

tasks. Having access to learning apps and digital textbooks, as well as communication platforms, provided students with the tools they needed to thrive in school. However, they also turned into a form of diversion with networking platforms and entertainment applications vying for the focus of students. The struggle to manage beneficial and distracting smartphone usage grew more noticeable during times of distant learning. Throughout the outbreak smartphone utilization surged as education heightened in importance. Platforms like Zoom and Canvas Mobile experienced a surge in adoption as smartphones became essential for participating in classes and accessing educational materials. From 2015 to 2024 the use of smartphones, for academic purposes broadened with the emergence of new applications. Laptops continue to play a role in academic tasks that require high intensity workloads; this indicates that smartphones are seen more as complementary rather than essential tools, for learning purposes. In 2015 a large majority of students amounting to 76% stated that they used smartphones on a basis, for both academic and non-academic activities. In 2020, amid the situation. 81% of students relied on their smartphones every week for studies. In 2021 popular apps such as Canvas Mobile with a 91 percent adoption rate and Zoom, with 74 percent usage were widely utilized. From 2022 to 2024 saw a period of stability, in smartphone usage as they primarily complemented laptop based learning.

With these questions, we understood how smartphone use during study hours affects students' concentration and were able to make the study. For a large number of students, it has a negative effect.

Conclusion

Constantly looking at the phone while a student is studying leads to a very low rate of memorising information from the learning material. The brain gets tired faster by doing two different activities, studying and looking at the phone, which leads to a decrease in concentration and productivity. The uncontrolled use of smartphones during the learning process negatively affects concentration. Nowadays, people cannot live without technology, which also leads to their addiction. Even if a person does not want to use their phone while studying, receiving a notification distracts them, due to their habit of constantly checking who is texting them. Research consistently shows that spending much time on smartphones is associated with lower academic achievement levels in students by impacting their ability to focus during study sessions and decreasing the quality of their sleep patterns which are crucial for memory and cognitive abilities to thrive.

People who use their smartphones a lot while studying and try to do things at once tend to have a harder time understanding and remembering what they're learning compared to those who concentrate solely on studying without distractions from their phones or other activities. Research indicates that multitasking can divide your attention and lead to academic performance overall. Various studies have found that using smartphones for multitasking during study sessions can have an impact on students grades because they often underestimate how much it affects their ability to learn effectively. Those who heavily rely on their smartphones often struggle with managing their time due to constant notifications and the temptation of social media during study time causing interruptions, in focus and leading to longer study sessions that are less productive overall.

On the side of things is when students make a conscious effort to limit their phone usage while studying. They usually show improved academic results and more effective learning habits compared to those who don't control their phone use well when hitting the books. Having a high dependency level toward smartphones. Which is seen as usage. Is linked to lower academic achievements. This reliance tends to go hand in hand with levels of stress and anxiety along with lower grades and performance in tests. These negative impacts are especially noticeable, in students who struggle to prioritize studying over using their smartphones.

However, challenging it may be though; smartphones have the potential to boost success if used appropriately. Educational applications and digital resources along with tools for communication

have the potential to enhance learning when students use them purposefully for reasons. However, the drawbacks, due to misuse like gaming or social media browsing tend to overshadow these advantages. According to studies it is evident that there exists a contrast in academic achievement between students who primarily utilize smartphones for educational activities such, as accessing study materials or organizing group projects compared to those who engage in non-academic activities on their devices.

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PAPER 6

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CAREER READINESS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Introduction

In recent years, social media platforms have evolved from tools for connection purposes to a powerful way for networking, collaborating, and academic and personal development. More examples that can appear like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and many more are no longer “the places” where a person can only post his photos and videos from the summer vacation, or only vlogs from famous YouTubers, or just to make a video call from Bulgaria to the person’s relatives in the United States of America for example. These platforms have become much more, they have taken a big part of everyone’s work routine and entertainment.

Many of the human age groups are affected by the social media factor, but the most numerous categories are the university students, specifically the interviewed ones in our survey – the undergraduates. Why them? Because these people are fresh high school graduates who dive into the high academic fields, changing their whole perspective and learning routine, starting to gain an understanding of how they can use efficiently the sources that the information superhighway suggests to them. Most importantly how to include the privilege of having an infinity of information from one click away in their academic performance and future development.

In addendum to Social Networking sites is the development of online learning. According to The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) - part of the United States Department of Institute of Education Sciences (IES) that collects, analyzes and publishes statistics on education and public school district finance information in the United States, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, the number of undergraduates enrolled exclusively in online college courses jumped from 2.4 million to 7.0 million between 2019 and 2020. This increase of nearly 200 % shows how studying online evolved into a preferred option among young people (Peck, 2024). The important question will be if the social media platforms use helps students’ motivation for achieving their career and academic goals.

This research explores the extent to which social media use influences students’ preparedness for their ability to maintain their work and learning success. By examining the intersection of social media engagement and career- related outcomes, this study seeks to provide insights into how digital platforms contribute to young people’s motivation for work development.

Literature Review

The significance of SNSs to Undergraduate students

Social Network Sites (SNSs) like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have become integral parts of daily life for many users, including students from different parts of the world regardless of which kind of educational institutions they are from. But mostly it is used by university students. While platforms such as LinkedIn are used for academic and professional networking, others like Facebook and Twitter are more social. These sites can positively and negatively impact students’ academic performance, with time management often being a key factor in negative outcomes. Research shows that students' excessive use of SNSs may interfere with their studies, though effective multitasking and time management can mitigate these effects. Educators have begun

incorporating SNSs into their curricula to enhance student engagement, yet concerns about their negative impact on academic performance remain, note the authors of the research from the faculty of business at the University of Jordan, Amman (Maqableh et al, 2015).

The increasing use of the internet, including SNSs, has changed many areas of life, particularly in education. While many studies highlight the negative effects of SNS usage on academic performance, others such as the one on the topic “Effect of Online Social Networking on Student Academic Performance. Computers in Human Behavior” suggest that multitasking and strong time management skills can help students use SNSs without harming their academic work. They help students build peer networks, which is especially important for first-year students or those from diverse backgrounds. SNSs can enhance students’ social integration and provide a platform for academic discussions and collaboration (Paul et al, 2013)

The Role of Multitasking

Effective multitasking and time management can reduce the negative impact of SNS use. Research suggests that students who develop strong self- regulation and time management skills are better able to balance SNS use with academic responsibilities, leading to less disruption in their academic performance.

Various studies have explored how different factors influence the impact of SNS usage on academic outcomes. These factors are described as multitasking, time management, student characteristics, personality, study habits, and academic competency. Additionally, some researchers have examined the cultural differences in how SNSs are used, as well as users’ attitudes toward SNSs and their perspectives on their use (Rienties & Tempelaar, 2013).

Significance of SNSs to Undergraduate Students: SNSs play an important role in fostering social connections, academic collaboration, and peer support networks, particularly for first-year or international students. They can serve as valuable tools for both social integration and academic engagement.

Impact of SNSs on Academic Performance: The effects of SNS usage on academic outcomes are mixed. While excessive time spent on SNSs is often linked to distractions and lower academic performance, other studies suggest that SNSs can be integrated into academic contexts to support learning if used effectively.

In the following subsections, the extent of social media uses for networking and professional development and its way of influencing students' career decisions and academic goals, will be discussed

Social Media for Academic Purposes

Social media has a great impact on student’s lives. They spend a considerable part of their time on these pages. Social media includes social networking sites (SNSs), virtual gaming sites, video sites, projects sites and blogs. Millions of students are using these Web 2.0 tools worldwide, there hasn’t been much research regarding the educational use of social networking. The purpose of this study is to investigate attitudes toward the use of social media in the learning process. The findings suggest that social media and social network sites in particular can be very useful as educational tool. Students using SNSs as a supplement to their curriculum showed that they loved spending time on SNSs, and exercises, videos and other sharing in group are useful for their academic purposes. The paper concludes with suggestions for improving academic purpose and it highlights the fact that every educator must regard how their current teaching standard can be improved or how they could perhaps be replaced because of a prevalent web (University of Alexander Moisiu, 2015).

Effects of Social Media on Academic performance

Social media usage is on the rise among students. It is used to interact with others and learn. Students used it to hold group discussions with their classmates or instructors. In addition, students were also encouraged to send and receive course content via social media for research objectives, which improves academic achievement. However, overuse of social media has been observed among youth, which could impact their academic performance. The study investigated the impact of social media on the academic performance of Mandaue City College students for the academic year 2022-2023. Utilized a quantitative correlation design with 336 students as respondents selected through stratified random sampling, the research employed adapted survey questionnaires distributed via Google Forms and assessed academic performance through general weighted average. Based on the study's findings, the researchers concluded that there is no significant difference between the effects of social media and the academic performance of the students. The study implied that the way students use social media for informational seeking, socialization, self-expression, and entertainment did not necessarily impact their academic performance in school. Furthermore, this study confirmed McLuhan's Laws of Media which present the effects of print, technology, and new media on how it influences the lives of people (Sandstrom, 2012). It is in tetrad form of Four Effects that consists of the following, Enhance, Obsolesced, Reversal and Retrieval. In relation to this theory, the study suggested that social media enhances the way students seek information, how they communicate and interact with other people, and how it entertains them.

Effects of Social Media on career readiness

Social media has both positive and negative effects on career readiness. These effects depend widely on how it is used. Here's a breakdown:

Some of the positive effects can be:

- **The Networking Opportunities.** An example is the platforms like LinkedIn allow individuals to connect with professionals in their field, fostering opportunities for mentorship, job referrals, and collaboration.
- **Personal Branding:** Social media enables individuals to build their personal brand by sharing expertise, achievements, and skills, which can attract potential employers or clients.
- **Learning and Development:** Social media provides access to a wide array of educational content, webinars, industry news, and skill- building resources that enhance career readiness.
- **Job Search:** Many companies post job openings on social media platforms, making it easier for users to discover opportunities and apply directly.
- **Communication Skills:** Engaging in online discussions, writing posts, and interacting with peers or professionals on social media helps individuals improve their communication skills.

Contrarily some negative effects like:

- **Distractions:** Social media can be a significant time-waster, leading to procrastination or a lack of focus on skill development and career goals.
- **Inappropriate Content:** Inadequate privacy settings or posting controversial or unprofessional content can harm an individual's reputation and hinder career prospects.
- **Unrealistic Comparisons:** Seeing others' career successes and achievements on social media can lead to unhealthy comparisons, anxiety, or a false sense of pressure.
- **Addiction:** Excessive use of social media can lead to dependency, impacting productivity and time management, which are crucial for career development.
- **Privacy Issues:** Sharing too much personal information or engaging in debates online can

jeopardize privacy or security, potentially impacting future job prospects.

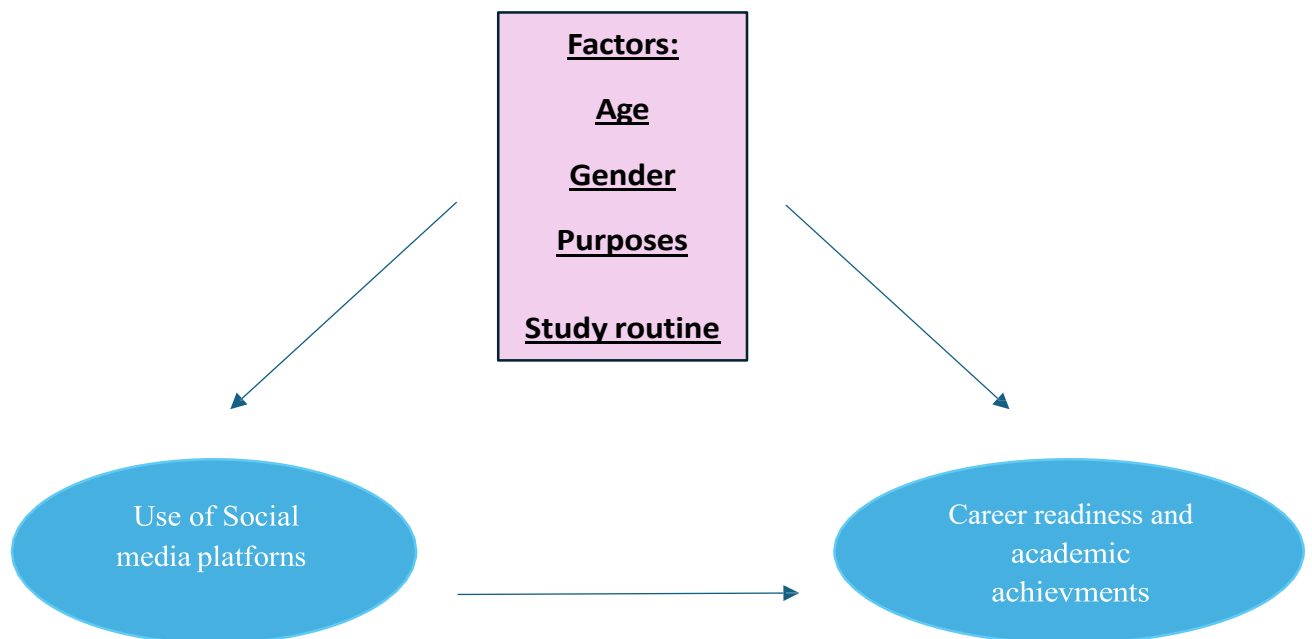
Methodology

The data for this study was collected by a survey administered to 40 Undergraduate students during the winter 2024-2025 semester. Data should be collected from the people that can provide the correct answers to solve the problem and represent the whole people that the researcher wants to study (Sekaran, 2003). The age range of the respondents was between 18 to 25 years. The sample consists of 27 females and 13 males from different universities in Bulgaria but the biggest excerption is from the UNWE, and some people from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. Students were instructed that the survey is created for research purpose for a project in Academic ethics and its goal is to collect tangible answers according to the questions about the screen time students have, the purposes of using social media platforms, the effect which is given on them, their opinion on social media development and Artificial intelligence (AI) and their assumptions about their role in the educational process.

Research hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: The influence of social network platforms on students' academic achievements and career readiness due to gender.

Hypothesis 2: Statistically the main reason for the two sides' opinions on the subject is the different purposes Internet and Social media platforms are used for.



Research structure

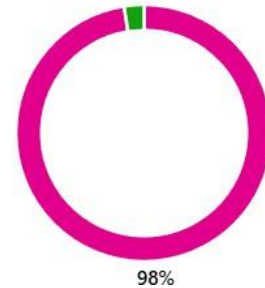
The survey consists of 15 questions. Some of them are not required. The questions are separated into three sections depending on the previous answer that the respondent gave to the survey. The questionnaire starts with identifying the students' gender and age category.

Results and discussions

In the data which the researchers got around 98% of the respondents are between 18 and 28 years old. That helps us with the data analysis because, for the research paper topic, this is the target group that is needed. That target group forms many undergraduate students from the UNWE.

2. What is Your age category?

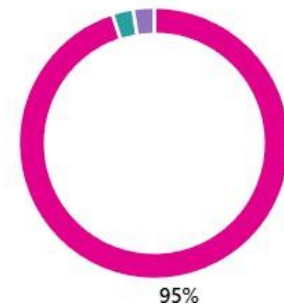
under 18	0
18-25	39
26-36	0
37-47	0
over 48	1



On the question of the occupation of the respondents, the data is again forming the targeted group of the survey, as the results are 95 % are university students.

3. What is Your occupation?

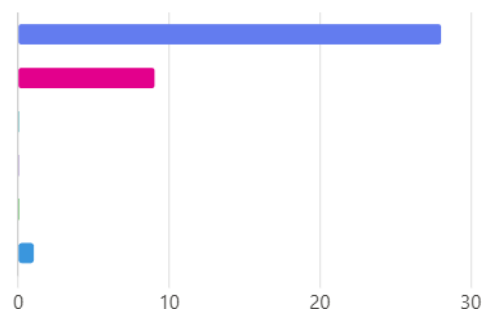
a school student	0
an university student	38
an employee	1
a self-employed person	1



As it was said, the most numerous group is represented by the students from UNWE, which gives us reasonable information for the condition of students' learning and motivation, specifically in the university. 28 of the students are part of the UNWE community, mostly in the first and second year of their bachelor's degree. The second group is formed by students from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.

4. In which university do You study?

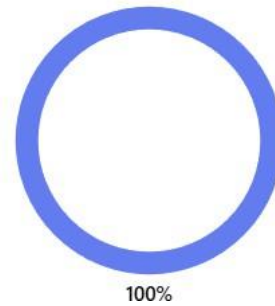
UNWE	28
Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski	9
NBU	0
University of Architecture, Civil Eng. and Geodesy	0
Technical University	0
Other	1



Considering the question of how often they use social media, all the respondents gave the same answer - daily. This answer surely cannot surprise anyone and the reason is that in today's world is hard to imagine a human being without a smartphone or a laptop, specifically young people. This is how better communication is achieved, making it easier to gather materials for work, university, or school.

7. How often do You use social media?

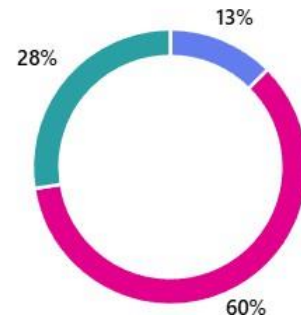
● Daily	40
● Weekly	0
● I don't have social media.	0



In response to the question about approximate daily screen time, 60% of participants reported that they spend between 2 to 4 hours surfing the Internet. Meanwhile, 28% indicated that their screen time exceeds 4 hours, and 13% reported screen time of less than 2 hours.

3. How much approximately is Your daily screen time?

● under 2 hours	5
● 2-4 hours	24
● over 4 hours	11
● Other	0



An important question that arises is the purpose for which people spend their time on social media. The subsequent survey question reveals data that, in contrast to the previous inquiries, is more diverse. According to the results, 35% of respondents use social media platforms primarily for communication, 27% for entertainment, 23% for education, and 14% for work. The data indicates

that, despite the potential benefits of social networking platforms in education, many students primarily use them for communication and entertainment. A valuable suggestion is that individuals in academic fields should explore how social networks can assist them in completing projects or providing substantial examples.

9. For which purposes do You use social media?

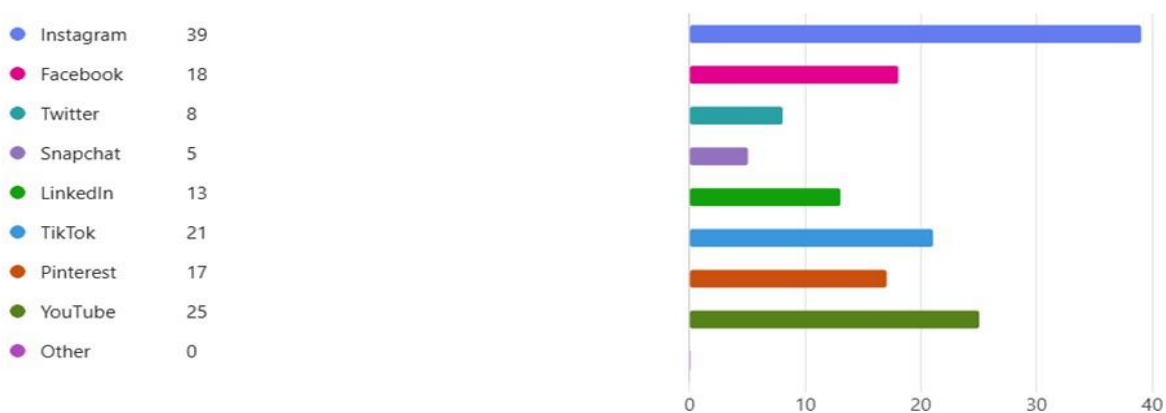


Of all of the social media platforms, the most used by the applicants is Instagram with 27%, then YouTube with 17%, TikTok with 14%, Facebook and Pinterest with 12%, and LinkedIn with 9%. According to the survey, the most used are Instagram and YouTube. Instagram is a photo and video-sharing social networking service which for most users is a way of entertaining and sharing

everyday life content. It should not be neglected that many people work through this platform. The so-called influencers who earn money from creating and sharing various kinds of content also influence not only the respondents of the survey but also all the people around the world. Here appears a crucial factor which affects the readiness for a career, the life visions, and the routine of the students and these are the popular people.

On YouTube, there are many educational videos available. They range from mathematics lectures videos that demonstrate how a certain exercise can be solved, to videos with instructions for different apps, platforms or servers such as how to use Excel or Word.

10. Which social media platforms do You use?



In response to the inquiry regarding the impact of social media on student motivation, 48% of

applicants believe that its use enhances their motivation. Meanwhile, 40% report that it has no effect on them, and 13% feel that social networking platforms diminish their motivation. There are various strategies to maintain motivation.

12. How does social media affects Your motivation?



Another question that the applicants were asked was: What will be the advantage of using social media and AI in education? The question was open, without a choice answer, so everybody could express his/her own opinion. The goal was for the survey to present more individual opinions on this topic, similar to the interviews that can be done to collect information.

1. Help with making the projects that we are working on better. Give us more information and a different point of view of the problems. Help with promoting work projects and with the communication.
2. AI can also improve how students are assessed and guided while also helping to build digital literacy, critical thinking, creativity and problem- solving skills.
3. Analysing influencers marketing strategies
4. Everyone will have access to more understandable information and will have time to be more creative in the time which in the other case is taken up in searching for the information.
5. Easier understanding of the material.
6. Make the lessons more interesting
7. Saving time on researches and tasks
8. Further opportunities for self development
9. It helps everything to be available to the students - they can also help each other out. And AI will help the search for materials and other useful information to be less time-consuming.
10. AI should be used as a tool not as a primary source in education and that should be taught in school
11. Further education
12. Better studying
13. Helping professors teach the students in an interesting way
14. Social media won't have a positive impact but AI could be very useful to help

understand staff.

Conclusion

While social media can be valuable for enhancing career readiness through networking, learning, and self-promotion, it also requires mindful use. Career readiness is best supported when social media is used strategically for professional development, rather than as a source of distraction.

The information provided is based on a combination of the Journal of Career Development or platforms such as LinkedIn Learning and the Harvard Business Review, which often explore how social media impacts professional growth.

The extent of the influence of social media on students' lives is substantial. In addition to the research paper's information and references, it is important to note that each individual can regulate his method of social media use, whether it is for communication, education, or other purposes. What matters most is that every student should have access to a good example of effective usage of Social Networking Sites (SNSs). This can be achieved by placing a greater emphasis on organizing seminars or faculties' workshops which would provide useful training on managing the time spent on social media efficiently.

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PAPER 7

HOW RELIANCE ON DIGITAL NOTE-TAKING AFFECTS INFORMATION RETENTION?

Vasilena Vasileva, Victoria Novoselska, Yana Naydenova

Introduction

The increased use of technology in everyday life, including during academic studies has had a great impact on modern education. The number of university students who use digital devices for taking notes and memorizing the material is increasing. Nowadays there are many apps that allow students to organize their notes more efficiently as well as making it easier for them to find information.

However, there is still a concern among society about how does reliance on such technologies impact information retention and academic performance. It is highly debated that while these tools offer convenience, they also affect how well students retain and understand information. In order to find answers to these questions, this research paper aims to look at the topic from different points of view.

This paper argues that digital note-taking does not have a significant impact on students' academic performance and taking notes on paper is still a preferred method. This is in contrast to other surveys who claim that digital note-taking has a negative effect on information retention and leads to poor assessment scores.

Literature review

The first source of information (Artz, Johnson, Robson and Taengnoi, 2017) comes to the conclusion that there is no statistically significant difference in performance between those that employed a computer and those that used paper. However, there is confirmation that computer note taking is negatively related to assessment scores. The investigators who did the survey speculate that students who chose to take notes on computers possess characteristics related with lower assessment scores than students who opt to take notes on paper. In order to test this hypothesis, they decided to use pre-experiment survey to identify the students who primarily use laptop or tablet computers to take notes when given a choice. The results show that in particular, students preferring computers are less likely to categorize their own note-taking skills as "very good", are more likely to categorize their note-taking skills as "poor" and are less likely to think that notes are "very useful" for performing well in courses. However, the researchers state that they cannot isolate whether it is the student's individual-specific characteristics that cause lower assessment scores or if the note taking method is, itself, inherently at fault.

Given the provided information above, our team disagrees with the statement that digital note-taking leads to lower assessment scores. The researchers were unable to provide enough evidence in support of their position because they did not take into consideration the individual characteristics of every student that might be at fault for their worse academic performance. Due to the lack of this consideration, the research cannot be effective for future references.

According to another research (Morehead et al., 2019) students who use an internet-connected device to take notes may be more likely to multitask or spend class time performing the preferred online activities. As expected, students who multitask using a computer in class have lower test scores when compared to peers who attend only the lecture. When online tests are being used in a classroom setting, students who use computers might have some advantage in memorizing the given information. The study's aim is to show the impacts of students' note-taking behavior and their individual differences on how they retain information. The research indicates that there is no significant difference in relation to the understanding of the students who use computers and those who took notes on paper. In addition, it was found that students who took notes, regardless of their method, performed better on this task than students who did not take notes. Based on the information gathered as part of this research, it is safe to make the assumption that neither note-taking method is better than the other and it depends on the preference of the student which one to use.

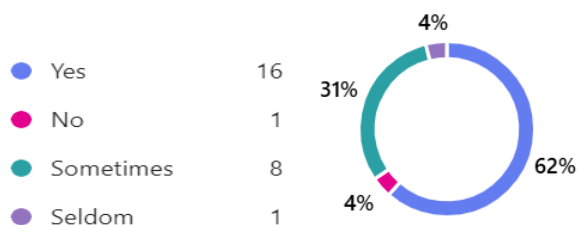
Our team finds similarities between the research above and the one we conducted while examining the topic. Based on our personal observations we agree that university students sometimes can get distracted during lecture by their devices. However, that does not mean that it has a negative effect on their academic performance. The participants in our survey as well state that it is better to take notes, regardless of the method, than not taking notes in general. In addition, they claim that it helps them while preparing for an exam.

Methodology

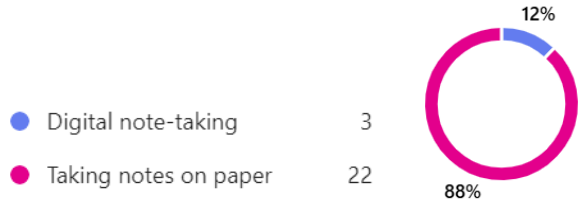
In order to prove our thesis, we conducted a survey among twenty-five university students from the University of National and World Economy, Sofia University and Medical University of Sofia, studying in various specialties between the age of eighteen and twenty years old. Our survey consisted of ten questions – nine with four possible answers and one open which required a short answer. The research was conducted for a period of 17 days (15.11 – 30.11). The results were carefully observed by us and organized in charts and graphs, allowing readers to better understand the gathered information.

Results

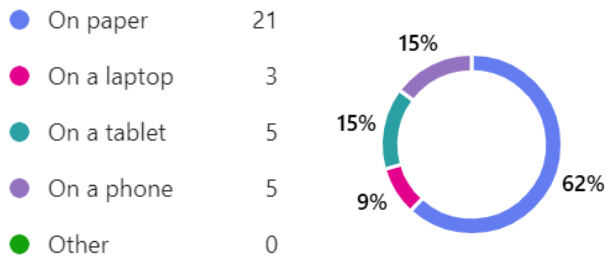
Our first question was “Do you take notes during the lectures?”. The results show that 62% of the students take notes during the lectures (16 people) with only one person stating that they do not. 31% (8 people) admit that they sometimes take notes during lectures.



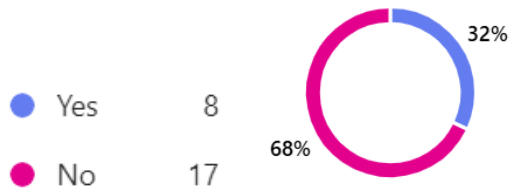
With regards to which method they prefer, 88% of the participants (22 people) say that they take notes on paper, whereas 12% (3 people) like to use a digital device.



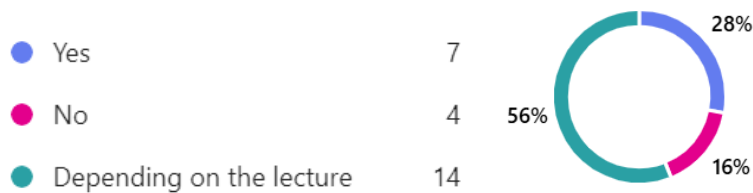
When asked how they take notes the majority of the respondents (62%) said that they use paper, followed by an equal percentage of people using tablets and phones (15%) and only 9% using laptops.



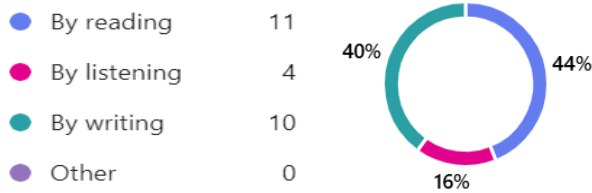
A surprising statistic is that 68% (17 people) state that it is not necessary to take notes during every lecture in comparison to only 32% (8 people) who believe that it is essential.



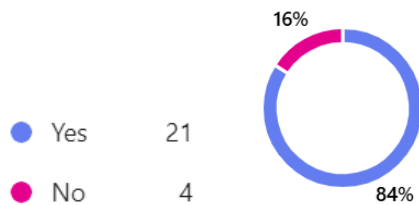
Our research shows that 28% of the participants get distracted by their devices during every lecture, whereas 56% responded “depending on the lecture”. There are only 4 people who do not get distracted.



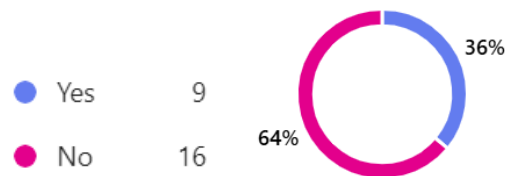
To the question “How do you assimilate the new information?” 11 people (44%) responded “by reading”, followed by 10 people (40%) who stated “by writing” and only 4 people (16%) who assimilate the information by listening.



The majority of the respondents (84%) believe that their notes are useful when preparing for an exam and only 16% think that they are not.

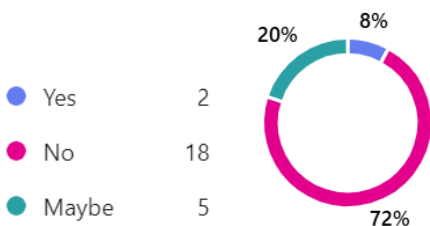


Regarding the use of study apps, 64% admit that they do not rely on them while studying and only 36% find them essential.



The most popular app among university students is considered to be Quizlet, followed by Photomath, Notion, ChatGPT, Duolingo, Study Bunny, Focus Timer, Khan Academy, Moodle, etc.

Finally, when asked if they think that digital note-taking has a negative effect on their academic performance, 72% of the participants do not believe that it worsens their assessment scores. Only 8% gave an answer “Yes” and 20% - “Maybe”.



Discussion

The findings suggest that digital note-taking is still not the most preferred method among university students. Taking notes on paper is considered a better option, although there are some people who claim to be using digital devices such as tablets, laptops or phones. The majority of the

respondents think it is not necessary to take notes during every lecture and some even say that they get distracted depending on the lecture, which leads us to the conclusion that their inability to concentrate must be related to the teaching method of the lecturer or the individual characteristics of the student and not to the preference when it comes to taking notes. The university students believe that it is important to take notes in general as it helps them prepare for exams, which is in contrast to the study made by Artz, Johnson, Robson and Taengnoi who suggest that those preferring computers are less likely to think notes are “very useful” for performing well in courses. Study apps are not that used yet. However, the most popular, based on the results, is Quizlet. Finally, according to the people who took part in the survey, digital note-taking does not have a negative effect on their assessment scores.

Conclusion

In conclusion, although digital note-taking is becoming more common, most university students still prefer taking notes on paper. Some students use digital devices like tablets or laptops, but this choice is based on personal preference. Many students agree that taking notes is important for exam preparation. While study apps are becoming more popular, they are not that used yet. Overall, the study shows that digital note-taking does not affect students' exam scores negatively, suggesting that the way students study and how lectures are taught matter more than the method of note-taking.

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PAPER 8

THE IMPACT OF CONSTANT NOTIFICATIONS ON FOCUS AND PRODUCTIVITY

Dimitar Rachev, Martin Valkanov

Introduction

As we enter the digital age, social media has become an essential part of daily life, particularly among university students. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Facebook offer a range of functions, from communication and entertainment to accessing information. However, the constant stream of notifications from these platforms has raised concerns about their impact on students' ability to focus, manage their time, and perform academically. These interruptions can disrupt concentration, encourage procrastination, and increase stress levels.

This study explores how the frequent notifications from social media affect students' ability to maintain focus and manage their time effectively. Specifically, it examines the influence of these distractions on cognitive performance, emotional well-being, and academic success. The research question guiding this paper is: How do constant social media notifications impact a student's ability to focus and use time efficiently? It is hypothesized that these distractions impair students' concentration, contribute to procrastination, lower academic performance, and cause emotional stress. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue by analyzing existing literature, gathering data through surveys, and exploring potential strategies for mitigating these effects.

Literature Review

Notifications and Cognitive Fragmentation

Notifications, by their nature, fragment attention. Jin et al. (2024) explain that due to attention residue, cognitive processes are disrupted even after switching tasks, making it difficult to regain full focus on the original task. This phenomenon is commonly observed among students, as frequent interruptions from social media hinder their ability to concentrate on academic work. Research has shown that multitasking, often triggered by these notifications, negatively affects memory retention and overall productivity, leading students to spend more time than necessary completing assignments (Springer Journals, 2022).

Social Media Platforms and Distraction Dynamics

Social media platforms are designed to keep the user engaged via multiple notifications. According to a study published by IEEE Xplore in 2023, notifications from platforms such as Instagram resulted in a drop in productivity of up to 30% during study sessions. The algorithm-driven content recommendations of TikTok only exacerbate this with extended screen time and delay the completion of tasks. This is a big problem for students, as these platforms consistently distract them during the time when they need to concentrate; time required for deep work is lost as a result (Jin et al., 2024).

Procrastination and Academic Performance

Procrastination due to interruptions from social media has been well documented. Students facing frequent notifications tend to procrastinate over finishing an assignment and thereby result in poor performance in exams. According to the *Journal of Adolescence*, 2022, procrastination is not just a habit; rather, it is a behavioral response to distractions, one of which is created by social media. Students who are consistently on notifications tend to waste time and delay the start of important academic tasks, which affects their grades and overall academic performance. *Springer Journals*, 2022.

Emotional and Psychological Effects

In addition to cognitive disruptions, social media notifications also contribute to emotional disturbances. Students who experience frequent distractions often report feelings of anxiety, guilt, and frustration. For instance, a 2021 study on students frequently interrupted by social media found that they experienced higher levels of stress, creating a cycle where emotional strain led to even more frequent use of social media (Jin et al., 2024). These emotional challenges further hinder students' productivity and their ability to achieve academic success.

Gaps in Research and Mitigation Strategies

While much research has focused on negative impacts, less research has been conducted on proper mitigation strategies. Common solutions include muting notifications or the use of "Do Not Disturb" modes, which usually fail due to inconsistent application and lack of long-term habit formation. According to *Springer Journals*, 2022, further research should be done to study integrated solutions that combine behavioral interventions with advanced technological tools, such as AI-driven focus modes or institutional digital wellness programs.

Methodology

Research Design

We employed a mixed-methods approach using Google Forms to examine how social media notifications impact students' focus and time management. The primary data were collected from 33 participants aged 16 to 26. The combined quantitative and qualitative survey provided a comprehensive analysis of social media usage patterns, emotional responses, and academic performance.

Data Collection

The survey consisted of the following questions:

- How many hours per day do you spend on social media?
- How often are you interrupted by notifications during study sessions?
- Which types of notifications are most distracting (e.g., likes, messages, trending posts)?
- How do these interruptions affect your productivity and ability to focus?
- Have you employed any strategies to minimize distractions?

The data was collected anonymously to ensure the confidentiality of responses.

Participants were asked for informed consent before completing the survey.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to throughout the research process. Participants' anonymity was guaranteed, and no identifying information was collected. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any point without consequence. Data was stored securely and analyzed in aggregate to maintain participant confidentiality.

Results and Discussion

- **Notification Frequency.** 63.6% of participants reported receiving 3–5 notifications per hour, while 12.1% received over 10 notifications hourly. Instagram and TikTok were identified as the most disruptive platforms.
- **Impact on Focus.** 21.2% of participants reported that their focus was significantly disrupted by notifications, with many abandoning study sessions altogether after checking their phones. Frequent interruptions were linked to longer task completion times and decreased productivity.
- **Emotional Responses.** 66.7% of respondents reported feeling guilty or anxious after being distracted by notifications. Some participants commented, "Social media is very time consuming and overstimulates our brains. The consequences are decreased focus which is a major issue in my generation (me included).", "I am able to focus more if I don't engage with notifications or social media at all."
- **Emotional and Academic Consequences.** The survey findings reveal that the emotional and psychological toll of social media notifications is substantial. Many students reported feeling overwhelmed by the constant need to check their phones, which led to increased stress and procrastination. These emotional consequences, in turn, contributed to delayed task completion and lower academic performance.
- **Mitigation Strategies.** While 81.8% of participants attempted strategies such as muting notifications or enabling "Do Not Disturb" modes, only 30.3% found these methods effective in the long term. A smaller group utilized techniques such as placing their devices in separate rooms or using focus applications, reporting a noticeable improvement in productivity.

Comparison with Existing Research

The survey results align with existing studies on the negative impact of notifications on students' productivity and well-being. However, the limited success of mitigation strategies highlights the gap between awareness and effective implementation. These findings underscore the need for more sustainable solutions, such as institutional interventions and the development of more advanced technological tools.

Recommendations

- **Institutional Interventions:** Universities should incorporate digital wellness programs into curricula to educate students on managing distractions and cultivating healthier study habits.
- **Technological Solutions:** App developers could introduce AI-driven focus modes and customizable notification schedules to reduce distractions during study sessions.
- **Behavioral Changes:** Encouraging students to practice mindfulness, set device-free study times, and maintain physical separation from devices can help improve focus and reduce procrastination.

Conclusion

This research emphasizes the significant impact of social media notifications on students' ability to maintain focus and manage their time effectively. The constant interruptions caused by these notifications disrupt cognitive processes, resulting in fragmented attention and increased procrastination. This, in turn, negatively affects students' academic performance. Furthermore, students often experience emotional distress, such as feelings of guilt and anxiety, due to these distractions, which further impede their productivity and overall well-being.

Although strategies such as muting notifications or using "Do Not Disturb" modes can provide short-term relief, their inconsistent use limits their effectiveness over time. This highlights the need for more sustainable and structured approaches to managing digital distractions. To address this issue, educational institutions and app developers should work together to create lasting solutions. Universities, for instance, could integrate digital wellness programs into their curricula, which would help students develop stronger time-management skills, better self-regulation techniques, and healthier habits around technology use. App developers, on the other hand, could enhance their platforms by incorporating AI-driven focus tools or customizable notification settings that allow students to minimize distractions during study periods.

Looking ahead, future research should investigate the long-term effects of digital wellness programs and AI-based focus tools on student productivity and mental health.

Additionally, further studies could explore how to implement lasting behavioral changes in students, helping them establish healthier relationships with social media and, ultimately, improve their academic performance and well-being.

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PAPER 9

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND STUDY HABITS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS?

Georgi Vichev, Ralitsa Dimitrova

Introduction

The worldwide spread of social media has drastically reshaped how people meet their daily needs. Among university students, social media platforms have become integral to social interaction, entertainment, seeking information and the educational process. However, the increasing amount of time spent on these platforms (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019) raises concerns about their potential impact on students' study habits and academic performance. Some argue that social media can offer educational benefits—such as access to academic resources and networking opportunities—others worry that excessive use could lead to distractions, reduced study time, and ultimately, hinder academic success. Understanding how social media consumption affects study behaviours is crucial for helping students develop strategies to support their success in today's digital age. This gives importance to the question of what the relationship between time spent on social media and students' study habits is.

This paper argues that excessive social media use is linked to poor study habits and its objective is to examine this relationship among students in the University of National and World Economy in Sofia, Bulgaria.

By investigating the ways in which social media influences study habits, this research aims to contribute awareness of how students manage their time and insights into how to better balance their online presence with academic responsibilities.

Literature review

Social media has affected daily habits of people in all areas of life including the study habits of students. Many studies have examined the direct impact of time spent on social media on academic performance and argue that it can lead to reduced study efficiency and lower grades. Junco (2012), for example, found that increased social media use was negatively correlated with students' GPA, suggesting that time spent on social media interferes with academic tasks and reduces the time students devote to studying. Similarly, other studies reported that students who spent more time on social media showed poorer academic performance and time management skills. (Lepp et al., 2015; Paul et al, 2012)

Social media is also frequently identified as a major source of distraction. Its use has developed into an addiction for many and has various adverse effects (Andreassen et al., 2017) and suboptimal study habits are among them. Xiong et al. (2019) did an intervention with students who meet criteria for social media addiction and the results showed that reducing their time spent on social media improved their mental health and academic efficiency. Further, a study by Nwosu et al. (2020) found that time spent on social media was associated with lower levels of self-control and greater procrastination. Additionally, attention spans have been shrinking which also has significant implications for how students learn and retain information in the classroom (Lorenz-Spreen et al, 2019).

Concerns about the negative impact of social media on study habits are prevalent, however, the effects of social media also depend on the way students choose to utilize it. Studies have shown that spending time on social media for educational purposes has a positive effect on study habits by increasing motivation for academic involvement and enhancing the learning experience, though may still present challenges such as distraction. (Bal & Bicen,2017; Saini & Abraham, 2015).

Positive influence has been observed by Moran, Seaman, & Tinti-Kane (2011) who report that university educators find social media sites to be valuable tools for collaborative learning and sources of information.

Social networks used primarily for socializing can positively impact students' social integration and can improve mental well-being by reducing feelings of social isolation which in turn may support academic success (Ellison et al., 2007; Madge et al., 2009)

Another factor that matters when students spend time on social media is their personality traits. Troll et al. (2021) and Paul et al., (2012) suggests that participants with higher levels of self-discipline and motivation may be better equipped to manage their social media use without it negatively impacting their study habits.

This dual nature of social media, as both a potential source of support and a cause of distraction, show the complexity of its role in students' academic lives and the need to further research its impact. Understanding how students balance these dynamics may be key to determining whether social media is ultimately beneficial or detrimental to their study habits.

Methodology

The data for this research was gathered through an online survey design conducted via Microsoft Forms. This method allowed for the collection of self-reported data from a sample of students. Given the widespread use of digital platforms, the method of online survey was chosen for its accessibility, efficiency and broad reach (Selm et al., 2006). The survey was developed to investigate the relationship between time spent on social media and study habits among university students and consisted of three main sections:

- Time spent on Social Media: Participants were asked to report the average amount of time they spend on social media daily.
- Purpose of Social Media use: Respondents were asked to indicate the primary reasons for their social media use.
- Study habits: Participants were asked to rate their study habits, including time management, focus during study sessions, study strategies and methods they use.

We also investigated areas of current degree levels, social media usage patterns and the perceived impact of social media on their studying.

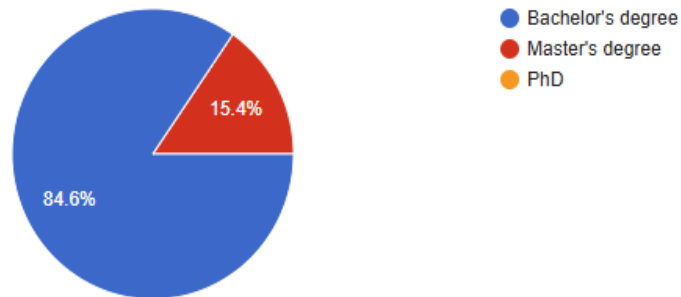
Data Analysis

The data collected from 13 university students reveals the relationship about the time spent on social media and study habits among university students.

- Level of degree

What level of degree are you currently undertaking?

13 responses



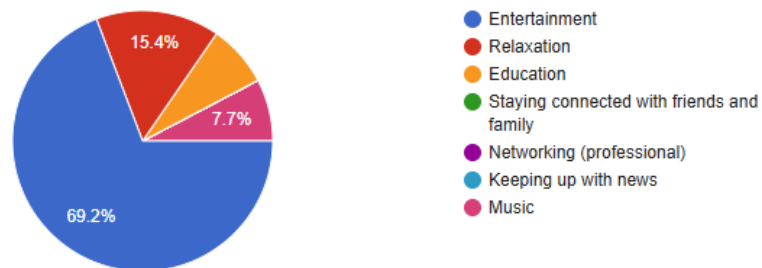
The majority of respondents (84.6%) are currently undertaking a Bachelor's degree, while a smaller proportion (15.4%) are pursuing a Master's degree. Notably, none of the respondents are pursuing a PhD. This indicates that the quiz primarily engaged participants at the undergraduate and early postgraduate levels.

Purposes of using social media

For the most part of the stated hours of usage, for what purposes do you use your preferred social media platforms?

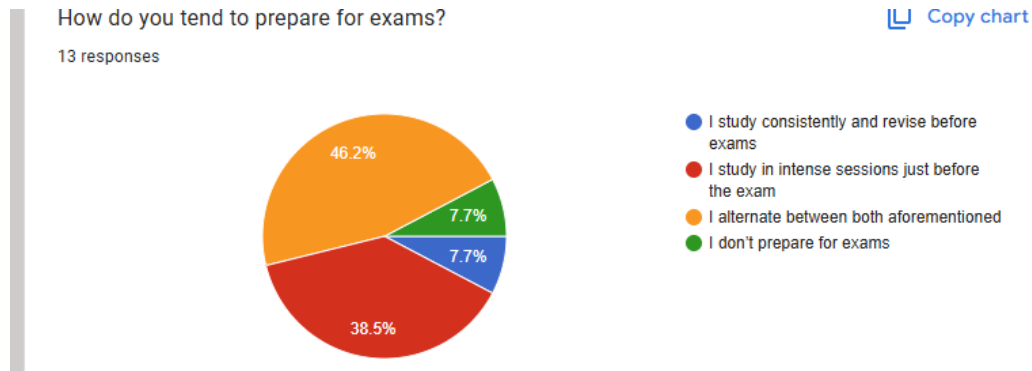
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13 responses



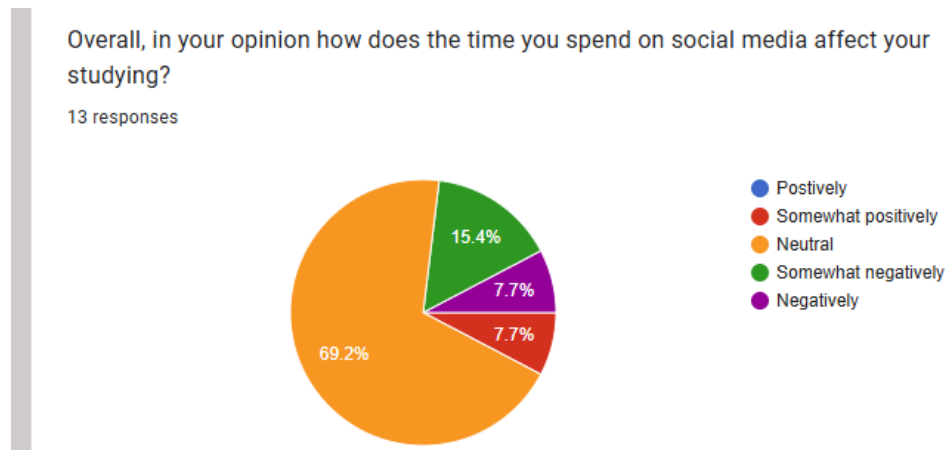
The majority of participants (69.2%) primarily use social media for entertainment. A smaller portion (15.4%) use it for relaxation, while education and music-related activities each accounted for 7.7% of usage. Notably, no respondents reported using social media for staying connected with friends and family, networking, or keeping up with news. This suggests that the primary motivation for social media use among these respondents leans heavily toward personal enjoyment and leisure rather than social interaction, professional growth or information gathering.

Preparation for exams



The most common approach (46.2%) is a combination of consistent study and intense sessions just before the exam. A significant portion (38.5%) reported that they prefer to study in intense sessions right before the exam. Meanwhile, 7.7% of respondents study consistently and revise before exams, and another 7.7% admitted to not preparing for exams at all. This indicates that most respondents favor a mixed approach or last-minute cramming, while only a small number rely on consistent study habits or forego preparation entirely.

The effect of social media on studies



Most (69.2%) feel that social media has a neutral impact on their study habits. A smaller portion (15.4%) reported that social media affects their studying somewhat negatively, while 7.7% believe it affects them negatively. Conversely, only 7.7% indicated a somewhat positive impact, and no one reported a completely positive effect. These results suggest that while most respondents do not feel social media significantly hinders or helps their studying, a notable minority experience some negative effects, highlighting potential challenges with distraction or productivity.

Results and Discussion

The data collected from 13 university students provide valuable insights into the relationship between social media usage and study habits, revealing key patterns and challenges. The results highlight students' social media usage patterns, preparation strategies, and perceptions of how social media impacts their studying.

Social Media Usage and Purposes

The majority of respondents (46.2%) spend 2-4 hours daily on social media, with another 23.1% spending 4-6 hours. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube are the most frequently used, with each being selected by 69.2% of participants. TikTok followed, used by 23.1% of respondents.

Regarding the purposes for using social media, entertainment was the dominant reason, cited by 69.2% of participants. Relaxation (15.4%) and education (7.7%) were less common, while no respondents reported using social media primarily for staying connected, professional networking, or keeping up with news. These trends indicate that students' social media use is primarily leisure oriented.

Impact on Studying

When asked how social media affects their studying, most students (69.2%) reported a neutral impact. However, 15.4% felt social media affected their studying somewhat negatively, and 7.7% reported a negative impact. Only a small minority (7.7%) found the impact to be somewhat positive.

These findings suggest that while most students believe social media does not drastically affect their studies, a notable proportion experiences negative effects, likely related to distractions and time management challenges.

Exam Preparation Strategies

Students reported varying methods of preparing for exams. The most common approach (46.2%) was alternating between consistent studying and last-minute intense sessions. Additionally, 38.5% relied on intense study sessions just before exams. Only 7.7% studied consistently and revised before exams, while another 7.7% did not prepare for exams at all. This highlights a preference for flexible or last-minute study strategies among respondents.

Study Strategies and Goals

When it comes to study strategies, 61.5% of students reported prioritizing tasks based on urgency and importance. Strategies such as scheduling specific study blocks and focusing on tasks in intervals were each used by 38.5% of respondents. Notably, 7.7% did not use any specific study methods.

The primary goal for most respondents (76.9%) was to pass exams, while 15.4% aimed for a deep understanding of the subject, and 7.7% focused on learning something practical.

Distractions and Procrastination

A significant portion of students (76.9%) reported being occasionally distracted while studying, with 15.4% frequently experiencing distractions. Procrastination was also common, with 61.5% procrastinating occasionally and 15.4% doing so frequently.

Efforts to Reduce Social Media Usage

Regarding attempts to reduce social media usage to improve academic performance, 61.5% of students reported that such efforts did not make a difference, while 15.4% found it helpful. 23.1% had not attempted to reduce their social media use.

Conclusion

The findings suggest that social media plays a significant role in students' daily lives, primarily for entertainment. While the majority feel it has a neutral impact on their studying, a portion of respondents' experience challenges related to distractions and inefficient study habits. Successful management of social media usage and structured study strategies appear to be key factors in balancing productivity and leisure.

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PAPER 10

HOW SMARTPHONE USAGE DURING STUDY HOURS IMPACTS CONCENTRATION AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Beatris Gologanova, Denislav Georgiev, Sofia Stoykova

Introduction

Social media platforms have become integral to university students' lives, offering avenues for learning, communication, and entertainment. However, the pervasive use of platforms such as Instagram and TikTok has raised concerns about their potential to distract students and adversely affect their academic performance. Understanding the intricate relationship between social media usage and academic outcomes is crucial, especially as students face challenges in maintaining focus and managing study schedules.

This research aims to explore university students' social media usage patterns and their impact on academic performance. It investigates whether excessive use leads to procrastination and reduced concentration levels. Drawing from a survey conducted among students aged 18-24 and peer-reviewed studies, this paper analyzes behaviors, challenges, and potential solutions for managing social media distractions during study hours.

Research Questions:

1. What are the primary purposes and usage patterns of social media among university students?
2. How does social media usage affect students' concentration and academic performance?
3. What strategies can mitigate the negative effects of social media on academic success?

Thesis Statement:

While social media serves as a valuable tool for education and communication, excessive use and poor management can negatively impact university students' concentration, study habits, and overall academic performance.

Literature Review

The Role of Social Media in Student Life

Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook play central roles in university students' daily routines, facilitating collaborative learning and knowledge sharing. Ellison et al. (2007) highlight that these platforms can enhance social capital among students, helping them stay connected and informed. However, prolonged social media use can interfere with academic tasks, as Meier et al. (2012) note, leading to procrastination and time mismanagement.

Impact on Concentration and Study Habits

Junco (2012) emphasizes the dual nature of social media: while it provides access to educational resources, it also distracts students, reducing time spent on focused study. Excessive social media usage is often associated with lower grades and diminished academic performance due to multitasking

and procrastination. For example, multitasking between academic work and social media leads to fragmented attention spans, making it difficult for students to complete tasks efficiently.

Procrastination and Academic Performance

Karpinski et al. (2013) highlight that social media exacerbates procrastination, with students prioritizing online interactions over academic tasks. The ease of access to entertainment content leads to time mismanagement, particularly during critical study periods. Furthermore, scrolling through feeds during study breaks often extends beyond intended periods, reducing effective time spent on academic activities. Over time, this behavior contributes to reduced academic achievements and heightened stress levels among students.

Methodology

Survey Design

A survey was conducted to explore why the relationship between social media usage and academic performance among university students. The questionnaire focused on variables such as platform preferences, daily usage patterns, study habits, and self-reported academic performance. Open-ended questions were included to gather qualitative data on students' perceptions and recommendations.

Participants

The survey included 12 university students aged 18-24, selected through convenience sampling and representing diverse academic disciplines. While the sample size was small, the insights gathered provide valuable initial observations about the role of social media in students' academic lives.

Data Collection

The survey comprised both quantitative and qualitative questions, covering aspects like time spent on social media, preferred platforms, and self-reported academic performance. Qualitative responses captured recommendations for managing distractions and improving focus during study hours. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the topic.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained from all respondents. Data were anonymized to ensure privacy and confidentiality. Additionally, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any point, ensuring adherence to ethical research guidelines.

Results

Social Media Usage Patterns

- **Age Group:** All participants were aged 18-24.
- **Preferred Platforms:** Instagram was the most popular platform, used by 92% of respondents, followed by TikTok (8%).
- **Daily Usage:** 75% of participants spent 3-7 hours daily on social media, while 25% reported 1-3 hours of usage.

Purpose of Social Media Use

- Educational Use: 7 participants used social media for educational purposes.
- Entertainment: 12 participants cited entertainment as a primary reason for social media use.
- Communication and Inspiration: 11 participants used social media for communication, and 4 for inspirational content. These varied purposes demonstrate the complex relationship students have with social media, balancing its benefits with its distractions.

Academic Behaviors and Challenges

- Study Frequency: 42% studied primarily before tests, while 42% studied during free time, and only 17% studied after every lecture. This distribution suggests that students often use reactive rather than proactive study strategies, potentially exacerbated by social media distractions.
- Concentration: 75% noticed a decline in concentration levels due to smartphone use. Many cited frequent notifications and the urge to check updates as key challenges.
- Academic Performance: Most participants rated their academic performance as "Good" (42%) or "Excellent" (33%), but 25% described it as "Average."
- Procrastination: 42% admitted to daily procrastination due to smartphone usage, while 50% experienced it rarely. Only 8% claimed that they never procrastinate, indicating that social media significantly affects time management.

Recommendations for Reducing Distractions

Participants suggested strategies for managing smartphone distractions, including:

- Limiting screen time by locking social media apps for specific periods.
- Activating airplane or silent mode to avoid notifications.
- Keeping phones out of reach or in a different room while studying.
- Using social media only as a reward after completing tasks.
- Switching off notifications entirely during study sessions.
- Developing structured study routines to minimize idle distractions.

Discussion

Interpreting Usage Patterns

The results highlight that Instagram's prominence among students' high daily usage (3-7 hours) reflects social media's significant role in their lives, primarily for entertainment and communication. While social media serves as a valuable educational tool, excessive use can undermine academic productivity. These patterns suggest a need for students to adopt more mindful and intentional social media habits, especially during academic periods.

Impact on Concentration and Academic Performance

The survey findings align with existing literature on the negative impact of social media on concentration and study habits. The majority of respondents acknowledged a decline in focus due to smartphone usage. Procrastination rates were notably high, with only a small minority avoiding it

altogether. The association between frequent procrastination and "Average" academic performance underscores the need for better time management strategies and digital discipline.

Despite this, many students still achieved "Good" or "Excellent" academic performance, suggesting that the impact of social media distractions varies significantly among individuals. Factors such as self-discipline, the ability to multitask effectively, and the nature of their social media usage likely mediate these outcomes. However, consistent distractions over time may erode academic success, even for high-performing students.

Broader Implications for Academic Success

Although many students rated their performance as "Good" or "Excellent," the high levels of procrastination and reduced concentration suggest that their potential is not fully realized. Universities should address this gap by promoting digital literacy and self-regulation techniques to help students balance social media use with academic responsibilities. The growing prevalence of social media usage among students makes it imperative for educators and institutions to develop policies and tools that encourage mindful usage without completely restricting access.

For instance, academic institutions could introduce app-based time management tools or organize workshops focusing on the psychological impact of digital habits. These efforts could help students cultivate healthier relationships with social media while maximizing its benefits.

Recommendations

Based on the survey responses and literature review, the following strategies are recommended to mitigate the adverse effects of social media on academic performance:

- **Screen Time Limits:** Encourage the use of apps that lock social media platforms after a set duration.
- **Focused Study Environment:** Advise students to keep their phones in another room or out of reach while studying.
- **Notification Management:** Promote the practice of switching off notifications during lectures and study hours.
- **Reward-Based Usage:** Suggest using social media as a reward after completing academic tasks.
- **Digital Literacy Programs:** Universities should organize workshops to educate students on managing their digital habits effectively.
- **Structured Study Schedules:** Encourage students to develop and adhere to structured routines that allocate specific times for studying and leisure activities.
- **Mindfulness Training:** Introduce mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques to help students manage distractions and improve focus.
- **Social Media Detox Initiatives:** Facilitate periodic detox challenges where students take breaks from social media to reassess their digital habits and productivity.

Conclusion

This study underscores the dual role of social media in university students' lives. While platforms like Instagram and TikTok provide opportunities for education and communication, their excessive use can lead to reduced concentration, procrastination, and diminished academic performance. By

implementing the recommended strategies, students can harness the benefits of social media while minimizing its drawbacks. Future research should explore the long-term effects of social media on academic success and develop tailored interventions to support students in achieving their full potential.

In conclusion, addressing the challenges posed by social media requires a collective effort from students, educators, and institutions. By fostering a culture of mindful social media usage and equipping students with the tools to manage their digital habits effectively, universities can help students maximize their academic achievements and overall well-being. Additionally, fostering ongoing dialogue about the impact of digital habits on education will enable institutions to adapt to the evolving digital landscape and better support their student populations.

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PAPER 11

THE IMPACT OF NOTIFICATIONS ON ACADEMIC FOCUS AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Alexander Yosifov, Danail Voykov, Nikita Balew

Introduction

Nowadays, technology is an immersive part of everyone's life, and social media plays a mandatory role, especially for young people. In a world moving so quickly, every distraction can impact an individual's ability to focus and manage time effectively. This problem is particularly relevant for students, who are heavily engaged with social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Messenger, Viber and others. Our research focuses on the question: *What is the impact of constant notifications from social media on students' ability to focus and manage their time effectively?* This study aims to help students realize the impact of social media notifications and potentially improve their effectiveness while studying or working.

Methodology (Research methods)

The methodology used in this study combines survey-based research and internet research to gather and analyze data. The survey was designed to collect quantitative and qualitative insights from students regarding their social media usage patterns, preferences, and priorities. It included questions about the amount of time spent on social media, the frequency of usage, and the role of social media in their daily lives, including its impact on time management and academic tasks.

In addition to the survey, internet research was conducted to support and expand upon the findings. This involved reviewing online resources, previous studies, and relevant literature to contextualize the survey results within broader trends in social media usage and its effects. Together, these methods provided a comprehensive understanding of how students interact with social media and how it influences their behavior and time management.

Review

Constant notifications from social media can significantly disrupt students' ability to focus and manage their time effectively. These notifications act as frequent interruptions, pulling students' attention away from academic tasks, studying, or other responsibilities. The need to immediately check and respond to alerts creates a cycle of distraction that makes it challenging to maintain sustained concentration.

Several studies have explored the effects of notifications on cognitive functions and focus. For example, research shows that "disruptions caused by notifications negatively affect cognitive functions, including reasoning ability and working memory." These core cognitive processes are essential for maintaining focus. Frequent interruptions also reduce productivity, attention, and concentration capacity. Even the mere presence of smartphones, without receiving notifications, can cause a "loss of concentration," suggesting that smartphones themselves can disrupt focus.

Additionally, studies show that even the awareness of notifications can lead to disengagement from tasks, further eroding focus.

Furthermore, studies show that every interruption, such as a social media notification, requires time to refocus on the original task, reducing overall productivity. This phenomenon, known as “attention residue,” means that even brief distractions can leave traces in the mind, impairing the ability to concentrate fully when returning to the task.

The study also discusses the impact of notifications on teenagers, who often respond immediately to notifications, regardless of the task they are engaged in. This impulsive response disrupts attention and task completion. The concept of "nomophobia" — the anxiety related to being without a smartphone — is also introduced. It highlights a psychological dependency on smartphones, which amplifies the negative impact of notifications on focus and well-being.

Moreover, the allure of social media can lead students to procrastinate. Notifications often prompt them to spend more time scrolling through apps than initially intended, further delaying important activities. Over time, this habit can result in poor time management, missed deadlines, and increased stress levels.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Respondents' Answers to Social Media

No.	Statement	Answer Percentage (%)
		Yes
1	Accessing social media more than 3 hours/day	85.3
2	Accessing social media after waking up	68.6
3	The importance of social media	91.2
4	Prioritizing social media over tasks	32.4

Source: Review of Multidisciplinary Education, Culture and Pedagogy | ROMEO

According to the pre-research data, 85.3% of students use social media for more than three hours daily, and 68.6% of them primarily check social media right after waking up. While 91.2% of students regard social media as very important, 67.6% prioritize completing assignments over using social media.

Table 2. Number of Social Media Users in Students

No.	Social media	Total Users
1.	TikTok	80
2.	YouTube	92
3.	Instagram	101
4.	Facebook Messenger	21

No.	Social media	Total Users
5.	Snapchat	10

Source: Review of Multidisciplinary Education, Culture and Pedagogy | ROMEO

Based on the pre-research data above, Instagram is a social media that is widely used by students in lectures to communicate and share information. In addition, YouTube is also the second most social media owned by students along with TikTok.

In today's world, social media provides convenience but can also lead to addiction. This, in turn, influences how individuals manage their time and activities. Therefore, organizing schedules and practicing effective time management has become increasingly important.

In a study by Anders Jensen, Asbjørn Thesbjerg, and Tilde Ankerstjerne Christiansen, participants reflected on the relationship between self-control and smartphone use, particularly in relation to notifications. One participant (P4) described the internal struggle: "Does my phone use me, or do I use the phone?" This highlights the tension between active and habitual smartphone use, affecting attention and focus. Participants reported that notifications were often "disturbing and interruptive," with the type of notification influencing how disruptive they were. For instance, sales alerts were bothersome, while urgent notifications like emails or direct messages were seen as necessary interruptions.

Participants also discussed how certain notifications could lead to unintentional smartphone use, which they later regretted. For example, one participant was compelled to check Instagram notifications about friends' stories, leading to distractions. The study found that the timing of notifications also affected their impact. Participants like P6, P5, and P2 reported feeling disturbed by notifications during work, but their impact varied depending on their workload. Some participants felt checking their phones during work was acceptable in certain circumstances, while others found that notifications "nudged" them to check their phones more frequently during work hours, disrupting their focus.

However, from another perspective, notifications can also serve as tools for maintaining connections and managing responsibilities. For instance, many students rely on social media for academic collaboration, reminders about group projects, and quick access to resources shared by peers. Notifications ensure they stay informed and don't miss critical updates.

The impact of these notifications often depends on how students interact with them. With mindful usage and proper boundaries, notifications can be controlled to minimize their disruptive effects. For example, students can use app settings to prioritize essential alerts while silencing unnecessary ones during study sessions.

In essence, while social media notifications can pose challenges to focus and time management, they can also be integrated into students' routines as helpful tools when managed thoughtfully. Striking a balance between connectivity and concentration is key.

Strategies not to be distracted

- **Establish Clear Boundaries:** Create specific timeframes for checking notifications, especially during study or when focusing on important tasks. Ensure your child's study area is free from distractions, including mobile phones.

- **Customise Notification Settings:** Personalise notification preferences to receive only essential alerts and disable non-essential ones. Remove notifications from smartwatches.
- **Utilise 'Do Not Disturb' Mode:** Activate 'Do Not Disturb' or similar modes during designated periods to minimise interruptions on phones.
- **Manage Screen Time:** Set daily limits for screen time to reduce overall phone usage. Install a screen-time monitoring app on all devices to track usage.
- **Prioritise Quality Sleep:** Avoid phone usage before bedtime to ensure restful sleep. Keep all technology out of the bedroom.
- **Encourage Reading:** Foster a habit of reading fiction for at least 30 minutes a day instead of scrolling on devices.
- **Embrace Mindfulness:** Cultivate mindfulness techniques to stay present and resist the constant urge to check phones.

Results (key findings):

- **Social Media Prevalence:** According to survey results, 85.3% of students use social media for more than three hours every day, and 68.6% of them check it as soon as they get up. Just 32.4% of students place more importance on finishing projects than on social networking, despite the fact that 91.2% of them think it's vital.
- **Impact on Time Management and Productivity:** Constant notification disruptions cause "attention residue," which is the inability of pupils to completely refocus after an interruption, in addition to impairing cognitive processes like memory and reasoning. Overall productivity, focus, and job completion efficiency are all negatively impacted by this.
- **Influence of Social Media Platforms:** Students most frequently utilized Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. During lectures, Instagram is specifically used for information sharing and communication. Students who use these platforms, particularly when studying, are more likely to procrastinate because they are tempted to check their messages, which causes them to put off assignments and become more stressed.
- **Numerous students displayed "nomophobia,"** a psychological dependence on their smartphones, especially in reaction to social media notifications, along with impulsive reactions. This need frequently resulted in impulsive behaviors that further interfered with focus, such checking alerts regardless of the task at hand.
- **Self-Control and Smartphone Use:** The study by Jensen, Thesbjerg, and Christiansen revealed a common internal struggle between self-control and smartphone use. Participants expressed concerns about the balance between actively using their phones and being controlled by them.
- **Distraction and Regret:** Several students reported that certain notifications, such as those from Instagram or Facebook, led to unintentional phone use, resulting in distractions they later regretted. The timing of these notifications played a role in how disruptive they were, especially during work or study sessions.

In conclusion, students' concentration and productivity are significantly and mostly negatively impacted by continual social media updates. According to our research, students' ability to focus on academic assignments is severely hampered by frequent notification interruptions, which results in poor time management and decreased productivity. A loop of inefficiency is produced by these

distractions, which force pupils to constantly return to their work after each break. Furthermore, the "attention residue" phenomenon demonstrates that even short-term interruptions have an impact on cognitive function, making it challenging for students to concentrate completely on their academics.

The study also emphasizes the behavioral and psychological effects of these interruptions, especially for young people who frequently feel pressured to reply to notifications right away, regardless of what they are working on at the time. This problem is made worse by the idea of "nomophobia," or the fear of living without a smartphone. It strengthens reliance on gadgets and social media, which further impairs concentration and wellbeing.

Not all notifications, though, are necessarily harmful. Notifications about academic obligations, for example, might help students stay informed and stay in touch with their friends. Effectively handling these alerts to keep them from becoming too much to handle is the difficult part. Students can reduce distractions and restore control over their time by implementing techniques including personalizing notification settings, using "Do Not Disturb" modes, and establishing clear guidelines for phone use. Additionally, teaching students self-control and mindfulness practices might help them avoid the impulsive need to check their alerts, freeing them up to concentrate on more crucial assignments.

Students must ultimately find a balance between remaining connected and focusing, even if social media notifications can present both advantages and difficulties. Students can benefit from technology without sacrificing their academic achievement or personal wellbeing if they use it carefully and manage it properly.

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PAPER 12

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCREEN TIME, SLEEP QUALITY, AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Olav Zhekov, Viktor Hadzhiyski

Introduction

The relationship between screen time, sleep and performance is a topic, that concerns not only students and young people, but every single person globally, as technology is nowadays undeniably an inevitable part of our every day lives. When it comes solely to university students, the increasing reliance on digital devices among them has raised concerns regarding the impact of screen time on various aspects of their well-being, particularly sleep quality and academic performance. With the widespread use of smartphones, laptops, and other screen-based technologies, students are often engaged in activities that extend late into the night, such as social media browsing, video streaming, or studying online. This increase in screen time, especially before bedtime, has been linked to disruptions in sleep patterns, including difficulty falling asleep, reduced sleep duration, and poor sleep quality. The blue light emitted from screens interferes with the production of melatonin, a hormone responsible for regulating sleep, leading to delayed sleep onset and fragmented rest. As sleep plays a crucial role in cognitive function, attention, and memory consolidation, inadequate rest can have a direct and negative impact on students' academic performance. Lack of sleep has been usually associated with reduced focus, slower reaction times, and lower grades. Understanding the relationship between screen time, sleep quality, and academic outcomes is vital for addressing the challenges faced by us and our colleagues in balancing our digital habits with our academic responsibilities. This issue not only highlights the importance of healthy sleep practices but also emphasizes the need for universities and students to adopt strategies that promote better sleep hygiene and manage screen time effectively to foster both academic success and overall well-being.

Literature Review

The relationship between screen time, sleep quality, and academic performance is increasingly scrutinized as university students spend more time on electronic devices. Prolonged screen exposure is an integral part of modern life but poses risks to mental and physical health, especially sleep, which subsequently influences academic outcomes.

Impact of Screen Time on Sleep Quality

Mechanisms of Sleep Disruption

Prolonged screen time affects sleep through physiological and psychological pathways. Blue light emitted from electronic devices suppresses melatonin, the hormone responsible for sleep-wake cycles, and thus postpones sleep. A meta-analysis involving over 125,000 participants confirmed that increased screen exposure leads to shorter sleep duration and diminished sleep efficiency, particularly when screens are used within two hours of bedtime (Carter et al., 2016). Disruptions are exacerbated by the intensity of screen use; specifically, interactive activities such as social media and gaming

create greater cognitive arousal than passive activities such as watching videos. Even device type makes a difference: while smartphones are more likely to be used close to the face and are designed for higher concentration in blue light, which is more disruptive of pre-sleep routines, devices that are designed for immersive interaction - gaming consoles or VR headsets - amplify the physiological arousal associated with delayed sleep onset (PLOS ONE, 2021).

Psychosocial Impact on Sleep

Psychological factors, too, come into play. Social media platforms produce addictive behavioral loops that encourage people to check on updates, comments, or likes deep into the night. This increases the mental arousal of the person at times meant for relaxation, which further delays falling asleep. Social comparison and exposure to disturbing content online may also provoke anxiety and ruminative thinking, each of which has been implicated in the occurrence of insomnia among young adults (Twenge et al., 2019).

Effects of Poor Sleep on Academic Performance

Sleep is important for memory consolidation, problem-solving, and emotional regulation—all of which are essential to performing well academically. Disruptions in sleep disturb these processes, leading to cognitive impairments such as poor attention, reduced speed in information processing, and reduced creative-thinking ability. A longitudinal study of 10,000 university students showed that students who reported less than six hours of sleep per night did worse on academic measures compared to their counterparts who slept seven to eight hours. This effect is especially noted in tasks that require sustained attention, such as reading comprehension and mathematical reasoning (PLOS ONE, 2020).

Daytime Sleepiness and Cognitive Fatigue

The accumulation of sleep debt also results in daytime somnolence, reducing the ability to focus during lectures and complete academic tasks efficiently. Research has demonstrated that students with higher daytime sleepiness are three times more likely to fail critical exams compared to their well-rested peers.

In a survey of 500 undergraduate students, 68% reported experiencing daytime fatigue directly linked to late-night screen use (Beebe et al., 2017).

Emotional and Behavioral Impacts on Learning

Besides these cognitive effects, inadequate sleep makes students more emotionally unstable, thereby increasing the levels of stress and reducing resilience against academic challenges. Sleep-deprived students are very likely to procrastinate, miss deadlines, and become overwhelmed; this therefore sets a spiral of poor academic performance (Frontiers, 2021).

Strategies to reduce negative effects

Individual interventions

Some strategies that students can follow to reduce the negative effects of screen time include:

1. Developing Screen-Free Patterns Setting aside digital-free times, especially before going to bed, has the potential to increase the quality of sleep, replacing that time with reading, meditation, or

any hobby in general that doesn't involve being online will prepare your body for sleep.

2. Effective Utilization of Technology Applications such as Apple Screen Time or Freedom that track and limit screen time help students self-regulate their use of such devices. Besides that, enable

"Night mode" or using blue light-blocking glasses reduces the physiological Impact of screen exposure,

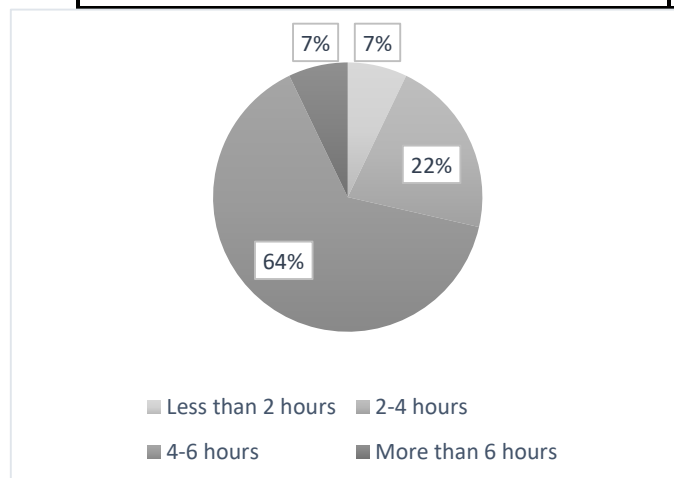
3. Prioritizing Sleep Hygiene Maintaining consistent sleep schedules, even on weekends, strengthens the body's natural sleep-wake cycle. Stepping consumption of caffeine and heavy meals near bedtime further fosters healthy sleep

Conclusion

The pervasive use of screens in students' lives at the university level has undeniable effects on sleep quality and academic performance. Even as technology brings about great benefits educationally, overuse may undermine the very goals it aims to serve. By promoting individual and institutional strategies for healthy screen habits and sleep hygiene, students can unlock their full academic potential while safeguarding well-being.

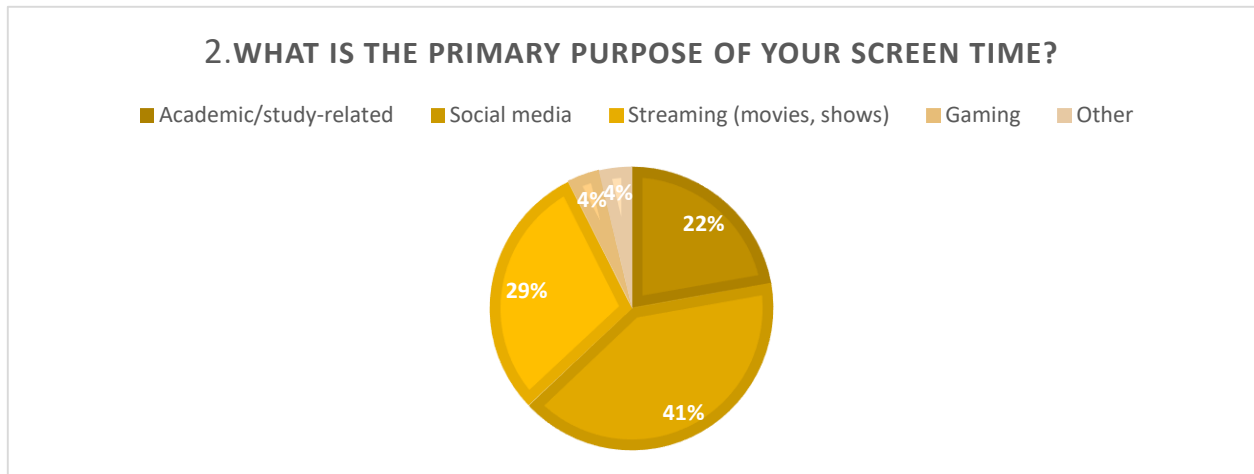
Results

1.How many hours do you spend on screens (phone, computer, tablet) per day?	
Less than 2 hours	1
2-4 hours	3
4-6 hours	9
More than 6 hours	1



Based on the data, most respondents spend between 2 to 6 hours per day on screens, with the majority (9 out of 14) spending 4 to 6 hours daily. A smaller portion (3 out of 14) spends 2 to 4 hours, while only one person spends less than 2 hours and one person exceeds 6 hours. This suggests that a significant number of individuals in the sample are using screens for extended periods, which may have implications for their sleep quality and overall well-being.

2.What is the primary purpose of your screen time?	
Academic/study-related	6
Social media	11
Streaming (movies, shows)	8
Gaming	1
Other	1

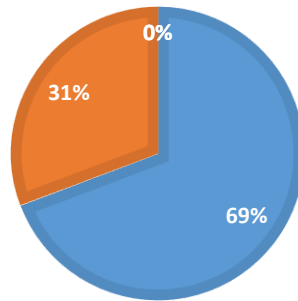


The data reveals that social media is the most common use of screen time, with 11 out of 14 respondents spending time on it. Academic or study-related activities are the primary purpose for 6 respondents, while 8 individuals use screens for streaming movies and shows. A smaller number of respondents (1 each) use screens for gaming or other purposes. This indicates that entertainment and social engagement are the dominant drivers of screen time among the sample, which could influence factors like sleep quality and academic performance.

3. At what time do you usually stop using screens before going to bed?	
Less than 30 minutes before sleep	9
30 minutes to 1 hour before sleep	4
1-2 hours before sleep	0
More than 2 hours before sleep	0

3. AT WHAT TIME DO YOU USUALLY STOP USING SCREENS BEFORE GOING TO BED?

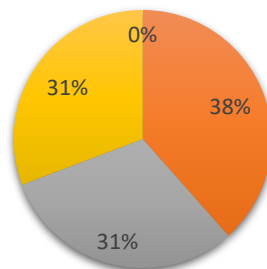
■ Less than 30 minutes before sleep
 ■ 30 minutes to 1 hour before sleep
■ 1-2 hours before sleep
 ■ More than 2 hours before sleep



The data shows that the majority of respondents (9 out of 14) stop using screens less than 30 minutes before going to bed, while 4 respondents stop 30 minutes to 1 hour before sleep. No respondents reported stopping screen use 1-2 hours or more than 2 hours before bed. This suggests that most individuals are engaging with screens close to bedtime, which could potentially disrupt their sleep quality, as the blue light emitted from screens can interfere with the body's ability to fall asleep.

4. On average, how many hours of sleep do you get per night?	
Less than 5 hours	0
5-6 hours	5
6-7 hours	4
More than 7 hours	4

4. On average, how many hours of sleep do you get per night?

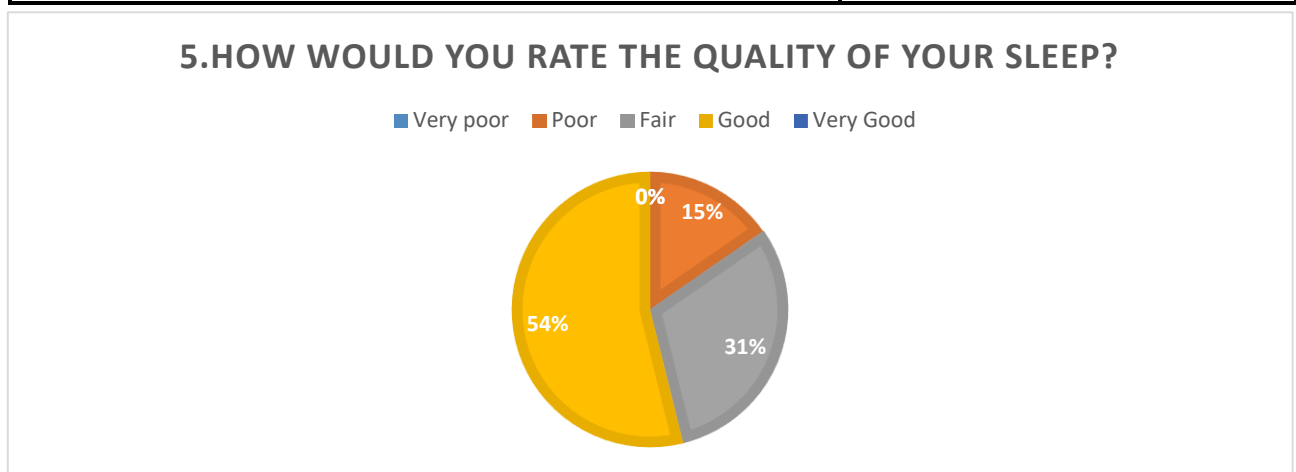


■ Less than 5 hours
 ■ 5-6 hours
 ■ 6-7 hours
 ■ More than 7 hours

The data indicates that sleep duration among respondents is fairly varied, with 5 individuals getting 5-6 hours of sleep, 4 getting 6-7 hours, and another 4 getting more than 7 hours per night. Notably,

no respondents reported getting less than 5 hours of sleep. While many students are getting a reasonable amount of rest, a significant portion (5 out of 14) are still sleeping less than the recommended 7-9 hours for optimal health and cognitive function. This could potentially be linked to screen time habits and may impact their overall well-being and academic performance.

5.How would you rate the quality of your sleep?	
Very poor	0
Poor	2
Fair	4
Good	7
Very Good	0



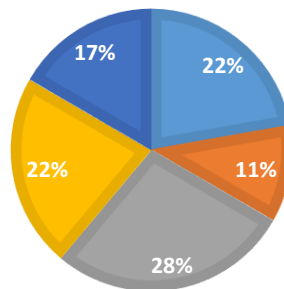
The data shows that the majority of respondents rate their sleep quality as "Good" (7 out of 14), while 4 rate it as "Fair" and 2 rate it as "Poor." No respondents reported their sleep quality as "Very Poor" or "Very Good." This suggests that while most individuals experience decent sleep quality, there is still a notable portion who feel their sleep could be improved. The presence of fair and poor sleep quality among some respondents may be indicative of factors like screen time, sleep habits, or stress that affect overall restfulness.

6.Do you experience any of the following sleep issues regularly? (Select all that apply)	
Difficulty falling asleep	4
Waking up frequently during the night	2
Waking up feeling tired	5

Trouble staying awake during the day	4
None of the above	3

6.DO YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SLEEP ISSUES REGULARLY?

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Waking up frequently during the night
- Waking up feeling tired
- Trouble staying awake during the day
- None of the above

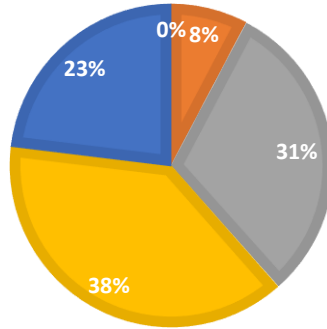


The data reveals that a variety of sleep issues are experienced by respondents, with the most common being waking up feeling tired (5 out of 14), followed by difficulty falling asleep and trouble staying awake during the day (4 each). Fewer respondents report waking up frequently during the night (2), and 3 individuals do not experience any of these sleep issues. This suggests that many students may be struggling with sleep-related problems that could be linked to factors such as screen time, stress, or irregular sleep habits, which may impact their overall health and academic performance.

7.How would you describe your academic performance (e.g., GPA, grades)?	
Very poor	0
Poor	1
Average	4
Good	5
Excellent	3

7.HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ?

■ Very poor ■ Poor ■ Average ■ Good ■ Excellent

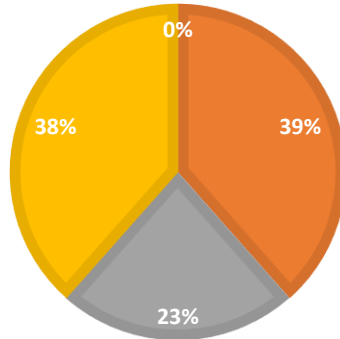


The data shows that most respondents rate their academic performance as "Good" (5 out of 14), followed by "Average" (4), and "Excellent" (3). Only 1 respondent rated their performance as "Poor," and none rated it as "Very Poor." This suggests that while the majority of students feel their academic performance is satisfactory or above, there is a small portion who may be facing challenges. It also indicates that, despite varying sleep quality and screen time habits, most students still manage to perform reasonably well academically. However, there may be room for improvement, especially among those reporting lower sleep quality or higher screen time.

8.Do you feel that your screen time has a significant impact on your sleep quality?	
Yes, positively	0
Yes, negatively	5
No impact	3
Not sure	5

8. DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR SCREEN TIME HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON YOUR SLEEP QUALITY?

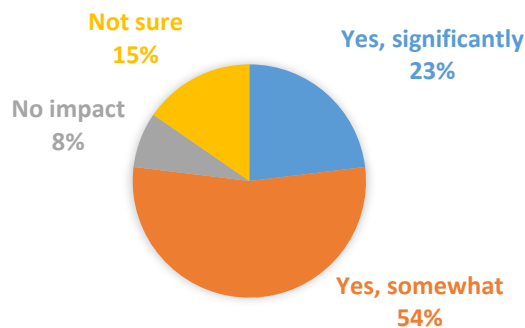
■ Yes, positively ■ Yes, negatively ■ No impact ■ Not sure



The data reveals that 5 respondents believe their screen time negatively impacts their sleep quality, while 3 feel that screen time has no impact. Interestingly, 5 respondents are unsure about the effect of screen time on their sleep. No one reported a positive impact. This suggests that a significant portion of students recognize the potential negative effects of screen time on their sleep, while others are uncertain, possibly due to inconsistent habits or other influencing factors. It highlights the need for further exploration into how screen time affects sleep patterns and overall well-being.

9. Do you feel that poor sleep quality affects your academic performance?	
Yes, significantly	3
Yes, somewhat	7
No impact	1
Not sure	2

9. DO YOU FEEL THAT POOR SLEEP QUALITY AFFECTS YOUR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?



The data shows that the majority of respondents (7 out of 14) feel that poor sleep quality somewhat affects their academic performance, with 3 reporting a significant impact. Only 1 respondent believes that sleep quality has no impact on their academic performance, and 2 are unsure. This indicates that most students recognize a connection between sleep and academic outcomes, with many acknowledging that poor sleep can hinder their ability to perform well in their studies. It highlights the importance of addressing sleep-related issues to improve both well-being and academic success.

10.How often do you prioritize study time over sleep?	
Always	2
Often	2
Sometimes	5
Rarely	4
Never	0



The data shows that 5 respondents sometimes prioritize study time over sleep, while 2 do so often and 2 always prioritize studying. No respondents reported never prioritizing study over sleep. This suggests that a significant portion of students struggle to balance academic demands with the need for adequate rest, often choosing to sacrifice sleep in favor of study time. This could potentially lead to negative consequences for both sleep quality and academic performance, as insufficient sleep can impair cognitive function and productivity.

Conclusion

All the collected data highlights several key insights about the relationship between screen time, sleep quality, and academic performance among university students. Most students spend significant time on screens, primarily for social media and entertainment, with many using screens close to bedtime. While a majority report getting a reasonable amount of sleep, many experience sleep issues, such as waking up feeling tired or having trouble falling asleep. Despite this, most students rate their academic performance as "Good" or "Average," with some acknowledging that poor sleep negatively

affects their academic outcomes.

One common trend is that students often prioritize study time over sleep, which could create a cycle of insufficient rest, leading to decreased cognitive function and, ultimately, worse academic performance.

To improve sleep hygiene and academic performance, students should aim to reduce screen time at least one hour before bed to help improve sleep quality. Universities could offer workshops on sleep hygiene and time management to help students better balance their academic responsibilities with the need for adequate rest. Implementing regular sleep routines, creating a restful sleep environment, and prioritizing 7-9 hours of sleep nightly could enhance cognitive function and focus.

Additionally, improving time management by breaking study sessions into focused blocks and avoiding late-night cramming can help students balance both study and rest more effectively. By adopting these strategies, students can improve both their sleep quality and academic performance, leading to better overall well-being.

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PAPER 13

THE IMPACT OF DAILY SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Introduction

social gathering groups to appear in the Netscape. With the further development of the forums

Social Media in University Student's Lives

In this sense, social media has inevitably become a major part of adolescents' everyday lives. As of 2024, the average time spent on social media is 143 minutes (~2.5 hours) daily, 5.3% less compared to the data from 2023, but about 67.78% increase (53 minutes overall) in comparison with 2013 (SOAX, 2024). Given the current data it becomes clear that students are almost certainly using social media for various tasks. Social platforms offer an excellent means of sharing and creating content/information, making them an extremely useful tool not just for students who wish to learn or partake in collaborative efforts, but also an overall excellent means of communication between peers. However in recent years it has been shown that a significant amount of the time spent on social media is dedicated for entertainment purposes (See 4. Results and Discussion for further information). Followingly, while social media clearly showcases immense benefits in the

Literature review

To start off our research paper, we shall first analyze some relevant materials to the topic: on, interests and backgrounds, which could enable educators to adjust their teaching materials according to students' needs. The final perk is development of collaborative abilities. This is

(2018) reveal that excessive nonacademic internet use, including social media, was negatively associated with students' classroom performance for two reasons. Distraction and time waste from

Methodology

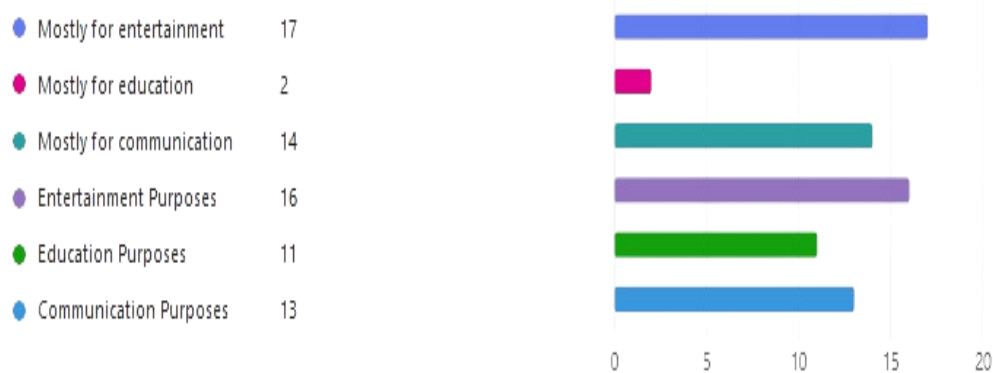
Use of Survey

Our research paper was based on the answers of a questionnaire, completed by 33 students from 1st to 4th year, 23 of whom were in their 1st academic year. The survey contains a variety of questions aimed at gathering fundamental information for our research, starting off with the respondents' level of education and their chosen higher education institution, their form of

education (distance or regular) and continues with a question regarding their daily use of social media. Then we dive into the details about their purpose of using social media, their preferred time of the day for using social media and whether it has any impact on them. The last questions seek to research the respondents' opinions on whether they feel pressured to present themselves in a different way because of the internet and whether they feel as if they are doing better or worse academically because of social media. Our survey contains 3 open answer questions to get into more detail about students' opinion on the overall impact of social media on them. All results are presented as bar charts, pie charts or open answers.

Results and Discussion

6. For what purposes do you use Social Media?

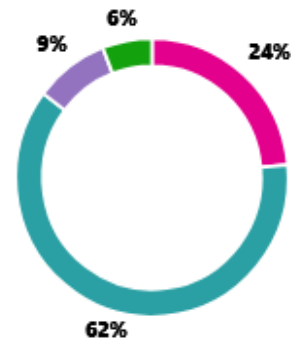


Social media demonstrates significant potential in shaping university students' lives, particularly in the realms of entertainment, communication, and education. According to the data presented, Entertainment stands as the most common purpose for social media use, with 17 students primarily engaging with platforms for this reason. This underscores the role of social media as a stress reliever and a source of relaxation and cultural content for students navigating academic pressures.

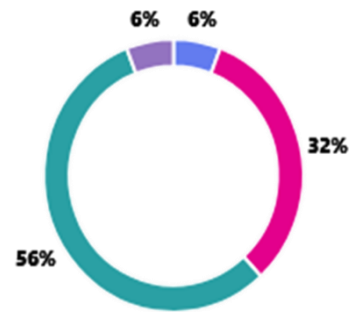
Communication, highlighted by 14 students, reflects another critical potential of social media. It serves as a powerful tool for maintaining relationships, building professional networks, and collaborating on academic projects, thereby enhancing connectivity in both personal and academic contexts.

Finally, while education ranks lower in usage purposes (with 11 students emphasizing it), it remains a growing area of potential. Social media platforms offer access to educational resources, peer discussions, and real-time information sharing that can complement traditional learning methods.

● None / Barely	0
● 1-3 Hours	8
● 3-6 Hours	21
● 7-10 Hours	3
● 12+ Hours	2

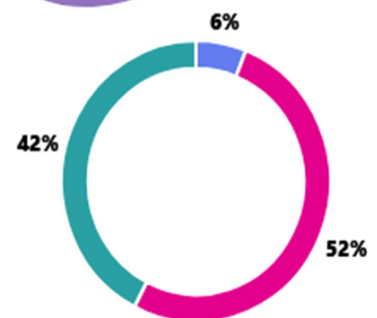
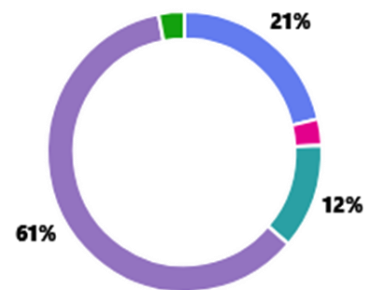


● No Effect	2
● Minor Effect	11
● Moderate Effect	19
● Major Effect	2



3
—

● Mostly Positive	7
● Slightly Positive	1
● Not sure	4
● Slightly Negative	20
● Mostly Negative	1



● Yes, towards more exposure	2
● Yes, towards less exposure	17
● I don't plan on changing my exposure	14

Peer responses:

- It certainly has an enormous impact on university students, however its positivity or negativity depends on what do they consume
 - Social media is normally used by students as a way to distract themselves from responsibility, too much of it would definitely affect the academic performance of most
 - It serves as a distraction for them and often forces them to compare other students, to gossip. It teaches them to not be themselves. But sometimes can be helpful for exchanging information
- The responses above conclude that the impact can be positive for exchanging information, but mostly negative because of distraction from responsibilities and mocking comparisons among students.

Peer responses:

- Well mostly negative, since a lot of students nowadays don't care about their academic performance or bettering their general knowledge
- If they listen to a podcast/course, then it is mostly good, but even then, I may say that the distraction element is always there
- It can have a negative impact on focus and productivity and distract us from more important tasks.
- It depends on the person
- Mostly positive

The next responses summarize that the impact on university students depends on the person, but still many people don't care about their academic performance or bettering their general knowledge and others could listen to a podcast, which could also act as a form of distraction from more important tasks.

Peer response:

- I believe that social media alienates people to the point where they lack basic social skills and interacting with reality becomes difficult. In some rare cases the person loses perception of the virtual and it blends with reality, creating delusions... Im not saying social media should be banned, but their oversaturated market should be moderated at least. If not, it's highly likely society will suffer long lasting effects (it actually already is suffering). Students as a whole have many many

problems in this insane rushed society and conflicts on media like Twitter or Reddit only poison the well of information and create chaos... It is what it is.

The last response sums up that social media alienates people and makes them lack social skills. It also creates long lasting effects of suffering in the society and conflicts which could poison the well of information and create chaos. That is why social media should be moderated at some sense.

Conclusion

Before we conclude this paper, we would like to first say that unfortunately our form applicant volume is in our opinion too low for proper data gathering and prognosis to be made. Despite this, however, we believe we managed to successfully bring forth the foundations necessary for well-laid-out research on the given topic which consequently allows for further data to be submitted into our work.

According to our findings, social media has been almost certainly incorporated into the daily lives of university students and it's likely for its usage to increase for the foreseeable future. The benefits of using social media are evident and prove extremely efficient in providing adolescents with massive amounts of information which they can in turn use to enrich their knowledge and aid them in researching topics related to their tasks. Not only that, but social media offers an immense ease of communication between peers which in turn boosts their social interaction and provides them the groundwork necessary for potential long-lasting collegial relationships that further aids them in their university work. The means of entertaining students also plays a major role in their mental life through providing relaxation and a break from stressful environments which might be common in their overall work life, though it stands imperative to take into account the potential harm which entertainment can cause to higher education students' academic performance such as the possible misinformation that they may fall victim to or the distraction factor which could prevent them to focus on their education by being enthralled to the content shown to them on social platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook etc. .

In any case, as with any study done on such an ever-changing topic, the study reported in this paper has some limitations. Although the interviewees were able to adequately fulfill the general aims of our research through the questions, they answered alongside the opinions they were able to express, the small number of participants reduces the generalizability of the results. Another limitation is related to the fact that the group was largely homogenous, i.e. the subjects came from the same institution. Yet another weakness may concern the data collection instrument, namely the Microsoft Forms survey which was conducted only once. Perhaps a different set of questions, their wording or a series of such questionnaires carried out over a particular period of time (say one academic year) may have yielded more detailed and insightful results. Despite these limitations, this study provided some insights into the usage of social media by university students and its implications.

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PAPER 14

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE, STUDY HABITS AND ACADEMIC PRODUCTIVITY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Ivan Georgiev, Nikola Bobchev, Plamena Ganeva

Introduction

Social media platforms have become an integral part of modern life, especially among young adults and university students. Originating during the Web 2.0 era, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and others have revolutionized how people communicate, collaborate, and consume information. Initially designed for networking and entertainment, these platforms now play a significant role in education and professional development. While social media offers opportunities for academic engagement, such as accessing educational resources, collaborating on group projects, and sharing knowledge, its overuse can negatively affect students' academic performance. Previous studies suggest that excessive time spent on social media often correlates with procrastination, poor time management, and reduced focus on academic tasks. Students may prioritize social media interactions over studying, leading to lower academic achievement.

Research question: The Relationship Between Time Spent on Social Media and Study Habits Among University Students

Therefore, the study sought to answer the following questions.

- What is the current level of social media usage among university students in Bulgaria?
- How do different types of social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) impact students' study habits?
- Can the integration of social media tools in educational contexts positively impact student engagement and performance?

Literature review

Al-Shargi, Hashim and Kutbi assert that Liu studied students' use, attitudes and perceptions of 16 different social media tools through an online questionnaire involving 221 students. The top four reasons that prompted students' use of social media tools were found to be social engagement (85%), direct communications (56%), speed of feedback/results (48%), and relationship building (47%). This

highlights the platform's utility for both academic and personal interactions. Al-Tarawneh emphasizes that in education, two streams are prevailing for social networks: the use of social networks as a tool supporting activities deemed important for the purpose of educational institutions, instructors, and students. For example, Wang, Chen, and Liang argue that platforms like Facebook and YouTube provide opportunities for group discussions, online forums, and access to educational materials. While the second stream is the bad influence social network inflicts on students behaviours and time management. According to Wang, Chen and Liang students use social network sites for many purposes such as access to information, group discussion, resource sharing and entertainment. Studies suggest that prolonged exposure to platforms like Instagram and TikTok, which prioritize entertainment and short visual content, can reduce students' ability to concentrate on academic tasks. In particular, Al-Tarawneh notes that misuse of social media during lectures or study time leads to a decline in productivity and academic outcomes.

Methodology

The survey for this research was created using Google Forms, a widely accessible tool that enabled students to open, complete, and submit their responses easily. This format ensured convenience and encouraged broader participation. The survey included 16 questions, primarily multiple-choice, designed to capture insights into the relationship between social media usage and study habits among university students in Bulgaria.

The focus of the questions revolved around key themes such as:

- Daily time spent on social media
- Most used social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook)
- Study hours outside of lectures
- Content type most consumed on social media
- Perceived distractions caused by social media during academic activities
- Impact of social media on academic performance and focus
- Motivation for academic activities influenced by social media

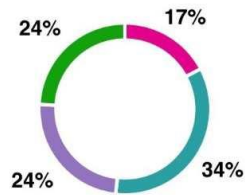
The format facilitated efficient data collection, as the responses were automatically processed into visual representations, such as bar graphs, upon submission. This enabled clear and immediate insights into the proportion of responses for each category, which were instrumental in analyzing trends and patterns.

A total of 63 students participated in the survey, and the data was further filtered to focus on the targeted age group of 18 to 25-year-olds, which aligns with the demographic most active on social media. This age group represents the core of the university student population and was ideal for examining the research questions.

1. How many hours daily do you spend on social media?

[More details](#)

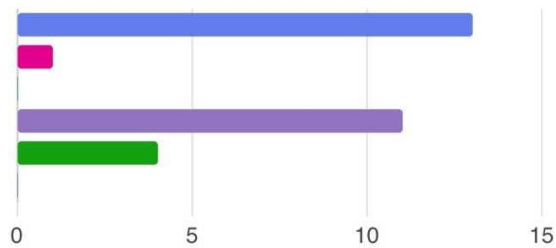
● 0	0
● 1-2	5
● 3-4	10
● 5-6	7
● Over 6	7



2. What social media platform do you use the most?

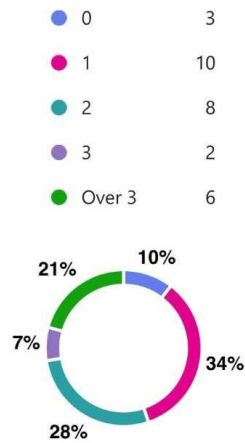
[More details](#)

● Instagram	13
● Facebook	1
● Snapchat	0
● Tik Tok	11
● You Tube	4
● Other	0



5. How many hours daily do you spend studying? (outside of lectures)

[More details](#)



Results and discussions in our community

1. Daily Hours Spent Studying (Outside of Lectures)

Categories & Responses:

- 0 hours: 3 responses (10%)
- 1 hour: 10 responses (34%)
- 2 hours: 8 responses (28%)
- 3 hours: 2 responses (7%)
- Over 3 hours: 6 responses (21%)

Key Insights:

- The majority (34%) spend 1 hour studying daily, followed closely by 28% dedicating 2 hours.
- Only 21% of respondents spend more than 3 hours daily on studying.
- A small proportion (10%) reported not studying outside lectures at all.

Analysis:

- The data suggests a mixed commitment to studying, with most respondents dedicating minimal to moderate time.
- This may indicate challenges in motivation, workload management, or competing priorities (e.g., social media).

2. Most Used Social Media Platforms

Platforms & Responses:

- Instagram: 13 responses
- TikTok: 11 responses
- YouTube: 4 responses
- Facebook: 1 response
- Snapchat/Other: 0 responses

Key Insights:

- Instagram (13 users) and TikTok (11 users) dominate as the most used platforms.
- YouTube is significantly less popular, with only 4 users.
- Facebook is almost obsolete among respondents (1 user).

Analysis:

- Instagram and TikTok's popularity align with current social media trends favoring short, engaging visual content.
- The minimal use of Facebook suggests generational or demographic differences in social media preferences.

3. Daily Hours Spent on Social Media

Categories & Responses:

- 0 hours: 0 responses
- 1-2 hours: 5 responses (17%)
- 3-4 hours: 10 responses (34%)
- 5-6 hours: 7 responses (24%)
- Over 6 hours: 7 responses (24%)

Key Insights:

- The majority (34%) spend 3-4 hours daily on social media.
- A significant 48% of respondents spend 5 or more hours on social media (7 users for 5-6 hours, and 7 for over 6 hours).
- No one reported 0 usage, emphasizing near-universal reliance on social media.

Analysis:

- Excessive time on social media may impact study habits and productivity.
- The correlation between social media usage and limited study hours should be explored further to identify patterns or causality.

Overall Analysis

Study vs. Social Media Time:

- The high usage of social media correlates with lower study durations. For instance, 34% of respondents who spend 3-4 hours on social media might overlap with those dedicating minimal study time (1-2 hours).
- Further investigation (e.g., surveys or interviews) can determine whether time spent on social media impacts academic performance.
- Social Media Preference:
 - Instagram and TikTok dominate, indicating a preference for visual, quick-consumption content among participants.

Conclusion

This study highlights the dual role of social media in influencing university students' study habits. While platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram offer opportunities for academic collaboration and resource sharing, excessive usage can negatively impact time management and productivity. The results indicate that most students dedicate minimal time to studying while spending significant hours on social media, particularly Instagram and TikTok. To mitigate the negative effects, universities should promote the educational use of social media through Learning Management Systems and other collaborative tools. By encouraging a balanced approach, students can harness the benefits of social media while maintaining focus on their academic goals.

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PAPER 15

THE IMPACT OF VIDEO-SHARING PLATFORMS ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLES AND STUDY HABITS

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Introduction

What are the greatest obstacles that students nowadays are facing and how are they affecting their productivity regarding their studies? The vast majority of the population views social media as a distraction, but it's not only about the platforms themselves but how you use them. An advantage they have over conventional ways of acquiring information is that they provide users with simplified and easier-to-access videos. In this case study we plan to tackle the problems that arise from the prejudices connected with social media.

Literature Review

Nowadays social media plays a tremendous role in our everyday life – from communicating with each other to exchanging information about learning styles and study habits.

According to a global report, there are nearly 4,623 billion internet users around the world by the year 2022 and 58.4% of these people are active social media users (Kemp, 2022a). These numbers have increased consistently for the past decade. Meanwhile, social media users have considerably transferred from PCs to mobile devices (Acarsoy, 2019). According to WeAreSocial 2022 report, Facebook is the most commonly used social media platform throughout the world. Respectively YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Wechat, TikTok, FB Messenger, Douyin, QQ, Sina Weibo, Kuaishou, Snapchat, Telegram, Pinterest, Twitter, Reddit and Quora come after Facebook (Kemp, 2022a).

Social media is not only about entertainment, but it also can be used for educational purposes. Users sharing information upon education circulate their videos by sharing them with #LearnOnTikTok and #EduTok hashtags (Fiallos et al., 2021). It has started partnerships with education technology initiatives with #EduTok hashtags for creating educational content on the platform (Hutchinson, 2020). As a result of these initiatives, it has many studies in education fields such as health education (Comp et al., 2021; Fraticelli et al., 2021; Nikookam & Guckian, 2021), sport sciences education (Escamilla-Fajardo et al., 2021), foreign language education (Pratiwi et al., 2021; Xiuwen & Razali, 2021), chemistry education (Hayes et al., 2020), physics education (Syah et al., 2020), IoT education (Draganić et al., 2021), museum education (Huebner, 2022), dance education (Heyang & Martin, 2022; Warburton, 2022), etc.

Use of YouTube for educational purposes firstly began with (Trier, 2007a, 2007b) works. Afterward researches upon its use in many fields such as nursing education (Duncan et al., 2013), chemistry education (Franz, 2012) dance education (Hong et al., 2020) have been conducted. It is asserted that use of YouTube for educational purposes provides many advantages for educators (Srinivasacharlu, 2020). These are expressed under main titles as making contributions to professional developments of educators, learning by observing other educators, presenting interesting and attractive contents for the students, enabling to reach new knowledge free of charge, its being

visual and audio, being watchable in every place and at any time, mobile learning, everyone's having right to speak, micro learning, note taking, pausing opportunity, easy access to the contents such as graphics in order to understand confused concepts, video slowing option for people who learn slowly. It is emphasized that YouTube should not replace the lessons completely despite its above-mentioned advantages; and that it can be used in classes for the main points, visuals or summary of the subject (Srinivasacharlu, 2020). Also, one of the important advantages of YouTube is its easy integration to LMSs such as Canvas, Moodle (Mpungose & Khoza, 2022; Pratama et al., 2022).

With social media unveiling its educational side it has become a primary source for educational content for students thus changing the way they consume and retain knowledge. The main example for this evolution is the process of learning itself. Learning styles describe how learners interact, acquire knowledge, or respond to stimuli in their learning environments (Shaw and Marlow, 1999). Insight into various learning styles can help both educators and students. Educators can design and customize teaching activities to address different groups of learning styles more effectively.

The social learning theory (SLT) posits that learning is most effective when learners are allowed to observe and interact with other learners, as well as form or participate in small study groups compared to the lecturers' teaching styles (Bandura, 1971, Bandura, 2002, Gong et al., 2014). This theory has become popular with the widespread use of social media and mobile technology.

Therefore, as the method of processing information is crucial to students' comprehension, the identification of their learning styles is also important. A review of past studies on learning theories and models has revealed three types of learning styles: participatory, independent, and collaborative (Riechmann and Grasha, 1974, Felder and Silverman, 1988, Sadler-Smith, 1997).

Social media efficiency is also one of the sub-constructs measured in Self, which suggests that students with higher efficiency tend to use social media for learning, as they are confident of their skills in using technology, as is expected. Therefore, students with participatory learning style may have more experience in using social media as they use these tools during their learning activities, compared with the collaborative groups, who prefer working with their teammates. Thus, this may explain the focus of participatory groups on Self compared with the collaborative group.

Study habits are a student's systematic way of studying. It may be efficient or inefficient. Efficient habits produced positive academic performance otherwise it produces ineffective academic performance (N. M. Noor, 2011). Accordingly, Noor (M. Owusu-Acheaw and A. G. Larson, 2014) categorized study habits, as to how and how much and what students read. As indicated it is a pattern of the learning schedule of the individual student. In the broader sense study habits determine the chance of academic success. Pragmatic and creative education involves the habit of personal investigation, which demands personal investigation, creativity, self-thinking, and critical thinking. Study habits are naturally developed at a very young age in school, but once formed, they last forever (L.Hu and P. M.Bentler, 2009).

While study habits cannot be changed once developed, they can be enhanced for maximum productivity of the student by the usage of social media. It provides students with a study blueprint that they can implement on their already existing study habits to further develop them so they're better suited for their university needs.

In conclusion, each social media site caters to unique needs such as social networking (Facebook), sharing videos (YouTube), and sharing photos (Instagram). The benefits and flexibility of social media may explain the significant impact of performance on the students' intentions to use social media for learning, regardless of their learning styles.

Methodology

To gather the data needed to do this case study and validate the conclusion that they have reached at the end, the authors have chosen to conduct a self-made survey. It contained 17 questions which were answered by a total of 75 students between the ages of 18-34. The period in which this survey was active was between 13.11.2024 and 24.11.2024. The answers have determined the direction in which the authors have chosen to answer the outgoing question: “How does frequent use of video-sharing platforms affect students’ learning styles and study habits?”.

Data Analysis of the Results

The survey that the authors have analyzed here was answered by a total of 75 students, the majority of which are from UNWE university. However, there are also students from other universities like Sofia University, Technical University, New Bulgarian University, as well as international universities. Not only are the students from different universities, but they also differ in the year they are currently studying in. This allows the authors to analyze all the different techniques that the students have acquired until now.

Question 4 (analysis)

The survey question regarding study preferences among students provides valuable insights into their learning habits and attitudes towards academic preparation. Below is a detailed analysis of the responses, highlighting trends, implications, and possible recommendations.

Results:

1. Attend Lectures/ Exercises and Study at home: 47 responses (57%)
2. Only attend Lectures/ Exercises: 15 responses (18%)
3. Self-Preparation only: 15 responses (18%)
4. Only go to university to drink coffee: 5 responses (6%)

1. Attend Lectures/ Exercises and Study at home (57%)

The majority of the respondents (57%) prefer a blended approach, attending lectures and studying at home. This indicates a strong inclination towards structured learning combined with independent study.

The authors have deduced that these students value the interaction and guidance provided in lectures while recognizing the necessity of self-study to reinforce knowledge and better help them prepare for exams.

2. Only attend Lectures/ Exercises (18%)

A smaller segment of students (18%) feels that attending lectures alone suffices for their preparation.

This group of students may either be confident in their ability to absorb information only during lectures or may not fully grasp the importance of additional study outside of attending the lectures. It could also indicate a reliance on the lecturer's effectiveness or the lack of interest in the learning process in general.

3. Self-Preparation Only (18%)

Another 18% prefer self-preparation through textbooks, presentations and videos.

These students may be more independent learners who prefer to control their study pace and not to rely on others like during the lectures. They might also feel that they can learn more effectively through self-directed methods rather than traditional lectures.

4. Students who only go to university to drink coffee (6%)

A small fraction (6%) indicated they only attend university for social reasons, such as drinking coffee.

This could reflect disengagement from academic activities, possibly due to lack of interest in the course material or other external factors affecting motivation.

The high percentage of students who combine lecture attendance with home study suggests a proactive approach to education. In contrast, the low percentage of coffee-only attendees may indicate that while there are some disengaged students, they're not the majority. The data reflects diverse learning preferences among students. Those who prefer attending lectures likely benefit from direct interaction with instructors. Self-preparers may thrive in environments that allow for flexibility and autonomy in learning.

Question 5 (Analysis)

The survey question regarding the frequency of daily social media usage among respondents provides a fascinating glimpse into the digital habits of individuals. Below is a comprehensive analysis of the responses, exploring trends, implications, and potential recommendations.

Results:

1. 1-3 Hours: 29 responses (55%)
2. 4-8 Hours: 42 responses (38%)
3. 8-12 Hours: 5 responses (7%)

1. 1-3 Hours (55%)

The majority of respondents (55%) report using social media for 1 to 3 hours daily. This indicates a moderate level of engagement with social media platforms.

This group likely uses social media for specific purposes such as staying connected with friends, accessing news or engaging in hobbies without it. They do not get distracted by the entertaining part of social media more than necessary.

2. 4-8 Hours (38%)

A significant portion (38%) spends between 4 to 8 hours on social media each day. This suggests a higher level of engagement and possibly a reliance on these platforms for various activities.

This usage pattern may indicate that social media serves as a primary source of entertainment, information, and social interaction for many individuals in this group.

3. 8-12 Hours (7%)

Only a small fraction (7%) reported using social media for 8 to 12 hours daily. This extreme usage could indicate either heavy engagement and or potential issues such as addiction or dependence on social media. For this group, excessive social media use might lead to negative consequences, including decreased productivity, social isolation or mental health challenges.

The data shows that a significant majority (93%) of respondents use social media for less than 8 hours a day, suggesting that while social media is an integral part of daily life for many, there is a limit to how much time is typically spent on those platforms. The small percentage of users who engage for 8-12 hours raises concerns about the impact of excessive usage on well-being and productivity. This could be an area for further investigation and support

Question 6 (Analysis)

Results:

1. Daily: 29 responses (39%)
2. Weekly: 43 responses (57%)
3. Never: 3 responses (4%)

1. Daily Use (39%)

A notable portion of respondents (39%) reported using social media for educational purposes daily.

This indicates that a significant number of individuals integrate social media into their regular learning routines. Daily users likely utilize platforms to access educational content, participate in discussions, follow thought leaders, or engage with peers on academic topics.

2. Weekly Use (57%)

The majority of respondents (57%) indicated that they use social media for educational purposes on a weekly basis.

This suggests that while they may not engage with educational content every day, they still find value in using social media as a supplementary learning tool. Weekly users may rely on social media to reinforce what they learn in formal settings or to explore topics of interest at their own pace.

3. Never Use (4%)

Only a small fraction (4%) indicated that they never use social media for educational purposes.

This minimal percentage suggests that most respondents see some value in integrating social media into their learning experience. Those who do not use social media for education might prefer traditional learning methods or may not be aware of the educational resources available on these platforms.

The combined total of daily and weekly users (96%) indicates a high level of engagement with social media for educational purposes among respondents. This reflects a growing trend where learners are increasingly turning to digital platforms for information and collaboration. Potential Barriers: The small percentage of individuals who never use social media for educational purposes could point to barriers such as lack of awareness, preference for conventional study methods, or concerns about the reliability of information found online.

Question 7 (Analysis)

Results:

1. 0 Hours: 5 responses (7%)
2. 1-2 Hours: 53 responses (71%)
3. 2-4 Hours: 14 responses (19%)
4. More than 4 hours in general: 3 responses (4%)

1. 0 Hours (7%)

A small percentage of respondents (7%) reported not spending any time watching educational content. This indicates that a minority may not engage with educational resources through video or online platforms.

This group might prefer traditional learning methods, such as reading textbooks or attending lectures, or they may not be aware of the available educational content online.

2. 1-2 Hours (71%)

The majority of respondents (71%) indicated that they spend between 1 to 2 hours watching educational content. This suggests a strong inclination toward incorporating educational media into their routines.

This level of engagement indicates that many individuals find value in short, focused educational videos or courses, which can fit easily into their daily schedules.

3. 2-4 Hours (19%)

A smaller segment (19%) spends between 2 to 4 hours watching educational content. This suggests a deeper engagement with longer-form content or multiple resources.

These users may be more dedicated to their learning, possibly exploring complex topics or participating in structured online courses that require more time investment.

4. More than 4 Hours (4%)

Only a minimal fraction (4%) reported spending more than 4 hours on educational content. This indicates that while some individuals are highly engaged, most prefer shorter viewing times.

Excessive consumption of educational content may lead to information overload, suggesting that most respondents prefer manageable amounts of information that can be easily absorbed.

Question 8 (Analysis)

Results:

1. YouTube: 40 responses (34%)
2. TikTok: 25 responses (21%)
3. Instagram: 46 responses (39%)
4. Other: 7 responses (6%)

1. YouTube (34%)

YouTube is the second most used platform, with 34% indicating it as their preferred choice. This aligns with broader trends showing YouTube's extensive reach and popularity as a source of video content.

This indicates that users likely appreciate YouTube for its vast array of educational, entertainment, and informational content, making it a versatile platform for various interests.

2. TikTok (21%)

TikTok was chosen by 21% of respondents as their preferred platform. This reflects the platform's rapid growth in popularity, particularly among the younger generations who favor short-form video content.

The engagement on TikTok suggests that users are drawn to its creative and interactive nature, making it an effective platform for trends and viral content.

3. Instagram (39%)

Instagram is the most popular platform among respondents, with 39% of respondents favoring it. This indicates its strong appeal, particularly for visual content sharing and social interaction.

Instagram's focus on aesthetics and community engagement makes it a critical platform for brands and influencers aiming to connect with audiences, especially to the younger users.

4. Other (6%)

A small percentage (6%) indicated using other platforms not specified in the main options. This could include platforms like Twitter, Snapchat or other such like social networks.

This group may represent other interests or preferences for platforms that cater to specific types of content or communities.

Question 9 (Analysis)

The survey yielded a variety of responses regarding study habits, including Studying in the Mornings Studying Only Before Exams Studying After Work Studying During the Weekend Studying at Home Taking Notes During Lectures and Doing Exercises Making Practice Tests Studying Only During Lectures Do Not Study at All Analysis of Responses.

1. Studying in the Mornings

Many students find that they are most alert and focused in the morning, making this a popular time for study sessions.

Morning study habits may indicate a preference for structured routines, allowing students to tackle challenging material when their cognitive abilities are at their peak.

2. Studying Only Before Exams

This habit suggests a reactive approach to learning, where students may rely on cramming rather than consistent study practices.

Students who study only before exams may experience higher levels of stress and may not retain information as effectively as those who engage in regular study.

3. Studying After Work

For working students, studying after work can be a practical choice, allowing them to balance professional responsibilities with academic commitments.

This habit indicates strong time management skills but may also lead to fatigue, impacting the effectiveness of study sessions.

4. Studying During the Weekend

Weekend study habits suggest that students are willing to dedicate their free time to academic pursuits, potentially allowing for longer, uninterrupted study sessions.

This approach can be effective for deep learning but may also lead to burnout if not balanced with leisure activities.

5. Studying at Home

Studying at home offers flexibility and comfort but may also present distractions.

Students who prefer studying at home may benefit from strategies to create an effective study environment that minimizes distractions.

6. Taking Notes During Lectures and Doing Exercises

This habit reflects an active engagement with course material and suggests that students value interactive learning.

Note-taking and exercises can enhance retention and understanding, indicating that these students are likely to perform well academically.

7. Making Practice Tests

Creating practice tests is a proactive study strategy that can significantly enhance understanding and retention of material. This habit indicates a commitment to mastering content and preparing thoroughly for assessments.

8. Studying Only During Lectures

Relying solely on lecture time for learning suggests a passive approach to education. Students who adopt this habit may struggle with retention and understanding outside of the classroom context.

9. Do Not Study at All

A small percentage of respondents are indicating they do not study at all and that raises concerns about the lack of engagement and motivation that some of the students nowadays show.

This group may require additional support or intervention to foster better academic habits and encourage participation in their education.

Question 10 (Analysis)

Results:

1. Not at all: 6 responses (8%)
2. A little: 28 responses (37%)
3. Moderately: 23 responses (31%)
4. A decent amount: 15 responses (20%)
5. Fully: 3 responses (4%)

1. Not at all (8%)

A small percentage of respondents (8%) indicated that social media doesn't affect their study habits at all. This suggests that these individuals may either have strong self-discipline or do not engage with social media frequently enough for it to impact their studies.

Also, these responders represent students who have effectively managed their time and use social media in moderation, allowing them to focus on academic responsibilities.

2. A little (37%)

A significant portion (37%) reported that social media affects their study habits only a little. This indicates a recognition of some influence but suggests that it may not be substantial enough to disrupt their academic performance.

These respondents might use social media primarily for social media interactions of leisure, with minimal impact on their study routines.

3. Moderately (31%)

About 31% indicated that social media moderately affects their study habits. This suggests a more noticeable influence, where social media may distract from or interfere with academic activities.

Students in this category may struggle to balance their time between social media engagement and studying, indicating a need for strategies to manage distractions effectively.

4. A decent amount (20%)

These students stated that social media affects their study habits to a decent extent. This suggests that these individuals may find themselves frequently distracted or drawn away from their studies by social media activities.

This group may benefit from interventions aimed at reducing distractions, such as time management training or digital wellness resources.

5. Fully (4%)

Only a small fraction (4%) reported that social media fully affects their study habits, indicating that their academic performance is significantly compromised by their engagement with social platforms.

This group of students may require support to address potential addiction or compulsive behaviors related to social media use, which could be detrimental to their academic success and also result in problems in their personal life too.

Question 11 (Analysis)

Results:

1. Visual: 38 responses (27%)
2. Auditory (learn through listening): 25 responses (18%)
3. Reading: 42 responses (30%)
4. Writing: 37 responses (26%)

1. Visual (27%)

A significant portion of respondents (27%) identified as visual learners, indicating a preference for learning through images, diagrams, charts, and other visual aids.

Visual learners benefit from materials that incorporate graphics and visual representations of information, suggesting that educators should utilize multimedia resources to enhance understanding.

2. Auditory (18%)

About 18% of respondents indicated they learn best through auditory means, such as listening to lectures, discussions, or audio recordings.

This group may thrive in environments where verbal explanations are emphasized, highlighting the importance of incorporating discussions and auditory materials into teaching strategies.

3. Reading (30%)

The largest group of respondents (30%) reported a preference for reading as their primary learning style. This indicates a strong inclination toward engaging with written texts, articles, and books.

Reading learners benefit from well-structured written materials, suggesting that providing comprehensive reading resources can enhance their learning experience.

4. Writing (26%)

A notable percentage (26%) identified writing as their preferred learning style. This group likely learns best through notetaking, summarizing information, and engaging in written exercises.

Writing learners may benefit from opportunities to express their understanding through written assignments and reflective writing exercises.

Question 12 (Analysis)

Enhanced Understanding Responses: "It helps me understand things better," "It helps me understand key difficult concepts using all kinds of visuals," "It helps me understand the concepts better." Implications: Many respondents find that educational content enhances their comprehension, particularly when it incorporates visuals or practical examples. This suggests that well-designed educational videos can significantly aid in grasping complex topics. Neutral or Negative Effects Responses: "Neutral or slightly negative since it's mostly entertainment content," "Definitely slows it down." Implications: Some respondents express concerns that much of the content they consume is entertainment-focused rather than educational, leading to distractions that hinder their learning process. Practical Application Responses: "I practice my visual learning habits," "It helps me to do my landscape projects," "There are tips for easier learning that I try out." Implications: Respondents indicate that they apply strategies learned from content to improve their study habits and practical skills, suggesting that educational media can provide actionable insights. Information Absorption Responses: "I absorb more information through the content I watch," "Helps a little," "positively." Implications: Many learners feel they retain information better when it is presented in a visual format, highlighting the importance of engaging content in facilitating memory retention. Alternative Learning Methods Responses: "Actually, it is not really weekly but not never either. I sometimes watch educational videos. I think it makes it clearer to me than just reading and it is an alternative." Implications: This suggests that video content serves as a complementary resource to traditional reading, offering clarity and alternative perspectives on subjects.

Question 13 (Analysis)

1. Yes (87%)

A significant majority of respondents (87%) indicated that they actively apply what they learn from educational videos. This high percentage suggests that educational videos are effective tools for facilitating practical learning and skill development.

The strong inclination to apply learned concepts indicates that respondents find value in the content they consume, which may enhance their understanding and retention of information. This also suggests that educational videos are successfully bridging the gap between theory and practice.

2. No (13%)

A smaller portion of respondents (13%) reported that they do not put into practice what they learn from educational videos. This could indicate a variety of factors, such as lack of opportunity, motivation, or relevance to their personal or professional lives.

For this group, there may be barriers preventing them from applying their knowledge, which could include insufficient resources, lack of time, or challenges in translating theoretical knowledge into practical applications.

Question 14 (Analysis)

1. Yes (92%)

An overwhelming majority of respondents (92%) indicated that they find the educational content helpful. This high percentage suggests that the materials being consumed are effectively meeting learners' needs and contributing positively to their understanding and skill development.

The strong affirmation of helpfulness indicates that educational videos and resources resonate well with users, likely due to their relevance, clarity, and engagement level. This positive feedback can encourage content creators to continue producing similar materials.

2. No (8%)

A small percentage of respondents (8%) reported that they do not find the content helpful. This response suggests that there may be specific areas where the content falls short in meeting learners' expectations or needs.

Understanding the reasons behind this dissatisfaction is crucial. It may indicate issues such as lack of depth, poor presentation quality, irrelevance to learners' goals, or insufficient practical application.

Question 15 (Analysis)

1. Yes (73%)

A significant majority of respondents (73%) indicated that they feel more inclined to study after watching educational videos. This high percentage suggests that these videos effectively stimulate interest and motivation in learners.

The positive influence of educational videos on study motivation indicates that well-crafted content can serve as a catalyst for deeper engagement with academic material, potentially leading to improved learning outcomes.

2. No (27%)

A smaller portion of respondents (27%) reported that they do not feel more inclined to study after watching educational videos. This response suggests that, for some individuals, the videos may not have a motivating effect.

This group may experience barriers to motivation, such as feeling overwhelmed by the information presented, preferring other study methods, or lacking a connection to the content.

Question 16 (Analysis)

1. 30-60 Seconds (12%)

A small percentage of respondents (12%) indicated that they can retain attention for videos lasting between 30 to 60 seconds. This suggests a preference for very short content, likely suitable for quick tips or brief explanations.

While this group appreciates concise information, it may limit the depth of content that can be effectively communicated in such a short time frame.

2. 1-5 Minutes (27%)

About 27% of respondents prefer videos that are between 1 to 5 minutes long. This length allows for slightly more detailed explanations while still being manageable for viewers with limited attention spans.

This group may benefit from quick overviews or summaries that provide essential information without overwhelming detail.

3. 5-10 Minutes (51%)

The largest group of respondents (51%) indicated that they prefer videos lasting between 5 to 10 minutes. This suggests that viewers are willing to engage with moderately longer content that allows for more comprehensive coverage of topics.

This length is ideal for in-depth explanations, tutorials, or discussions, indicating that educators should aim for this duration to enhance viewer engagement and retention.

4. More than 20 Minutes (10%)

Only a small fraction of respondents (10%) indicated that they can maintain attention for videos longer than 20 minutes. This suggests that while some viewers are open to longer formats, they may require compelling content to sustain their interest.

Longer videos may be suitable for detailed lectures or complex topics but should be used judiciously, ensuring they are engaging and well-structured to keep viewers attentive.

Question 17 (Analysis)

1. Microeconomics (19%)

A total of 22 respondents (19%) indicated that they are searching for videos related to microeconomics. This subject may attract students seeking to understand concepts such as supply and demand, market structures, and consumer behavior.

The interest in microeconomics suggests a need for accessible resources that clarify complex theories and real-world applications in this field.

2. Math (32%)

Math emerged as the most sought-after subject, with 37 respondents (32%) indicating they are looking for educational videos on this topic. This reflects the widespread challenges students face in grasping mathematical concepts.

The high demand for math-related videos highlights the importance of providing clear explanations, step-by-step problem-solving techniques, and diverse approaches to cater to different learning styles.

3. Informatics (26%)

With 30 responses (26%), informatics is another popular subject area for video searches. This may include topics such as programming, data analysis, and information systems.

The interest in informatics suggests a growing need for resources that cover both foundational concepts and advanced topics, especially as technology continues to evolve.

4. Other (24%)

The "Other" category received 28 responses (24%), indicating that respondents seek educational videos on a variety of subjects beyond those listed. This could encompass fields like biology, history, art, or specialized topics.

The diversity in subjects under "Other" suggests that content creators should consider expanding their offerings to include a wider range of topics to meet varied learner interests.

Conclusion

Taking everything said until now into account, the authors have come to the conclusion that the use of video-sharing platforms does indeed affect students in a positive way regarding their learning styles and study habits. Based on the data analysed above it has become clear that, contrary to the popular belief regarding social media's negative influence on students, the right usage of such platforms can be a loyal companion in their academic studies. The motivation to study, the better understanding of concepts and the entertaining way of presenting the information are just some examples of the underlined benefits that make social media a preferred method other the traditional ways of studying.

The authors encourage all readers that haven't tried social media as a learning tool yet to give it a chance and see for themselves how good of an ally it can truly be!

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KEY FINDINGS

This International Economic Relations students' paper proceedings present significant insights, highlighting the shared challenges and opportunities associated with social media usage in academic settings, as well as unique perspectives offered by their individual studies.

The following important conclusions can be made from the conducted students' research:

A recurring theme is the dual nature of social media. On the one hand, platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn serve as tools for academic collaboration, networking, and access to educational resources. On the other hand, excessive use often leads to distractions, procrastination, and fragmented attention, which negatively impact academic productivity and outcomes.

Multiple studies emphasized the disruptive effects of constant notifications on students' concentration and time management. Frequent interruptions reduce focus, increase task-switching, and prolong study sessions, often causing stress and diminished academic performance. However, the strategic use of "Do Not Disturb" modes and notification management shows potential for mitigating these effects.

Several papers highlight the psychological consequences of social media use, including anxiety, reduced self-esteem, and emotional stress, particularly due to comparison behaviors. These factors contribute to decreased academic motivation and a less productive learning environment.

The research consistently points to the negative impact of social media on study habits and time management. Many students report using social media for leisure rather than academic purposes, leading to inefficient use of study time. However, when used for academic tasks, social media can enhance productivity and collaboration.

Studies examining digital note-taking and smartphone usage underscore the need for balance. While digital tools offer convenience and organization, they can hinder information retention and deeper learning processes if over-relied upon.

Social media platforms, particularly LinkedIn, emerged as valuable tools for career readiness and professional networking. Students who strategically use these platforms benefit from improved career prospects and skill development. However, overuse for non-professional purposes can detract from these advantages.

A unique perspective highlighted in some papers is the role of individual traits, such as self-discipline and time management skills, in determining how social media affects academic performance. Students with better self-regulation tend to balance social media use more effectively, minimizing its negative impact.

Across the studies, recommendations include: limiting screen time during study sessions, managing notifications to reduce distractions, promoting digital literacy and mindfulness practices and encouraging the use of social media for educational and professional purposes rather than entertainment.

CONCLUSION

The collected research papers provide a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted impact of social media on university students' academic lives. While social media presents numerous benefits, such as access to educational resources, collaboration opportunities, and career development, its pervasive use often results in challenges like reduced focus, procrastination, and emotional stress. The studies underscore the dual nature of social media: it can be a valuable academic tool when used purposefully but can also become a source of distraction and inefficiency when overused or mismanaged.

Common themes include the negative impact of constant notifications on focus and time management, the role of self-discipline in mitigating distractions, and the importance of balancing digital convenience with effective learning strategies. The insights offered by these studies highlight the urgent need for fostering digital literacy and mindfulness to help students navigate the complexities of social media usage.