

**Example of a Minor Research Project: The Impact of Social Media on University**

**Students' Academic Performance**

**Name:**

**Institution:**

## **Abstract**

This minor research project investigates the relationship between social media usage and academic performance among university students. The study uses a survey method to collect data from 150 undergraduate students across different faculties. Findings show that excessive use of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, correlates negatively with academic performance. However, moderate and purposeful use, especially for educational purposes, can enhance learning. The study recommends encouraging responsible social media use to improve academic outcomes.

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## **Introduction**

In today's digital era, social media has become an essential part of students' daily lives. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok provide opportunities for communication, entertainment, and information sharing. However, the growing concern is whether the time spent on social media affects students' academic success. Many scholars have studied the link between social media use and academic performance, but findings have been mixed. Some researchers argue that social media is a distraction that lowers academic results (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010), while others suggest it can be a tool for educational engagement (Junco, 2012). This research project aims to explore the impact of social media on the academic performance of undergraduate students at a public university. Specifically, it examines how different levels and purposes of social media use influence students' grades and study habits.

## **Literature Review**

Social media platforms have transformed communication and access to information. According to Wang, Chen, and Liang (2011), social media allows students to collaborate and share educational resources, leading to improved learning outcomes. However, Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) found that students who frequently use Facebook tend to have lower Grade Point Averages (GPAs) compared to non-users.

Paul, Baker, and Cochran (2012) examined online social networking's effect on student academic performance and found that multitasking with social media during study time negatively impacts learning. Similarly, Ophir, Nass, and Wagner (2009) suggested that media multitasking reduces cognitive control, making it harder for students to concentrate on academic tasks.

On the positive side, Junco (2012) demonstrated that when students use social media for academic discussions and sharing academic resources, their engagement and grades

improve. Therefore, the relationship between social media and academic performance depends largely on the way and purpose of its usage.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between the frequency of social media use and students' academic performance?
2. How does the purpose of social media use (social vs. educational) influence academic success?
3. What strategies can be implemented to promote responsible social media use among students?

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This study used a descriptive survey research design to gather data from a sample of undergraduate students.

#### **Participants**

A total of 150 undergraduate students from three faculties (Arts, Science, and Business) at XYZ University participated in the study. The sample included 80 females and 70 males, aged between 18 and 24 years.

#### **Data Collection Instrument**

A structured questionnaire was developed to collect data. The questionnaire included sections on demographic information, patterns of social media usage, purposes of usage, and academic performance (measured by self-reported GPA).

#### **Data Collection Procedure**

The questionnaire was distributed electronically via Google Forms. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was assured.

#### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages, mean scores) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation coefficient) to determine the relationship between variables.

## **Results**

### **Patterns of Social Media Usage**

- **Frequency:** 78% of students reported using social media daily, with an average usage time of 3-5 hours per day.
- **Popular Platforms:** The most used platforms were Instagram (85%), Facebook (70%), and TikTok (60%).
- **Purpose:** 60% used social media mainly for social interaction, 30% for entertainment, and only 10% for educational purposes.

### **Academic Performance**

- Students who used social media for more than 5 hours daily had an average GPA of 2.5.
- Students who used social media for less than 2 hours daily had an average GPA of 3.2.
- Those who used social media primarily for educational purposes had a GPA higher by 0.5 points than those who used it for social reasons.

### **Correlation Analysis**

A significant negative correlation ( $r = -0.48$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was found between hours spent on social media and academic performance. However, a positive correlation ( $r = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was found between educational use of social media and academic performance.

### **Discussion**

The results support the hypothesis that excessive social media use negatively affects academic performance. This finding is consistent with Kirschner and Karpinski's (2010) study,

which indicated that frequent Facebook users tend to have lower grades. Multitasking between academic work and social media leads to reduced concentration and poor time management, affecting students' academic outcomes (Ophir et al., 2009).

Interestingly, when social media is used for academic purposes, such as participating in study groups or accessing educational content, it can positively impact learning. This aligns with Junco's (2012) findings that strategic use of social media can increase student engagement.

The small percentage of students who used social media for educational purposes shows a missed opportunity. Encouraging students to join academic discussion groups, share notes, and engage in knowledge-sharing activities on social platforms could help improve academic results.

### **Conclusion**

This minor research project concludes that while social media is an integral part of students' lives, its impact on academic performance depends on the manner of use. Excessive and purposeless use leads to poor academic outcomes, while controlled and educational use can enhance learning.

Universities should implement programs that teach students about responsible social media usage. Academic counselors and educators should encourage students to use these platforms for academic networking and knowledge exchange.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Awareness Campaigns:** Universities should organize workshops and seminars on responsible social media use.
2. **Integration into Learning:** Educators should use social media tools like Facebook Groups, WhatsApp Groups, and YouTube Channels for academic discussions.

3. **Time Management Skills:** Students should be trained on how to manage their time effectively to avoid excessive social media distractions.

4. **Parental and Peer Support:** Family members and friends should support positive online habits.

5. **Research Expansion:** Future research should explore the impact of emerging platforms like TikTok on academic performance.

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