



# THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON COLLEGE STUDENTS: AN OVERVIEW

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## ABSTRACT:

Social media has become a significant part of the everyday life of college students. The rapid growth of smartphone usage and easy access to the internet have increased the popularity of social media platforms among young people for communication, learning, entertainment, and sharing information. The present study, “*The Impact Of Social Media Use On College Students: An Overview*,” focuses on understanding the beneficial and harmful impacts of social media on college students.

The study is descriptive and analytical in nature and mainly depends on secondary data. The findings show that social media supports students in education, communication, skill improvement, and social interaction.

**Keywords:** Social Media, College Students, Academic Performance, Communication, Mental Health, Education.

## INTRODUCTION:

Social media is used for many purposes such as education, business, entertainment, communication, and sharing information. College students use social media for online classes, academic discussions, connecting with friends, networking, and entertainment. It also helps them get study materials, work together with classmates, and stay updated about current news and trends.

In recent years, the increasing use of smartphones and easy internet access have greatly increased social media usage among young people, especially college students. Because of this, social media has become an important part of students’ lives and has a strong influence on their communication, behaviour, lifestyle, and academic performance.

The word *social* in the term social media indicates the role of these platforms in encouraging communication, interaction, and participation among people. Social media helps individuals connect with others and develop social networks through internet-based and mobile applications. These platforms enable users, communities, businesses, and organizations to create, share, discuss, and modify content generated by users themselves.

Social media is commonly used for sharing experiences and memories, maintaining friendships, building communities, promoting ideas and products, and accessing or distributing news and information.

According to *Merriam-Webster* (2019), social media refers to online platforms where people can connect with others and share ideas, messages, information, photos, videos, and other content through the internet.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology describes social media as digital tools, websites, and mobile applications that help people communicate, create content, and share information with others online.

Similarly, the American Psychological Association explains social media as online communication platforms that allow individuals and groups to interact with each other and exchange information, opinions, messages, and different types of digital content.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- i. To examine the influence of excessive social media use on students' physical and mental well-being.
- ii. To analyze the positive and negative effects of social media on the academic performance of college students.
- iii. To study the influence of social media on the communication skills of college students.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

**Boyd and Ellison (2007)**, in their work *Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship*, discussed the meaning and development of social networking sites and analyzed their increasing significance in communication. Their study emphasized that social networking platforms have changed how people—especially young individuals and college students—connect with others by forming online communities and sustaining social relationships through digital means.

**Ellison et al. (2007)**, through the study *The Benefits of Facebook Friends: Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites*, investigated how Facebook use contributes to social capital among college students. The researchers observed that social networking platforms helped students strengthen interpersonal relationships, maintain social support, and improve communication with peers and friends.

**Subrahmanyam and Greenfield (2008)**, in the research *Online Communication and Adolescent Relationships*, analyzed the influence of online communication on adolescent relationships and behaviour. The study pointed out that digital communication encourages self-expression and social interaction; however, excessive dependence on online communication may reduce direct face-to-face interaction and affect emotional development.

**Pempek et al. (2009)**, in their study *College Students' Social Networking Experiences on Facebook*, examined the daily use of Facebook among college students. The findings indicated that students spent a considerable amount of time on social networking platforms mainly for communication and entertainment purposes, which often diverted attention from academic responsibilities and study activities.

**Kuppuswamy and Narayan (2010)**, through the study *The Impact of Social Networking Websites on the Education of Youth*, evaluated the educational influence of social networking websites on young people. The researchers emphasized that while social media promotes communication, knowledge sharing, and collaborative learning, excessive usage may negatively influence students' concentration and academic achievement.

**Kaplan and Haenlein (2010)**, in the study *Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media*, discussed the growth, classification, opportunities, and limitations of social media platforms.

The authors concluded that social media supports participation, creativity, and information exchange, although issues such as privacy concerns and misinformation remain major challenges.

**Liu (2010)**, in the study *Social Media Tools as a Learning Resource*, examined the educational usefulness of social media tools in higher education. The findings suggested that social media platforms can encourage collaborative learning, improve communication among learners, and provide easy access to educational resources and information sharing.

**Rouis et al. (2011)**, in the study *Impact of Facebook Usage on Students' Academic Achievement*, investigated the relationship between Facebook use and academic achievement among university students. The findings demonstrated that excessive Facebook usage adversely affected students' study habits, grades, and time management abilities.

**Wang et al. (2011)**, through the study *The Effects of Social Media on College Students*, analyzed how social media influences students' communication patterns, academic activities, and lifestyles. The researchers observed that students mainly use social networking platforms for entertainment and social interaction, which may sometimes decrease academic productivity and increase distraction.

**Junco (2012)**, in the study *The Relationship Between Frequency of Facebook Use, Participation in Facebook Activities, and Student Engagement*, explored the connection between Facebook activities and student engagement. The findings suggested that moderate use of Facebook may improve communication and participation in educational activities, whereas excessive use reduces study time and negatively influences academic performance.

**Al-Rahmi and Othman (2013)**, through the study *The Impact of Social Media Use on Academic Performance Among University Students*, examined the role of social media in collaborative learning and academic interaction. The researchers concluded that educational use of social media can improve communication and teamwork among students, although excessive use for entertainment purposes may create academic distractions.

**Tess (2013)**, in the article *The Role of Social Media in Higher Education Classes (Real and Virtual): A Literature Review*, reviewed the use of social media in higher education teaching and learning. The study emphasized that social media platforms can enhance classroom interaction, participation, and collaborative learning when effectively integrated into educational practices.

**Kirschner and Karpinski (2014)**, through the study *Facebook and Academic Performance*, investigated the relationship between Facebook use and students' academic achievement. The findings indicated that students who spent excessive time on social networking sites generally showed weaker academic performance and poorer study habits compared to non-users.

**Mehmood and Taswir (2015)**, in the study *The Effects of Social Networking Sites on the Academic Performance of Students in College*, examined the impact of social networking sites on students' educational performance and online behaviour. The study found that while social media facilitates communication and information exchange, excessive involvement in online activities contributes to procrastination and reduced academic efficiency.

**Khurana (2015)**, through the study *The Impact of Social Networking Sites on the Youth*, explored the educational and social effects of social networking sites on young people. The findings revealed that social media assists students in maintaining social relationships and accessing information, but overuse may reduce personal interaction and negatively influence mental health.

**Sharma and Shukla (2016)**, through the study *Impact of Social Media on Youth*, examined the influence of social media on the behaviour, lifestyle, and education of young people. The study concluded that social media encourages communication and information sharing; however, excessive use may result in addiction, stress, and reduced attention toward academic activities.

**METHODOLOGY:** The present study is based on a descriptive and analytical research design.

**SOURCES OF DATA:** The study is primarily based on secondary data. Information and data were collected from various sources such as: Research journals, articles, Websites and online databases, Newspapers and magazines, and Previous research studies related to social media and college students.

**METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION:** Relevant information was gathered through a detailed review of literature and analysis of existing studies, reports, and statistical data regarding social media usage among college students.

**SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS:** The collected data were analyzed and interpreted to understand the effects of social media on students' academic performance, communication abilities, and physical and mental health.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **Age-wise Distribution of Social Media Users in India:**

As per the various reports, social media usage in India is highest among young people, especially those between 18 and 34 years of age. Different social media platforms show varying patterns of age-group participation.

### **Age-wise Social Media Users in India (2025)**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Major Usage Trend</b>
13–17 years	Moderate use, mainly on visual platforms like Snapchat and Instagram.
18–24 years	Highest social media usage among students and young adults.
25–34 years	Largest active user group on platforms like Facebook and YouTube.
35–44 years	Moderate and growing usage, mainly for news, business, and communication.
45–54 years	Lower usage compared to younger groups.

55 years and above Least active age group on most social media platforms.

Young adults and college students form the largest segment of social media users in India. The rapid growth of smartphones, affordable internet services, and digital communication has increased social media engagement among youth. Older age groups also use social media, but their participation remains comparatively lower.

## IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON COLLEGE STUDENTS:

The use of social media can produce both positive and negative outcomes. On one hand, it offers opportunities for communication, learning, collaboration, and social connection. On the other hand, excessive or improper use may contribute to issues such as misinformation, cyberbullying, hate speech, sleep problems, reduced physical activity, and limited face-to-face interaction.

### I. Positive Impact of Social Media Use on College Students:

**1. Educational Support:** Through social networking platforms, students can access digital learning resources, recorded lectures, e-books, and academic discussions more conveniently. Platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp are often used for sharing study-related information and discussing academic topics with classmates.

**2. Improved Communication:** Social media makes communication faster and easier. Students can quickly connect with teachers, friends, classmates, and family members through messages, voice calls, and video calls.

**3. Knowledge and Awareness:** Through social media, students can stay updated about current news, educational opportunities, scholarships, career options, and important events happening around the world.

**4. Skill Development:** Using social media can help students improve different skills such as communication, creativity, leadership, digital knowledge, and technical abilities.

**5. Career Opportunities:** Social media platforms also help students learn about internships, jobs, online courses, and career-related opportunities. They can connect with professionals and build useful networks for their future careers.

**6. Group Learning and Collaboration:** Students can study together through online groups where they share notes, discuss projects, solve problems, and help each other in learning.

**7. Entertainment and Stress Relief:** Many students use online platform for leisure activities such as watching videos, listening to music, and gaming.

**8. Self-Expression and Creativity:** Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube provide opportunities for students to share ideas and creative content.

**9. Social Connectivity:** Students can maintain relationships with distant friends and relatives while also forming new connections.

**10. Access to Online Communities:** Students can join different online groups and communities related to education, culture, hobbies, and other interests where they can learn new things and exchange ideas with others.

### II. Negative Impact of Social Media Use on College Students:

**1. Decline in Academic Performance:** Using digital media too much can affect students' studies. Overuse of social media might reduce their study time and focus.

**2. Addiction and Time Wastage:** Many students spend hours on social media without realizing how much time has passed. This can become a habit and waste valuable time.

- 3. Mental Health Issues:** Too much use of social media can make students feel stressed, anxious, lonely, or depressed. Negative comments and comparisons with others can also lower self-confidence.
- 4. Lack of proper sleep:** Many students use social media late at night, which affects their sleep. Lack of proper sleep can make them feel tired and less active during the day.
- 5. Online Harassment:** Some students face bullying, rude comments, or harassment online, which can hurt their feelings and affect their mental well-being.
- 6. Distraction from Studies:** Notifications, messages, and endless scrolling often distract students from studying and paying attention in class.
- 7. Reduced Physical Activity:** Spending long time on phones and online media can reduce outdoor activities and exercise, leading to an unhealthy lifestyle.
- 8. Weak Face-to-Face Communication:** Students who depend too much on online communication may interact less with people in real life, which can weaken personal relationships.
- 9. Spread of False Information:** Social media sometimes spreads fake news and incorrect information, which can confuse students and create misunderstandings.
- 10. Digital privacy issues:** Sharing personal photos, information, or details online may lead to privacy problems, hacking, or online fraud.
- 11. Exposure to Inappropriate Content:** Students may come across harmful or unsuitable content on social media, which can negatively influence their behaviour and thinking.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

- This study is entirely based on secondary data sources.
- Findings of this study depends on the accuracy of previously published sources.
- The study may not represent all college students equally due to differences in region, culture, and access to technology.

#### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

- Online media is commonly used by college students for communication, entertainment, studies, and connecting with others.
- Most students spend a large part of their day on platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook.
- Social media helps students in learning by giving easy access to study materials, educational videos, online discussions, and useful academic information.
- It also makes communication easier among students, teachers, friends, and different communities.
- However, spending too much time on social media can negatively affect students' studies by reducing concentration and study time.
- Many students become distracted and waste a lot of time on social media, which may lead to addiction and poor time management.

- Excessive use of social media can also affect mental health and may cause stress, anxiety, loneliness, and low self-confidence.
- Continuous use of smartphones and social media may harm physical health by causing eye strain, headaches, sleep problems, and less physical activity.
- Problems such as cyberbullying, fake news, and privacy risks are also common among college students using social media.
- The effects of social media can be both positive and negative depending on how much and how responsibly it is used.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY:**

- Future research may examine the long-term effects of social media use on the academic performance of college students.
- Further studies can explore the relationship between social media usage and students' mental health, emotional well-being, and stress levels.
- Comparative studies may be conducted between rural and urban college students regarding social media usage patterns and its impact.
- Future researchers can investigate the influence of different social media platforms on students' behaviour and learning habits.
- Further research can analyze the impact of social media addiction on students' physical health, sleep patterns, and lifestyle.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- College students should use online platform carefully and in a balanced way.
- Students should set time limits for social media use so that it doesn't interfere with their academic performance or develop into a habit.
- Social media should be used more for learning, gaining knowledge, and productive activities instead of spending too much time on entertainment.
- Colleges should organize awareness programs to educate students about the safe and healthy use of online media.
- Students should be careful while sharing personal information online in order to protect their privacy and security.
- Students should also take part in physical activities, outdoor games, and direct social interactions to maintain good physical and mental health.
- Before believing or sharing any information on social media, students should check whether the information is true and reliable.
- Counseling and support services should be available for students dealing with stress, cyberbullying, or social media addiction.
- Proper time management and self-control are important for maintaining a healthy balance between studies, social media, and personal life.

**CONCLUSION:** The study indicates that social media affects college students in both favorable and unfavorable ways based on the manner of its use. Proper and balanced use of online media can assist students' education, communication, and overall personal growth, while excessive use may lead to academic difficulties, mental stress, and health-related issues. Therefore, college students should be motivated to use online media in a sensible and productive way while maintaining a balance between their online and real-life activities.

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