The Impact of Social Media usage Among College Students

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ABSTRACT

Students' everyday lives now revolve around social media, which presents both substantial obstacles and a variety of advantages. The study examines social media's dual nature, emphasizing how it affects social behaviour, academic achievement, and mental health in addition to the problems it poses, including addiction, false information, privacy issues, and academic distraction. According to research, social media makes it easier to communicate, obtain learning materials, and express oneself. On the other hand, overuse frequently results in procrastination, diminished academic attention, and elevated anxiety and depression levels. To minimize the negative consequences and optimize the potential advantages of social media,

recommendations highlight the necessity of digital literacy initiatives, balanced usage practices, and institutional support.

In order to solve the difficulties that pupils encounter in the digital age, our research offers parents, educators, and legislators' valuable insights. To improve comprehension and add to previous research, the study makes use of both primary and secondary materials, including research papers, articles, and Google Forms.

Keywords: Digital media, Academic achievement, Mental health, Procrastination, Digital literacy, Privacy issues, Academic distraction.

INTRODUCTION

According to **Y.K. Dwivedi et al. (2021),** billions of people worldwide now use the web, social networks, smartphone applications, and other electronic communication technologies on a daily basis. The term "social media" describes a range of technological tools that help users exchange information and ideas. It has completely changed how people interact, communicate, and obtain information, having a significant impact on many facets of daily life, especially for young adults. Social media use has been seen to have a significant impact on students' lives. Students no longer use traditional learning methods for their education; instead, they choose to use social media for learning and other educational purposes. Students can easily access a variety of up-to-date information via online platforms such as social media. **(Kandpal Sharma Arpita, et.al, 2023)**.

Students are a big demographic that is greatly impacted by the widespread usage of social media because they are digital natives. According to **Pal (2018) (quoted by Kandpal Sharma Arpita et al., 2023)**, there is a need to look into the viability of incorporating social media into the official teaching and learning process because of the sharp rise in the number of people using platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter. These platforms provide a wealth of chances for both academic and personal development, but they also come with special difficulties that may have an impact on students' performance and general well-being.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the complex effects of social networking sites on students, looking at both its benefits and drawbacks.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Hu N, Soh KL, Japa S (2024) identified important trends and patterns of collaboration in order to provide a thorough bibliometric analysis of the effects of social media on college students between 2007 and 2023.

2. Agarwal Disha, Kushwaha Singh Govind, Anand Basu, Mishra Ishita and Sharma Komal (2024) sought to examine how social media affected college students' knowledge of and involvement in social issues. It showed that social media is an effective instrument for raising awareness and promoting civic involvement among college students, indicating that it has the capacity to bring about significant social change.

3. Kandpal Sharma Arpita, Tripathi Gagan, Gupta Vanshika, Rawat Shivani and Tripathi Shubhangi (2023) found that the majority of students (98.11%) at GBPANT University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, not only used social media for entertainment but also for educational purposes. The study focused on how students perceived the use of social media for educational purposes.

4. Kandpal S Arpita, Paragi Annun (2023) intends to examine the features of their profiles and examine usage trends in order to talk about how social media affects young people in both rural and urban areas.

5. Rao Narasimha B, David V, Kalyani V (2022) focuses on certain areas such as health, business, education, society, and youth and discusses all facets of social media, including both its advantages and disadvantages.

Dhanwal Sanyogita et al. (2022) did a study in Haryana and found that students' use 6. of social media was negatively connected with their academic performance and positively connected with age, sex, and field of study.

7. Alghamdi F. (2021) aims to provide an overview of the critical challenges in social media research in the educational field and some current initiatives in addressing them.

8. Iwamoto and Chun (2020) showed that there is a significant likelihood that anxiety and sadness will also arise when social media sources start to cause stress.

9. Anderson Terry (2019) has concentrated on social media's opportunities and problems, and it is expected to keep evolving in the immediate and long term. It ended by looking at some potential remedies.

10. Aalbers et al. (2018) found that people who used social media more passively experienced higher levels of loneliness, melancholy, hopelessness, and feelings of inferiority.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To Analyze the Patterns of social media usage among college students.
2. To examine the impact of social media usage among students.

METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data sources served as the foundation for the study. While secondary data was obtained from a variety of journals, websites, research papers available on Shodhganga, Google Scholar, and other sources, primary data was gathered through convenience sampling from 100 Kumaun University students of 15 to 30 years of age pursuing different types of degrees using a Google Form.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

1. To Analyze the Patterns of social media usage among college students.

Social media has ingrained itself into everyday life, especially for younger people. A sizable portion of active social media users are college students in particular.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

I.   Age

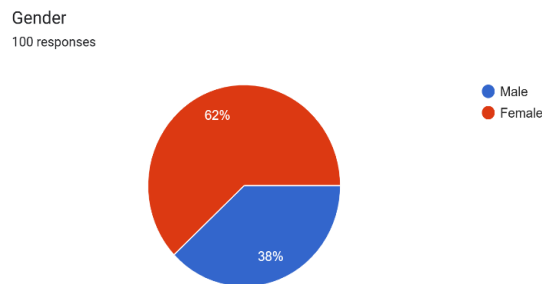| Age Group	Number of Students	Percentage
15 - 20	65	65%
21 - 25	29	29%
26 - 30	6	6%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table. 1

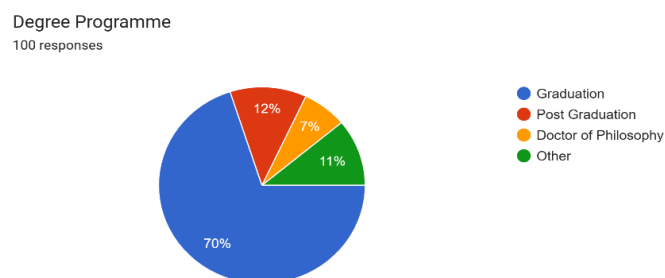The table above shows that the majority of students are between the age group of 15 to 20 with 65% of students.

II.   Gender

The bulk of respondents—62 percent—are men, while 38% are women, as shown in Figure 1.2. below.

Gender
100 responses

Male
Female

62%

38%

Fig 1.2

III.   Degree Programme

Degree Programme
100 responses

Graduation
Post Graduation
Doctor of Philosophy
Other

12%

7%

11%

70%

Fig 1.3

Just 12% of respondents are seeking post-graduate degrees, the second-highest group among the aforementioned degree programs, while 70% of respondents are pursuing graduation degrees from colleges connected to Kumaun University.

IV.   Location

Location
100 responses
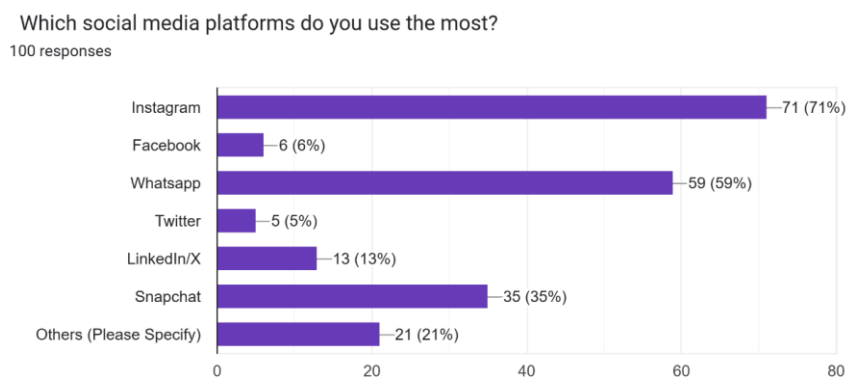
- Rural
- Urban
- Semi-Urban

49%

12%

39%
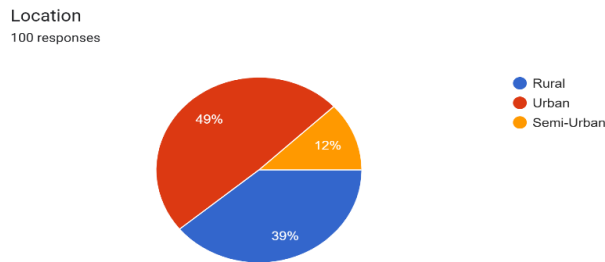
Fig 1.4

39% of respondents are from rural areas, whereas 49% of respondents are from urban areas. Social media usage trends provide information about the social, intellectual, and behavioural aspects of this group.

1. **Usage Patterns**

Popular websites including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp are regularly used by students. Facebook and WhatsApp were the most popular platforms for sharing text messages, images, and videos among students in higher secondary schools, according to a study by **Dhanwal Sanyogita et al. (2022).**

Which social media platforms do you use the most?
100 responses

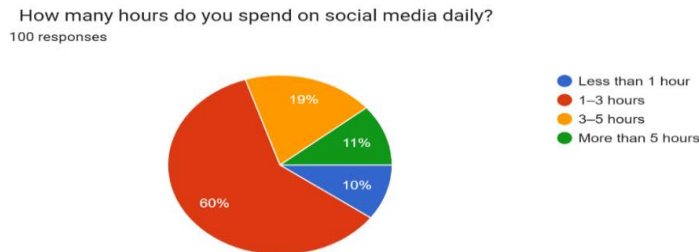| Platform	Count
Instagram	71 (71%)
Facebook	6 (6%)
Whatsapp	59 (59%)
Twitter	5 (5%)
LinkedIn/X	13 (13%)
Snapchat	35 (35%)
Others (Please Specify)	21 (21%)

Fig 1.5

When it comes to sharing their ideas, texts, and accomplishments, the majority of learners chose Instagram (71%) and WhatsApp (59%). People, especially young people, have little privacy these days. Face-to-face contacts have decreased because they simply want to post everything they do on social media.

Characteristics of the usage include:

Time Spent: On average, students use social media for two to five hours per day, with late-night and evening hours seeing the most usage. **Dhanwal Sanyogita et al. (2022)** More than half of the students reported using social media for more than two hours per day, according to the amount of time they spent on it.

How many hours do you spend on social media daily?
100 responses

Less than 1 hour
1–3 hours
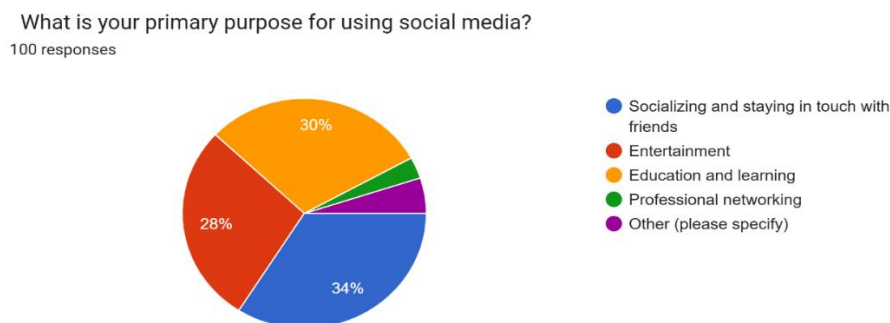3–5 hours
More than 5 hours

Fig 1.6

According to the research, 60% of students, or more than half, spend one to three hours a day on social media.

Consumption of Content: People like visual and video content, and reels, short films, and live streaming are becoming more and more popular.

Engagement Activities: Students actively participate in online challenges and polls, like, share, and discuss.

2. **Purpose of Usage**

Undergraduate students use social media for a variety of reasons, such **as self-expression, communication, entertainment, and learning and research.**

What is your primary purpose for using social media?
100 responses

Socializing and staying in touch with friends
Entertainment
Education and learning
Professional networking
Other (please specify)

Fig 1.7

According to the report, students use social media more for communication and socialization than for learning and instruction. Entertainment-related social media use comes in third, followed by professional networking at 3% and other uses at 5%. Students used social media for a variety of objectives, including blogging, conversing, and finding work, according to a study by **Kandpal Sharma Arpita, Tripathi Gagan, Gupta Vanshika, Rawat Shivani, and Tripathi Shubhangi (2023).** Most students benefit from using social media to increase their knowledge.

83% of students indicated that they utilize social media platforms for academic purposes when asked about their usage patterns when it comes to using them exclusively for education and learning, or for academic purposes. (Fig 1.8)

Do you use social media for academic purposes?
100 responses

- ● Yes
- ● No

83%

17%
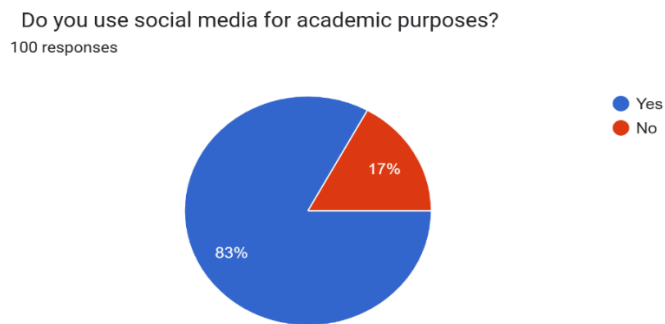
Fig 1.8

Objective 2. To examine the impact of social media usage among students.

Social media has a big impact on college students' life, affecting their social relationships, mental health, and academic achievement. Even while it has many advantages, using it excessively can have drawbacks. To maximize advantages and minimize disadvantages, a well-rounded strategy that incorporates managing time and digital detox is necessary. According to Rao Narasimha B, David V, and Kalyani V (2022), social media has both positive and negative effects on education. The former includes learning, sharing knowledge, and being prepared, while the latter include a decrease in human content, poor grades, time waste, and a lack of desire.

Impacts of Social Media Usage

Social media has many advantages, but using it can often provide difficulties. The benefits and drawbacks of using social media are listed below:

   i)   **POSITIVE IMPACTS:** The extensive usage of social media underscores its importance in contemporary education and student life since it not only provides students with a major source of knowledge but also plays a crucial part in building and sustaining interpersonal relationships **(Hu N, Soh KL, Japa S, 2024).**

The positive aspects are as follows:

✓ **Academic Performance:** Students can exchange information and resources by using social media sites like ResearchGate, LinkedIn, and Facebook academic groups. Learning experiences are improved by online study groups and YouTube tutorials.

How has social media affected your academic performance?
100 responses

- Positively
- Negatively
- No Impact

37%
9%
54%
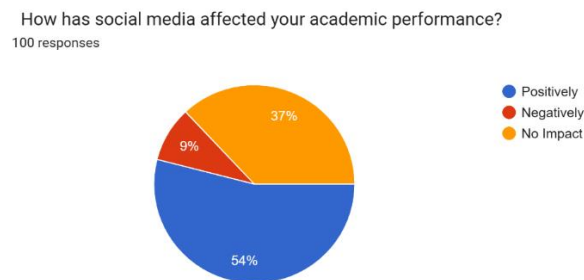
Fig 2.1

According to the majority of pupils, social media has improved their academic achievement. (Fig 2.1)

✓ **Mental Health:** It provides motivational and inspirational information to improve support and morale. It offers techniques for reducing stress and encourages meditation through motivational live sessions and videos. For instance, that of Sandeep Maheshwari, a renowned motivational speaker.
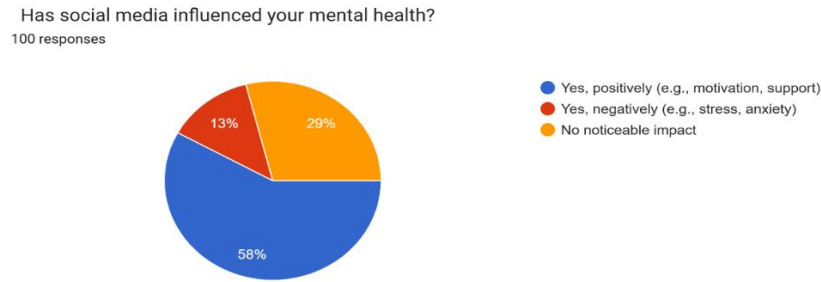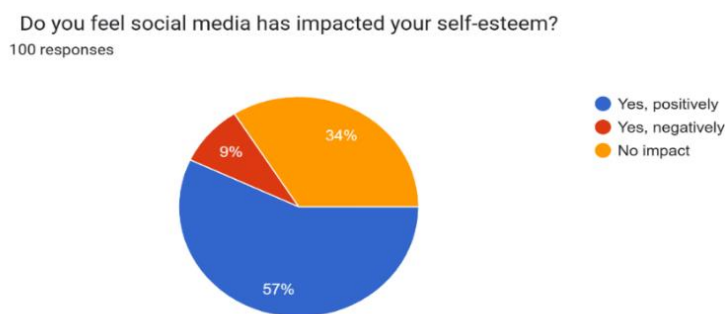
Has social media influenced your mental health?
100 responses

- Yes, positively (e.g., motivation, support)
- Yes, negatively (e.g., stress, anxiety)
- No noticeable impact

13% 29% 58%

Fig 2.2

Do you feel social media has impacted your self-esteem?
100 responses

- Yes, positively
- Yes, negatively
- No impact

9% 34% 57%

Fig 2.3

When used responsibly, social media can also improve mental health and self-esteem, as seen in Figures 2.2 and 2.3. According to **Kandpal Sharma Arpita, Tripathi Gagan, Gupta Vanshika, Rawat Shivani, and Tripathi Shubhangi (2023),** social media networking sites contribute to the improvement of the wellbeing and self-esteem of the majority of students (73.58%).

✓ **Skill Development:** social media also aids in the development of new skills by exposing users to digital marketing, content production, and personal branding. gaining soft skills through online interactions, such as cooperation and communication. According to research by **Kandpal Sharma Arpita, Tripathi Gagan, Gupta Vanshika, Rawat Shivani, and Tripathi Shubhangi (2023),** the majority of pupils agree that social media helps them develop their reading and writing skills.

Has social media helped you in building new skills or gaining knowledge?
100 responses
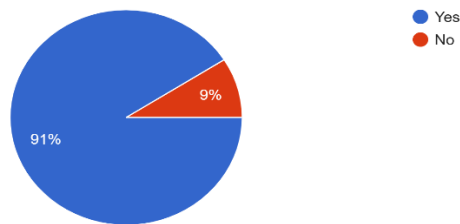
Fig 2.4

According to Figure 2.4, 91% of the students who responded concur that social media is an effective medium for learning new things and developing new skills.

ii) **ADVERSE EFFECTS:** Its widespread influence on young adults' life has created a number of difficulties. Despite the advantages of digital platforms, students deal with serious problems like cyberbullying, academic diversions, and mental health, all of which have an effect on their general wellbeing and academic achievement. It is clear that responsible use is required, particularly during stressful times like tests or political gatherings**.**

What challenges do you face while using social media?
100 responses
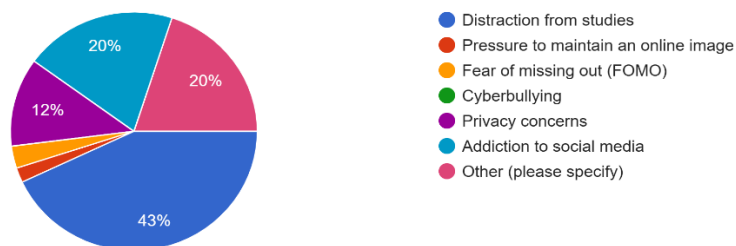
Fig 2.5

The aforementioned graph demonstrates the drawbacks of social media use, with the majority of students (43%) claiming that it diverts them from their studies while just 2% feel pressured to maintain their online persona and 3% experience FOMO.

The drawbacks of using social media are as follows:

✓ **Privacy Concern**

Students who post original works or personal thoughts could be the objects of online harassment, which would deter them from participating further. Furthermore, students who are not aware of privacy settings may unintentionally expose critical information, leaving them open to identity theft or other criminal activity. **Kasturi Kumar Suman, Vardhan Bobby P. (2014)** Even if social media is essential for communication, teamwork, education, and other purposes, it also presents a number of serious problems, such as privacy issues, security risks, deceit, and unclear terms of agreement that could potentially endanger or violate privacy, among other things.

✓ **Academic Distractions and Time Mismanagement**

For undergraduate students, the continual pull of social media updates and interesting information is a major distraction. Numerous students claim that scrolling through Instagram, YouTube, or WhatsApp for hours on end interferes with their ability to concentrate on their academic work. Excessive social media use can promote procrastination, which can result in missed deadlines, less study time, and poorer academic achievement, particularly around test periods when students find it difficult to reconcile their online and academic obligations. According to **Tayo S. Subair, Adebola Temitope Solomon, and Yahya Oreoluwa Deborah's (2019)** research, some participants' daily social media usage led to them delaying their academic assignments in order to spend time on social media, typically as a way to kill time. In their work, **Rao Narasimha B, David V, and Kalyani V (2022)** outlined some of the detrimental impacts, including decreased capacity for learning and research, diminished capacity for creative writing, waste of time, poor academic performance, and a decline in student motivation.

Do you feel social media encourages unhealthy habits, such as procrastination or sleep deprivation?
100 responses

● Yes
● No

38%

62%
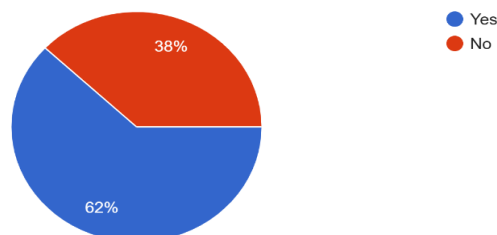
Fig 2.6

Approximately 62% of students concur that social media contributes to bad behaviours like procrastination and sleep deprivation, which reduce learning and comprehension as well as academic performance and generate academic distractions.

Do you find it difficult to balance social media usage with academics and other responsibilities?
100 responses
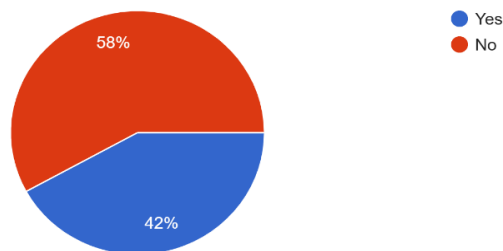
Fig 2.7

According to the pie chart above, 42% of students find it challenging to manage their use of social media with their coursework and other obligations since it causes an extensive amount of distraction.

✓ **Comparison:**

Students frequently compare themselves to others, which breeds jealously and inferiority complexes. Due of the pressure to live up to inflated expectations, social media comparison can lead to anxiety, strain, and even melancholy. Feelings of isolation and discontent with one's own existence might be exacerbated by FOMO. According to **Iwamoto and Chun (2020),** students may be influenced to begin contrasting one another to others or to have extremely irrational judgments about themselves or other people as a result of social media posts, particularly given the growing dependence on social media in daily life. This can have a number of affective repercussions. **(Chen M and Xiao X, 2022)**

How often do you compare yourself to others on social media?
100 responses
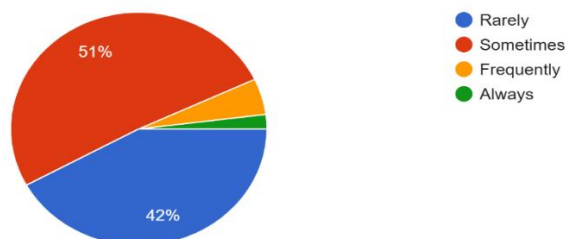
Fig 2.8

As can be seen from the accompanying data, 51% of students compare themselves to others, 5% compare themselves to others regularly, and 2% compare themselves to others constantly.

✓ **Peer Pressure:**

Another issue faced by students is the peer pressure to conform to online trends, challenges, or lifestyles adds to the stress, especially for students trying to fit in or gain social validation.

✓ **Social Exclusion and Over-Reliance**

Ironically, excessive use of social media can result in social isolation even if its purpose is to connect people. Students might value online communication more than in-person contacts, which would lower the calibre of their relationships in the actual world. Their capacity to pursue offline interests, hone interpersonal skills, or create a support system in their local community is further hampered by an over-reliance on social media for amusement or emotional support. According to **Vernon et al. (2017),** higher levels of social media involvement were associated with higher levels of depression among adolescents, which was a result of higher rates of sleep disruption.

Have you ever considered taking a break or detoxing from social media?
100 responses
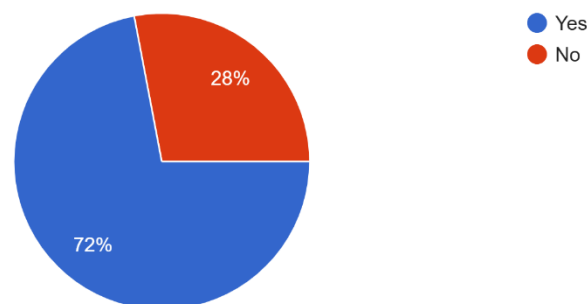
Fig 2.9

Most respondents (72%), said they had considered or tried a social media detox. This implies that a sizable portion of people are aware of the possible drawbacks of social media and sense the need to cut off, at least temporarily, in order to preserve their wellbeing. According to a study by Saxena Alok (2018), each person should assess their own use of social networking sites and how it affects their quality of life before establishing personal boundaries.

CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

The study comes to the conclusion that has both advantages and disadvantages. 83% of students use social networking sites for educational purposes, 54% of students say social media has a good effect on their academic performance, and 91% say it helps them learn new skills. But as they say, "too much of anything is bad." Extreme use of social media can cause distractions; 60% of students use it for one to three hours every day, mostly for socializing, with Instagram being the most popular platform (71%), and 43% citing academic interruptions. This is supported by research by **Tayo S. Subair et al. (2019),** which shows that social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp are mostly utilized for informational, social, and academic purposes, with users spending an average of two to three hours a day on them, which could lead to distraction and social media addiction. This waste of time can impair academic performance by making it more difficult for students to stay on top of their assignments, particularly when tests are coming up. Notwithstanding its benefits, 42% of students find it difficult to balance social media and academics, 43% report being distracted by social media, and 62% report bad habits like procrastination and lack of sleep. These findings imply that, although social media can be beneficial for academics, it can also be difficult to manage time well and maintain a healthy balance between social media and academics. This double effect emphasizes the necessity of using it carefully in order to maximize its advantages and minimize any potential disadvantages.

Furthermore, social media has a darker side, as the saying "the coin has two faces" implies. It facilitates connection, aids in seeking support, creates a sense of community, lessens feelings of loneliness, and, according to a study, has a positive impact on motivation (58%) and self-esteem (57%). However, 51% of students report social comparison stress, which can lead to anxiety and depression. Other issues include privacy, addiction, and FOMO, and the pressure to project a flawless life online can negatively impact one's wellbeing. Sixty-two percent of students concur that social media promotes bad behaviours including procrastination and lack of sleep. According to research by **Hou et al. (2019) and Shams Maham et al. (2022),** social media improves academic performance, but its addictive qualities can cause mental health problems and a decline in problem-solving abilities, which makes students more forgetful and causes them to delay off completing their assignments until the very last minute. Due to the

negative parts of social media, students also believe that they need to take a vacation from it in order to maintain their wellbeing.

In summary, social media is a two-edged sword that can improve learning and personal growth if used carefully. However, over-reliance can be detrimental to one's mental health and academic achievement. To optimize its advantages while reducing its disadvantages, a well-rounded strategy involving moderation and digital literacy is necessary.

SUGGESTIONS:

This suggests that in order to teach students how to use social media responsibly, digital literacy programs are necessary. By holding courses on subjects like computer literacy, privacy, time management, online etiquette, and using social media to further one's career, universities and colleges may play a crucial role. Therefore, encouraging an equitable approach to digital media use is crucial to ensuring that students get the most out of it without sacrificing their academic objectives or general well-being. Students should have access to mental wellness groups and counselling services to help them deal with the emotional difficulties that social media presents. Students' understanding of the possible psychological risks that social media poses to their health may be increased with the aid of counselling programs **(Chen M and Xiao X, 2022).** A good balance can also be achieved by promoting offline pursuits like sports, cultural events, and community involvement.

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