



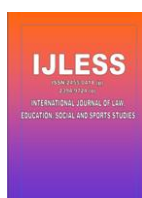
The Effect of Social Media on Life Styles and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become an integral part of daily life, profoundly influencing the lifestyle and academic performance of secondary school students. This paper explores the multifaceted effects of social media, examining its positive and negative impacts on students' academic achievement, social interactions, and personal development. The study discusses the meaning and definition of social media, its characteristics, and its importance in modern education. Additionally, the paper emphasizes the significance of responsible social media use, identifies key educational implications, and provides actionable recommendations for stakeholders, including educators, parents, and policymakers. The findings underscore the need for balanced and mindful engagement with social media to optimize its benefits while mitigating its potential drawbacks.

Keywords: Social Media, Academic Achievement, Lifestyle, Secondary School Students, Education, Digital Literacy.

Introduction

Social media platforms have transformed communication by opening up new channels for conversation and information exchange. Social media can be both a resource and a distraction for secondary school kids, impacting their academic performance, time management, and lifestyle choices. Social media can facilitate collaborative learning and provide access to educational content, according to certain research, but it can also have negative impacts including short attention spans and a high incidence of cyberbullying (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This essay seeks to present a thorough examination of social media's impact on secondary school pupils, emphasising how it shapes both their academic and personal lives.

Meaning of Social Media

Social media refers to digital platforms that facilitate the creation, sharing, and exchange of information, ideas, and content among users. These platforms include social networking sites (e.g., Facebook,

Instagram), microblogging services (e.g., Twitter), video-sharing platforms (e.g., YouTube, TikTok), and collaborative tools (e.g., Google Docs, Slack).

Definition of Social Media

- **Kaplan and Haenlein (2010)** define social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content."
- **According to Boyd and Ellison (2007)**, social media consists of web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system and articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection.
- **Merriam-Webster defines social media as** "forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content."
- **Oxford Languages describes social media as** "websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking."

Characteristics of Social Media

1. Interactivity

One of the characteristics that sets social media platforms apart is their interactivity. Through comments, likes, shares, or real-time reactions, it enables two-way conversation between users. Social media becomes a dynamic and participatory arena as a result of this engagement, rather than merely a medium for the distribution of information. Users can submit information on Facebook and Twitter, for instance, and get instant feedback in the form of comments, shares, and likes. This encourages in-the-moment communication, increasing user engagement and a sense of community. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media platforms facilitate collaboration by enabling users to engage in a variety of ways, including chat groups, live streaming, and direct messaging. This encourages active engagement and adds to a more customised experience.

2. Accessibility

People may stay connected almost anywhere, at any time, thanks to social media platforms' ease of use on a range of devices, including smartphones, tablets, laptops, and desktop computers. Millions of people rely on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to keep informed, entertained, and connected, which has led to social media's widespread use and global reach. The widespread adoption of flexible web designs and mobile applications guarantees that these platforms are user-friendly and straightforward for people of all ages. Accessibility is essential to social media's growth because it enables users of various backgrounds to engage in online communities and access content whenever it's convenient for them (Sterne, 2010).

3. User-Generated Content

The emphasis on user-generated content (UGC) is among social media's most innovative features. Social media makes it possible for anybody to develop, share, and distribute material, in contrast to traditional media, which is usually created by a small number of powerful organisations. People may now communicate their thoughts, skills, and creativity in a way that was before impossible because to the democratisation of content creation. User-generated content, such as blogs, podcasts, videos, and images, is what makes platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok so successful. This increases the diversity of information and the range of voices being heard by encouraging creativity and giving people the ability to express their own viewpoints (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

4. Networking

Networking is another key characteristic of social media. Relationship building and maintenance are made easier by platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, which enable users to connect with friends, family, coworkers, and others who have similar interests. These relationships may be professional or personal. Social media has actually emerged as a vital instrument for professional networking, allowing people to increase their visibility and impact. For instance, LinkedIn is widely used for job searches and career advancement, but Facebook and Instagram support community building and the maintenance of personal relationships. According to Ellison et al. (2007), networking also includes the establishment of online communities where members can work together, exchange resources, and offer support to one another on a range of topics, from activism to professional growth.

5. Global Reach

Social media has a global reach, facilitating connection between people worldwide and dismantling geographical obstacles. Users can share content with a worldwide audience via social media sites like Instagram and Twitter, facilitating the spread of knowledge. Due to its worldwide accessibility, social media has also been instrumental in fostering cross-cultural dialogue and global awareness. For instance, YouTube gives content producers access to millions of viewers globally, enabling people from other nations to discover one another's customs and life experiences. Due to its ability to facilitate cross-border collaboration, knowledge sharing, and social change mobilisation, this connectedness has had a significant impact on global business, education, and social movements (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

6. Integration

In order to provide a smooth user experience across various platforms, social media platforms frequently interact with other digital tools and technology. For instance, users can utilise social media to log into different apps or link their Facebook or Instagram accounts to e-commerce websites. Both the professional and educational spheres are affected by this integration. In the workplace, for example, social media platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter are often used to communicate industry news, while platforms like Google Docs or Zoom complement social media's function in promoting virtual collaboration and communication. Social media is an essential component of contemporary digital ecosystems because of its capacity to integrate with other tools, which increases its usefulness. (Sterne, 2010).

Importance of Social Media in Modern Education

1. Information Access

Social networking sites offer immediate access to a wealth of information, which makes them useful tools for both teachers and students. Students may keep up with the most recent research discoveries, industry news, and academic trends on sites like Reddit, LinkedIn, and Twitter, which act as real-time knowledge exchange centres. Social media provides informal learning in addition to academic resources by enabling users to engage in online discussions, join educational forums, and interact with subject matter experts (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Students' access to knowledge that may not be easily accessible through conventional educational channels is expanded, and the learning process is improved by this quick access to information.

2. Collaboration

Social media promotes teamwork, which is crucial in today's classroom. Social media is integrated with tools like Google Workspace, Slack, and Microsoft Teams to give students a platform to collaborate on projects, exchange ideas, and improve communication. Peer-to-peer learning is promoted via these platforms, which let students share ideas, work through issues together, and gain knowledge from one another's experiences. Beyond the classroom, collaboration fosters global learning and a diversity of

viewpoints by enabling students from other institutions or even nations to collaborate on projects (Rheingold, 2012).

3. Skill Development

Students can improve vital abilities including communication, critical thinking, and digital literacy by utilising social media. Students can hone these abilities in a useful, real-world setting by interacting with various kinds of content, taking part in online forums, and producing their own content. Furthermore, in today's digital workforce, having the capacity to interact successfully online and comprehend digital platforms is becoming more and more crucial. Students can hone these abilities in a non-formal, informal learning setting by using social media (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

4. Global Perspective

Social media's capacity to link pupils with individuals from various geographic and cultural backgrounds is among its most significant educational advantages. Students can learn from classmates in other countries thanks to platforms like Twitter, Zoom, and WhatsApp that promote global connection and collaboration. Students gain a more comprehensive worldview, promote inclusivity, and increase their global consciousness as a result of being exposed to a variety of cultures and viewpoints. Students now have the chance to interact with a global network of learners through the growing prevalence of virtual exchange programs and international online conferences (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

5. Engagement

Social media makes learning more collaborative and dynamic, which increases student engagement. Videos, podcasts, infographics, and live-streamed events are examples of multimedia content that can be included into educational environments to accommodate various learning styles. While interactive features like polls, quizzes, and live debates on platforms like Instagram and Twitter keep students interested and motivated, platforms like YouTube and TikTok give teachers innovative methods to convey content. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media's capacity to combine education and fun keeps students' attention and promotes active engagement.

6. Innovation

Social media encourages new approaches and strategies, which promotes innovation in teaching and learning. With sites like Kahoot and Quizlet providing entertaining and engaging ways to get students interested in academic material, gamification, for instance, has gained popularity. Another effective teaching technology that has gained popularity is the virtual classroom, which allows students to communicate with peers and teachers in real time from any location. These cutting-edge teaching strategies not only increase student engagement but also get them ready for the quickly changing digital environment of the workplace (Stewart, 2014).

Significance of Social Media for Secondary School Students

1. Enhanced Learning Opportunities:

Students can access educational videos and tutorials on social media sites like YouTube and Khan Academy, which enhance traditional classroom training. Students may review lessons, get ready for tests, and learn at their own pace with the help of these resources. For instance, there are a lot of educational channels on YouTube that provide content in areas like physics and maths, allowing kids to learn more about difficult subjects after school (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The availability of extra learning resources aids in knowledge consolidation and offers other perspectives on ideas that might not be fully grasped in class.

2. Social Connectivity:

For secondary school students, instructors, and family members to stay in touch, social media is essential. Social networking platforms, video conferencing, and messaging services provide regular communication and involvement. Especially in distant learning settings, these platforms assist students in maintaining relationships with their teachers and peers. Students' mental well-being is increased by preserving these relationships because they allow them to talk about both personal and academic difficulties, creating a positive learning environment (Ellison et al., 2007). Additionally, online forums and group chats facilitate collaborative learning, enabling students to exchange ideas, work through issues, and study for tests with one another.

3. Personal Development:

Students can share their thoughts through blogs, vlogs, and other content creation platforms thanks to social media, which promotes creativity and self-expression. Students can produce and share creative material on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, which helps them build their identities and confidence. Students can demonstrate their talents, discover new interests, and interact with a global audience through these activities. These artistic endeavours contribute to their personal growth by encouraging self-reliance and elevating self-worth (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

4. Awareness:

Students are kept up to date on current affairs, international concerns, and societal difficulties using social media. Real-time news outlets that offer updates on social, political, and environmental topics include Twitter and Instagram. Students benefit from this steady stream of knowledge by understanding different viewpoints and being more conscious of the world around them. Students are encouraged to think critically about global issues and develop their own ideas by, for instance, following news coverage and taking part in conversations surrounding significant events like parliamentary elections or rallies against climate change (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

5. Career Preparation:

Social networking provides useful tools for developing skills and exploring job options. Students can interact with professionals, learn about various businesses, and investigate possible career routes using platforms such as LinkedIn. Students can follow businesses on LinkedIn, join groups for professionals, and even communicate with mentors who can help them advance their careers. Students can better comprehend the abilities needed in different industries and make well-informed judgements about their future jobs because to this access to industry-specific materials and professional networks (Ellison et al., 2007).

Educational Implications

1. Integrating Social Media in Curriculum:

Social media platforms can be used by educational institutions for a variety of learning activities, including group projects, online field trips, and interactive classes. By incorporating these platforms into the curriculum, educational institutions may boost student involvement and develop practical uses for knowledge. Teachers may, for instance, give group assignments that call for students to communicate with one another or do research via social media. This promotes group learning and fosters the development of critical abilities including digital communication and teamwork (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

2. Promoting Digital Literacy:

Teachers must teach students how to use social media in an ethical and responsible manner in order to highlight the value of digital literacy. Cyberbullying, privacy, and the value of critically assessing

material found online should all be taught to students. Given the abundance of content on social media, students need to develop the ability to discern between trustworthy and untrustworthy sources in order to become more astute information consumers (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). Students who receive instruction on social media etiquette are also guaranteed to comprehend the possible repercussions of exaggerating personal details and participating in online disputes.

3. Monitoring Usage:

Parents and educators must help students strike a balance between screen time and academic obligations. By ensuring that kids use social media in moderation, monitoring tools and parental restrictions can assist avoid distractions that could impair academic performance. By establishing rules for proper use, parents and teachers can assist students in forming positive digital habits. Students' academic performance can be enhanced and the dangers of excessive screen time can be decreased by striking a balance between social media and study time (Sterne, 2010).

4. Encouraging Critical Thinking:

Students need to be taught to critically assess the vast amount of material they come across on social media. Students should be encouraged by their teachers to evaluate the reliability of internet sources, evaluate arguments, and distinguish between opinion and fact. These critical thinking abilities are crucial for making wise decisions in daily life as well as for scholarly research. For students to grow into knowledgeable digital citizens, it is essential to encourage them to challenge the reliability of information they find online and to stay out of echo chambers (Pariser, 2011).

Conclusion

Secondary school students' lifestyles and academic performance are significantly impacted by social media, which presents both opportunities and difficulties. Although technology facilitates connectivity and improves access to information, excessive or careless use can impair both academic performance and personal wellbeing. Together, educators, parents, and legislators must foster a culture that encourages social media use in moderation and gives children the tools they need to maximise its positive effects while reducing its negative ones. Society can guarantee that social media becomes a driving force for constructive change in education by encouraging ethical behaviour and digital literacy.

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