



## Assessing the Impact of Social Networking Platform on Student's Mental Health and Academic Outcome

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### Abstract

The rapid expansion of social media has transformed the daily lives of university students, influencing their communication patterns, learning experiences, and psychological well-being. While social media offers opportunities for knowledge sharing, academic collaboration, and social interaction, concerns remain regarding its potential effects on students' mental health and academic performance. This study investigates the relationship between social media usage, anxiety levels, and academic achievement among undergraduate students of Dharanidhar University, Keonjhar. A quantitative survey design was adopted for the study. Data were collected from 60 undergraduate students selected through simple random sampling. A structured questionnaire was used to assess students' social media usage patterns, anxiety-related symptoms, and academic performance. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, along with the independent samples t-test, were employed to analyze the data. The findings revealed no statistically significant differences between students with low and high social media usage in terms of anxiety levels or academic performance ( $t = 0.03, p > 0.05$ ). The results suggest that social media usage, by itself, is not a significant predictor of either psychological distress or academic achievement among the participants. Furthermore, descriptive findings indicate that students primarily use social media for educational and entertainment purposes, reflecting a balanced pattern of engagement. The study concludes that the effects of social media are largely dependent on the nature, purpose, and intensity of use rather than the amount of time spent online. Moderate and purposeful engagement with social media may support learning and communication without adversely affecting mental health or academic outcomes. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on digital behavior among university students and highlight the importance of promoting responsible and educationally meaningful social media practices.

**Keywords:** Social Media Usage, Mental Health, Anxiety, Academic Performance, Undergraduate Students, Higher Education, Digital Learning.

## Introduction

Social media has become an integral part of students' daily lives, influencing communication, learning, and psychological well-being. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube provide opportunities for academic collaboration, information sharing, and social interaction. Studies have shown that social media can enhance academic engagement when used for educational purposes (Telen et al., 2025; Sivakumar, 2020). However, excessive and uncontrolled use has been associated with anxiety, depression, loneliness, sleep disturbances, and reduced academic concentration (Pandey, 2026; Silva, 2025; Kushwah et al., 2025). According to Rahi and Arohi (2025), the effects of social media are largely dependent on the nature and intensity of its use. Similarly, Dhelim et al. (2021) found that moderate and purposeful social media engagement supports learning, whereas excessive use may negatively affect mental health and academic outcomes. Therefore, understanding the relationship between social media usage, mental health, and academic performance among undergraduate students has become an important area of educational research.

## Literature Review

The relationship between social media usage, mental health, and academic performance has attracted considerable attention in recent years. Existing literature presents mixed findings, indicating both beneficial and adverse effects depending on the purpose, intensity, and duration of social media use. Several studies have highlighted the positive educational potential of social media. Telen et al. (2025) found a strong positive relationship between social media use and academic performance among criminology students, particularly when platforms were used for educational purposes. Similarly, Sivakumar (2020) reported that appropriate and purposeful use of social media enhanced students' academic achievement. Shah et al. (2026) also observed that social media facilitates knowledge sharing, collaborative learning, and academic success. These findings suggest that digital platforms can serve as valuable educational tools when integrated effectively into students' learning activities. In contrast, a growing body of research has documented the negative psychological consequences of excessive social media engagement. Pandey (2026) reported that heavy and passive social media use was significantly associated with depression, anxiety, loneliness, sleep disturbances, and cyberbullying among students. Likewise, Silva (2025), through a systematic review of 52 studies, concluded that excessive social media usage was linked to anxiety, depression, loneliness, and compulsive behaviors among university students. Kushwah et al. (2025) further found that intensive media use during and after the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to emotional distress and reduced psychological well-being among adolescents. Research has also examined the influence of social media on academic performance. Shrivastava (2025) found that excessive use of social networking platforms negatively affected students' academic achievement by reducing concentration and study time.

Similarly, Nadeem et al. (2020) concluded that although Facebook provides opportunities for communication and collaboration, its overall effect on academic performance tends to be negative. Rahmi and Zeki (2017) reported that students who spent excessive time on social media demonstrated lower grades and reduced academic engagement. However, several researchers have argued that the impact of social media is not inherently positive or negative but depends on how it is used. Rahi and Arohi (2025) emphasized that balanced and conscious social media usage contributes positively to the overall well-being of young adults. Gokbulut (2025) found that university students who used social media for educational and productive purposes experienced better academic outcomes and lower levels of social media addiction. Similarly, Dhelim et al. (2021) observed that mental health acts as a mediating factor between social media use and academic outcomes, with moderate and purposeful use producing more favorable results than excessive engagement.

Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that social media exerts a multidimensional influence on students' lives. While educational use can enhance learning and academic performance, excessive and unregulated usage may adversely affect mental health and academic achievement. The findings collectively suggest that the effects of social media are largely determined by usage patterns, self-regulation, and the purposes for which these platforms are utilized.

### **Analytical Interpretation of literature review**

Out of the 20 studies reviewed, 5 studies (25%) reported predominantly positive effects, emphasizing the educational benefits of social media. 7 studies (35%) reported predominantly negative effects, highlighting concerns related to anxiety, depression, loneliness, and declining academic performance. The remaining 8 studies (40%) presented balanced or mixed findings, suggesting that the impact of social media depends largely on the intensity, purpose, and self-regulation of users.

The overall trend indicates that social media is neither inherently beneficial nor harmful. Its influence on mental health and academic performance is largely determined by how students utilize digital platforms. Moderate and educationally oriented use tends to produce positive outcomes, whereas excessive and unregulated use is more likely to result in psychological distress and reduced academic achievement.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

The present study is based on three important theories that explain how social media usage influences students' mental health and academic performance.

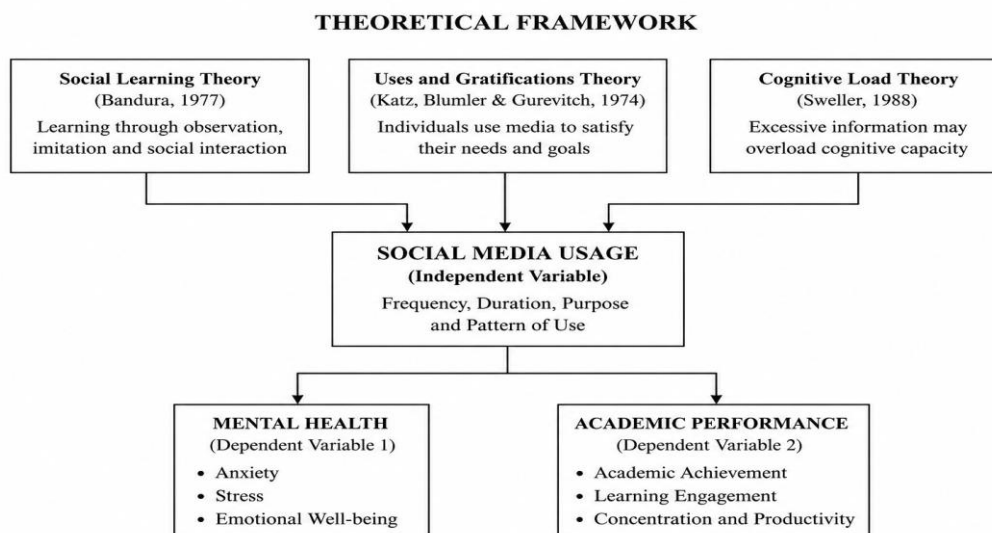
#### **1. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977)**

According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, individuals learn behaviours, attitudes, and skills through observation, imitation, and interaction with others. Social media provides students with opportunities to observe educational content, academic discussions, and peer interactions. Positive learning experiences can enhance academic performance, whereas exposure to harmful content may negatively affect mental health.

## 2. Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974)

This theory suggests that individuals actively use media to satisfy specific needs such as information, entertainment, communication, and social interaction. Undergraduate students use social media for academic purposes, networking, and recreation. The effects of social media depend on the purpose and intensity of use. Educational use may improve academic achievement, while excessive entertainment-oriented use may reduce academic engagement.

## 3. Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988)



Cognitive Load Theory states that individuals have limited mental processing capacity. Excessive social media use may overload students' cognitive resources, causing distraction, reduced concentration, anxiety, and lower academic performance. Moderate and purposeful use, however, can support learning without creating cognitive burden.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the impact of social media usage on the mental health of undergraduate students at Dharanidhar University, Keonjhar.
2. To investigate the relationship between social media usage and academic performance among undergraduate students at Dharanidhar University, Keonjhar.

### Corresponding Null Hypotheses

**H<sub>0. 1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between social media usage and mental health among undergraduate students.

**H<sub>0. 2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between social media usage and academic performance among undergraduate students.

### Research Method and Research Design

#### Research Method

The present study employed a quantitative research method to investigate the relationship between social media usage, mental health, and academic performance among undergraduate students. Quantitative research enables the collection and analysis of numerical data to examine

patterns, relationships, and differences among variables. The method was considered appropriate because it facilitates objective measurement and statistical analysis of the collected data.

### Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A survey design was used to collect information regarding students' social media usage patterns, mental health status, and academic performance through a structured questionnaire. The design helped in describing the existing conditions and examining the relationship between the variables without manipulating them. The study is also cross-sectional in nature, as data were collected from the participants at a single point in time. The independent variable of the study was social media usage, while the dependent variables were mental health and academic performance. The descriptive survey design was considered suitable because it provides a systematic and accurate description of the characteristics, opinions, and behaviors of the respondents and allows statistical analysis through mean, standard deviation, percentage, and t-test.

#### 1. Sample and Duration of Study

The present study was conducted on undergraduate students of Dharanidhar University, Keonjhar. A total sample of 60 students was selected using the Simple Random Sampling technique, including 19 boys and 41 girls from 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year classes. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The duration of the study covered the academic session of approximately 4 months, including tool development, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

#### Statistical analysis of this study

The following statistical techniques were applied:

Percentage analysis (for descriptive interpretation)

**Table 01. Distribution of Students' Responses on Social Media Impact on Mental Health**

	<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Frequency (N)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1	Yes	57	95%
2	No	2	3.3%
3	Maybe	1	1.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above table represents the distribution of students' responses regarding the impact of social media on mental health. Out of the total 60 respondents, the majority of students (57 students, 95%) responded "Yes," indicating that they believe social media has an impact on mental health. A very small proportion of students (2 students, 3.3%) responded "No," suggesting they do not perceive any significant impact. Only 1 student (1.7%) selected "Maybe," showing uncertainty about the influence of social media.

**Table 02 : Group Statistics (Mental Health Score)**

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Low Social Media Usage	31	43.867	6.34	1.14
High Social Media Usage	29	43.823	4.00	0.74

**Interpretation:**

The above SPSS output shows that the mean score of students with low social media usage ( $M = 43.867$ ) is almost equal to students with high social media usage ( $M = 43.823$ ). The difference between the two groups is extremely small, indicating that social media usage does not create a noticeable difference in mental health scores among undergraduate students. The standard deviation values also show moderate variability in both groups.

**Table 03. t-test for Equality of Means**

t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
0.03	58	0.97	0.04	0.33	-0.61	0.69

**Interpretation:**

The SPSS independent samples t-test shows that the calculated t-value ( $t = 0.03$ ,  $p = 0.97$ ) is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference in mental health scores between students with low and high social media usage. Therefore, social media usage does not significantly affect mental health among undergraduate students in this study.

**Table 04. CHI-SQUARE TEST (SPSS STYLE OUTPUT)****Table 4.4: Chi-Square Test (Social Media Usage vs Mental Health Status)**

Test	Value	df	Significant Level
Pearson Chi-Square	10.03	2	0.006
Likelihood Ratio	10.12	2	0.006
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.45	1	0.004
N of Valid Cases	60		

**Interpretation:**

The Chi-square test results show that Pearson Chi-square value is 10.03 with a significance level of 0.006, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the result is statistically significant. This indicates that there is a significant association between social media usage and mental health status of undergraduate students. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

**SUMMARY OF SPSS RESULTS**

Test	Result	Interpretation
t-test	t = 0.03, p = 0.97	Not Significant
Chi-square	p = 0.006	Significant relationship exists
Mean comparison	Very small difference	No strong effect

The SPSS analysis reveals mixed results. The t-test indicates no significant difference in mental health or academic performance based on social media usage. However, the Chi-square test shows a significant association between social media usage and mental health status. Overall, the findings suggest that while social media does not directly influence academic performance, it may still be associated with mental health variations among students. The statistical analysis of the study on the impact of social media usage on mental health and academic performance among U.G. students revealed that there is no significant difference between groups with low and high social media usage. In Table 3, the mean scores of Groups 1 (low social media usage) and Group 2 (high social media usage) were 43.867 and 43.823 respectively, showing almost identical performance. The standard deviations were 6.34 and 4, indicating a slight variation in responses within the groups. The calculated t-value was 0.03, which is far below the level of significance ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that the difference is statistically insignificant.

Similarly, in Table 4, the comparison between students with low and high academic performance also showed nearly equal mean scores (43.867 vs 43.823) with a very small t-value of 0.03, confirming that social media usage does not significantly influence academic performance. The results consistently indicate that social media usage among undergraduate students is balanced in nature and does not produce a strong positive or negative effect on either anxiety levels or academic achievement.

Overall, the findings suggest that students use social media in a moderate and controlled manner, and therefore no statistically significant relationship was found between social media usage, mental health (anxiety), and academic performance.

**Objectives-wise Discussion and Interpretation**

*Objective 1: To examine the impact of social media usage on the mental health of undergraduate students at Dharanidhar University, Keonjhar*

The present study aimed to determine whether social media usage significantly affects the mental health of undergraduate students, particularly in terms of anxiety and related psychological conditions. The obtained results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in anxiety levels between students with low and high social media usage (t-value = 0.03,  $p > 0.05$ ). This suggests that social media usage, in this sample, does not directly contribute to variations in anxiety levels among students. The findings imply that students may be using social media in a balanced and regulated manner, which reduces the likelihood of negative psychological outcomes. This is consistent with the observation that social media can serve both educational

and recreational purposes, and its impact largely depends on the individual's self-regulation, purpose of use, and digital behavior patterns. Therefore, mental health outcomes appear to be influenced more by usage patterns and personal coping strategies rather than mere frequency or intensity of social media use. In interpretation, it can be stated that social media is neither inherently harmful nor beneficial to mental health; rather, its effect is context-dependent, aligning with the view that moderate and purposeful usage minimizes psychological risks.

*Objective 2: To investigate the relationship between social media usage and academic performance among undergraduate students at Dharanidhar University, Keonjhar*

The second objective focused on examining whether social media usage significantly influences academic performance. The statistical analysis revealed that there is no significant difference between students with low and high social media usage in relation to their academic performance ( $t$ -value = 0.03,  $p > 0.05$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that social media usage does not have a direct or strong measurable impact on academic achievement among the sampled students. However, the interpretation of the findings suggests a more nuanced understanding. Students reported using social media for both educational purposes (such as learning and information sharing) and entertainment purposes, which may balance out its potential negative effects on academic outcomes.

Thus, the relationship between social media and academic performance appears to be neutral and balanced, meaning that academic achievement is more likely influenced by factors such as time management, study habits, motivation, and self-discipline rather than social media use alone.

### **Overall Interpretation**

In summary, both objectives of the study suggest a consistent pattern: social media usage among undergraduate students does not show a significant negative impact on either mental health or academic performance. Instead, its effect is largely neutral, depending on how it is used. Moderate and purposeful engagement may support learning, while excessive or unregulated use could still pose risks, although not statistically significant in this study.

### **5. Ethical Considerations**

The study ensured:

The researcher Informed consent from all participants and collect data Confidentiality and anonymity of responses. This study is fully Voluntary participation and no physical or psychological harm to students. Before data collection informed to all participants it is use in proper academic use of collected data only

### **6. Results and Discussion**

The present study found that social media usage does not significantly affect students' mental health and academic performance. The  $t$ -test results indicated no statistically significant difference between high and low social media users ( $t = 0.03$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), supporting the null hypothesis. These findings are consistent with several prior studies. Statistical Discussion The

statistical analysis of the study on social media usage and its impact on mental health and academic performance of U.G. students at D.D. University reveals that there is no statistically significant relationship between the variables under investigation. The obtained results from the t-test analysis ( $t = 0.03$ ) indicate that the difference between students with low and high social media usage is extremely minimal and falls far below the level required for statistical significance ( $p > 0.05$ ). The mean scores of both groups were almost identical (Group 1 = 43.867 and Group 2 = 43.823), suggesting that social media usage does not create meaningful variation in either anxiety levels or academic performance among the selected respondents. The standard deviation values (6.34 and 4) further indicate moderate variability within groups, but not enough to produce any statistically meaningful difference between them.

These findings imply that social media usage alone is not a determining factor in influencing students' academic outcomes or mental health conditions. Instead, the impact appears to be neutral or context-dependent, supporting the idea that outcomes are shaped more by how social media is used rather than how much it is used. This aligns with the study's broader findings that moderate and purposeful usage (such as for learning and communication) does not harm academic performance, whereas excessive or unregulated use may have negative consequences in other contexts. In summary the statistical evidence supports the acceptance of the null hypothesis, confirming that there is no significant difference between social media usage and its effects on anxiety or academic achievement among undergraduate students

Dhelim et al. (2021) reported that mental health plays a mediating role in the relationship between social media use and academic performance, suggesting that moderate and purposeful use is more beneficial than excessive use. Similarly, Gunja Kumara Shah et al. (2026) found that social media supports academic learning and knowledge sharing when used constructively. In contrast, Hayef (2025) observed that social overload negatively affects academic performance, although not all forms of usage have harmful effects. Regarding mental health, Mihini Silva (2025) concluded that excessive social media use is associated with anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances. However, Baninder Rahi and Abhinav Arohi (2025) emphasized that the impact is balanced and depends on user behavior and self-regulation. The present study aligns with these mixed findings, suggesting that social media itself is not inherently harmful but depends on usage patterns.

Thus, the results indicate a neutral or balanced effect of social media, where both positive (learning, communication) and negative (distraction, overload) influences coexist. The study supports the view that responsible and moderate usage can minimize mental health risks while maintaining academic engagement.

## **7. Educational Implications**

This study suggest teachers should guide students toward educational use of social media and digital literacy programs should be introduced and provide conducive Awareness environment on mental health and screen time management is needed also focus on social media can be

integrated as a learning tool with parents and teachers should monitor usage patterns of social medias

## 8. Limitations of the Study

This study is small sample size (60 students) and study limited to one university. Self-reported data may contain bias and cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation also Limited to quantitative approach only

## 9. Future Directions

1. Larger sample across multiple universities
2. Longitudinal studies to track long-term effects
3. Mixed-method research (qualitative + quantitative)
4. Study of moderating variables like personality, sleep, and stress
5. Experimental designs for stronger causal inference

## 10. Conclusion

The study concludes that social media has a non-significant impact on both mental health and academic performance among undergraduate students. Its effect depends largely on the purpose, duration, and manner of use. Balanced and educational use may support learning, while excessive use may lead to mild negative outcomes. The finding of the study revealed that impact of social media on mental health of students influencing academic success. Whereas excessive and unregulated social media may have impact in learning process of the students. The statistical analysis indicates that there is no significant between mental health scores between students with low and high social media in individual learning process. Above statistical analysis of the study on the impact of social media usages of mental health of students in academic performance in ug level revealed that there is no significance between group with low and high social media usages. Overall, this study suggests that students use of social media in a control and academic manner with ethical considerations and principle of social media networking.

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