

A Study on the Impact of Social Media Usage on Academic Performance among College Students

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ABSTRACT

The use of social media influences a lot in the lives of college students, their study, communication and learning patterns. This paper has analyzed the effects of using social media on the academic performance of college students. Our research design was a quantitative cross-sectional study and a structured questionnaire that we distributed via Google Forms. The study involved a total of 100 undergraduate and postgraduate students of between the ages of 18 to 25 years, in the convenience sampling. We have examined the data with the help of descriptive statistics, such as frequency and percentage, and the examination of patterns of its usage and its impact on the academic sphere. The findings revealed that 96 percent of students engaged in social media where WhatsApp (82 percent), YouTube (76 percent), and Instagram (68 percent) were the most common media. The majority of students (60) said that they devoted more than three hours a day on social media, but the use of social media during late nights was most prevalent (40%). The students have mainly relied on social media as a source of entertainment (74%), communication (61%), and education (32%). The results showed a positive and negative impact on academic performance. Most students thought that social media can enhance knowledge (71%), aid academic activities such as assignments (62%), and enhance communication with peers (76%). Nonetheless, the overuse resulted in academic difficulties, including the distractions (59 per cent), a reduced time to study (66 per cent), poor concentration (61 per cent), and the overall negative effect on academic performance (54 per cent). The paper concludes that there is a dual impact of social media on academic performance. It can be used wisely as a learning, collaboration, and engagement tool. Non-academic and excessive use may however lead to distraction, lack of concentration and low productivity among academics. Thus, the balanced and responsible use of social media should be encouraged to ensure that the social media can have the greatest benefits and minimal harm. The findings provided can be useful to teachers, policymakers, and learners in the development of effective measures of utilizing social media in academics.

Keywords: Social media, Academic performance, College students, Social media usage, Educational technology, Student learning, Academic engagement, Distraction.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Besides academic and psychological factors, social media has altered the development of academic identities and learning spaces of students. The digital world has broken the barriers of classroom learning. The social media sites have enabled the formation of virtual learning communities where students are able to share notes, discuss

assignments, clarify doubts and even share academic resources in real time. (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Tess, 2013). Such interactive environments tend to encourage mutual learning, collaboration to find solutions and exchange of knowledge. This can be used to achieve improved academic outcomes. (Manca & Ranieri, 2016; Rahmi & Zeki, 2017).

Multimedia content can be utilized on the social media platform such as educational videos, infographics, live sessions and discussion forums among others, and this provides numerous learning opportunities, which can be tailored to various learning styles. As an example, auditory and visual learners can get access to recorded lectures and instructional videos. Reflective learners may, in the meantime, be more actively involved with the help of platforms based on discussion. Exposure to various learning materials can enhance perception, memorization, and the general academic participation of college students. (Junco, 2015; Boateng & Amankwaa, 2016). Moreover, social media facilitates fast communication between teachers and students. Social networking platforms have been known to be used by many instructors to provide course materials, updates, and feedback. Such accessibility is able to enhance academic support systems and develop a sense of belongingness within the academic community (Dabbagh and Kitsantas, 2012; Sobaih et al., 2016). In cases where students feel related and encouraged, the motivation and involvement tend to increase. This has a positive impact on their academic performance (Kuh, 2009; Tinto, 2017). Nevertheless, in spite of such possible advantages, the uncontrollable and overuse of social media is a cause of serious concerns. Time displacement is one of the greatest problems that are linked to the use of social media among college students. Studying, reading, or doing assignments may be substituted with a visit to the social networking site or other non-academic activities (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010; Jacobsen and Forste, 2011). This shift in the time usage can directly reduce academic productivity and achievement (Rosen et al., 2013). The other factor is the impact of multitasking behavior, which is a result of the use of social media on students. Students tend to alternate between school and social media notifications. This is capable of distracting them and lowering their thinking. Cognitive psychology studies indicate that constant distractions and task switching reduce concentration, impair memory ability, and decrease the quality of academic performance (Ophir et al., 2009; Junco and Cotten, 2012). Consequently, their academic performance can decline as the attention is divided even among those students who spend sufficient time studying. Social comparison on the internet has the potential to affect academic confidence and mental health of students. The presence of selected images of the success and image of peers can create expectations that are not realistic, and contribute to an increased sense of inadequacy (Vogel et al., 2014; Appel et al., 2016). This stress and anxiety, as well as reduced academic self-efficacy, are one of the major determinants of academic success (Bandura, 1997; Honicke and Broadbent, 2016). The concept of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) makes the relationship between social media and academic performance more complicated. Students with the tendency of frequently visiting social media to follow their peers tend to become addicts to the habit. This habit may interfere with the course of study, sleeping patterns, and general academic discipline (Przybylski et al., 2013; Elhai et al., 2018). Use of social media in the late-night may cause a sleeping issue that has an adverse effect on concentration and grades (Levenson et al., 2016; Hershner and Chervin, 2014). Also, college students have become concerned with social media addiction. Characteristic features of addictive use include excessive use of time on the Internet, the inability to control the use of the Internet, and the absence of focus on academic tasks (Andreassen, 2015; Kuss and Griffiths, 2017). The students who are more addicted to social media tend to have lower academic achievements and are more likely to procrastinate (Meier et al., 2016; Hawi and Samaha, 2017). Poor preparation and poor academic achievement may be the consequences of procrastination (Steel, 2007). Demographic and situational factors are also important to be taken into consideration to influence the relationship between academic performance and use of social media. The role of

digital literacy, gender, field of study, and school year can influence the use of social media among school-going students (Pew Research Center, 2018; OECD, 2021). Academic and non-academic use can be equally balanced by strong self-regulation skills in students. Conversely, individuals less self-disciplined can be affected negatively in their academics (Zimmerman, 2002; Broadbent and Poon, 2015). In theoretical terms, a connection between social media usage and academic performance can be explained with the help of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. According to this theory, individuals turn to media to serve a certain need, such as information, communication, and entertainment (Katz et al., 1973; Ruggiero, 2000). The more likely students to attain positive academic results is when the social media is mainly used with school-related purposes (Al-Rahmi et al., 2015). Conversely, overuse to entertain oneself can be detrimental to school performance (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010). There is also the Self-Regulation Theory. It emphasizes the need to exercise self-control, goals, and time management in order to excel in academics (Zimmerman, 2002). With proper self-regulation, students will be able to use social media without compromising on their school work. On the other hand, those with poor self-regulation may end up using it too much, leading to lower academic performance (Panadero, 2017). Even with the growing research in this area, results are still inconsistent. There are studies that indicate a negative correlation between social media use and academic outcomes, whereas there are also studies that reveal a positive or even a neutral relationship (Paul et al., 2012; Huang, 2018). Such contradictions could be explained by the differences in research methods, the nature of study groups, and trends in the use of social media. Further studies are required to define the relationship between social media use and academic performance in college students. This relationship is important to understand in order to develop effective educational policies and interventions. The schools will be able to encourage responsible use of social media, academic activity online, and assistance in time management and digital well-being (UNESCO, 2023; OECD, 2021). Over the past few years, social media has become one of the largest aspects of the life of college students. It affects their mental, social and academic development. Applications such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube enable students to interact, collaborate, and have easy access to learning materials. The increased usage and access to the internet and smartphones has tremendously increased the frequency at which college students use social media. Studies indicate that there is a dual role of social media. It may be used as an educational aid and may distract a student, affecting their academic results (Panigrahy, Patro, and Sahoo, 2024; Hasan, Nasreen, and Tasneem, 2024). Academic performance is the level of achievement among students in their academic work, which is normally quantified in terms of grades, test scores, and learning outcomes. Social media will provide students with opportunities to access academic content, engage in online discussions, and cooperate with peers. This is capable of enhancing learning and academic achievement (Khanal and Joshi, 2025; Javeed, 2023). Nonetheless, the impact of social media mostly hinges on the use of these platforms by the students. Academic use of social media has the potential to increase knowledge, engagement, and performance (Su and Huang, 2021; Tekin, 2024). But, too much non-academic use can lead to negative academic outcomes. As numerous studies discovered, excessive spending on social networking platforms may reduce study time, decrease the level of concentration, and impair academic performance (Mosharrafa, Akther, and Siddique, 2024; Mou et al., 2024). Social media addiction has been associated with worse academic results and an increased number of cases of procrastination in university students (Altındağ and Erdirencelebi, 2025; Salari et al., 2025). Additionally, research shows that the link between social media use and academic performance is complicated and affected by many psychological and behavioral factors. As an example, social media can indirectly influence academic performance by such problems as stress, anxiety, and fear of missing out (FoMO). These elements are capable of damaging the concentration and attention of students (Gong, Guo, and Tan, 2025). Moreover, excessive use of social media has been linked to the decreased self-discipline, which is a key to academic

achievement (Tekin, 2024). It has also been shown in some studies that social media does not necessarily have a negative effect on academic performance, in fact, in some cases, it can also be educationally beneficial when properly used. A study conducted by students of the university revealed that school work with the help of social media enhanced its engagement and learning outcomes. Conversely, non-academic use was found to be a distractor and result in poor performance when it was excessive (Adhikari, 2024; Sikarwar and Agrawal, 2025). In addition, studies on lifestyles have revealed that excessive consumption of social media has a negative impact on academic performance because of reduced study time and increased distractions. In one study, participants reported that each additional hour of time spent on social media reduced the likelihood of obtaining good academic outcomes significantly (Boahene et al., 2020). These results indicate that social media can have a positive or negative effect on academic performance, depending on the reason, length, and the usage. Thus, one should learn about the influence of social media on the academic results of college students. The investigation into this relationship will help educators, students, and policymakers to develop strategies that will promote effective educational use of social media and minimize its adverse effects. This paper will set out to discuss how the use of social media has impacted on the academic performance of college students and whether it has contributed to academic success or failure.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study design that was applied in this research was a quantitative research design, where a survey based on a questionnaire was used to test the effect of using social media on academic performance among college students. The methodology was cross-sectional design where data was collected at one point in time to determine the pattern of social media use among students and its relation with their academic performance. It is a suitable design used in determining the relationship between behavioral variables and school performance in a research project (Creswell, 2014).

2.2 PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the study were 100 college students who were undertaking undergraduate and postgraduate programs in different academic subjects. A convenience sampling method was employed because it was feasible and available to the participants. The students aged 18 to 25 years were covered because this is the age bracket that utilizes the social media platforms the most. The voluntary subjects of the study were both male and female students.

2.3 INCLUSION CRITERIA

The inclusion criteria were given as follows:

- Students currently enrolled in a college or university
- Students using at least one social media platform
- Students willing to participate voluntarily

2.4 EXCLUSION CRITERIA

The exclusion criteria were given as follows:

- Students, who did not use social media
- Students, who submitted incomplete questionnaire responses

2.5 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on previous studies examining social media usage and academic performance (Junco, 2015; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Khanal & Joshi, 2025). The questionnaire consisted of four sections:

2.5.1 SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This section collected participants' background information, including:

- Age
- Gender
- Course level (Undergraduate/Postgraduate)
- Field of study

2.5.2 SECTION B: SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE PATTERN

This section assessed students' social media usage characteristics, including:

- Types of social media platforms used (e.g., WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube)
- Average time spent on social media per day
- Purpose of social media usage (academic, entertainment, communication, etc.)
- Frequency of social media use

2.5.3 C. ACADEMIC USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.

In this section, the use of social media in academics was assessed and it included:

- Accessing academic materials
Participating in scholarly debates.
- The communication with classmates and teachers.
Horizons: Note sharing and study materials.
Sub-section D1: SAT score (maximum 200): 198.

2.5.4 D. THE FOLLOWING MEASURES WERE USED TO DETERMINE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:

- Self-reported academic performance
- Grade percentage range
- The perceived effect of social media on academic performance.

The participants were asked to specify the impacts of social media on their academic performance as positive, negative, or neutral.

2.5.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The questionnaire given by Google Forms was used to collect data through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire link was communicated to the students through social media platforms and academic groups. All the respondents were involved on a voluntary basis and all of them provided informed consent before filling out the questionnaire. Participants were told the aim of the study and assured of the confidentiality of their responses which would be used exclusively on research purposes.

2.5.6 VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

- Independent Variable
The usage of the social media and time, purpose, frequency and type of usage.
- Dependent Variable
Academic achievement, which was on self-reported grades and perceived academic influence.

2.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of the collected data. Demographic characteristics and patterns of social media usage were summarized with the use of descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation).

The inferential statistical analysis was used to test the correlation between social media use and academic performance. The correlation was done to find the intensity and direction of the relationship between the use of social media and academic performance. All statistical tests were done using IBM SPSS Statistics.

2.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study did not need ethical approval since it was voluntary and anonymous, with the collection of data. The study informed the participants of the study objective and they gave informed consent before taking part. The participants were not identified and the research was conducted in confidence.

Results

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58	58%
	Female	42	42%
Course	B.Sc.	38	38%
	B.A.	27	27%
	B.Com	20	20%
	B.Ed.	15	15%
Academic Year	First Year	30	30%
	Second Year	28	28%
	Third Year	25	25%
	Fourth Year	17	17%
Academic Performance	Below 50%	12	12%
	50–60%	22	22%
	61–70%	30	30%
	71–80%	21	21%
	Above 80%	15	15%

Table 1: General Characteristics of Participants (N = 100)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Social Media Use	Yes	96	96%
	No	4	4%
Platform Used	WhatsApp	82	82%
	YouTube	76	76%
	Instagram	68	68%
	Telegram	41	41%
	Facebook	29	29%

Table 2: Social Media Usage Among Students

Time Spent	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	12	12%
1–2 hours	28	28%
3–4 hours	34	34%
More than 4 hours	26	26%

Table 3: Daily Time Spent on Social Media

Time	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Morning	9	9%
Afternoon	18	18%
Evening	33	33%
Late Night	40	40%

Table 4: Preferred Time of Social Media Use

Purpose	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Education	32	32%
Entertainment	74	74%
Communication	61	61%
Time Pass	58	58%

Table 5: Purpose of Social Media Use

Statement	Agree (%)	Frequency (n)
Helps in studies	64%	64
Improves knowledge	71%	71
Used for educational videos	68%	68
Helps in completing assignments	62%	62
Improves communication with classmates	76%	76

Table 6: Positive Impact of Social Media on Academic Performance

Statement	Agree (%)	Frequency (n)
Distracts from studies	59%	59
Spend more time than studying	63%	63
Reduces study time	66%	66
Affects focus	61%	61
Negatively impacts academic performance	54%	54

Table 7: Negative Impact of Social Media on Academic Performance

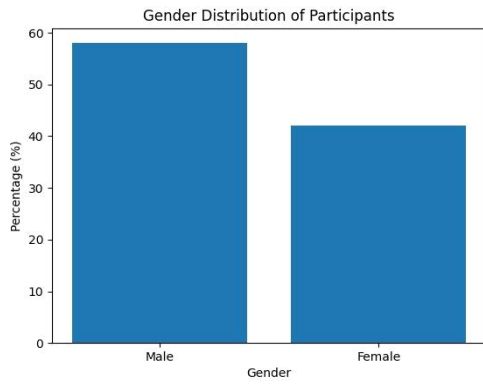


Figure 1. Gender Distribution

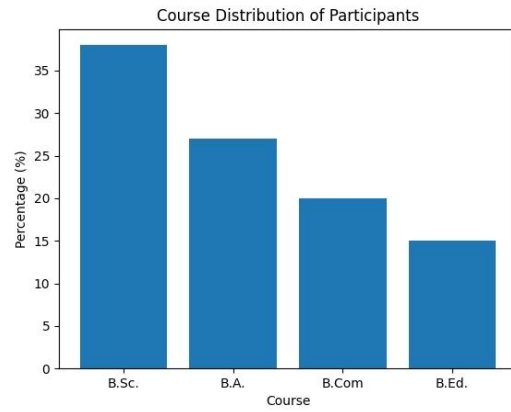


Figure 2. Course Distribution

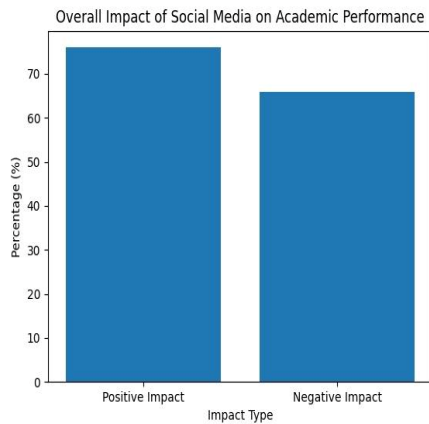


Figure 3. Daily Social Media Usage

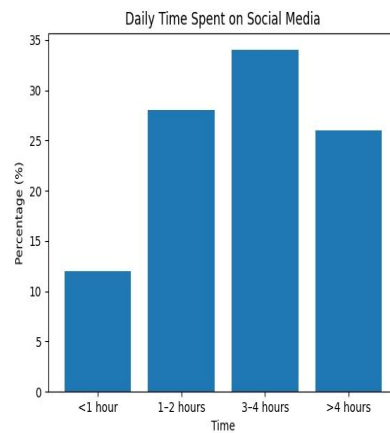


Figure 4. Social Media Impact

The characteristics of the participants overall were as follows.

One hundred learners participated in this study. Out of all these, 58 percent were males and 42 percent females. The majority of respondents were registered in B.Sc. programs (38%), then came B.A. (27%), and B.Com (20%), and B.Ed. (15%). Regarding the academic year, 30% were in their first year, 28% in their second year, 25% in their third year, and 17% were in their fourth year.

In terms of academic performance, 12-percent of the students scored below 50. Twenty two percent registered 50 to 60. Thirty percent had a score of 61 to 70. Twenty-one percent had a score of between 71 and 80. Fifteen percent got a score of more than 80. This implies that the majority of the students achieved average results in their learning.

2. Pattern of Social Media Usage.

The findings indicated that 96 percent of students indicated that they were using social media and 4 percent indicated that they were not using social media. WhatsApp was the most popular platform (82%), then YouTube (76%), Instagram (68%), Telegram (41%), and Facebook (29%).

In terms of daily usage time:

- 12% used social media for less than 1 hour
- 28% used it for 1 to 2 hours
- 34% used it for 3 to 4 hours
- 26% used it for more than 4 hours

This shows that most students spent more than 3 hours daily on social media.

Regarding the preferred time of use:

- Morning: 9%
- Afternoon: 18%
- Evening: 33%
- Late night: 40%

Late night was the most popular time for social media use.

In terms of purpose:

- Education: 32%
- Entertainment: 74%
- Communication: 61%
- Time pass: 58%

Entertainment was the main reason for using social media.

• **Impact of Social Media on Academic Performance**

Based on Likert scale responses:

- 64% of students agreed that social media helps in their studies.
- 71% agreed that social media improves their knowledge.
- 68% agreed that they use social media for educational videos.
- 62% agreed that social media helps in completing assignments.
- 76% agreed that social media improves communication with classmates.

However, some negative impacts were also noted:

- 59% agreed that social media distracts them from studies.
- 63% agreed that they spend more time on social media than studying.
- 66% agreed that excessive social media reduces study time.
- 61% agreed that social media affects their focus.
- 54% agreed that social media negatively impacts academic performance.

These results show that social media has both positive and negative effects on academic performance.

• **Open-Ended Responses**

The majority of students have observed that social media enables them to get educational videos, study materials and get in touch with their peers. Nonetheless, a good number of them also said that excess use causes distraction, loss of focus and reduced time of study.

Comprehensively, students believed that social media is a good tool if used sparingly, but when taken in abundance, it will negatively impact academic performance.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The results indicate that social media is having a high usage among students and is also a significant part of both instructional and recreational activities. Although it has some academic advantages such as better knowledge and communication, its overuse is associated with distraction and reduced academic concentration.

4. DISCUSSION

The research problem that was examined in the present research was on the impact of social media usage on the academic performance of college students. The results demonstrate that the social media are very popular among the students and that they are significant to their performance and personal life. The findings indicate that social media may have positive and negative impacts on academic performance based on the method and duration the students use the social media. In this study, social media has become very popular as almost all the students (96% of

the total) were found using social media. This high usage is a measure of increased access to smartphones and the internet by the youths. WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram were the most used platforms. WhatsApp was the most used platform (82%), probably due to the fact that it supports communication, exchange of academic information, and group discussions. In its turn, YouTube came next with 76 percent of students using it, which could likely be attributed to the fact that it provides educational videos, tutorials, and lectures that contribute to learning. This research also established that students devote a lot of time on social media. Many students (60% of them) claimed to spend more than three hours a day on these platforms. Excessive use of social media may deny students academic time such as studying, doing assignments and revision. Additionally, the most frequent period of social media usage is late at night (40%), which can disrupt sleeping habits and focus and eventually academic results.

Notwithstanding these problems, the paper has discovered that social media has a number of positive impacts on academic performance. The majority of the students had similar views; they believed that social media assists them in their studies (64) and enhances their knowledge (71). This implies that social media may prove to be a useful learning tool when appropriately used. Other students claimed that they used social media to watch educational videos (68%) and do assignments (62%). Also, social media enhanced communication with peers (76%), allowing students to exchange notes, discuss their school issues, and collaborate on their homework. Such results show that social media can provide the learning opportunities and improve the academic engagement in case of educational purposes. Nonetheless, the research revealed critical adverse effects associated with heavy consumption of social media as well. Over fifty percent of the students claimed that social media distracts them (59%) and decreases their study time (66%). Moreover, 63 percent of students acknowledged about spending more time on social media than studying, which can be a detriment to their performance. Social media can reduce attention and concentration among students due to distractions such as notifications and other entertaining activities. Also, 61 percent of students believe that social media has an impact on their concentration capacity and 54 percent believe it negatively impacts their grades. Such results suggest that social media abuse and overuse may interfere with academic duties.

Overall, the findings suggest that social media is a double-edged sword. When used for educational purposes and in moderation, it can enhance knowledge, communication, and academic performance. However, excessive use, primarily for entertainment and other non-academic reasons, can negatively affect students' focus, study time, and academic results. Therefore, students should be encouraged to engage with social media in a balanced and responsible way to maximize its benefits and limit its drawbacks.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the influence of social media on the academic performance of college students. It discovered that social media is widely used and it is a major aspect in the daily lives of the students. Almost every student is a user of social media, with WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram being the most popular. The reasons why students resort to social media are many such as education, communication and entertainment. These findings underscore the fact that social media has gained prominence in the contemporary student life. The researcher discovered that social media has both positive and negative impacts on academic performance. In the affirmative, a big number of students indicated that social media assists them in their studies, enhances their knowledge, and assists in academic activities like doing assignments and watching educational videos. Social media also enhances communication among students since they have an opportunity to share study materials and collaborate more efficiently. All these benefits demonstrate that social media may be a beneficial learning tool when used properly.

The study, however, also indicated that there are a number of negative impacts associated with excessive use of social media. Students claimed that social media distracts them, deprives them of time to study and affects concentration. Many students said they had to spend more time on social media than on their academic work, which could negatively affect their academic results. Overuse, particularly as entertainment, can decrease concentration and productivity of the students. On the whole, the results indicate that the effects of social media on academic performance are contingent on the use of social media by students. Social media can be used in a balanced and educational manner to enhance learning and academic performance and when overused and not used in an educational manner, it may cause distractions and loss of academic concentration. Thus, students are to be advised to utilize social media in a wise and responsible way.

To sum up, social media may be a valuable educational tool when it is used appropriately. Learning and academic achievement with minimal negative consequences should be encouraged in educational institutions, teachers, and students through efficient and responsible use of social media.

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Cite this Article:

Kiran; Narayan, S. (2026). *A Study on the Impact of Social Media Usage on Academic Performance among College Students*. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Arts, Science and Technology (IJMRAST)*, 4(4), 69–80.

Journal URL: <https://ijmrast.com/> DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59828/ijmrast.v4i4.260>



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