



PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS ON STUDENTS' INTELLECTUALITY

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Abstract: *This article explores the psychological impact of social networks on students' intellectuality, emphasizing the complex relationship between social media engagement and academic performance. Drawing on a comprehensive literature review and a specific study by Kaitlyn Flad (2010), the research highlights both the beneficial and detrimental effects of social networking sites (SNS) on students' cognitive development and educational outcomes. The literature identifies positive aspects, such as enhanced peer interaction, collaborative learning, and information access, alongside negative consequences, including academic distractions, reduced study time, and lower performance linked to excessive use. Flad's study of 41 high school students (54% female, 46% male) reveals significant gender differences: females outperformed males in GPA (73% of females vs. 53% of males achieved 3.0 or higher) and participation in honors (86% vs. 58%) and AP courses (64% vs. 36%). However, frequent SNS use—56% visited daily, 29% more than five times daily—correlated with academic interference, particularly among females (69% of those reporting homework delays). The findings underscore the dual nature of social media's influence, shaped by factors like gender, engagement levels, and self-efficacy, calling for a nuanced approach to mitigate risks and maximize educational benefits for students in the digital age.*

Key words: *Social Networks, Psychological Impact, Students, Intellectuality, Academic Performance Social Media Gender Differences Cognitive Development Peer Interaction Distractions Educational Outcomes Engagement Cyber-bullying Self-efficacy Study Time Collaborative Learning GPA (Grade Point Average).*



Introduction

The psychological impact of social networks on students' intellectuality has garnered significant and increasing attention in various academic circles across the globe. This observation is particularly noteworthy as the prevalence and influence of social media continue to rise dramatically and exponentially in today's fast-paced digital age. The existing literature reveals a complex and multifaceted interplay between active participation in social networking platforms and varying levels of academic performance among students. This intricate relationship is significantly shaped and influenced by a wide array of factors, including but not limited to gender differences, cultural context, socioeconomic status, and the nature and depth of individuals' engagement with these digital platforms. As social media becomes an integral part of daily life and routine for an ever-growing number of students, understanding its various effects on their intellectual development, cognitive skills, and overall educational outcomes becomes ever more crucial and important for educators, parents, and policymakers alike.

Flad (2010) initiates this discourse by emphasizing the need to investigate the academic outcomes of social networking site participation, particularly among high school students. Her study highlights the emotional consequences and challenges faced by adolescents, including cyber-bullying and peer pressure, while also considering how these factors might differ between genders. This foundational work sets the stage for understanding the broader implications of social networking on student performance.

Building on this, Mingle and Adams, (2015) explore the role of social media in Ghanaian senior high schools, noting that these platforms facilitate peer interaction and engagement. Their findings suggest that social media can enhance student performance by enabling structured discussions and reflective thinking. However, the authors also acknowledge the potential distractions that social media may introduce, echoing concerns raised by Flad, (2010).

In a similar vein, Destiny Oberiri, (2016) investigates the influence of social media on undergraduate students in Nigeria, pointing out that while social media aids



research and information dissemination, it can also lead to neglect of academic responsibilities. The dual nature of social media's impact is further underscored by Rabbani, (2016), who contends that excessive use of social networking sites can detrimentally affect learning outcomes, particularly for students with lower self-efficacy. This highlights the psychological nuances that can influence how students engage with social media in relation to their academic pursuits.

The exploration of social media's impact continues with Olusegun Babatunde, (2017), who presents a critical perspective on the negative effects of social media, such as inadequate study time and potential health risks. This concern is echoed by N. Nyabera, (2017), who finds that while social networking sites can facilitate knowledge sharing, their overuse may lead to decreased academic performance due to reduced study time.

(El Khatib and Firdouse Rahman Khan, 2017) further contribute to this dialogue by examining the implications of social media on students' interpersonal skills and academic performance. They highlight the potential for social media to enhance learning and communication, yet caution against the excessive use that may hinder academic success. This ambivalence is a recurring theme in the literature, reflecting the varied experiences of students across different contexts.

The research by (World English Journal and Ismail K Kutubkhanah Alsaied, 2017) specifically focuses on the effectiveness of social media as a learning tool, particularly among female Saudi students. The findings suggest that increased usage may foster engagement and collaborative learning, although the lack of a causal relationship between social media use and improved learning performance raises questions about the generalizability of these benefits.

(John Kolan and Emefa Dzandza, 2018) and (Alsulimani and Sharma, 2019) both affirm the significant impact of social media on academic performance, with the former emphasizing the advantages of enhanced relationships and personalized learning experiences, while the latter notes the positive correlation between social media use and academic achievement. However, they also address the negative



aspects, such as information piracy, which complicates the overall assessment of social media's role in education.

Through this literature review, it becomes evident that the psychological impact of social networks on students' intellectuality is multifaceted, with both positive and negative implications for academic performance. The varying contexts and conditions under which students engage with social media underscore the necessity for a nuanced understanding of this dynamic relationship.

DISCUSSION

In a research study (conducted by Kaitlyn Flad)¹ involving 41 students, 54% of the participants were female and 46% were male. Regarding academic performance as indicated by grade point averages (GPAs), the largest group of students, 34%, had a GPA between 3.0 and 3.4. Meanwhile, 29% had a GPA ranging from 3.5 to 4.0, 12% fell between 2.5 and 2.9, 5% were between 2.0 and 2.4, and 20% were either unaware of their GPA or unsure how to determine it. When examining GPA by gender, females accounted for 75% of those with the highest GPAs (3.5-4.0), while males made up 25%. Additionally, 73% of female participants achieved a GPA of 3.0 or above, compared to 53% of male participants.

The study also explored enrollment in honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses as another indicator of academic success. Overall, 73% of participants had taken or were currently enrolled in an honors course. This included 86% of female students and 58% of male students. Notably, 32% of females and just 5% of males had completed five or more honors courses. Regarding AP courses, 54% of all participants had taken at least one, with females comprising 64% and males 36% of this group.

Since the participants were all set to graduate in 2011, the type of diploma they anticipated earning provided further insight into academic achievement by gender. Seventy percent of students were on track to receive a Regents with Advanced Designation diploma, with 62% being female and 38% male. Twenty percent

¹ <https://core.ac.uk/download/233570894.pdf>



expected to earn a Regents Diploma, evenly split between females and males, while 10% anticipated receiving a local diploma—all of whom were male.

When asked about post-secondary intentions, 88% of participants planned to attend college after high school, with only one male student indicating he did not intend to pursue higher education. Ten percent were uncertain about their plans.

The survey also examined students' engagement with social networking sites (SNS). Thirty-nine percent of participants were members of one SNS, 49% belonged to two, and 12% were part of three or more. Beyond computer access, 61% used their cell phones to engage with SNS, with 60% of these being female and 40% male. Additionally, 63% of all participants accessed their SNS accounts via email, with 65% of this group being female and 35% male.

The study examined high school students graduating in 2011, focusing on the types of diplomas they anticipated receiving and how these expectations correlated with academic achievement and gender differences. A substantial 70% of the total participants expressed that they expected to obtain a Regents diploma with Advanced Designation. Among those anticipating this diploma, a notable 62% were female, while 38% were male. In addition, 20% of students expected to receive a standard Regents Diploma, with an equal distribution of gender (50% female and 50% male). Finally, 10% of students planned to receive a local diploma, which was exclusively awarded to male students.

Regarding post-secondary aspirations, an impressive 88% of all participants indicated their intention to pursue college education following high school graduation. Interestingly, only one male student explicitly stated he did not plan to attend college. Furthermore, a small segment of participants—10%—expressed uncertainty about their future educational plans.

The survey also gathered information on students' engagement with social networking sites (SNS). The findings revealed that 39% of participants were members of one SNS, while 49% had memberships on two SNSs, and 12% reported having three or more memberships. In terms of access methods, 61% of students utilized their cell phones for SNS purposes, with 60% of these users being female and 40% male.



Additionally, 63% of participants accessed their SNS memberships via their email accounts, with 65% of these users being female and 35% male.

The frequency with which students visited SNSs varied significantly. A total of 56% of participants reported visiting an SNS at least once daily, while 29% indicated they accessed an SNS more than five times a day. Additionally, 7% reported visiting at least once per week, with the remaining respondents visiting once per month. Notably, among those who visited SNSs more than five times daily, a striking 66% were female, contrasting with 33% of male participants.

The study also explored how social networking impacted students' academic responsibilities. When asked if their SNS usage interfered with timely homework submission, 32% of participants responded affirmatively, with a significant 69% of these individuals identifying as female. In terms of studying, 34% of all respondents admitted to spending time on SNSs instead of studying "Several times," with 77% of these students being female. Conversely, 86% of students who reported "Never" spending time on SNSs instead of studying were male.

The survey included a true or false question regarding the perceived importance of learning from social networking compared to traditional school learning. Only 17% of all students responded "True," with an overwhelming 86% of those respondents being female. The importance of SNS membership was also assessed, revealing that 10% of participants regarded their memberships as "Very important," and notably, all of these students were female. Overall, 61% of all participants considered their SNS memberships to be at least "Somewhat important."

Additionally, the study highlighted a concerning trend regarding students' GPAs and their perceptions of learning from SNSs. A significant 18% of participants were unaware of their GPAs, and among those, many believed that what they learned on SNSs held greater importance than their formal education. Conversely, 88% of students with a GPA of 3.0 or higher answered "False" to the notion that SNS learning was more significant than school learning. A correlation was identified between frequent SNS usage and academic distractions, with half of the students who reported



visiting SNSs more than five times a day also admitting to spending time on SNSs instead of studying or completing assignments.

The results of this survey illuminated various themes related to adolescent engagement with social networking websites, academic practices and attitudes, and the notable differences observed between male and female respondents. These findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the significance of social networking for adolescents and the disparities in academic engagement based on gender. The study will further analyze these results, explore their implications, identify limitations, and provide recommendations for school counselors and other professionals interested in researching this topic in the future. The conclusions drawn from this survey will offer valuable insights into the relationship between social networking usage and academic performance among adolescents, ultimately contributing to a better understanding of how these factors interact in the lives of high school students.

SUMMARY

The article examines the psychological impact of social networks on students' intellectuality, focusing on how social media influences academic performance and cognitive development. It draws from various studies to highlight the multifaceted relationship between social media use and students' educational outcomes, shaped by factors such as gender, cultural context, and engagement levels. The literature reveals both positive and negative effects: social media can enhance peer interaction, collaborative learning, and information access (Mingle & Adams, 2015; Kolan & Dzandza, 2018), yet excessive use may lead to distractions, reduced study time, and lower academic performance (Rabbani, 2016; Babatunde, 2017).

A specific study by Kaitlyn Flad (2010) involving 41 high school students graduating in 2011 provides detailed insights. It found that 54% of participants were female, with females outperforming males academically—75% of those with GPAs of 3.5-4.0 were female, and 73% of females achieved a GPA of 3.0 or higher compared to 53% of males. Females also showed higher enrollment in honors (86%) and AP courses (64%) than males (58% and 36%, respectively). Social networking



site (SNS) usage was prevalent, with 56% of students visiting SNSs daily and 29% more than five times a day, predominantly females (66%). However, 32% admitted SNS use interfered with homework, with 69% of these being female, and 34% prioritized SNS over studying, with 77% being female.

The study also noted gender differences in attitudes toward SNS: 86% of those who valued SNS learning over traditional education were female, and all students who deemed SNS membership "very important" were female. A correlation emerged between frequent SNS use and academic distractions, particularly among students visiting SNSs more than five times daily. Overall, the article underscores the dual nature of social media's impact—offering educational benefits while posing risks to academic focus—and emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding to guide students, educators, and policymakers effectively.

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