

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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Introduction

Social media has turned into an essential element of individuals' lives including students in today's world of communication. Its use is growing significantly more than ever before especially in the post-pandemic era, marked by a great revolution happening to the educational systems. Recent investigations of using social media show that approximately 3 billion individuals worldwide are now communicating via social media ([Iwamoto and Chun, 2020](#)). This growing population of social media users is spending more and more time on social network groupings, as facts and figures show that individuals spend 2 hr a

day, on average, on a variety of social media applications, exchanging pictures and messages, updating status, tweeting, favoring, and commenting on many updated socially shared information

Significance of the study

Though social media, as the name suggests, is expected to keep people connected, probably this social connection is only superficial, and not adequately deep and meaningful to help individuals feel emotionally attached to others. The psychological effects of social media on student life need to be studied in more depth to see whether social media really acts as a social support for students and whether

students can use social media to cope with negative emotions and develop positive feelings or not. In other words, knowledge of the potential effects of the growing use of social media on students' emotional well-being can bridge the gap between the alleged promises of social media and what it actually has to offer to students in terms of self-concept, self-respect, social role, and coping strategies (for stress, anxiety, etc.).

Exemplary general literature on psychological effects of social media

Before getting down to the effects of social media on students' emotional well-being, some exemplary works of research in recent years on the topic among general populations are reviewed. For one, [Aalbers et al. \(2018\)](#) reported that individuals who spent more time passively working with social media suffered from more intense levels of hopelessness, loneliness, depression, and perceived inferiority. For another, [Tang et al. \(2013\)](#) observed that the procedures of sharing information, commenting, showing likes and dislikes, posting messages, and doing other common activities on social media are correlated with higher stress. Similarly, [Ley et al. \(2014\)](#) described that people who spend 2 h, on average, on social media applications

will face many tragic news, posts, and stories which can raise the total intensity of their stress. This stress-provoking effect of social media has been also pinpointed by [Weng and Menczer \(2015\)](#), who contended that social media becomes a main source of stress because people often share all kinds of posts, comments, and stories ranging from politics and economics, to personal and social affairs. According to [Iwamoto and Chun \(2020\)](#), anxiety and depression are the negative emotions that an individual may develop when some source of stress is present. In other words, when social media sources become stress-inducing, there are high chances that anxiety and depression also develop.

Discussion

The body of research on the effect of social media on students' affective and emotional states has led to mixed results. The existing literature shows that there are some positive and some negative affective impacts. Yet, it seems that the latter is pre-dominant. [Mathewson \(2020\)](#) attributed these divergent positive and negative effects to the different theoretical frameworks adopted in different studies and also the different contexts (different countries with whole different educational systems). According to Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions

([Fredrickson, 2001](#)), the mental repertoires of learners can be built and broadened by how they feel. For instance, some external stimuli might provoke negative emotions such as anxiety and depression in learners. Having experienced these negative emotions, students might repeatedly check their messages on social media or get addicted to them. As a result, their cognitive repertoire and mental capacity might become limited and they might lose their concentration during their learning process. On the other hand, it should be noted that by feeling positive, learners might take full advantage of the affordances of the social media and; thus, be able to follow their learning goals strategically. This point should be highlighted that the link between the use of social media and affective states is bi-directional. Therefore, strategic use of social media or its addictive use by students can direct them toward either positive experiences like enjoyment or negative ones such as anxiety and depression. Also, these mixed positive and negative effects are similar to the findings of several other relevant studies on general populations' psychological and emotional health. A number of studies (with general research populations not necessarily students) showed that social networks have facilitated the way of staying in touch with family and friends living far away as well as an increased social support ([Zhang,](#)

[2017](#)). Given the positive and negative emotional effects of social media, social media can either scaffold the emotional repertoire of students, which can develop positive emotions in learners, or induce negative provokers in them, based on which learners might feel negative emotions such as anxiety and depression. However, admittedly, social media has also generated a domain that encourages the act of comparing lives, and striving for approval; therefore, it establishes and internalizes unrealistic perceptions.

Implications of the study

The use of social media is ever increasing among students, both at school and university, which is partly because of the promises of technological advances in communication services and partly because of the increased use of social networks for educational purposes in recent years after the pandemic. This consistent use of social media is not expected to leave students' psychological, affective and emotional states untouched. Thus, it is necessary to know how the growing usage of social networks is associated with students' affective health on different aspects. Therefore, we found it useful to summarize the research findings in

A review of the research findings on the relationship between social media and students' affective traits revealed both positive and negative findings. Yet, the instances of the latter were more salient and the negative psychological symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and stress have been far from negligible. These findings were discussed in relation to some more relevant theories such as the social comparison theory, which predicted that most of the potential issues with the young generation's excessive use of social media were induced by the unfair comparisons they made between their own lives and the unrealistic portrayal of others' on social media.

The Influence of Social Media on Society

Social media has revolutionized the way people communicate, access information, and engage with the world. Its influence extends across multiple dimensions of life, affecting individuals, businesses, and even governments. With billions of users worldwide, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (now X), and TikTok have become integral to modern communication, culture, and commerce. While social media offers unprecedented opportunities for connection, it also raises concerns regarding misinformation, privacy, and mental health. This essay will

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The Transformation of Communication

One of the most significant impacts of social media is the transformation of communication. Traditional modes of

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