



## The Effects of Social Media on University Student's Daily Life and Motivation to Study

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### Abstract

Recently, social media has developed itself into a growing virtual platform that allows us to connect, communicate, share ideas, and stay updated on news. It has revolutionized the way that humans communicate with each other, and it has contributed to making the world a more modern society. The purpose of this research was to find out whether or not social media has any correlation with students' daily life while studying in university. This research investigated how social media affects university students on a daily basis and sought to find out how the students balance their daily lives while being on social media. Last but not least, this study also examined how daily usage of social media impacts the students' motivation to study. This study was made using qualitative research that was conducted through an interview of 15 university students who are between the ages of 18 and 24 years old. The discussion and conclusion portion of this study stated that the responses were mixed because the university students have their own thoughts, perceptions about university work, and characteristics that are taken into account. The university students all use social media, and it has been integrated into their everyday routines. The results showed that social media does not affect overall university life, yet it is still a distraction and the culprit of procrastination amongst the students. However, even so, there is a good balance between the students' daily life and how active they are on social media because this study found that the students prioritize their work before going onto social media. This study further explored that social media impacts the majority of female university students' self-esteem, resulting in some negative effects on a daily basis. The results further displayed that the majority of the participants think that even if social media has some downfalls when it comes to their everyday lives, there is nothing too serious and there are no issues on a big scale.

**Keywords:** *Social Media, University students, Motivation, Self-esteem, Procrastination*

### 1. Introduction

Social media has become one of the most important communication means in recent times. Social networking exists to provide communication amongst people regardless of the distance, making it open for people to easily share information, files, pictures, and videos, create blogs and send messages, and conduct real-time conversations. It is a modern platform that allows us to connect, communicate, and share ideas and information through virtual networks. According to Hocevar (2013), Social media comprises a dynamic and rapidly expanding recourse in today's society. In other words, social media has revolutionized the way that humans connect and communicate with one another in modern society. Social media are an assortment of internet websites, electronic communication services, and practices that "support collaboration, community building, participation, and sharing" (Gannon, 2014). Technology over the years has improved the way that individuals communicate and socialize with others (Gannon, 2014). These social networking sites are online communities that allow individuals to present themselves in the way that they choose through online systems (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Taylor (2020) stated that social media platforms have become one of the most often used methods of communication of today. Besides, networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and the list goes on offer a portal to entertainment, information, and news by the second. Moreover, Taylor (2020) said that these various modes of access mandate social media integration being woven into the fabric of mankind's interactions with one another. Social media sites have increased in popularity over the past several years. Since the first social medium site was launched in 1997, more than 35 major social networking sites have been created, with millions of users worldwide (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Nevertheless, Taylor (2020) mentioned that social media usage has become an aggressive consumer phenomenon considerably changing the nature of what is considered normal interactions. In these modern times, social media has integrated itself into becoming a new way of life, and it is almost impossible to find somebody around you that does not own a social media account.



University students are no exception because they are young adults that are given flexibility and responsibility when it comes to their studies. Social media is a popular way amongst university students to connect, and it is a virtual way of life for these students. Furthermore, each student has their own experiences, characteristics, opinions, and priorities regarding social media usage. Social media sites provide a culture of approbation through which individuals express what they believe their audience wants to hear to meet perceived expectations (Brown, 2015). Additionally, Taylor (2020) stated that university students are impacted by their social media use in both positive and negative ways. The impact of social media use has depended upon the students, their ability to focus, and their knowledge of how to use social media for academic purposes. In other words, every student's mindset and perception of social media will vary depending on each student. Therefore, to be successful students, they must find the right balance between their everyday lives and social media to avoid any distractions and disruptions. According to Liu (2016), Social media is a way for students to connect with others, and facilitating interactions with family and friends was the extrinsic motivation factor significantly associated with social media addiction levels. To add to this, Liu (2016) also mentioned that some motivation factors for university students to use social media included killing idle time, finding entertainment, getting away from pressures or responsibilities, and relaxing.

Embarking to university comes with lots of responsibility in terms of the students' studies and daily life. The level of responsibility for each student will vary depending on their characteristics, mindset, financial stability, priorities, and wellbeing. Additionally, according to Qu (2011), the success of responsibility is up to the students' action of choice, thus, meaning that the students' performance all depends on the choices that they make. Moreover, it plays a fundamental role as guidelines for the students to become mature, such as developing the ideological cultivation, moral character, professional behavior, interpersonal communication as well as the creation of wealth in full scale. The students will have different opinions of one another, some will have a bigger workload than normal and take work more seriously than others. University is typically the time when the students begin to become their authority figure and start to develop their own beliefs and values rather than allowing themselves to be defined by others, such as peers and other authority figures

Also, Nottoli (2020) stated that social media are often part of their everyday life; while they can elicit positive experiences, there are also negative effects to consider. To expand, Barker (2018) stated that with social media being a prominent platform in the days of sharing information over the internet, it can affect one's self-esteem if not careful. Social media affects self-esteem in many other ways, for instance, a study made by Puglia (2017) stated that body comparison tendency was negatively correlated with body esteem and positively correlated to use social media for body comparisons. Furthermore, it suggested that social media is a new avenue for individuals to engage in the maladaptive body comparison process. When people are constantly looking at images of others online, it may spark thought and encourage people to compare each other thus making self-esteem lowered. Self-esteem and self-confidence can affect the mindset and performance of these university students, therefore, making them have a more negative experience when it comes to social media in their everyday lives. It can encourage problems such as creating a negative mindset, spark disorders, and link to higher levels of anxiety, narcissism, and decreased social skills (Silva, 2017). It can then create a negative effect on the university student's daily life and decrease motivation concerning their studies. Furthermore, the author of *Facehooked: How Facebook affects our emotions, relationships, and lives*, Flores (2016), explained that "when someone interacts over social media for prolonged periods of time, inevitably they feel compelled to continue to check for updates. I call this the "Slot Machine Effect" in that when we receive a like or a comment to a post, or when we come across an interesting new post from someone else, we experience what psychologists refer to as intermittent reinforcement—sometimes we get "rewarded" with an interesting post, and sometimes we are not, but the rewards through external validation of our posts, cause us to remain digitally connected." Flores further explained that "research has also shown that Facebook users are becoming increasingly depressed from comparing themselves to their own profile. Meaning that if a person's reality does not match the digital illusion they post on their profiles, emotionally, one may feel they are not living up to the "best" form of themselves." This is just an aspect of what is occurring in today's



rapidly evolving digital world, which could negatively impact these university students and create further problems within their everyday lives.

As mentioned, the students utilize social in various activities, that are, connecting with others and facilitating interactions with family and friends, which were the extrinsic motivation factors significantly associated with social media addiction levels. Social media becomes a part of their everyday life that may positively and negatively affect the students. It becomes an interesting issue for the researcher to find out how social media recently play an important role on university students. Thus, this study sought to explore the overall effects of social media on university students. However, there are 3 main research questions that this study aimed to find out. These questions coincided with the objective section, and the survey sections will be based around these questions: 1) How does social media affect university students? 2) How do the students balance their everyday lives while being on social media? and 3) Does daily usage of social media affect the students' motivation to study? The following sections show the objectives of this study that can help to answer the research questions.

## 2. Objectives

This paper aimed to find out how social media has affected university students. The overall objective of this study was to find any correlations and record any thoughts and feelings that the student participants may have about social media and their everyday lives. However, the author has formulated 3 objectives that will try to accomplish while doing this research:

- 1) To investigate how social media affects university students on a daily basis
- 2) To study how the students balance their daily lives while being active on social media
- 3) To examine how daily usage of social media impacts the students' motivation to study

## 3. Materials and Methods

This study used in-depth interviews with 15 participants to collect data. The interviews have been conducted from October to November 2020. Each interview took 30 to 45 minutes approximately. The participants were university students between 18 and 24 years of age and also own an active social media account. This research used social media platforms, namely, Facebook and Student's Line group to recruit the participants who are university students. Snowball sampling is also another method employed to recruit other participants. As the interviewer, the author asked each participant a series of 20 structured questions. However, if the participant went off track with the question, the author would bring up again the main point of the question and continue with the layout of the 20 questions. This method was to make sure that none of the questions were left unanswered and to prevent the interview from going off track. Some questions such as "what is your name" were used to break the ice with the interviewee as introducing each other was a key to make the participant more comfortable while answering the questions. The interview was conducted in 4 sections (A-D). The first section (A) was the demographic section of the interview. This section was to make sure that the participants were indeed bachelor's degree students and fit within the required age group. Then, the interview was continued to sections B, C, and D that aimed to fit in the criteria of the objectives of the paper. The questions were laid out in systematic order organized from 1 to 20. All of the interview questions are laid out in the table below.

**Table 1** A set of interview questions

| Interview section  | Questions   |
|--|---|
| A) Demographic   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your name?</li> <li>2. Are you a current university student?</li> <li>3. What is your age?</li> </ol>   |
| B) How social media affects university students on a daily basis | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approximately how often do you use social media?</li> <li>2. How many social media sites do you currently use?</li> <li>3. What are the reasons for you to use social media?</li> </ol> |



| Interview section   | Questions   |
|---|---|
|   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Does social media affect your university life in any way? (good or bad)</li> <li>5. Does social media affect your self-esteem? If so, how?</li> <li>6. How much impact does social media have on your life?</li> <li>7. In what way has it impacted you? Do you have any personal feelings or experiences?</li> </ol>   |
| C) Students balance daily life while being active on social media         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do you balance your daily life while playing on social media?</li> <li>2. Is using social media one of your main daily pass times?</li> <li>3. Does social media have a big part in your everyday routine?</li> <li>4. Does social media contribute to procrastination in your daily routine and while doing assignments?</li> </ol>  |
| D) How daily usage of social media impacts student's motivation to study. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does social media impact your overall motivation to study?</li> <li>2. If so, do you feel that social media is a distraction to you while you are studying, doing homework, etc.?</li> <li>3. Do you use social media to help with studies?</li> <li>4. Do you feel that social media is prioritized over your work?</li> <li>5. If you did not own any social media accounts, would you be more motivated to study?</li> </ol> |

#### 4. Results and Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the 3 main objectives, which were how social media affects university students on a daily basis, how the students balance daily life while being active on social media, and how daily usage of social media impacts the students' motivation to study. The interviewees were in a total of 15 people, and each interview clarified that each interviewee met the criteria of being a university student and aged between 18 to 24 years in the demographics section (A) above.

##### 4.1. The effect of social media on university students' daily basis and daily life balance

Based on the results of the interview, it was found that the majority of the interviewees checked social media quite a few times per day, meaning that it was a recurring activity that affects their everyday routine. The majority of the interviewees also stated that they used 3 to 5 different social media sites at the time. These results showed that they must check social media a few times per day and use 3 to 5 different social media accounts, which further showed that a lot of their time was consumed when they are checking these different sites each time per day. Therefore, to summarize, social media must take up a lot of their time daily. When the interviewees were asked what were their reasons for using social media, more than half stated that they go on social media for checking up on what is going on around them such as following up on news, for entertainment purposes, and for seeing what people are doing. However, the study of Chukwuere & Chukwuere, (2017) found that using social media is beneficial for the students to increase the learning's engagement levels, which means social media today can be used for the academic purposes as well. It also brings up what Liu (2016) stated that social media is a way for students to connect with others and facilitates interactions with their family and friends. Moreover, it also correlates to Taylor's study (2020) that social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat are commonly used for communication and interaction with others. Furthermore, Chukwuere & Chukwuere (2017) found that social media helps the students improve social interaction and relationships with lecturers as well. On the other hand, social media can be also addictive, social gathering isolation, distractive, and monophobia.



Social media affects the students on a daily basis since these findings showed that social media has integrated itself deep into these students' lives and also plays a major role in connectivity and leisure purposes. However, the research raises further questions as the majority of the interviewees stated that, regardless of how many times they use social media per day, social media does not affect their university life in any way. Some even stated that it affected them positively. However, even though they said social media did not affect them, most still admitted that it was a distraction while studying. The findings showed that even though these students check their social media frequently every day, their personal feelings demonstrated that it did not have any effect on their overall university lives, except being a distraction sometimes.

In terms of the interviewees' self-esteem, more than half stated that social media doesn't affect their self-esteem. However, the majority of females participants in the interview admitted that it does affect their self-esteem when it comes to body comparisons and unattainable beauty. The results show that in some cases, especially with females, social media can affect their self-esteem and self-body perception, which can further lead to a negative impact of social media on university students on a daily basis. It correlates to the statement of Puglia (2017) which stated that that body comparison tendency was negatively correlated with body esteem and positively correlated to social media use for body comparisons.

During the interview when the participants were asked how much impact "does social media have on your life," half of the interviewees stated that it didn't have much impact whereas the other half stated that it did have a big impact. It raises further questions in the study because these particular findings make it unable to tell what the majority of the students think. However, it coincides with the finding of Taylor (2020) which stated that students are impacted by their social media use in both positive and negative ways. The impact of social media use depends upon the students, their ability to focus, and their knowledge of how to use social media for academic purposes. In other words, every student's mindset and perception of social media will vary depending on each student. It further showed that each student has their own thought about how much impact social media has on their lives. The results of this question confirmed that half of the students have their own thoughts and the other half have other thoughts. One student stated that "social media makes me waste time more often; I feel like I could be doing something else instead, but I choose to be lazy on social media." The results exhibited that social media does get in the way of their everyday routine and that they spend a lot of time-wasting their time on these social media sites. It also displayed that their everyday routine is not as productive as it could be as a student due to social media. However, on the contrary, more than half stated that it impacted them positively. Social media helps them connect with others and see the latest news, which proves that social media impacts these interviewees more positively than negatively.

All of the interviewees stated that they all have a good balance when it comes to their daily lives and their active times on social media. They use social media when they have free time and use it when they are bored. One student stated that "If it is time to do work then work, if it is free time then it's my personal time to do whatever." Another student stated that "When I have got work to do, I tend to avoid going on social media by focusing on the job I have to complete. Like I feel a lot better on social media without the nagging feeling of having to complete my task." These are the kinds of similar responses that the interviewees stated and further shows that these interviewees have a good balance when it comes to their daily lives while being active on social media. It can be concluded that even though all the interviewees stated that social media didn't have much impact on their life, for all of them it is still one of their daily frequent pass times and they don't have any trouble with balancing their daily lives with social media. Additionally, this could be because university students are encouraged to be on top of their own work and are given the responsibility of being in charge of their own work and it is up to them whether or not they are motivated or not.

A large majority of the students stated in the findings that social media has played a big part in each of the student's everyday routines. On the contrary, when the interviewees were asked if social media contributes to procrastination in their daily routines and assignments, all of them agreed that it does indeed contribute to their procrastination, which raises further questions in the study because at the start of the interview they all stated that they had a good balance of using social media at the appropriate time and it doesn't get in the way of their work. As the researcher, it is confusing since on one hand all of the interviewees stated that they have a good balance of university work and social media time but on the other hand, they



stated that social media indeed does get in the way of their daily routine and it is the culprit of procrastination during assignments. It could further mean that social media is indeed a distraction and they do procrastinate on it but it doesn't get in the way of their studies and they have formulated their own personal balance of their daily lives and their usage of social media.

#### *4.2. The impact of social media on university student's motivation to study*

Half of the interviewees stated that social media affects their overall motivation to study negatively but on the contrary, the other half stated that it does not affect their motivation to study. This result is parallel to the study of Taylor (2020) that social media has an impact on students in both positive and negative ways. It depends on how individuals use social media. However, this is in contrast to the findings of Wang et al., (2011) which indicated that social media use has a negative impact on grades. While, Chukwuere & Chukwuere (2017) found that it affects students' educational performance. This information sparks further questions because when the interviewees were asked if social media impacted their university life overall, the majority said only positive things about their social media experience and stated that there wasn't much impact. It made the author questioned why the majority first said that social media doesn't have much impact in their everyday lives but then on the other hand when asked if social media contributed to procrastination in their daily routine and while doing assignments, half of the interviewees agreed that it does contribute. These results showed that the interviewees do not consider procrastination as a major impact or downfall when it comes to their university life. The study further explores that half of the interviewees state that social media is an overall distraction while being a student, and the other half state that it is not an overall distraction. Even though half stated that social media is a distraction, they did not consider it a major impact when it comes to their overall university life. The result showed that the students have figured out a good balance for themselves and don't allow procrastination to influence their everyday lives too much. According to the study of Qu (2011), the student's performance and responsibility depend on their choices.

The study further explores that the majority of the participants said that social media can be a tool for the students to help with their studies. It can be a way for them to interact with their peers and with their professors. In Ivala & Gachago's theoretical framework (2012), it showed that students were simultaneously involved in academic and social activities. The students can also create learning contexts when engaging in educational activities both on and off-campus. Lastly, the students can transfer social media from a social context to an educational context. When they are studying away from university, it is a good tool to use to connect to help each other and get feedback. Social media is a way for these students to allow access to communicate with the university while they are away from the campus. Overall, it plays a big role in how the university students interact with their university, how they connect, and how they can attain feedback from their professors; it creates a big online community. It coincides with what social media is about. Technology over the years has improved the way that individuals communicate and socialize with others (Gannon, 2014). The interviewees were then asked if they felt that social media was prioritized over their study work. A large majority stated no, and that work comes first before social media. It can be concluded that these students have a good balance of their daily university lives while being active on social media and daily usage of social media does not impact their motivation to study. Within this, an interviewee said, "work comes first" another says, "work before social media."

For the final question in the interview, the interviewees were asked if they did not own any social media accounts, would they be more motivated to study? More than half stated no, and the rest stated yes. It displayed that even if social media were not involved in the student's life, the majority states that it would not have any impact on their study, and their feelings towards their studying and university would be the same, which links to the previous question when the author asked how much impact social media has in their everyday lives, and the majority stated not much impact. It proves that social media is not a big issue that is holding them down from their university life balance.



## 5. Conclusion

This research expressed that all university students are indeed active on social media and own several social media accounts that they check frequently throughout the day. They use it as a way to connect and for leisure purposes, especially when they are bored. According to the objectives of this study, it can be concluded that social media also does not affect university life much and if they had to get rid of social media altogether, it would not affect their studies. However, as being said, even though it does not affect university life as much, it still is a big distraction concerning their studying and daily life routine. Furthermore, social media also strongly affects procrastination when it comes to student's daily life and studying time, which negatively affects their motivation to study. Besides, there is a strong need to check what their friends are doing, and to connect is always a constant distraction. The findings expressed that every student has their own thoughts and feelings depending on their attitude towards university and other factors.

On the other hand, even though social media is a distraction and contributes to their procrastination, it does not affect the balance of their daily life and university. Besides, social media is never prioritized over work and is always put second when work is due, leading to not much correlation between students' daily life while studying in university. From the findings, social media can also be a tool to connect and improve their study quality, which positively affects these university students on a daily basis. The students feel better when they can connect with their peers to help one another, gain feedback from their professors, and connect with their university as if they brought their university home with them. It gives the students more security and confidence when it comes to their studying and university life, the security of help and guidance always being around the corner. Social media does get in the way of their study when it comes to procrastination. However, the results showed that the majority of the participants agree that even if social media has some downfalls regarding their everyday lives, there is nothing too serious and no issues on a big scale. According to the findings, this study suggested that it will be beneficial for both students and lecturers if classes utilize social media platforms as tools for class activities. Social media platforms are not only used for connecting between the lecturers and students, some social media platforms such as Tiktok can be also used to create video content for a class project and presentation as well. This idea would help to motivate the students to study.

Nonetheless, for future research, it is important to take into account that each student will have their own opinions depending on their priorities and characteristics. Therefore, even though a student said that social media does not have much impact on their life, it still does interfere with how motivated they are to do work and is the culprit for their procrastination during the study. This research successfully investigated what were the overall effects that social media has on university students on a daily basis. It also emphasized how the students balance their lives when they are so active on social media. Furthermore, it also investigated whether or not social media has a role to play when it comes to the motivation of students. This research targeted only university students who are within the age group of 18-24 years, which is bachelor's degree students, and the interviews of 15 participants were used to find any correlations, similarities, and differences between the students. To get more precise data, further research must be conducted to find out more details.

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