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Stressor–Strain–Outcome Dynamics of Digital Distractions: Investigating Social Media Usage, Subjective Well-Being, and Academic Performance Among University Students

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ABSTRACT

With the rapid development in technologies and social media applications, university life has changed completely when it comes to daily activities and communication as well as the educational settings. Though, on the one hand, platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and WhatsApp bring numerous possibilities for networking, collaborative learning, and sharing educational resources, on the other hand, their frequent use creates serious problems on psychological and academic levels. The present study is going to explore the interdependent relationships between social media usage (SMU) patterns, subjective well-being (SWB), and academic performance of university students at the University of Sargodha in Pakistan. Particularly, the research will analyze such aspects as social media usage frequency, platforms used, reasons for using social media, effects on psychology such as upward social comparisons and related academic results.A descriptive research methodology has been chosen for conducting this research. A sample of 331 students from undergraduate and graduate programs at various faculty of the University of Sargodha was selected using a stratified random sampling method. To collect data, questionnaires were used including measures of social media usage, subjective well-being scales and academic performance indicators. Analyses have been made with the help of statistical software SPSS Version The results show that social media is an integral part of college students' lives and most of them are actively using it daily on a smartphone for more than three hours with a view to socializing, entertainment, and education. However, whereas moderate and goal-directed use is positively correlated with collaboration and academic motivation, compulsive and obsessive use causes serious academic and psychological risks. Constant access to idealized images of peers stimulates social comparison and leads to higher levels of anxiety, stress, and poor psychological well-being. Besides, digital task-switching is not related to learning and long periods of time spent online are linked with cognitive distraction, time substitution, late assignments, and lower grade point average. Social media plays a double role in university students' life since it functions both as an efficient means of education and as a cause of psychological problems and academic challenges. To create a healthy balance between them, the following measures should be taken by institutions and educators.

Introduction

Social media has played a crucial role in changing the way people communicate, interact, and learn in the digital age today to be a key feature of the lives of university students (Junejo, 2022; Zafar & Mobin, 2023). Social media platforms including Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and WhatsApp provide endless possibilities for social networking, group collaboration, and learning (Yang et al., 2022). In developing nations such as Pakistan, due to cheap smartphones and internet usage, the level of digitization among youth has been exceptionally high (Khan et al., 2020). Although social media could be used by students to share resources and build communities, its extensive usage creates several psychological and academic issues that require research attention.

The consequences of excessive social media use on students' SWB and academic performance are far-reaching and profound. While purposeful social media use such as joining academic study circles, studying educational material, and developing social networks contributes to emotional adjustment and motivates academic performance (Alshuaibi et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2022), excessive or addictive social media usage always leads to negative consequences like time displacement, impaired concentration, and insomnia (Kuss & Griffiths, 2023; Khan & Javed, 2026). Frequent viewing of their idealized peers leads to upward social comparisons, which are rooted in Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory and have been shown to lead to increased anxiety, depression, and dissatisfaction with university students (Hussain & Riaz, 2020; Khan & Javed, 2026).

In addition to this, engaging in multitasking through social media during lecture classes and academic study hours greatly hinders cognitive concentration and lowers academic productivity (Twenge & Campbell, 2024). Numerous studies that have been carried out in higher education institutes in Pakistan indicate a highly negative correlation between high levels of social media use and academic measures like CGPA and assignment submission on time (Kauser & Awan, 2019). However, despite the emergence of several international literatures in this regard, there is a pressing need to conduct local studies to examine the relationship between social media use, subjective well-being, and academic performance in regional Pakistani universities like the University of Sargodha.

The current study addresses this gap in literature by conducting an analysis on the different effects of social media usage on the subjective well-being and academic performance of university students.

Background of the Study

During the last two decades, the global world of communication has been revolutionized with the rapid rise of the social media technology revolution. Social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp are no longer used merely as fun recreational tools but have transformed into essential infrastructure for communicating, disseminating information and building a network of connections (Junejo et al., 2022). For university students of today—digital natives—these social media platforms offer unique opportunities to build their peer networks and participate in collaborative learning (Yang et al., 2022). Rapid developments in the field of affordable smartphones and mobile broadband services in developing countries such as Pakistan have resulted in widespread use of digital technologies by youth populations (Saqib, 2025).

Even though digital tools have many benefits regarding academic learning, cooperation among peers, and social aspects, the widespread usage of these platforms without regulation creates numerous psychological and academic issues (Kuss & Griffiths, 2023). There is increasing empirical evidence pointing out the double-edged sword: if social media platforms are used properly in the process of academic research and education, then this will help to enhance the students' motivation (Alshuaibi et al., 2018). At the same time, when social media platforms are consumed excessively, then there are negative consequences.

The psychological implications that come from extensive social media use are especially alarming when viewed considering higher education institutions. Theoretically based on social comparison theory proposed by Festinger (1954), such constant contact with heavily edited images of others' lives leads to frequent cases of upward social comparisons. Research has firmly established a connection between such activity and increased levels of anxiety, depressive feelings, emotional exhaustion, and reduced life satisfaction in college students (Elsayed, 2025; Qamar & Ali, 2026). Also, multitasking unrelated to work (such as checking notifications while attending classes or studying) hinders cognitive performance, reduces efficiency, and causes poor academic results and low CGPA (Anwar, 2025).

Even though many studies in international literature provide evidence about the links between digital media use, psychological well-being, and academic performance, contextual differences still must be considered. The universities located in Pakistan, for example, the University of Sargodha, offer certain sociocultural context, which includes robust family living environment as opposed to high academic stress and different quality of the infrastructure available to the digital technologies. It is crucial to understand what types of social media use can influence students' well-being and academic performance in the setting. Therefore, the current research seeks to investigate relationships empirically.

Review of Related Literature

The fast spread of digital technology over the last twenty years has significantly changed communication and information accessing patterns as well as the social network formation of the youth generation. Currently, students at universities utilize social media networks like Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp not as entertaining devices but as essential parts of their lives. In developing nations like Pakistan, the extensive use of affordable smartphones and mobile internet connections has facilitated the use of digital technologies by university students; thus, social networking websites have become an integral part of their everyday lives as well as academics. Thus, there is a substantial amount of scholarly work conducted on the effects of social media utilization by students on their psychological well-being and education.

For a comprehensive comprehension of the psychosocial processes through which social media has an impact on students' well-being, one needs sound theoretical models. One of the most well-known is the social comparison theory of Festinger (1954), which claims that people have an inherent tendency to assess their own beliefs and skills by comparing them with others'. Within the modern digital environment, social media users are constantly bombarded with idealized portrayals of peers' successes, physical appearance, and lifestyles.

Expanding this model to the context of higher education, modern research shows that constant social media scrolling and the exposure to such idealized profiles leads to regular social upward comparison. This process has been shown to lead to negative psychological consequences, namely increases in anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion, and reduced life satisfaction of the university students (Elsayed, 2025; Hussain & Riaz, 2020; Qamar & Ali, 2026). Moreover, models focused on stressors-strains-outcome relationship (as proposed by, for example, Cao et al., 2018) claim that compulsive dependency on social media results in social media fatigue which negatively impacts the subjective well-being and academic burnout.

Usage studies have found university students to be "digital natives," who engage frequently across various platforms. Usage studies performed among university students within South Asia have shown that most of these students access social media several times a day, with daily usage typically surpassing three hours. The smartphone device becomes the main means through which university students constantly remain connected.

Nevertheless, researchers found that there are behavioral differences between users that can be attributed to their intentions. Researchers have divided user engagement into active engagement (such as interpersonal communication, content creation, and collaboration) and passive engagement (such as browsing and content viewing). Whereas active and meaningful engagement tends to lead to positive social connectivity and academic resource sharing, passive engagement is highly predictive of psychological distress and behavioral addiction (Kuss & Griffiths, 2023; Yang et al., 2022).

Subjective well-being composite of life satisfaction, positive effect, and the relative lack of negative effect—is extremely vulnerable to one's digital practices. First, social media serves as an essential means of building social connections and creating a feeling of community that reduces one's experience of loneliness, especially in the case of students living far from their families (Junejo et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2022).

However, excessive and unrestrained use entails psychological risks. For instance, the fear of missing out, defined as a generalized concern about the possibility that one might miss rewarding experiences of other people, leads to a compulsion to check (Dhir et al., 2018). The described pattern of behavior tends to disrupt one's sleep architecture, cause constant fatigue, and provoke anxiety and depression in young people (Alonzo et al., 2021; Keles et al., 2020). In this way, although social media may positively impact relational well-being if one uses it in a moderate manner, compulsion ruins psychological flourishing.

The nexus between social media use and academic success is one which has been extensively studied by researchers and scholars, usually characterized by opposing views on their educational potential or distractions. There is an increasing trend of literature showing how social media can be used as a learning tool. YouTube videos, specific Facebook groups that promote studying, and WhatsApp academic accounts help students collaborate and learn from each other, exchanging information fast, as well as using tutorials (Alshuaibi et al., 2018; Al-Rahmi et al., 2022). If social media are being used in an intentional way for research and professional purposes, they can increase motivation and enhance classroom activities(Ayaz Khan J, Wali Ahmed F, Shaikh N, et al. July 13, 2025).

On the contrary, there is a large amount of empirical evidence indicating the serious risks of academic distraction and displacing activities. Task-unrelated digital multitasking, i.e. looking through social media notifications during classes and designated study periods, diverts attention, decreases deep processing and leads to procrastination. Research has clearly indicated that frequent use of social media websites leads to a reduction in effective learning time, thereby lowering CGPAs, missing deadlines and poor academic achievements (Kuss & Griffiths, 2023; Twenge & Campbell, 2024). In the regional context of Pakistan, social media usage has been

In conclusion, from the reviewed literature, it is evident that there are multiple ways in which social media use impacts university students, being an enabler of the link between social and academic worlds while at the same time being a source of psychological stress and poor academic performance. Nevertheless, most of the literature reviewed is derived from Western and urban areas. There is an urgent need for local studies on this matter to be conducted. Particularly, it is important to understand how this relationship takes place in the context of regional public universities of Pakistan such as the University of Sargodha, where students experience a unique cultural living environment and face other challenges.

Statement of the Problem

In current higher education settings, the explosive expansion of social media channels—such as Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and WhatsApp—has radically changed the way university students interact, seek information, and conduct their day-to-day activities (Junejo et al., 2022). Although such digital communities provide significant value in terms of informal learning, peer collaboration, and socialization (Yang et al., 2022), the widespread and uncontrolled use of social media poses critical psychological and academic problems (Kuss & Griffiths, 2023).

One of the key issues faced by modern educators and researchers is the double sidedness of extensive digital communication. On one hand, students regularly use digital communities for academic resource sharing and education (Alshuaibi et al., 2018). On the other hand, excessive and compulsive usage regularly leads to the development of maladaptive behavior patterns, such as time displacement, sleep problems, and distractions while conducting lessons and studying (Twenge & Campbell, 2024). Exposure to idealized peer images leads to upward social comparisons according to Festinger's (1954) model, which are reliably associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression, and reduced life satisfaction in university students (Elsayed, 2025; Qamar & Ali, 2026).

In addition, empirical studies indicate an emerging inverse link between compulsive digital multitasking and academic measures such as CGPAs and academic deadline misses (Anwar, 2025; Kauser & Awan, 2019). While considerable empirical literature is available globally on the consumption of digital media, there remains a notable empirical gap in understanding the dynamics of such processes within regional public universities in developing nations, especially universities like the University of Sargodha, where students are dealing with their own distinctive sociocultural living dynamics, including predominantly family living conditions and increasing academic pressures, among other factors.

In the absence of empirical examination of specific patterns of social media use and their impact on both subjective well-being and academic performance, it will not be possible for teachers, counselors, mental health workers, and university administrators to develop appropriate interventions. This research aims to fill this gap.

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate how social media usage influences university students' subjective well-being and academic performance. To comprehensively address this aim, the study sets out the following specific objectives:

- To explore the extent and patterns of social media usage among university students, paying particular attention to widely used platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and WhatsApp.
- To assess the levels of subjective well-being among university students using standardized psychological scales, including dimensions of life satisfaction, happiness, and emotional balance.
- To examine students' academic achievement through objective scores, such as GPA or self-reported academic performance.

Limitations, Scope, and Significance of The Study

In any research, there are certain restrictions that may affect the relevance of its generalizability and interpretation. The present study is not an exception. Firstly, the data are based on the self-reported level of social media use, subjective well-being, and academic performance. The social desirability bias or poor recall, which can reduce the accuracy of the responses, can also be applied to the self-reports (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Second, the research design of the study is cross-sectional that will be used to capture the information at a single point in time. This kind of design cannot enable any causal inference although it is applicable in the establishment of relationship between variables (Levin, 2006). Thirdly, the research is done in few universities, and this may restrict the extrapolation of the findings to a bigger population of students in Pakistan, or even in other countries. Finally, the academic performance is estimated based on reported CGPA or grades of the students that may not be capable of capturing the other learning aspects such as critical thinking, acquisition of skills, and their creativity.

With all its flaws, this study is still quite useful in its attempt to show how the application of social media influences the academic and mental performance of the students in higher education institutions. Indeed, this research has great significance for different stakeholders since it gives a balanced perspective of the influence of social media usage by the students on their well-being and academic performance. It can help students realize the range of influence their social media activities have on their psychological condition and academic success. This information can help them adopt more beneficial approaches to social media usage to keep a balance between the usage of social media and studying.

This research is significant for different stakeholders who will be able to obtain comprehensive information about the connection between the use of social media and subjective well-being and academic performance of the university students. This information will allow the students to understand the influence their social media use has on their psychological well-being and their academic success. Thus, it will allow them to make informed decisions regarding their social media use and develop a strategy for how to balance the use of the

The research focuses on students pursuing undergraduate studies in a particular university or region (please specify the name of your university and/or region here). The research seeks to examine the degree and trends in social media usage, with special focus on social media sites that have been widely adopted, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and WhatsApp. The subjective well-being will be measured through psychological scales such as life satisfaction, happiness, and emotional well-being. Academic performance will be measured using objective measures such as GPA.

Research Methodology

The Methodology chapter of the book discusses the way the research was conducted. It discusses the way the study was designed, the participants in the study, how individuals were selected, what instruments were used and how data was collected. The methods to ensure the findings are right, credible and equitable were also discussed. The second section examines what the information has claimed and what it implies how the feeling happy and satisfied and doing well in school relates to the use of social media among university students.

Research Design

The study used a descriptive research design. This would be a good design for the perceptions regarding the use of media, subjective well-being, and academic success of university students.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the students at the University of Sargodha. The University of Sargodha has students representing various faculties such as the Social Sciences, Education, Management Sciences and Natural Sciences. The students at the university were selected as they consume media frequently and they form a good sample to research information about the impact of social media on academic and psychological performance.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The University of Sargodha was selected as the target in the study of 360 students. The students were chosen based on a table that assists in deciding the number of individuals to enroll in a study. Although the table recommended adding several students, 360 was believed to be sufficient to achieve good results. To ensure that background and level of study students were represented, a stratified random sampling method was applied. This is one way of ensuring bias is avoided. Make sure that the sample is representative of the larger group of students. The sampling method was a -proportional stratified sampling method, implying that the same number of students was selected in each faculty as opposed to selecting the students according to the faculty. This was done to simplify comparing the results across the faculties and departments. The students were separated into groups in terms of their faculty. Three faculties were selected randomly thereafter: the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the Faculty of Sciences. A total of 360 students were selected out of each of these faculties, 120 students. The students in the sample were selected in every department within a faculty to ensure that the sample was balanced. As an example in the Faculty of Social Sciences, 40 students were selected for the Institute of Education 40 in the Department of Psychology and 40 in the Noon Business School. It was also done in the faculties with 40 students selected in each department. This methodology served to make the sample representative of the population of the students in the University of Sargodha. The use of social media was considered concerning the well-being of university students and their academic performance. The analysis of the results was conducted to determine whether there existed any correlation between the use of social media and the following outcomes.

Research Instrument

To conduct this study, we measured social media usage using three tools, subjective well-being and academic achievement. Our interest was to find out the relationship between social media use, subjective well-being, and academic performance. We had three tools to assist us in doing that. These are the tools that have been selected as they measure what we want to measure and have been applied in the past when it comes to education and research in psychology. The results obtained using these tools are reliable and can be compared to others of a similar study. This time we shall discuss each of these tools individually.

Components he studies covered a few scales as well as a large portion of the people in the study and some other questions to be able to have a better understanding of how social media influences people, how happy they are and how they are doing in school. These questions were responded to on a scale of one to five where one represented that you strongly disagree and five strongly agree. The questions were divided into parts: Section B was regarding media use. It examined its frequency of use in case people can easily access it in case it is beneficial or detrimental to their schoolwork and whether they feel they need it too much. Section C regarded the way people feel. It examined whether they are happy when they feel connected to other people and whether social media causes them to feel bad. Section D was concerning the performance of the people at school. It also examined whether they believe they do a job when they use social media to assist them in school and whether social media is detrimental to schoolwork. These additional questions were included to have a glimpse of the individuals in the study and to determine whether there were any other things to be learned.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher first obtained formal permission from the Department of Education, University of Sargodha, to conduct the study. After receiving approval, data were collected both physically (in classrooms) and digitally (through Google Forms). The researcher explained the study's purpose to participants and obtained their informed consent before distributing the questionnaires. Participants were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. They were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Completed questionnaires were collected, coded, and entered SPSS for analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation of Results

The SPSS, Version 28, was used in the analysis of data obtained by questionnaires. The following statistical methods were used: Characteristics and main variables, such as social media usage and academic achievement were summarized using Descriptive Statistics, including Mean, Standard deviation, Frequency and Percentage. Inferential Statistics were used to test hypotheses. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was also used to establish the relationship between media usage, subjective well-being and academic achievement. The findings depicted the relationship between the use of social media and well-being and academic performance. The Multiple Regression Analysis was used to examine the effects of the use of social media on the dependent variables, subjective well-being and academic achievement. All tests were set at the level of significance of $p < .05$.

Demographic Analysis

We have data of 331 university students. These students are mainly students at the University of Sargodha in Pakistan. This was the data we obtained through the plan provided to us. This plan indicated that we would obtain 310 responses and thus we believe that we have a substantial amount of the data we were seeking. We were attempting to get 360 student data. We examined the students to determine what they are like. We checked such things as whether they are a boy or a girl, their origin, their place of residence, what they are learning and their school performance. We also examined their use of the internet and social media. We were interested in whether these things can influence the way they feel happy and the performance at school. We were counting the number of students who said things. Assuming a student could make a choice than one answer, we counted each answer. Then we determined the percentage of students who provided each answer. We also compared the way various things were related to one another. As an illustration we considered the use of media and academic performance and the University of Sargodha students. The reason behind us doing this was to gain an insight into the data, both that of the university students and the University of Sargodha students.

The following is the gender distribution of the respondents:

Table 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Count	Percentage
Female	184	55.59%

Gender	Count	Percentage
Male	147	44.41%

The sample is somewhat female-biased (55.59%), which can be due to a higher number of females in some of the faculties of the University of Sargodha (e.g., Arts & Humanities or Social Sciences, according to the methodology). This gender bias would potentially affect findings around social media use since the literature shows that females tend to be more active in social media as a medium of social interaction which may have an impact on subjective well-being due to the heightened social connectedness or pressures of comparison.

The geographical location of the respondents:

Table 2: Geographic Location of the Respondents

Geographic Location	Count	Percentage
Urban	171	51.66%
Rural	160	48.34%

It indicates that the close balance between urban and rural students can be considered a good representation of different backgrounds, which can be related to the stratified sampling strategy. Rural students may experience more difficulty with regular internet use (as discussed in crosstabs below) and may otherwise exhibit the differences in social media use, such as less frequent but more intentional use of the internet to access academic resources, than urban students who may be better connected to the internet to consume entertainment or social content.

The living situation of the respondents:

Table 3: Living Situation of the Respondents

Living Situation	Count	Percentage
With family	222	67.07%
With roommates	61	18.43%
On campus	33	9.97%
Off campus (alone)	15	4.53%

As per all of them, most of them stay with their families (67.07%), which is very common in the Pakistani society since the support of families is very much appreciated there. It can be beneficial for improving their well-being due to the emotional support provided but can affect the social media activity independently (such as restricted access to social media). The students who live with roommates or university accommodation (approximately 28% of each) might indulge in peer social media activity.

The degree program of the respondents:

Table 4: Degree Program of the Respondents

Degree Program	Count	Percentage
Bachelor's	136	41.09%
Bachelor’s	85	25.68%
Master's	58	17.52%
Master’s	34	10.27%
Other	14	4.23%
PhD	4	1.21%

The structure of the student body at the university is given in Table 4.4, where Undergraduate students constitute the majority (66.77%, combined Bachelor variants). In addition, there is underrepresentation of postgraduate students (27.79%, combined Master variants), which will bias the findings in favor of their initial educational experience. PhD and Other students are insignificant in number, which limits the contribution of information about more advanced students who may benefit from using social media for networking purposes.

The semester level of the respondents:

Table 5: Semester of the Respondents

Semester	Count	Percentage
Fifth	84	25.38%
Sixth	75	22.66%
Fourth	67	20.24%
Third	59	17.82%
Seventh	30	9.06%
Eighth	11	3.32%
Second	5	1.51%

This suggests that the core consists of the Mid-to-Late semester students (Third to Sixth: 80.7%), showing that the sample consists of students who have developed their own study habits. The Early semester students (Second: 1.51%) are under-represented, hence no data can be collected on the phases of adjustment where the use of social media aids in social integration. The Late semesters (Seventh/Eighth: 12.38%) will show more adult uses like career networking.

The current GPA range of the respondents:

Table 6: Current GPA Range of the Respondents

Current GPA Range	Count	Percentage
3.0–3.5	187	56.50%
2.5–3.0	87	26.28%
3.5–4.0	56	16.92%
<2.5	1	0.30%

This is a sign that Most students have average to above average GPAs (3.0+: 73.42%), making this a potential high-achieving and/or positively biased sample (self-reported). Low performers (<2.5) do not occur often enough (0.30) for the sample to include those who are most affected by the negative aspects of social media, such as being distracted. The pattern here shows academic resilience, but gender differences can be observed in the crosstabs below.

The Internet Access Quality of the respondents:

Table 7: Internet Access Quality of the Respondents

Internet Access Quality	Count	Percentage
Good	185	55.89%
Excellent	100	30.21%
Fair	45	13.60%
Poor	1	0.30%

Positive access (Good/Excellent: 86.1) is dominant while social media are engaging. The smaller Fair/Poor access category (13.9%) can relate to the rural region (crosstabs) limiting use and possibly leading to inequity of learning due to limited online sources access.

The Average Daily Usage of the respondents:

Table 8: Average Daily Usage (Hours) of the Respondents

Average Daily Usage (Hours)	Count	Percentage
3–4	176	53.17%
1–2	91	27.49%
5+	49	14.80%
0–1	15	4.53%

This indicates that Moderate-to-high usage (3+ hours: 67.97) is the dominant usage pattern according to the literature on digital natives. Heavy users (5+: 14.80) might be dependent users of this technology and this might affect their health and performance; whereas low users (032: 32.02) might be the disciplined or access-restricted ones.

The Device Used Most by the respondents:

Table 9: Device Used Most by the Respondents

Device Used Most	Count	Percentage
Smartphone	176	53.17%
Multiple devices	111	33.53%
Laptop	44	13.29%

It is indicative of the fact that the Smartphones are dominant (53.17) since they offer mobility along with constant connectivity; therefore, constant accessibility. The number of gadgets used indicates that they are technologically savvy and possibly multitasking as in studying at their laptops and socializing on their mobiles.

The Number of Active Social Media Accounts of the respondents:

Table 10: Number of Active Social Media Accounts of the Respondents

Number of Active Social Media Accounts	Count	Percentage
3–4	156	47.13%
1–2	119	35.95%
5+	56	16.92%

The most common form of engagement is that of Moderate (3-4: 47.13%), which means varied usage of the platform without being overwhelmed. High users (5+: 16.92) have the potential to be exposed to more variety, but the danger of scattered attention and well-being lies.

The Primary Social Media Platforms of the respondents:

Table 11: Primary Social Media Platforms (Multi-Select) of the Respondents

Platform	Count	Percentage (of Total Respondents)
Instagram	228	68.88%
Snapchat	204	61.63%
YouTube	179	54.08%

Facebook	162	48.94%
TikTok	113	34.14%
Other	65	19.64%
Twitter	49	14.80%

This means that the most utilized platforms are Visual and interactive (Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube: top three), which also means that the platforms are preferred for the creation and consumption of visual content, not text-based (Twitter: 14.80%). It is the same trend in Pakistan where young people may like to watch those visual platforms, but at the same time, it may result in comparison of themselves, which may influence their health negatively. The big category "Other" (19.64%) is a synonym for niche/local platforms.

The Primary Purpose of Usage of the respondents:

Table 12: Primary Purpose of Usage (Multi-Select) of the Respondents

Purpose	Count	Percentage (of Total Respondents)
Social interaction	232	70.09%
Entertainment	181	54.68%
Academic purposes	156	47.13%
News consumption	90	27.19%
Content creation	46	13.90%

Uses for socialization and entertainment purposes make up the highest users (social: 70.09%, entertainment: 54.68%) because social media can help people become more connected, which can make them happy; however, it is detrimental to the academic performance of users. Academic use (47.13%) is significant and used for collaborative learning purposes, though it is lower than social use.

Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Social Media Usage (SMU)

The following is the Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Social Media Usage (SMU):

The results of the Likert scale responses of each section of the questionnaire (Section B – Social Media Usage, Section C – Subjective Well-Being, and Section D – Academic Achievement) are presented in greater detail. The analysis was conducted on 331 students at universities. Each item uses a 5-point scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree (SDA), 2 = Disagree (DA), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly Agree (SA). Tables show the distribution of responses (counts and percentages) per item, the average (M) and standard deviation (SD). A score of >3.0 represents overall agreement and a score <3.0 represents disagreement or neutrality. SDs indicate the spread of responses (the smaller the SD the more agreement). Results are analyzed with the help of the subsections of questionnaires and interpretations of results are given to analyze the results per subsection. These interpretations were used to place the results in context in relation to the research aims (e.g., how much social media was being used, how well the participants were feeling, academic attainment) and hypotheses (e.g., how social media usage relates to outcomes).

Dimension 1: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Frequency and Accessibility (B1–B5)

The following is the Dimension 1: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Frequency and Accessibility (B1–B5):

Table 13: Dimension 1: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Frequency and Accessibility (B1–B5)

Item	Statement	1 (SDA)	2 (DA)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
B1	I use social media every day.	18 (5.44%)	18 (5.44%)	95 (28.70%)	140 (42.30%)	60 (18.13%)
B2	I spend more than 3 hours daily on social media platforms.	31 (9.37%)	62 (18.73%)	113 (34.14%)	81 (24.47%)	44 (13.29%)

Item	Statement	1 (SDA)	2 (DA)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
B3	I primarily access social media through my smartphone.	5 (1.51%)	43 (12.99%)	98 (29.61%)	158 (47.73%)	27 (8.16%)
B4	I use multiple social media platforms daily.	18 (5.44%)	18 (5.44%)	159 (48.04%)	111 (33.53%)	25 (7.55%)
B5	I access social media at various times throughout the day.	6 (1.81%)	7 (2.11%)	113 (34.14%)	185 (55.89%)	20 (6.04%)

According to what was shown above, the questions refer to daily routines, time spending, devices, platforms, and time for using social media. This section illustrates medium to high frequency and accessibility of using social media among students, answering Research Question 1 (frequency and patterns of usage). The range of means is from 3.14 to 3.62, which means that there is generally a consensus on the frequent usage of social media. B1: M=3.62 (Use it daily) and B5: M=3.62 (I use it whenever I want) are widely supported and more than 60 percent agrees or strongly agrees, which shows that social media is an integral part of the everyday life of students. The dominance of the Smartphones (B3: M=3.48, 55.89% agreement) is consistent with the trends of mobility among the youth in Pakistan. However, time (over 3 hours) (B2: M=3.14) is more variable (SD=1.15) and only 37.76% agree on that, which proves that not all students are heavy users, which could be explained by academic reasons. There is a diversified engagement through multiple platforms (B4: M=3.32), however, a neutrality (48.04) shows that there is a limitation in using a small number of apps. In any case, the presented patterns confirm Hypothesis

Dimension 2: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Academic Engagement (B6–B10)

The following is the Dimension 2: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Academic Engagement (B6–B10):

Table 14: Dimension 2: Frequency Analysis of Academic Engagement (B6–B10)

Item	Statement	1 (SDA)	2 (DA)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
B6	I use social media for academic purposes (e.g., research, study groups).	14 (4.23%)	30 (9.06%)	141 (42.60%)	123 (37.16%)	23 (6.95%)
B7	I follow educational pages or influencers for academic support.	14 (4.23%)	7 (2.11%)	126 (38.07%)	158 (47.73%)	26 (7.85%)
B8	I use social media to stay updated on academic events or opportunities.	16 (4.83%)	27 (8.16%)	99 (29.91%)	158 (47.73%)	31 (9.37%)
B9	I collaborate with classmates on academic projects via social media.	14 (4.23%)	16 (4.83%)	160 (48.34%)	97 (29.31%)	44 (13.29%)
B10	Social media helps me find resources to understand academic content.	6 (1.81%)	8 (2.42%)	148 (44.71%)	145 (43.81%)	24 (7.25%)

These items explore social media's role in research, educational content, events, collaboration, and resources. This indicates that the level of academic engagement of the students in social media is moderate (3.343.53), thus indicating the positive aspect of the use of social media (Objective 1). The most prominent ones are the educational material (B7: M=3.53, 55.58%) and the updating (B8: M=3.49, 57.10%), which can be converted into informal learning using websites such as YouTube and Facebook. The finding of the sources (B10: M=3.52) and the collaboration (B9: M=3.43) is positive; however, there is low level of neutrality (e.g., B9: 48.34%), indicating inconsistent usage, which can be due to the institutional barriers in Pakistan. Academic usage (B6: M=3.34) is the least agreeable (13.29%), indicating that the use of social media is for leisure purposes. Low SDs (e.g., B10: 0.74) indicate the agreement of the usefulness, and thus Hypothesis 3 (the purpose moderates the effects of the moderators, and the academic focus is one such moderator), where academic focus enhances achievement, is supported.

Dimension 3: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Dependency and Distraction (B11–B15)

The following is the Dimension 3: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Dependency and Distraction (B11–B15):

Table 15: Dimension 3: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Dependency and Distraction (B11–B15)

Item	Statement	1 (SDA)	2 (DA)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
B11	I often check social media during study time, which distracts me.	32 (9.67%)	54 (16.31%)	136 (41.09%)	81 (24.47%)	28 (8.46%)
B12	I use social media during class or lectures.	33 (9.97%)	40 (12.08%)	145 (43.81%)	86 (25.98%)	27 (8.16%)
B13	I feel anxious when I cannot access social media.	16 (4.83%)	34 (10.27%)	181 (54.68%)	77 (23.26%)	23 (6.95%)
B14	I find it hard to focus on tasks without checking social media.	10 (3.02%)	6 (1.81%)	95 (28.70%)	194 (58.61%)	26 (7.85%)
B15	Social media use takes up time I could spend on academic work.	17 (5.14%)	26 (7.85%)	165 (49.85%)	92 (27.79%)	31 (9.37%)

These items measure checking during study, class use, anxiety, focus issues, and time displacement. Indeed, the subsection implies medium dependency and distraction (mean 3.06 3.66) meaning negative usage (Objective 4). The focus issues (B14: M=3.66, 66.46%) are highly supported and the SD (0.77) is the smallest which means that it is a strong agreement in terms of the existing literature on the harm caused by multitasking. Similar trends are visible for time displacement (B15: M=3.28) and class use (B12: M=3.10) where 37.16% of people support distractions. Anxiety (B13: M=3.17) is neutral-dominant (54.68%), which means that not all people are addicts. Higher SD (e.g., B11: 1.06) means variability which can be achieved through intensity of use. This proves Hypothesis 2 (negative relation with achievement) since distractions may lower performance.

Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Subjective Well-Being (SWB)

The Following is the Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Subjective Well-Being (SWB):

Dimension 1: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Subjective Well-Being Positive Effect (C1–C5)

The following is the Dimension 1: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Subjective Well-Being Positive Effect (C1–C5):

Table 16: Dimension 1: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Subjective Well-Being Positive Effect (C1–C5)

Item	Statement	1 (SDA)	2 (DA)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
C1	I feel happy with my life.	5 (1.51%)	3 (0.91%)	147 (44.41%)	142 (42.90%)	34 (10.27%)
C2	I am satisfied with my overall life circumstances.	4 (1.21%)	1 (0.30%)	135 (40.79%)	158 (47.73%)	33 (9.97%)
C3	I feel confident about my future.	4 (1.21%)	18 (5.44%)	137 (41.39%)	147 (44.41%)	25 (7.55%)
C4	I sleep well and wake up refreshed.	4 (1.21%)	3 (0.91%)	128 (38.67%)	167 (50.45%)	29 (8.76%)
C5	I feel optimistic about my personal goals.	16 (4.83%)	19 (5.74%)	187 (56.50%)	82 (24.77%)	27 (8.16%)

These items evaluate happiness, satisfaction, confidence, sleep, and optimism. It is observed that the Positive effect is of medium-high intensity (range of means 3.26-3.65), which answers Research Question 2 (levels of SWB). The agreement (57.70%+) is high in satisfaction (C2: M=3.65) and sleep (C4: M=3.65), with low SDs (0.700.71) implying consistency, which can be explained by family support in Pakistan. Optimism (C5: M=3.26) is moderate with neutral (56.50%) attitude due to academic pressure. It shows resilient SWB overall, but variation (C5: SD=0.87) implies sub-groups affected by external factors, as per Hypothesis 1 (relation with use).

Dimension 2: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Social Connectedness (C6–C10)

The following is the Dimension 2: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Social Connectedness (C6–C10):

Table 17: Dimension 2: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Social Connectedness (C6–C10)

Item	Statement	1 (SDA)	2 (DA)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
C6	I am satisfied with my social relationships.	2 (0.60%)	19 (5.74%)	82 (24.77%)	204 (61.63%)	24 (7.25%)
C7	Social media helps me maintain meaningful relationships.	3 (0.91%)	11 (3.32%)	113 (34.14%)	175 (52.87%)	29 (8.76%)
C8	Social media makes me feel connected and supported.	16 (4.83%)	22 (6.65%)	181 (54.68%)	85 (25.68%)	27 (8.16%)
C9	I use social media to strengthen ties with peers.	14 (4.23%)	32 (9.67%)	159 (48.04%)	98 (29.61%)	28 (8.46%)
C10	Social media helps me feel part of a community.	18 (5.44%)	22 (6.65%)	190 (57.40%)	76 (22.96%)	25 (7.55%)

These items assess relationship satisfaction and social media's role in connections. As it is shown, the level of Connectedness is moderate (mean 3.21-3.69), relationship satisfaction (C6: mean 3.69, 68.88% agree) is high, but the role of social media is ambiguous. There is a positive relationship between the maintenance of relationships (C7: mean 3.65), while community feeling (C10: mean 3.21) and support (C8: mean 3.26) have neutral-strong relations (54.68%57.40%), which shows that there is no social media improvement in those domains. SDs are high (0.88-0.91), so people have different experiences, maybe depending on the purpose of using the media. It proves Hypothesis 1 partially.

Dimension 3: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Subjective Well-Being Negative Impact (C11–C15)

The following is the Dimension 3: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Subjective Well-Being Negative Impact (C11–C15):

Table 18: Dimension 3: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Subjective Well-Being Negative Impact (C11–C15)

Item	Statement	1 (SDA)	2 (DA)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
C11	I compare my life with others on social media.	8 (2.42%)	9 (2.72%)	76 (22.96%)	213 (64.35%)	25 (7.55%)
C12	I feel pressure to present an idealized image on social media.	4 (1.21%)	18 (5.44%)	82 (24.77%)	200 (60.42%)	27 (8.16%)
C13	I sometimes feel depressed after using social media.	19 (5.74%)	20 (6.04%)	196 (59.21%)	70 (21.15%)	26 (7.85%)
C14	I feel excluded or left out when using social media.	3 (0.91%)	8 (2.42%)	150 (45.32%)	142 (42.90%)	28 (8.46%)
C15	I have taken breaks from social media for my mental health.	19 (5.74%)	30 (9.06%)	177 (53.47%)	80 (24.17%)	25 (7.55%)

These items cover comparison, pressure, depression, exclusion, and breaks for mental health. It demonstrates that the Negative impacts are manifest yet moderate (means 3.193.72). The most common are comparison (C11: M=3.72, 71.90% agreement) and pressure (C12: M=3.69, 68.58), with low SDs (0.740.75) revealing agreement, which is consistent with FoMO literature and Hypothesis 1 (negative SWB relationship). Depression (C13: M=3.19) and breaks (C15: M=3.19) are neutral-dominant (59.21%–53.47%), indicating occasional issues. Many (51.36% agreement) are affected by exclusion (C14: M=3.56), indicating that platform dynamics impacts negatively on SWB in some.

Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Academic Performance (AP)

The following is the Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Academic Performance (AP):

Dimension 1: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Study's Performance (D1–D5)

The following is the Dimension 1: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Study's Performance (D1–D5):

Table 19: Dimension 1: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Study's Performance (D1–D5)

Item	Statement	1 (SDA)	2 (DA)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
D1	I usually complete my academic tasks on time.	3 (0.91%)	7 (2.11%)	56 (16.92%)	239 (72.21%)	26 (7.85%)
D2	I perform well in exams and assessments.	4 (1.21%)	6 (1.81%)	73 (22.05%)	213 (64.35%)	35 (10.57%)
D3	I maintain a good GPA or academic record.	13 (3.93%)	14 (4.23%)	181 (54.68%)	84 (25.38%)	39 (11.78%)
D4	I manage my academic workload effectively.	13 (3.93%)	27 (8.16%)	149 (45.02%)	109 (32.93%)	33 (9.97%)
D5	I feel confident in my academic abilities.	7 (2.11%)	17 (5.14%)	66 (19.94%)	215 (64.95%)	26 (7.85%)

These items evaluate task completion, exam performance, GPA, workload management, and confidence. It demonstrates that Self-perceived performance is positive (Mean 3.37-3.84), thus answering Research Question 3 (achievements). Completion of tasks (D1: M=3.84, 80.06% agreement) and exam performance (D2: M=3.81) are high with low SDs (0.62-0.69) meaning high confidence. Maintaining GPA (D3: M=3.37) and dealing with workload (D4: M=3.37) are neutral (54.68%-45.02%) with high SDs (0.89-0.91) indicating variability, which may be related to outside interference. Academic confidence (D5: M=3.71) is high, indicating the ability to deal with distractions.

Dimension 2: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Positive Academic Use (D6–D10)

The following is the Dimension 2: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Positive Academic Use (D6–D10):

Table 20: Dimension 2: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Positive Academic Use (D6–D10)

Item	Statement	1 (SDA)	2 (DA)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
D6	I use social media to access academic resources (e.g., YouTube tutorials, study groups).	14 (4.23%)	18 (5.44%)	175 (52.87%)	93 (28.10%)	31 (9.37%)
D7	Social media enhances my academic motivation.	3 (0.91%)	8 (2.42%)	98 (29.61%)	191 (57.70%)	31 (9.37%)
D8	I collaborate with peers on academic projects via social media.	3 (0.91%)	19 (5.74%)	126 (38.07%)	147 (44.41%)	36 (10.88%)
D9	Social media helps me stay informed about academic deadlines.	15 (4.53%)	17 (5.14%)	183 (55.29%)	79 (23.87%)	37 (11.18%)
D10	Social media provides useful academic insights from experts.	5 (1.51%)	10 (3.02%)	156 (47.13%)	134 (40.48%)	26 (7.85%)

These items assess resources, motivation, collaboration, deadlines, and insights via social media. This shows that the use is positive and is moderately used (means 3.32-3.72) to facilitate the use of social media for learning (Objective 5). Motivation enhancement (D7: M=3.72, 67.07%) is highly valued, while collaboration (D8: M=3.59) and insights (D10: M=3.50) are valued, although resources (D6: M=3.33) and deadlines (D9: M=3.32) are neutral (52.87%-55.29%) and still have a great potential. This corresponds to Hypothesis 3 were purposeful use moderates positive.

Dimension 3: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Negative Academic Impact (D11–D15)

The following is the Dimension 3: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Negative Academic Impact (D11–D15):

Table 21: Dimension 3: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Negative Academic Impact (D11–D15)

Item	Statement	1 (SDA)	2 (DA)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
D11	Social media distractions have caused me to miss deadlines.	6 (1.81%)	9 (2.72%)	142 (42.90%)	145 (43.81%)	29 (8.76%)
D12	My academic performance has declined due to excessive social media use.	2 (0.60%)	12 (3.63%)	112 (33.84%)	176 (53.17%)	29 (8.76%)
D13	I am more productive when I avoid social media during study sessions.	14 (4.23%)	20 (6.04%)	175 (52.87%)	82 (24.77%)	40 (12.08%)
D14	I use social media while studying, which reduces my focus.	3 (0.91%)	6 (1.81%)	164 (49.55%)	126 (38.07%)	32 (9.67%)
D15	I struggle to balance social media use with academic responsibilities.	2 (0.60%)	6 (1.81%)	192 (58.01%)	102 (30.82%)	29 (8.76%)

These items examine missed deadlines, decline, productivity without social media, focus reduction, and balance struggles. This suggests that the Negative impacts are moderate (mean 3.34-3.66) and disruption (Objective 5) is highlighted. Reductions (D12: Mean=3.66, 61.93% approval) and failure to meet deadlines (D11: Mean=3.55) are noted with very low SDs (0.71-0.77). Difficulties in balancing (D15: Mean=3.45) and exhaustion of attention (D14: Mean=3.54) are common with productivity gain through avoidance (D13: Mean=3.34) being neutral (52.87%), with high SD of 0.92. This supports Hypothesis 2 which claims that overuse is bad for performance but appreciates moderation benefits.

Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Social Media Usage (SMU)

The following is the Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Social Media Usage (SMU):

In this section, a descriptive analysis is made in the form of statistics of the Likert-scale responses to the questionnaire sections: Section B (Social Media Usage), Section C (Subjective Well-Being) and Section D (Academic Achievement). It is an analysis of data provided by 331 university students and uses only means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of each item, as requested. The means are computed on the 5-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) and values higher than 3.0 are regarded as general agreement, lower than 3.0 are perceived as disagreement, and approximately equal to 3.0 are perceived as neutral. SD is a measure of the variability of responses, where the lower the value, the higher the consensus. The subsections of the questionnaire are used to provide some coherence to the analysis. The item, statement, mean and SD are present on each table. After every table, the results are interpreted and put into perspective of the research aim (e.g., use of social media and its extent, subjective well-being and academic performance) and hypothesis (e.g., the links among the usage and outcomes). Patterns, variability, and implications are outlined through the interpretations of the data.

Dimension 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Frequency and Accessibility (B1–B5)

The following is the Dimension 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Frequency and Accessibility (B1–B5):

Table 22: Dimension 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Frequency and Accessibility (B1–B5)

Item	Statement	M	SD
B1	I use social media every day.	3.62	1.02
B2	I spend more than 3 hours daily on social media platforms.	3.14	1.15
B3	I primarily access social media through my smartphone.	3.48	0.87
B4	I use multiple social media platforms daily.	3.32	0.90
B5	I access social media at various times throughout the day.	3.62	0.71

As stated above, these items concern daily habits, time, device, platform, and the moments when the participants access social media content. The mean score between 3.14 and 3.62 indicates that there is a moderate to high degree of agreement about the frequently and easily accessed social media contents, which addresses the first research question on the intensity and usage

trends. It means that the participants frequently use social media and can access it at any time of day (B1: M=3.62; B5: M=3.62), and it should be their routine practice. The low level of variability in B5 (SD=0.71) confirms that there is a high degree of agreement. Accessing social media via smartphones (B3: M=3.48) illustrates the trend of mobility. The time spent on social media is more than 3 hours (B2: M=3.14, highest SD=1.15) relatively dispersed, which may point to a higher level of variability for certain reasons (personal and academic). The number of platforms (B4: M=3.32) is rather numerous and agrees moderately (SD=0.90). In conclusion, these trends support Hypothesis 4.

Dimension 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Academic Engagement (B6–B10)

The following is the Dimension 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Academic Engagement (B6–B10):

Table 22: Dimension 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Academic Engagement (B6–B10)

Item	Statement	M	SD
B6	I use social media for academic purposes (e.g., research, study groups).	3.34	0.89
B7	I follow educational pages or influencers for academic support.	3.53	0.84
B8	I use social media to stay updated on academic events or opportunities.	3.49	0.94
B9	I collaborate with classmates on academic projects via social media.	3.43	0.93
B10	Social media helps me find resources to understand academic content.	3.52	0.74

These items explore social media's role in research, educational content, events, collaboration, and resources. It shows that the Means (3.34-3.53) represent a moderate degree of agreement on academic engagement, which corresponds to Objective 1, representing the role of social media in education. Following educational content (B7: M=3.53) and resource finding (B10: M=3.52) and being more appreciated and B10 having lower variability (SD=0.74) means that there is a consensus about the usefulness of social media for learning purposes. The connection between staying updated (B8: M=3.49) and collaboration (B9: M=3.43) is the fact that the SD values are higher (0.93-0.94) due to the different experiences, which can be a result of the platform preferences or support from universities in Pakistan. The general academic use (B6: M=3.34) is a bit lower, and the variability is moderate (SD=0.89). All the data confirm Hypothesis 3, according to which the intentional academic interest mediates the positive impact on performance.

Dimension 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Dependency and Distraction (B11–B15)

The following is the Dimension 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Dependency and Distraction (B11–B15):

Table 23: Dimension 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Dependency and Distraction (B11–B15)

Item	Statement	M	SD
B11	I often check social media during study time, which distracts me.	3.06	1.06
B12	I use social media during class or lectures.	3.10	1.05
B13	I feel anxious when I cannot access social media.	3.17	0.88
B14	I find it hard to focus on tasks without checking social media.	3.66	0.77
B15	Social media use takes up time I could spend on academic work.	3.28	0.93

These items measure checking during study, class use, anxiety, focus issues, and time displacement. It can be concluded that the Means (3.06-3.66) show moderate agreement on dependency and distraction, which have negative trends that can be applied to Objective 4. The issues with the ability to concentrate are the most significant (B14: M=3.66) and the standard deviation (SD=0.77) suggests a widespread understanding of these matters. Time displacement (B15: M=3.28) and anxiety (B13: M=3.17) can be considered moderately, however, their standard deviations (0.93 for B15) suggest the individual differences, possibly, the degree of usage. Study distractions (B11: M=3.06) and class use (B12: M=3.10) are close to the neutral level and have high standard deviations (SD=1.05-1.06). This supports Hypothesis 2, because these factors can affect academic performance negatively, and there is an agreement on the issues of concentration that are going to affect the students' productivity.

Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Subjective Well-Being (SWB)

The following is the Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Subjective Well-Being (SWB).

Dimension 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Subjective Well-Being Positive Effect

The following is the Dimension 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Subjective Well-Being Positive Effect (C1–C5):

Table 24: Dimension 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Subjective Well-Being Positive Effect (C1–C5)

Item	Statement	M	SD
C1	I feel happy with my life.	3.60	0.75
C2	I am satisfied with my overall life circumstances.	3.65	0.71
C3	I feel confident about my future.	3.52	0.76
C4	I sleep well and wake up refreshed.	3.65	0.70
C5	I feel optimistic about my personal goals.	3.26	0.87

The following is the positive effect analysis of frequency and accessibility (C1–C5): From the Means (3.263.65), there is moderately high positive effect that helps to answer Research Question 2 regarding the level of SWB. Satisfaction (C2: M=3.65) and sleep (C4: M=3.65) have the highest means and lower standard deviations (SD=0.70-0.71) indicating a consistently positive perception, which could be reinforced by cultural or familial support. There is a similar level for future confidence (C3: M=3.52) but a lower and less consistent level of optimism (C5: M=3.26) with higher SD=0.87 indicating possible academic doubts. Happiness (C1: M=3.60) has a moderate agreement (SD=0.75). To an extent, these results reinforce Hypothesis 1, because overall positive SWB can be reinforced through constructive social media use, but the variability of optimism could point to vulnerability to external stressors.

Dimension 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Social Connectedness (C6–C10)

The following is the Dimension 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Social Connectedness (C6–C10):

Table 25: Dimension 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Social Connectedness (C6–C10)

Item	Statement	M	SD
C6	I am satisfied with my social relationships.	3.69	0.71
C7	Social media helps me maintain meaningful relationships.	3.65	0.72
C8	Social media makes me feel connected and supported.	3.26	0.88
C9	I use social media to strengthen ties with peers.	3.28	0.91
C10	Social media helps me feel part of a community.	3.21	0.88

These items assess relationship satisfaction and social media's role in connections. It indicates that the Means (3.21, 3.69) of connectedness are moderate, and the relationship satisfaction (C6: M=3.69) is the most and low variability (SD=0.71) the most strongly agreed. The social media for maintaining relationships (C7: M=3.65) is positive (SD=0.72) while the community feeling (C10: M=3.21), support (C8: M=3.26), and peer connections (C9: M=3.28) are neutral with greater variability (SD=0.88-0.91). This means that social media is good at maintaining core relationships but not the broad one, thus supporting Hypothesis 1; the variability implies that social media affects people differently depending on the usage purpose or characteristics of users.

Dimension 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Subjective Well-Being Negative Impact (C11–C15):

The following is the Dimension 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Subjective Well-Being Negative Impact (C11–C15):

Table 26: Dimension 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Subjective Well-Being Negative Impact (C11–C15):

Item	Statement	M	SD

C11	I compare my life with others on social media.	3.72	0.74
C12	I feel pressure to present an idealized image on social media.	3.69	0.75
C13	I sometimes feel depressed after using social media.	3.19	0.88
C14	I feel excluded or left out when using social media.	3.56	0.72
C15	I have taken breaks from social media for my mental health.	3.19	0.91

These items cover comparison, pressure, depression, exclusion, and breaks for mental health. According to this, the Means (3.193.72) are indicative of moderate negative impacts and comparisons (C11: M=3.72) and pressure (C12: M=3.69) are most prevalent, low standard deviation (SD=0.740.75) implies that there is agreement among participants about these issues. Exclusion (C14: M=3.56) is also a significant issue (SD=0.72), while depression (C13: M=3.19) and breaks (C15: M=3.19) show neutral tendencies with high standard deviation (SD=0.88–0.91). Thus, the first hypothesis, stating the possibility of social media undermining SWB by way of comparisons, is confirmed.

Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Academic Performance (AP)

The following is the Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Academic Performance (AP):

Dimension 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Study's Performance (D1–D5)

The following is the Dimension 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Study's Performance (D1–D5):

Table 27: Dimension 1: Mean and Deviation Analysis of Study's Performance (D1–D5)

Item	Statement	M	SD
D1	I usually complete my academic tasks on time.	3.84	0.62
D2	I perform well in exams and assessments.	3.81	0.69
D3	I maintain a good GPA or academic record.	3.37	0.89
D4	I manage my academic workload effectively.	3.37	0.91
D5	I feel confident in my academic abilities.	3.71	0.77

These items evaluate task completion, exam performance, GPA, workload management, and confidence. This shows that the Means (3.37 3.84) show positive self-perceived performance, addressing Research Question 3. The highest means are obtained for task completion (D1: M=3.84) and exam performance (D2: M=3.81) with low variability (SD=0.620.69) showing high agreement. The other positive mean is that of Confidence (D5: M=3.71) (SD=0.77), while GPA (D3: M=3.37) and workload management (D4: M=3.37) have moderate means with higher variability (SD=0.890.91). This suggests a generally resilient academic performance, but with variable objective criteria which could have something to do with Hypothesis 2.

Dimension 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Positive Academic Use (D6–D10)

The following is the Dimension 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Positive Academic Use (D6–D10):

Table 28: Dimension 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Positive Academic Use (D6–D10)

Item	Statement	M	SD
D6	I use social media to access academic resources (e.g., YouTube tutorials, study groups).	3.33	0.88
D7	Social media enhances my academic motivation.	3.72	0.70
D8	I collaborate with peers on academic projects via social media.	3.59	0.79
D9	Social media helps me stay informed about academic deadlines.	3.32	0.90
D10	Social media provides useful academic insights from experts.	3.50	0.75

These items assess resources, motivation, collaboration, deadlines, and insights via social media. It demonstrates that Means (3.32 – 3.72) demonstrate moderate positive usage which confirms Objective 5. Motivation (D7: M=3.72) demonstrates the highest level of consistency with the lowest variability (SD=0.70) meaning that inspirational aspects were recognized. Collaboration (D8: M=3.59) and insights (D10: M=3.50) are positive (SD=0.75 – 0.79) but resources (D6: M=3.33) and deadlines (D9: M=3.32) are moderate in their level (SD=0.88 – 0.90). It corresponds to Hypothesis 3 when intentional use increases achievement although its inconsistency indicates variability.

Dimension 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis Negative Academic Impact (D11–D15)

The following is the Dimension 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis Negative Academic Impact (D11–D15):

Table 29: Dimension 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis Negative Academic Impact (D11–D15)

Item	Statement	M	SD
D11	Social media distractions have caused me to miss deadlines.	3.55	0.77
D12	My academic performance has declined due to excessive social media use.	3.66	0.71
D13	I am more productive when I avoid social media during study sessions.	3.34	0.92
D14	I use social media while studying, which reduces my focus.	3.54	0.73
D15	I struggle to balance social media use with academic responsibilities.	3.45	0.71

These items examine missed deadlines, decline, productivity without social media, focus reduction, and balance struggles. As pointed out above, the Means (3.343.66) suggest moderate negative consequences, thus pointing to disruptions as per Objective 5. There is consensus (performance decline) (D12: M=3.66) and missing deadlines (D11: M=3.55) with minimal dispersion (SD=0.71 - 0.77). There are also focus reduction (D14: M=3.54) and balance problems (D15: M=3.45) having similar scores (SD=0.71-0.73) while productivity boost through avoidance (D13: M=3.34) has greater dispersion (SD=0.92). This proves Hypothesis 2, which states that overuse is harmful, but the consensus about the decline exists, and the perception of the benefit of moderation varies.

Discussion

In the first place, the major goal of this research is to explore the effect of social media usage patterns on the SWB and performance of university students, using the empirical data of the students from the University of Sargodha, Pakistan. It is evident from the results of this study that there are two contradictory effects: although social media provides important tools for collaborative work and communication between peers, excessive consumption causes serious psychological risks and negatively affects performance at universities. This section will help understand the results of empirical research through existing theories.

The results of the descriptive analysis and frequency tables prove that social media has become an essential tool in the lives of university students. More than 65% of respondents noted daily usage more than 3 hours with the use of smartphone. Visual and interactive networks including Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube proved to be the most popular among the respondents, which confirms the regional tendency among Pakistani young people. It can be stated that the results obtained correspond to the ideas of Junejo et al. (2022) and Saqib (2025).

In addition to that, it should be noted that there was differentiation between active and passive usage of the resources. Even though about 47% of participants were involved in social media usage in academic contexts (i.e., participating in study groups and gaining access to educational tutorials), social communication and entertainment remained the key motivators for engaging in social media activities. This dichotomy in behavior indicates that even though students understand the practical advantages of digital tools, entertainment is often the dominant activity.

Speaking about subjective well-being, there appeared to be a paradoxical situation. First, despite relatively high level of life satisfaction and relational satisfaction among participants, there might be an explanation due to the supportive families prevalent in Pakistani culture (with more than 67% of respondents living with their families). In addition, the indicators related to psychological stress and negative effects were rather critical. Specifically, more than 70% of participants admitted making social comparisons on the Internet and 69% admitted being pressurized to create idealistic image of oneself. These empirical facts are highly supportive of Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory suggesting that constant exposure to social profiles leads to upward social comparisons. The results fully align

Moreover, there were students who used social networks to access educational resources and expert knowledge and be motivated by peers and reported higher levels of academic engagement in line with findings of Alshuaibi et al. (2018) and Al-Rahmi et al. (2022). At the same time, dependence on and distractibility by social media created serious difficulties in the learning process. It was found that most respondents experienced problems such as being distracted by social media while attending lectures, losing time that could be spent effectively for studying, missing deadlines for assignments, and decreasing in terms of overall GPA. All these findings can be related to the stressor-strain-outcome model of Cao et al. (2018) and confirmed by regional studies in Pakistan that proved that intensive and unorganized consumption of digital content predicts academic procrastination (Kauser & Awan, 2019; Rabia et al., 2020). When students are multitasking and constantly check notifications while studying, their cognitive processes are greatly divided as shown in a systematic review by Kuss and Griffiths (2023).

Conclusions

This study examined the multifaceted and complicated connection between the use of social media, subjective well-being, and academic performance amongst university students in the University of Sargodha. It is evident that social media has increasingly become an integral part of student life now with smartphone usage and visual-based platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube.

The findings underscore the two-edged nature of social media use amongst students. While intentional and deliberate use of digital platforms acts as an effective means for the exchange of academic resources and collaboration, maintaining social connections and support networks, thus promoting positive engagement and motivation; the extensive and unrestrained use of social media has negative psychological effects. Frequent exposure to the idealized images of peers often leads to upward social comparison which increases emotional stress and anxiety in students as well as lowers their life satisfaction. Additionally, social media use also has negative effects on the cognitive process due to the practice of multitasking, task-irrelevant browsing and time displacement during classes. This often leads to missed academic deadlines and increased procrastination among students and lowered average grade points.

Thus, the findings of the study prove that social media has great potential for

Recommendations

Concluding from the observations made in this study about the two-faced effect of social media usage on the subjective well-being and academic success of university students, the recommendations below are made:

- The university administration should make provision for counseling and digital well-being cells to assist the students to cope with social media fatigue, stress, depression, and upward social comparison.
- The curriculum designers and university management should introduce sessions on digital literacy and mindfulness of technology usage in orientation programs and student forums to sensitize the undergraduate students about the difference between passive and active engagement in their coursework.
- The administrators should persuade lecturers to adopt secure and moderated platforms like academic WhatsApp groups or educational websites for collaborative learning to make productive use of the students' digital engagement.
- The instructors should formulate guidelines about the use of smartphones by the students during classroom lectures and laboratory sessions.
- The teachers could benefit from the students' knowledge of visual and interactive platforms to assign course activities which involve ethical creation of content, research projects, and peer discussions.
- The students need to be responsible for regulating their daily screen time, having study sessions without smartphone distractions and taking periodic breaks to protect their sleep.
- Students should actively monitor their daily screen time, establish dedicated study periods
- free from smartphone distractions,
- Undergraduates should intentionally shift their social media habits away from mindless
- scrolling and social comparison toward peer collaboration, skill acquisition, and academic
- resource sharing.

Suggestions For Future Research

- From the scope, limitations, and findings of the current study, it is suggested that future researchers should consider the following directions in their work:
- Instead of conducting cross-sectional survey studies, future researchers should opt for longitudinal or experimental research designs to make stronger causal inferences about the relationship between the use of social media, well-being, and academic performance.
- Future research studies should include the objective criteria such as official cumulative grade point average, attendance records, and performance in exams conducted by the institution in addition to subjective reports.
- Future researchers should conduct the multi-campus research where they can include various universities located in urban and rural areas in Pakistan to increase generalizability.
- To get insights into how certain behavioral typology affects the psychological well-being and scholastic outcomes, the future research should focus on different behaviors related to social media such as active and passive use of social media and use of certain functions of a particular platform.
- Subsequent models should integrate potential moderating and mediating variables—such as self-regulation capacity, personality traits, sleep quality, and peer support systems—to more comprehensively understand the mechanisms linking digital habits to mental health and educational outcomes.

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