

## THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN KELANTAN

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**Abstract.** Among the Y and Z generation, who most of them are college students, social media has become a great phenomenon. Social media is now the main communication medium which helps people communicate quickly and effectively. Today, social network sites are running the future and career of students. It existed as an electronic connection between users, however, it has become a total addiction for students. There comes the question whether the excessive use of social media among students will provide a bad reputation to their academic performance. In this research, we studied the impact of social media on students' academic achievements among UNITAR undergraduate students in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. It shows whether the students successfully use social media in their study to improve their achievements or otherwise. The research paper discusses social media for academic purpose, impact of social media in academic performance, and the social media usage pattern among students.

**Keywords:** *social media, academic performance, college students, educational technology*

### Introduction

Since its inception, social media has become an integral part of daily life for many individuals and this includes college students. With the rise of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X or previously known as Twitter, and Tiktok, students now have access to a plethora of information and communication tools. As mentioned by Abdulahi et al. (2014), these websites are becoming popular among students and professionals as well as helping them in connecting with each other, their local and the global community at large. In Malaysia, social media is also widely being used as a tool for communication and group cohesion amongst students. Students have become so addicted to social media and not to mention each student must at least have one gadget for themselves. Scrolling through social media or uploading pictures and updating stories has become their daily routine. This excessive use of social media has begun to show a significant impact on students' life (Othman et al., 2017). There are many papers that have been investigating the impacts of social media on college students. However, this paper will focus on the academic performance of college students in Kelantan due to the use of social media. This study was conducted to identify the use of social media among the students of UNITAR, Kota Bharu which may have given an impact in their academic achievements. Therefore, this study aims to: (1) To identify the impact of social media toward students' academic achievements; and (2) To study the students' usage pattern of using social media.

## Results and Discussion

### *Social media for academic purpose*

Social media broadly defined as the online communications and interaction channel; and mechanism for content sharing and collaboration. This medium became one of the methods to communicating with other people socially and has been used especially by college students (Othman et al., 2017). Since the growth of portable devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops, the prevalence of social media use among students has increased. Today's college students (which consist of Generation Y or also named Millennial) are exposed to all types of technologies in many aspects of their lives (Al-Rahmi and Othman, 2013). On a daily basis they use desktop computers, laptops, E-readers, tablets, and cell phones to actively engage in social networking, text messaging, blogging, content sharing, online learning, and much more (Cassidy et al., 2011). Social media has steeply through all generations of internet users which has become a prominent communications tool especially in the college students community. Academic institutions and faculties have taken their chances to use this advantage to connect with current and potential students through social media as well as using it to deliver instructions. However, some research disagrees with the statement. Chang et al. (2019), Asemah et al. (2013) as well as Tarantino et al. (2013) mentioned that despite the popularity of social media for personal use, only a low percentage of students and faculty use them for academic practice. The online social networking sites (OSN) are used mainly on a regular basis by many millions of people and majority of them are the ages of college students.

The influence of social media on academic performance has been the subject of extensive research. According to studies, there is a negative correlation between social media usage and academic performance among students. Excessive use of social media, particularly Facebook, has been found to result in distraction, lack of concentration on academic tasks, and a decline in academic outcomes. It has been noted that students who spend more time on social media tend to perform poorly in academics as they devote less time to academic pursuits. Despite this, some studies have indicated that social media can have positive impacts on academic performance, such as facilitating collaborative learning and enhancing e-learning comprehension. In summary, while social media may have a few positive effects, it is more frequently associated with negative consequences for students' academic performance. In a study by Habes et al. (2018), he mentioned in his paper that social media has a negative association with students' academic achievement. People these days can be labeled as being too addicted to social media. Mensah and Nizam (2016) advised and recommended that those who are addicted users love to use the internet to set back their personal and professional responsibilities in which the final outcome is poor academic performance. Students tend to spend less time on their studies compared to before social media was a thing. It has become a major distraction for students which may lead to poor academic performance. This proves that there is a correlation between the dependency on social media and students' academic performance.

However, there are also studies that revealed social media improved students' achievement. This happened when they took the advantage to share ideas and concepts related to their studies with other students. By using social media, it can encourage online discussions among students beyond the traditional setting. In another study, it is said that social media has also improved the communication between the educators and

students which facilitate the communication of the correct information and improve understanding and the development of the ideas and the courses (Tarantino et al., 2013). Students and instructors may easily be contacted anytime to discuss their academics. Other than the social media mentioned above, there are also some websites that can encourage investigative-based and collaborative activities among students. This opens access for active participation and can therefore create opportunities for effective learning (Al-Rahmi and Othman, 2013). Social media enables students and instructors to share and publish information such as the course materials, notes, exercises, syllabuses, assignments, and so much more. Not only that, students can share and publish their works on social media, they will have the opportunity to receive feedback, new ideas as well as transform their own understanding through reflection.

Habes et al. (2018) concluded that academic performance can be improved by introducing educational solutions. They suggested finding ways to regulate the use of Facebook for entertainment and networking, developing better time-management skills, and utilizing social networking sites for academic purposes. To achieve academic success, it is essential to adopt a new strategy that considers the learner, the teacher, the content, and the technology environment. Creating pages that promote academic activities can be a helpful tool to avoid setbacks in academic performance. Teachers and parents should monitor students to ensure they use these sites correctly and find a balance between social media, academic, and extracurricular activities to prevent academic setbacks. The research findings indicate that social media has a positive impact on students' academic performance, enhances their learning abilities and promotes collaborative learning. Teenage students of all genders use Facebook more frequently, but the ratio varies depending on the availability of internet services. Facebook is a popular social media application among internet users globally and particularly in the Middle East. Lastly, social networking facilitates students in joining educational networks, engaging with peers, and developing their understanding of e-learning. In summary, social media has become a significant part of our lives, especially for students. Its impact on academic performance has been a topic of debate among researchers. While some studies suggest that social media has a negative impact on students' academic performance, other studies show that it can have a positive effect by improving communication and collaboration among students and instructors. The use of social media in education has its advantages, and it's up to students to use it responsibly to reap its benefits while minimizing its negative effects. The primary objective of this research paper is to thoroughly investigate and analyze the influence and effects of social media usage on the academic performance and achievements of students. By conducting a comprehensive study, this paper aims to shed light on how social media usage patterns among students impact their educational outcomes, including their grades, cognitive skills, and learning abilities.

### ***Impacts of social media on the academic performance of students***

Although social media can increase student learning through student interactions, there will be challenges when including social media in academic courses. The assumption that students are familiar with and agreeable to using certain types of social media can cause educators to inadvertently fail to provide the resources or encouragement necessary to support student usage and learning (Raza et al., 2020; Rithika and Selvaraj, 2013). Arnold and Paulus in 2010 discovered that students tend to use social media differently from the course instructor's intended use, even when it's

meant for educational purposes. The primary design of social media as a social networking tool leads to non-academic discussions occurring on the platform, even when it's being used for educational purposes. As students get older, the frequency of off-topic discussions also increases, indicating that older students engage more in unrelated discussions than younger ones. Although social media may encourage broader discussions of course content, it can have a negative impact on student GPA and the amount of time spent preparing for class. There are a few explanations for this impact, including the possibility that social media provides an excessive amount of stimulation, which can distract students from completing their coursework. Another reason could be that students who spend more time on social media have difficulty balancing their online activities with their academic preparation). Incorporating social media as an instructional strategy can be a difficult task, as it involves balancing the authority of the educator with the active participation of the students. Social media can foster a collaborative environment that promotes a constructivist approach to learning. In this approach, educators and students work together to co-create an understanding of a particular topic, rather than focusing solely on individual contributions. This equalizes the roles of students and educators in the knowledge sharing process. However, it is important to note that social media use can also raise concerns about privacy (e.g. cyber-plagiarism) and cyber-bullying and abuse. Therefore, it is crucial to establish standards and guidelines for social media use, similar to those enforced in the classroom, that emphasize appropriate behavior and attitudes.

Numerous studies have shed light on the benefits of social media when it comes to academic performance. Abdulahi et al. (2014), for example, showed that social networks can be instrumental in helping students develop themselves, increase their knowledge and creativity, exchange knowledge with others, and hone their technical skills. Similarly, Habes et al. (2016) that social media can lead to improved academic performance, learning, and collaboration, making it a valuable educational tool. Additionally, Mensah and Nizam (2016) noted that social networking sites can provide easy access to information, though they also cautioned against the negative impact of excessive use on academic performance. Mensah and Nizam (2016) came to the conclusion that the use of social media platforms significantly affects academic achievement of students in Malaysian tertiary institutions. However, among the six variables examined in their study, time appropriateness and health addiction have a more substantial influence on students' academic performance. This is because effective time management plays a crucial role in determining the success or failure of an individual. Asemah et al. (2013) support this argument, stating that students who spend more time on social media are likely to perform poorly academically due to their lack of focus on reading and instead spending more time communicating and chatting with friends. The negative impact of social media on academic achievement can ultimately lead to failure in their studies.

Another study conducted by Habes et al. (2016), it was discovered that a significant number of university students are addicted to social media, particularly Facebook. As a result, they tend to spend a lot of time on social networks, which distracts them from academic tasks and has a negative impact on their academic performance. Social media platforms, including Facebook, are also used by students as sources of information and means of communication. Social media has become an essential part of their daily routine and they spend anywhere between 4 to 12 hours a day on it. This overindulgence of social media usage leads to a decline in academic performance in terms of

educational attainment, intellectual visions, language skills, and moral behavior among students. It is mainly teenagers who are the most frequent users of social media and they tend to take it for granted from an academic point of view. Nevertheless, social media can be positively used to help students develop themselves, improve their knowledge and creativity, facilitate knowledge exchange, and enhance their technical skills. Various research studies suggest that the use of social media can have a positive impact on academic performance, provided that it is utilized judiciously for educational purposes. It has the potential to enhance collaborative learning, knowledge exchange, and technical skills, and can play a significant role in improving academic outcomes. Nevertheless, there are benefits and risks in using any social network. There are reports regarding its effect on students' academic performance. Some found a poor effect and influence when the media is over used which did not leave any improvements in students' academic performance. While others examined this same problem but found either no significant relationship between using social networking and students academic performance, or really a factor in students' academic performance (Al-Rahmi and Othman, 2013).

### ***Social media usage pattern***

Many studies have been conducted to study the patterns of social media usage among students which impacted their academic performance. Accordingly, the time spent on Facebook was negatively correlated with students' GPA, suggesting that increased social media engagement might be associated with lower academic achievement. In other words, students who use social media frequently may be at a higher risk of experiencing negative consequences in their academics. A study that revealed a negative correlation between the frequency of social media use and academic achievement. The study suggested that an excessive amount of time spent on social media might be associated with lower academic performance. High-frequency users exhibited lower academic self-efficacy, contributing to potential challenges in academic success. Their study exposed not only how often students engage with social media, but also includes the specific purposes behind their interactions. In another study, they emphasized the detrimental impact of extended social media use during study periods, signaling a need for a nuanced understanding of the temporal aspects of usage patterns. Their findings suggested that when students spend an excessive amount of time on social media, it can have detrimental effects on their study habits and later, in their academic performance.

The purpose of social media use among students is important to be understood in understanding its varied impact on academic performance. The importance of discriminating against the intent behind social media engagement, suggesting that the purpose plays a critical role in shaping outcomes. According to research, using social media for academic purposes and collaborative learning can leave a significant impact on students' academic achievements. In contrast, their research mentioned that the purpose of social media use is a crucial factor influencing academic self-efficacy, with non-academic purposes potentially hindering students' confidence in their abilities. This is supported in their study when they noted that when social media is used for educational purposes for instance in participating online forums or doing collaborative projects, it can enhance students' academic performance. All of these research shows how social media use among students is complex, and in order to fully understand how it impacts students' academic performances, it is important to not only to consider the frequency and duration use of social media, but also the personal reasons behind it.

### ***Contributions***

In the context of language education, the findings of this research underscore the need for a nuanced approach to incorporating social media into language learning strategies. Given the prevalence of social media use among college students, English educators in Malaysia should consider leveraging these platforms to enhance language proficiency. Integrating educational content, discussions, and collaborative projects through social media channels may prove to be a constructive way to engage students in language-related activities. The study's emphasis on the varied impacts of social media usage patterns on academic performance suggests that English educators should pay attention not only to the frequency and duration of social media use but also to the specific purposes behind such engagement. Understanding the intent behind students' social media interactions is crucial for tailoring language learning activities that align with their interests and needs. Moreover, the research highlights the potential positive outcomes of using social media for academic purposes, such as participating in online forums and collaborative projects. English educators can explore innovative ways to integrate language learning activities within these platforms, fostering an environment that encourages meaningful communication, language exchange, and collaborative learning. As an English educator, it is important to recognize the challenges posed by the distractions and potential negative consequences associated with excessive social media use. Addressing these challenges requires implementing strategies that promote responsible and purposeful social media engagement, emphasizing the importance of balancing academic responsibilities with online activities. In summary, this research provides valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between social media usage and academic performance among college students in Kelantan. English educators can use these insights to develop effective strategies for utilizing social media as a tool for language learning, fostering an environment that enhances language proficiency while mitigating the potential drawbacks associated with excessive use.

### **Conclusion**

This paper set out to investigate the dual faceted impact of social media on the academic achievements of college students in Kelantan, focusing specifically on undergraduates at UNITAR, Kota Bharu. Through a systematic review of existing literature and empirical studies, two primary objectives were addressed: identifying the impact of social media on students' academic achievements, and examining students' usage patterns of social media. The findings reveal a complex and nuanced relationship that defies a simplistic positive or negative classification. On one hand, the evidence strongly supports the concern that excessive, non-purpose driven social media use is negatively correlated with academic performance. Studies reviewed consistently indicate that high frequency use, particularly of entertainment and networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, leads to distraction, reduced concentration, poor time management, and lower grade point averages. Many students in Kelantan, like their counterparts globally, exhibit signs of behavioural addiction, spending between four to twelve hours daily on social media. This overindulgence often displaces study time, reduces academic self-efficacy, and contributes to declining educational outcomes.

On the other hand, this paper also highlights the constructive potential of social media when used intentionally for academic purposes. Platforms that facilitate collaborative learning, information sharing, instructor student communication, and access to educational content have been shown to enhance learning abilities, foster knowledge exchange, and improve academic performance. Students who engage in online academic forums, share course materials, or participate in collaborative projects benefit from expanded learning beyond traditional classroom settings. Thus, the impact of social media is largely contingent upon how, why, and how often it is used. The usage pattern among students is therefore the critical determining factor. Those who use social media primarily for social entertainment, with high frequency and without self-regulation, tend to suffer academically. Conversely, students who leverage social media as a supplementary learning tool, engaging in academic discussions, accessing information, and collaborating with peers, can experience measurable academic benefits. This suggests that blanket statements about social media being uniformly harmful or helpful are misleading. In conclusion, social media is neither an inherent academic asset nor an inevitable obstacle. It is a powerful tool whose effect depends entirely on the user's purpose and discipline. For college students in Kelantan, the challenge lies not in eliminating social media, but in cultivating responsible usage habits. This means prioritizing academic tasks, managing screen time, and consciously directing social media interactions toward educational goals. Educators and institutions also have a role to play by integrating social media meaningfully into pedagogy, establishing clear guidelines, and promoting digital literacy. Ultimately, with balanced and purposeful engagement, social media can coexist with and even enhance academic achievement.

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### **Conflict of interest**

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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