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## The Impact of Social Media Usage on Academic Performance: A Study of the Professional Educational Diploma Program in UAE

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### ABSTRACT

In this modern age, social media plays a crucial role in the development of society. This technological reform has also influenced the educational sector, which has had several impacts. Therefore, this study investigates perceptions regarding the impact of social media on academic performance among a sample of 231 individuals. A descriptive approach was used to conduct the analysis, which revealed the participant's perception of both positive and negative impacts of social media on academic performance, with statistically significant effects observed. Effect sizes indicate moderate to large magnitudes of these impacts, emphasizing their practical significance. Furthermore, strong positive correlations are found between perceptions of negative and positive impacts of social media on academic performance, highlighting the multidimensional nature of individuals' views. The study also has limitations, which include sampling bias and reliance on self-reported measures. Meanwhile, these insights contribute to a better understanding the complex relationship between social media and academic performance, informing strategies for promoting positive educational outcomes in the digital age.

### INTRODUCTION

Social media plays a crucial and diverse role in various aspects of individuals' lives, communities, and organizations (Kapoor *et al.*, 2018). According to Swart *et al.* (2019), social media platforms allow instant communication with friends, family, colleagues, and communities across geographical boundaries (Swart *et al.*, 2019). These platforms enable individuals to share real-time updates, messages, photos, and real-time,ster relationships, and develop social connections (Garg & Pahuja, 2020). It has both negative and positive impacts, mainly depending on the purpose of usage and consumption (Bekalu *et al.*, 2019; Beyens *et al.*, 2021). This study investigates the effects of social media usage on academic performance specifically. The complex relationship between social media and academic performance has several effects, which include distraction, reduced study time, sleep disruption, and impaired cognitive function and learning efficiency; on the other hand, social media increases collaborative learning, information sharing, and access to the educational resources (Al-Rahmi *et al.*, 2018; Ansari & Khan, 2020; Astatke *et al.*, 2023; Kumar *et al.*, 2021; Masood *et al.*, 2020; Mehta, 2022). This study investigates the impact of social media on academic performance in the context of professional education by examining the perspective of those enrolled in the professional educational diploma program at UAE. According to DiPaola & Wagner (2018), professional education is mandatory to excel in every field (DiPaola & Wagner, 2018). It provides specific skills and knowledge that equip individuals to compete in the global market (García-Pérez *et al.*, 2021). Professional education varies according to the skill set required for a specific field, such as technical skills

in engineering, clinical skills in healthcare, or managerial business skills (Demirkan & Spohrer, 2018; Gurcan & Cagiltay, 2019; Li, 2022). Professional education increases opportunities for career advancement and often leads to promotions, salary increases and access to leadership roles within organizations (Lee & Lee, 2018). Organizations are constantly evolve due to technological advancements, regulation changes, and consumer preference shifts (Hanelt *et al.*, 2021). Professional education helps individuals stay abreast of these changes and adapt their skills and knowledge according to the requirements (Smith & Gillespie, 2023). It also provides opportunities for networking with peers, instructors, and industry professionals. These connections lead individuals to job opportunities, mentorship, and collaborations that enhance career prospects (Ansari & Khan, 2020). This study comprehensively explains how social media affects academic performance in the professional educational diploma program. The study's findings inform educational practitioners to develop effective policies within the Professional Educational Diploma Program at Al Ain University. The results also guide the development of support services for students, such as workshops on time management and digital literacy skills. These services help students balance social media usage and academic responsibilities, ultimately improving their academic performance. The study also provides a guideline for educators to design curriculum within the diploma program by integrating lessons on digital citizenship, critical thinking and responsible social media usage to help students navigate the digital landscape effectively. The study also contributes to the existing body of knowledge in education and social sciences.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media is a collection of online communication channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration (Ukomadu, 2018). Some examples of social media include wikis, social networking, forums, microblogging, social bookmarking, and programs for social curating (Duong, 2020). Popular social media platforms include Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Reddit, Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ (Karle, 2020). Social networking has become a common global trend, and its scope has extended to almost every corner of the world (Ansari & Khan, 2020). Social networking sites have spread and developed into online platforms; people are creating, sharing, bookmarking, and communicating content at an astonishing rate, and prominent social media users are in demand (Bayrakdar *et al.*, 2020). Technology is important in a student's life (Tushetti, 2020).

According to Bharucha (2018), students can access more helpful information by connecting with learning groups and other handy educational systems when using social media in the classroom (Bharucha, 2018). Social media platforms provide educational institutions and students with numerous ways to enhance their teaching methods. Students have appropriate access to high-quality information on the school environment, departments, faculties, rules, and regulations using online resources, including the school website (Kuchyn *et al.*, 2021). It has been noted that social media provides a quicker and more expansive way to disseminate information to the broader public and students at a school (Arceneaux & Dinu, 2018). According to Latif *et al.* (2019), students spend more time on social media because they have free access to the internet with their smartphones at any time (Latif *et al.*, 2019). Studies suggest that students use social media for different purposes, such as communicating, watching movies, listening to music, finding information for educational purposes, and playing online games (Kesici & Tunç, 2018). Aside from these purposes, studies revealed that students use the Internet and social media for learning (Ansari & Khan, 2020; Moghavvemi *et al.*, 2018). Students took help from the internet to solve their assignments because they access a vast amount of books and different materials irrespective of the traditional way of going to the library and reading books to understand and solve the assignment (Barak & Assal, 2018; Sun *et al.*, 2018).

### Role of Social Media in Education

Social media networks exchange and generate knowledge, which add great value in the context of higher education (Zachos *et al.*, 2018). Social networking is a big part of schooling and college life. Through social media, information can now be accessed, provided, and communicated with more ease and convenience. (McHaney, 2023). Professors expand their use of social media by hosting live lectures or providing student support outside office hours, and social media helps

teachers connect with their students off campus and with their previous students (Bender, 2023). Educators leverage social media to facilitate learning by setting up student accounts and groups with conveniently accessible content. Instructors exchange ideas and forward requests via Skype, Facebook, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp (Aduba & Mayowa-Adebara, 2022). Teachers create hashtags that allow students to tag their academic posts and view the submissions to see what the group has produced creatively. Social media is integrated into classroom teaching at every college and University to the greatest extent possible, including admissions, campus life and alumni relationships (Benson & Morgan, 2018).

Education uses open social practices like blogging and social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ to facilitate easy communication with peer groups and possibly with people outside of the classroom, like subject matter experts and other students interested in the same topic (Malik *et al.*, 2019). The fact that social media are generally open to the world means the need to consider the risks of openness carefully, as well as the need to constantly communicate with the student to address their academic affairs and deal with issues related to the use of social media as they arise (Pope *et al.*, 2019). A new area of social media focusing on relationship building grew in popularity with demand outside the classroom. One study reported that using social media tools improved students' learning opportunities, allowed for real-time communication outside of the school, and enhanced opportunities for collaboration and creativity (Vilarinho-Pereira *et al.*, 2021). Students engage in online discussions with teachers after watching educational videos or sharing information about what they have seen and learnt. Educators also gain knowledge from requests made in social media conversations (Ansari & Khan, 2020).

### Positive and Negative Use of Social Media

Modern societies have witnessed the phenomenon of people's online use of social networking sites in a remarkable way. These sites have become widespread, especially among university students, and have diverse uses. Some use them positively and others negatively, despite these sites' many benefits in exchanging communications and knowledge. They also provide help to communicate with different people and communities, To get to know each other, send messages, and receive news, topics, and everything new in their arena; however, they constitute a source of real danger to social relationships, and they also lead to isolation and disintegration of the fabric of social life, and this extends to non-compliance with the laws prevailing in society, especially by the youth group (Abi-Jaoude *et al.*, 2020). Students in schools also use social media on a large scale, which affects the student's social and academic life. Hence, this study aims to investigate the impact of social media on academic performance, which helps improve students' performance in the Professional Diploma Program at Al Ain University.

Previous studies have addressed the relationship between the use of social media and each of the following variables: grade, gender, level of achievement, the number of hours, and the type of medium (Alblwi *et al.*, 2021; Booker *et al.*, 2018; Oguguo *et al.*, 2020). At the same time, this study examines the impact of social media on the academic performance of professional educational diploma program students in the context of language learning, which contributes valuable information to the literature and also provides a guideline to develop effective policies regarding the use of social media. Bou-Hamad (2020) investigated the impact of social media on students' academic achievement in terms of cumulative GPA. This study has shown a negative correlation between the use of social media and academic performance in terms of GPA, which reflects that the more time a student spends on social media, the less time a student spends on academic work (Bou-Hamad, 2020). According to David Robert Skvarc *et al.* (2021), social media platforms improve student academic performance, communication, interaction, participation, and self-directed learning (David Robert Skvarc *et al.*, 2021). Sarker *et al.* (2021) conducted a study at the Islamic University of Bangladesh to examine the impact of social media on academic performance. The study's results suggested that almost all students of the Islamic University of Bangladesh have access to the Internet, and most use various social media, which slightly negatively impacts their academic performance. The results also indicate that the student must balance chatting with academic activities (Sarker *et al.*, 2019). Kapoor *et al.* (2018) conducted a comparative study

that identified the impact of social media on students' academic performance and social life. On the other hand, it positively impacts the development of their personality and social life at school (Kapoor *et al.*, 2018). Kircaburun *et al.* (2020) conducted a study to determine the extent to which the excessive use of social media affects university applications in their personal and social lives. Some important results of the study show that students spend more than an hour a day using social media and Facebook, among all other social media activities (Kircaburun *et al.*, 2020). Social media has several effects on students, including that it reduces concentration in studies and affects a student's academic performance. The use of social networks leads to decreased physical activity and health problems, and one of its negative aspects is that it reduces and destroys social skills (Habes *et al.*, 2018; Keles *et al.*, 2020; Twenge *et al.*, 2018). According to Azizi *et al.* (2019), social media affects academic performance, mental health, and social relationships (Azizi *et al.*, 2019). Social media provides opportunities for social networking, online communication, support, and self-expression (Bailey *et al.*, 2020). However, social media negatively impacts academics, including distraction, procrastination, and time management issues (Türel & Dokumaci, 2022). When reviewing previous studies, the researcher found that some studies indicated positive trends towards the use of social media, while some studies have suggested that using social media has both positive and negative at the same time. Therefore, this study examines the impact of social media on academic performance by incorporating the point of view of professional educational diploma program students of UAE.

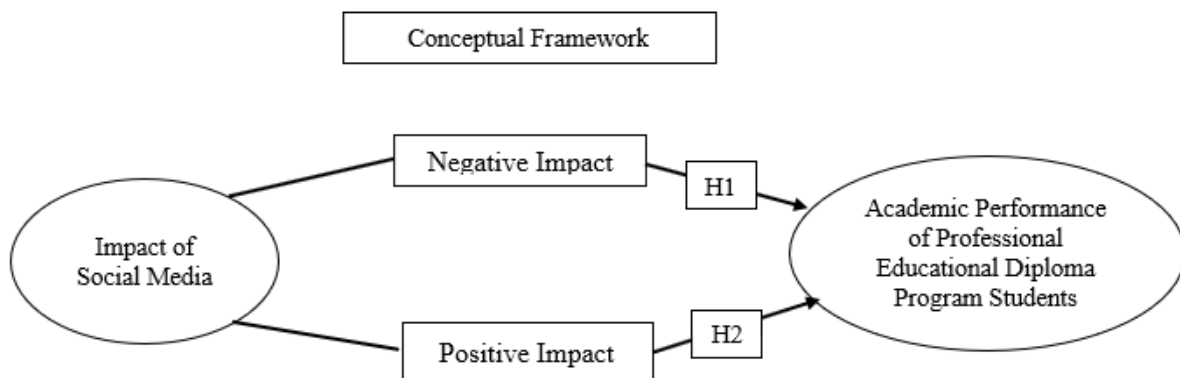


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

### Hypothesis Development

The following hypothesis was developed by reviewing the previous literature.

#### Hypothesis 1

##### Null Hypothesis (H0)

Social media has no significant positive impact on the academic performance of UAE students in the professional educational diploma program.

#### Alternative Hypothesis (H1)

Social media significantly positively impacts the academic performance of UAE students in the professional educational diploma program.

#### Hypothesis 2

##### Null Hypothesis (H0)

Social media has no significant negative impact on the academic performance of UAE students in the

professional educational diploma program.

### Alternative Hypothesis (H2)

Social media significantly negatively impacts the academic performance of UAE students in the professional educational diploma program.

### METHODOLOGY

This study incorporates a descriptive approach to understanding social media's impact on academic performance. According to Siedlecki (2020), the descriptive approach aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation or phenomenon (Siedlecki, 2020). By applying this approach to vocational educational diploma students, the researcher aims to answer what, where, when, and how social media impacts academic performance. A descriptive research design has various methods to investigate one or more variables. This study used the survey questionnaire method to collect data from vocational educational diploma students and understand the relationship between social media and academic performance by statistically analyzing the data.

### Study Sample

In Al Ain University of Science and Technology's Professional Graduate Diploma Program, 400 male and female students were enrolled for the academic year 2023–2024, making up the study population. The 400 people were given the electronic questionnaire; of them, 231 members of the study population—122 students studying in Arabic and 109 students studying in English—responded to it.

**Table 1:** Distribution of the study sample according to the language of the study

Percentage	No of Enrollments	Levels	Variable
52%	122	Arabic Language	Language of study
47%	109	English Language	
100%	231	Total	

**Table 2:** Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.981	20

Table 2 illustrates Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .981, obtained for the scale comprising 20 items, indicating an exceptional level of internal consistency reliability. This high coefficient suggests that the items in the scale were highly correlated, indicating that they consistently measure the same underlying construct. This high level of reliability gave the researcher confidence that the scale effectively measures the intended construct without significant measurement error. This result underscores

the scale's robustness in accurately assessing the targeted concept. Therefore, researchers and practitioners confidently utilize this scale, knowing that it provides dependable and consistent measurements for their purposes.

### Study Tool

The researcher produced a measure of the impact of social media use on academic performance from the student's point of view in the professional diploma program at Al Ain University in order to gather data about the target group and utilize it to answer the study questions. To determine how social media use affects students' academic achievement in Al Ain University's Vocational Educational Diploma Program. There were 27 items on the scale when it was first created. By examining the theoretical literature pertaining to the study's topic, the scale's original form was created (David R Skvarc *et al.*, 2021). The study tool consisted of (20) items in its final form after making the amendments recommended by several arbitrators.

### Reliability of the Tool

Using the Cronbach Alpha equation for internal consistency, the reliability of the scale was determined by calculating the internal consistency coefficient for the questionnaire items. The result was a value of (0.83), which is appropriate for the study.

### Validity of the Tool

Ten arbitrators with backgrounds in psychology, curricular philosophy, and teaching methods were asked to evaluate the scale's items based on their applicability, clarity, and phrasing. This confirmed the scale's apparent validity and the impact of social media use on students' academic performance in the Professional Educational Diploma Program at Al Ain University. The final version of the tool had 20 items after the arbitrators' suggested changes and changes to some of the item phrasing.

### Data Analysis Tool

To extract the reliability coefficient of the research instrument, Cronbach's alpha equation was one of the statistical studies that were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Edition 26. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation were computed as descriptive statistical measures to assess the impact of social media use on students' academic achievement. Social media's statistically significant effects on students' academic performance—both positive and negative—were assessed using a T-test. To examine the relationship between social media's beneficial and detrimental effects on students' academic achievement, the Posterior Distribution Characterization for Pairwise Correlations was employed.

### RESULTS

The following results were generated from the study

conducted to understand the impact of social media professional educational diploma program at UAE. on academic performance with the students of the Table 3 provides descriptive statistics which offer

**Table 3:** Descriptive Results

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Negative_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Academic_Performance	231	1.89	5.00	4.0717	.73180
Positive_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Academic_Performance	231	3.18	5.00	4.4656	.50647
Valid N (listwise)	231				

valuable insights into the perceived impact of social media on academic performance among a sample of 231 individuals. For the variable “Negative Impact of Social Media on Academic Performance,” respondents reported a range from 1.89 to 5.00, with a mean score of 4.0717 and a standard deviation of .73180. The results suggested that, on average, participants perceived a relatively high negative impact of social media on their academic performance, with moderate variability in their responses. Conversely, for the variable “Positive Impact of Social Media on Academic Performance,”

scores ranged from 3.18 to 5.00, with a higher mean of 4.4656 and a smaller standard deviation of .50647. This indicates that, overall, respondents perceived a stronger positive influence of social media on their academic performance compared to negative impacts, with less variability in their perceptions. The valid sample size of 231 indicates that all respondents provided complete data for both variables. These descriptive statistics provide a comprehensive view of the perceptions and the effects of social media on academic performance within the surveyed population. Table 4 provides the statistical

**Table 4:** One-Sample Test

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Negative_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Academic_Performance	84.564	230	.000	4.07167	3.9768	4.1665
Positive_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Academic_Performance	134.008	230	.000	4.46556	4.3999	4.5312

results of one-sample tests conducted for social media’s negative and positive impacts on academic performance that reveal significant results. For the negative impact, the t-value of 84.564 with 230 degrees of freedom indicates a highly significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) between the mean score of 4.07167 and the test value of 0. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranges from

3.9768 to 4.1665, indicating that the true mean of the negative impact lies within this interval. Similarly, for the positive impact, the t-value of 134.008 with 230 degrees of freedom also shows a highly significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) between the mean score of 4.46556 and the test value of 0. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranges from 4.3999 to 4.5312, suggesting

**Table 5:** One-Sample Effect Sizes

One-Sample Effect Sizes					
		Standardize	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Negative_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Academic_Performance	Cohen's d	.73180	5.564	5.039	6.087
	Hedges' correction	.73420	5.546	5.023	6.068
Positive_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Academic_Performance	Cohen's d	.50647	8.817	8.001	9.632
	Hedges' correction	.50812	8.788	7.975	9.600

a. The denominator is used to estimate the effect sizes. Cohen’s d uses the sample standard deviation. Hedges’ correction uses the sample standard deviation plus a correction factor.

that the true mean of the positive impact lies within this interval. These results indicate that social media's negative and positive effects on academic performance were significantly different from zero, which suggests that social media substantially impacts academic performance according to the perceptions of the surveyed individuals. Table 5 demonstrates the result of one-sample effect sizes, measured using Cohen's *d* and Hedges' correction, which provide insights into the magnitude of the impacts of social media on academic performance. Cohen's *d* is calculated to be approximately 0.73180 for the negative impact, while Hedges' correction yields a slightly higher value of 0.73420. The 95% confidence intervals for both effect sizes (Cohen's *d*: 5.039 to 6.087; Hedges' correction:

5.023 to 6.068) indicate a substantial effect of social media on academic performance, with a moderate to large effect size. Similarly, for the positive impact, Cohen's *d* is approximately 0.50647, and Hedges' correction is slightly higher at 0.50812. The 95% confidence intervals for both effect sizes (Cohen's *d*: 8.001 to 9.632; Hedges' correction: 7.975 to 9.600) suggest a significant positive effect of social media on academic performance, with a large effect size. These results indicate that social media's negative and positive impacts on academic performance have considerable practical significance, with Hedges' correction providing a slightly more conservative estimate due to its correction factor.

Table 6 demonstrates the results of posterior distribution

**Table 6:** Posterior Distribution Characterization for Pairwise Correlations

Posterior Distribution Characterization for Pairwise Correlations				
			Nega-tive_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Academic_Performance	Posi-tive_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Academic_Performance
Negative_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Academic_Performance	Posterior	Mode		.957
		Mean		.956
		Var-iance		.000
	95% Credible Interval	Lower Bound		.945
		Up-per Bound		.967
	N		231	231
Positive_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Academic_Performance	Posterior	Mode	.957	
		Mean	.956	
		Var-iance	.000	
	95% Credible Interval	Lower Bound	.945	
		Up-per Bound	.967	
	N		231	231

a. The analyses assume reference priors ( $\nu = 0$ ).

characterization for pairwise correlations between the negative impact of social media on academic performance and the positive effects of social media on academic performance, which reveals strong correlation values. Both correlations have a posterior mode of .957 and a mean of .956, indicating a high positive correlation between the two variables. The variance for both correlations was reported as .000, which suggests minimal variability around the mean. The 95% credible intervals for both correlations range from .945 to .967, indicating a tight range within which the true correlation was likely to lie. With a sample size of 231 for each variable, these results provide robust evidence of a strong positive correlation between perceptions of social media's negative and positive impacts on academic performance within the surveyed population.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the study, elaborate social media's perceived impacts on academic performance and the underlying relationship between these impacts. The descriptive statistics of the study highlight that the respondents, on average, perceive both positive and negative impacts of social media on their academic performance which provide the evidence in the favor of both H1 and H2. The mean scores suggest that participants generally believe social media substantially affects their academic endeavors. The relatively high mean scores for both negative and positive impacts indicate that social media is perceived to play a significant role in influencing academic performance. The one-sample tests confirm that these perceptions were significantly different from zero. Social media's negative and positive impacts on

academic performance were statistically significant which support H1 and H2, as evidenced by the low p-values and the wide confidence intervals that do not include zero. This suggests that the effects of social media on academic performance, whether perceived as positive or negative, are substantial and cannot be ignored. The effect sizes further underscore the magnitude of these impacts. The effect sizes for both negative and positive impacts are moderate to large, indicating that social media considerably influences academic performance according to the respondents' perceptions. This finding reinforces the importance of considering the role of social media in educational settings and its potential implications for students' academic outcomes. Lastly, the posterior distribution characterization reveals a strong positive correlation between perceptions of social media's negative and positive impacts on academic performance. This suggests that individuals who perceive social media to impact their academic performance significantly negatively are also likely to perceive it as having a substantial positive impact, and vice versa. This finding highlights the complexity of individuals' perceptions regarding the effects of social media on academic performance and emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of these perceptions. Therefore, the analyses provide comprehensive information on how social media is perceived to affect academic performance among the surveyed individuals. These findings have implications for educators, policymakers, and researchers interested in understanding and addressing the impact of social media on student learning outcomes. Considering these perceptions and their potential consequences when designing educational interventions and policies to promote positive academic outcomes in the digital age is essential.

### LIMITATIONS

While the study yields valuable insights into perceptions of social media's impact on academic performance, it also has several limitations. The potential for sampling bias exists, as the study's sample does not fully represent the population's diversity due to specific recruitment methods or demographic characteristics. Also, the reliance on self-reported measures introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, where participants provide responses, they perceive as socially acceptable rather than reflecting their true perceptions. Additionally, the cross-sectional design limits the study's ability to establish causal relationships or capture changes in perceptions over time. Future research should address these limitations by employing more representative samples, utilizing objective measures where possible, and using longitudinal designs to track changes in perceptions over time, thereby providing a more robust understanding of the dynamic relationship between social media and academic performance.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Academic institutions should implement educational

awareness campaigns to promote responsible social media use and mitigate negative impacts on academic performance.

- Educational practitioners should design and integrate digital literacy programs into the curricula to empower students with critical thinking skills and online safety practices.

- Institutions should provide resources and support for parents to facilitate constructive conversations about social media and academic success.

- Academic institutions should also offer teacher training and professional development on effectively integrating social media into classroom instruction while minimizing distractions.

- Encourage further research to understand the long-term effects of social media on academic outcomes and explore interventions to maximize educational benefits.

### CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that social media benefits students' academic lives, as it prepares them for the age of science and technology, as well as to continue their studies despite the distance from the place of learning and the inability to reach it. This study provided an understanding of the effects of using social media in the student's academic performance survey from the student's point of view. The sample's responses to the study tool showed that social media improves self-education for most students and makes learning fun and easy. It also works to help students understand with high efficiency, improves the quality of academic work, and stimulates demand. To become producers of society, social media also enhances collaborative learning and engagement among students. The comprehensive analysis of perceptions regarding the impact of social media on academic performance provides valuable insights into the complex relationship between digital technology and education. The results indicate that individuals perceive both positive and negative impacts of social media on their academic endeavors, with statistically significant effects observed. Moreover, the effect sizes suggest that these impacts are not only significant but also of moderate to large magnitude, which emphasizes the substantial role of social media in shaping academic performance perceptions. Furthermore, the strong positive correlation between perceptions of social media's negative and positive impacts highlights the multidimensional nature of individuals' views on this issue. This underscores the importance of considering diverse perspectives and experiences when addressing the influence of social media on education.

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