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# IIUM Journal of Human Sciences

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## The Impact of Daily Media Consumption: A One-Week Diary Study of Undergraduate Students at Bayan College, Oman

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### ABSTRACT

*Media consumption profoundly influences students' academic performance, social interactions and well-being. In Oman, excessive social media usage has been linked to mental health challenges among the youth. This study explores the media consumption patterns of undergraduate students at Bayan College, Oman. Participants were selected through the convenient sampling method. The study data comprised 53 daily media consumption records categorised under media platforms utilised, type of content, engagement duration, and the impact on student's academic performance and overall well-being. The diary entries were analysed manually using the qualitative content analysis method. The results are presented as verbatim expressions and simple descriptive statistics. The findings indicate that digital media, mainly social media and streaming services, dominate students' media consumption, averaging five hours daily. Multitasking during media use was also daily, often decreasing focus and productivity. Educational content in long-form video formats was the most frequently consumed content alongside entertainment. Participants reported media consumption had positive and negative effects; among them, improved connectivity with peers and family, reduced sleep, increased stress, and diminished concentration in class. This study highlights the need to develop strategies to encourage balanced and mindful media usage among university students to enhance academic performance and overall well-being.*

**Keywords:** *Digital Media, Media Consumption, Oman, Qualitative Content Analysis, Undergraduate Students*

### INTRODUCTION

Globally, media consumption is integral in the lives of college students, shaping their lives and behaviour and influencing their academic performance, social interactions and well-being (Kircaburun et al., 2020; Kolhar et al., 2021). The emergence of digital media and the proliferation of smartphones has resulted in many students engaging extensively with media platforms (Issa et al., 2021; Alsoudi et al., 2021; Raza et al., 2020). This, in turn, influences students' academic performance, social interactions, mental health, and overall well-being (Bekalu et al., 2019; Schønning et al., 2020; Braghieri et al., 2022).

Recent studies in Oman show that excessive social media use is linked to mental health challenges such as insomnia, stress, and anxiety (Al Battashi et al., 2021; Alsoudi et al., 2021) and poor academic performance among higher education students (Basha et al., 2019; Al-Rahbi & Al-Daraai, 2023). Understanding consumption patterns among this age group is essential to understanding how new media impacts students' well-being and performance.

This study is vital because college students spend a lot of time interacting with media (Tyagi & Khokhar, 2022; Peng-cheng & Hai-qin Yu, 2024), the most familiar platforms being Instagram,

TikTok, and YouTube. A key finding is the prevalence of multitasking, manifested by students consuming social media while studying or attending classes. This observation has raised concerns about the potentially negative impact on their behaviour, mental well-being and performance (Al Shalawi, 2022; Zhao, 2023). Further, this negative impact of media is linked to the type and nature of media content consumed. This is an important distinction because certain kinds of media negatively affect students' emotions, behaviours, and social relationships (Sandu & Nistor 2020; Bender & Bartlett 2021), highlighting the role social media plays in the lives of undergraduate students.

This study explored how undergraduate students consumed digital media, emphasising the type of media, content, duration and the impact it had on their thoughts, feelings, behaviour and academic performance. By analysing these patterns, the study provides insights into the dual nature of media consumption: as a tool for learning and social connection and as a potential source of distraction to users. Understanding these dynamics is thus critical for developing strategies that ensure balanced and mindful media usage.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Scholars are interested in the impact of media consumption on university student's academic performance, interactions and well-being (Ho, & Ito, 2019; Del, Mealy, & Kim 2021; Fraser, et al., 2022). The increased media consumption is attributed to the proliferation of digital media platforms, mainly social media and streaming services. This interest is evidenced by extensive research worldwide due to its impact on students (Mosharafa, 2019; Kolhar et al., 2021; Junejo, 2022; Ibrahim & Niazi, 2023).

### ***Types of Media Platforms***

In the Middle East, Central Asia and China region, the most preferred platforms among university students are Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok and YouTube (Qin, et., 2022; Issa, et al., 2021; Kolhar, et al., 2021), with YouTube being popular for educational content and tutorials (Shoufan, & Mohamed, 2022). In Kuwait, students prefer Snapchat and Instagram for self-expression, passing time, entertainment and self-presentation, while they utilise X (Twitter) for self-presentation, social interaction and entertainment (Alsalem, 2019).

This implies that Instagram, Snapchat and X are commonly used for social interactions and real-time updates, with Facebook primarily used for events (Gharbi et al., 2023). Conversely, streaming services like Netflix, Anghami, YouTubeMusic and Spotify are used for entertainment, education and social interaction (Flanagan, 2024; Abuljadail, et al., 2021).

### ***Type of Content Consumed***

The content consumed plays a significant role in shaping students' thoughts, feelings and behaviour (Tang, & Hew, 2022; Evans, et al., 2021), with both positive (Anggraini et al., 2023; Talaue et al., 2019) and negative (Faqihi et al., 2024; Abi-Jaoude et al., 2020) impact on consumers. Evans et al. (2021) reported that media content has a reciprocal effect on users, with vulnerable students being more prone to the adverse effects of media. Students with suicidal thoughts were more likely to feel the need to compare themselves to others, and females were more likely than males to report any adverse effects (Evans et al., 2021).

In comparison, long-form educational videos have been shown to be beneficial and enhance students' understanding and retention of course information (Richardson, 2023; Al-Khawaldeh, Alzboun, & Al-Awmleh, 2024). Conversely, entertainment content, though providing relaxation and escape, increases procrastination and significantly decreases productivity and academic performance (Sudarsono, Chandra Saputra, & Pinandito, 2023).

### ***Time Spent Consuming Media***

Globally, students spend substantial time on media content daily (Kircaburun et al., 2020; Kolhar et al., 2021). In 2021, a Polish study on the impact of social media on young adult lifestyles revealed that they spent 3 to 4 hours on social media daily (Wojdan et al., 2021). In Hong Kong, Wong et al. (2020) reported heavy internet use, psychological distress, and poor sleep quality among university students in China in a cross-sectional study.

Similarly, Junejo, Hussain, and Lashari (2022) reported social media weariness among university students in Pakistan, with heavy users showing lower academic performance and subjective well-being. The authors advise users to limit social media use to avoid negative consequences. Similarly, Kolhar et al. (2021) attributed excessive social media use to poor academic performance in Saudi Arabia. The authors recommend that educators monitor the time students dedicate to media platforms to prevent possible negative outcomes.

### ***Impact of Content Consumed***

The content consumed influences students' well-being positively and negatively, affecting them cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally (Chen & Xiao, 2022). In the USA, Del Ama, Mealy, and Kim (2021) found that increased time and frequency of social media use were linked to weaker educational values, poorer school attitudes, and reduced willingness to engage in cognitively demanding activities, often associated with tremendous academic success.

Cognitively, a meta-analysis found significant adverse effects on body image, well-being, mental health and self-esteem (McComb et al., 2023). Students with higher depressive symptoms and self-assessment motivation were found to be particularly vulnerable to these negative impacts (Aubry, et al., 2024). These findings suggest that social media exposure to aspirational content can lead to unfavourable self-comparisons and negative self-assessments, especially for individuals with pre-existing mental health vulnerabilities.

Emotionally, social media use evokes a range of emotions, from happiness and inspiration to anxiety and sadness, depending on the nature of the content (Kross et al., 2019). While it can provide social support and opportunities for sharing content, which may increase feelings of love and compassion (Janicke-Bowles, et al., 2022), excessive use and emotional investment are positively correlated with anxiety and depression (Alsunni & Latif, 2020). These findings highlight the importance of understanding the nature of content students consume and its potential impact on their overall mental health and emotional well-being.

Social media influences lifestyle choices, social interactions, and academic habits, with those who frequently view particular content more likely to adopt related behaviours (Del, Mealy, & Kim, 2021). On the other hand, excessive consumption of entertainment-oriented content has been associated with procrastination and diminished academic performance (Kolhar et al., 2021). Thus, the

type and frequency of social media content consumed are key determinants of students' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

In conclusion, a complex interplay exists between digital media use and its impact on student's academic performance and well-being albeit with both positive and negative outcomes. While media offers educational benefits and social connectivity, it also carries potential risks related to student's mental health, academic performance and wellbeing.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Study Design***

The study utilised Qualitative Content Analysis to interpret and systematically analyse textual or visual data (Komor & Grzyb, 2023). This method is suited for subjective analysis of verbatim texts and documents to gain insights into social worlds and ideologies (Selvi, 2019). This design helps identify patterns, themes, and meanings within the data to understand better the phenomenon (Selvi, 2019; Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023).

The researchers analysed personal diary entries from undergraduate students, where the students recorded their daily media use over one week. The entries were categorised into four main areas. The first entry was media platform utilised; the second entry focused on the content consumed, and the third category was duration of engagement, while the fourth entry detailed how student's media usage impacted their thoughts, feelings, and behaviour.

The researchers presented their study findings using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, and verbatim expression to facilitate an understanding of usage patterns and their implications for students' academic performance and well-being.

### ***Study Setting***

The study was conducted among undergraduate students enrolled in the Introduction to Media Studies course during the Summer 2024 semester at Bayan College in Muscat, Oman. The eligibility criteria for participation were limited to undergraduate students who voluntarily consented to participate. A purposive non-probability sampling method was used to select undergraduate students who would provide detailed descriptions of their daily consumption of media content over a span of seven days.

### ***Ethical Consideration***

Data collection started upon clearance from the College Research Approval Committee. Each potential participant was informed about the study purpose and data collection process, given the opportunity to ask questions, and informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Consenting participants signed an informed consent form, agreeing to keep and submit an electronic or hard copy of their daily media consumption record for seven days. Throughout the data analysis and reporting phases, a unique code number upheld each participant's anonymity and preserved the confidentiality of their data.

### ***Data Collection Process***

Data was collected from 53 students using the Daily Diary Entry approach, which captures individual experiences and helps to make sense of them (Richter-Killenberg & Volmer, 2022). This method helps understand life experiences in real-time, especially in capturing context-specific details. In addition, it minimises recall bias and helps participants provide rich and unique insights into their daily lives (Olorunfemi, 2024). To ensure the data collected was reliable, accurate, and meaningful, the researchers piloted the instructions with 5 participants who completed one-day entry of their media consumption habits. After obtaining the pilot's feedback, the researchers refined unclear areas and finalised the diary entry sheet to guide the study.

For data accuracy, each participant documented their daily media consumption habits by filling out the diary entry sheet at the same time each day after reflecting on the day's experiences. Participants recorded four items: the platform used, the type of media consumed, the duration spent, and how each media content impacted their thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. This step enhanced the study's rigor and the overall trustworthiness and validity of the findings (Johnson, Adkins, & Chauvin, 2020). Regular communication with participants was maintained throughout the data collection period. This step helped clarify doubts and address challenges participants encountered. This extra-quality mechanism ensured the diary entries were recorded accurately, reflecting participants' true experiences.

Finally, the researchers met regularly to ensure consistency in interpreting the entries. This helped resolve any discrepancies in categorizing data, reducing the risk of bias and increasing the reliability of the student data's coding.

### ***Data Analysis***

The daily diary entries were analysed manually using the thematic analysis framework through reflexive “immersion and crystallisation” (Borkan, 2021). Thematic analysis was chosen because it creates rich, trustworthy, sensitive, and insightful research findings, helpful in identifying, describing, organising, analysing, and reporting themes (Nowell et al., 2017). The analysis followed a 7-step process to ensure a systematic and rigorous approach. The first step involved familiarisation with the data, and the researchers read through the diary entries multiple times to become familiar with the content. This initial review helped the researchers understand the data and identify recurring patterns and initial impressions. The second step was organising the diary entries captured reflecting the media used, the content consumed, the time spent on each media type and the impact on their thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

The third step involved initial coding through a line-by-line and paragraph-by-paragraph approach to reflect different aspects of the data. The fourth step involved refining the initial codes under categories, ensuring they fit nicely under the four thematic areas highlighted in the study. The fifth step entailed identifying overarching themes that capture the essence of participants' media consumption habits and their impact on their lives. The sixth step involved interpreting the themes in light of participants' media habits and their influence on them. The seventh step entailed the two researchers revisiting the diary entries and ensuring that the themes accurately reflected students' experiences.

## **FINDINGS**

A total of 53 undergraduate students participated in the study. They maintained a daily diary of their media consumption habits for one week. Table 1 summarises the students' demographic characteristics, such as age and media platforms.

**Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Demographic Characteristics**

| <b>Variables</b>                   | <b>n (53)</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| <b>1. Age Range</b>                |               |                   |
| 18-20 years                        | 6             | 11.3%             |
| 21-22 years                        | 44            | 83.0%             |
| 23 and above years                 | 3             | 5.7%              |
| <b>2. Gender</b>                   |               |                   |
| Male                               | 12            | 22.6%             |
| Female                             | 41            | 77.4%             |
| <b>3. Study Major</b>              |               |                   |
| Public Relations and Communication | 32            | 60.4%             |
| Broadcasting                       | 14            | 26.4%             |
| Visual communication and Design    | 2             | 3.7%              |
| Advertising                        | 3             | 5.7%              |
| Journalism                         | 2             | 3.7%              |
| <b>4. Level of Study</b>           |               |                   |
| Year 1                             | 36            | 67.9%             |
| Year 2                             | 17            | 32.1%             |
| <b>5. Frequency of Media Used</b>  |               |                   |
| Instagram                          | 91            | 18.3%             |
| YouTube                            | 65            | 13.1%             |
| TikTok                             | 38            | 7.6%              |
| Snapchat                           | 64            | 12.9%             |
| WhatsApp                           | 58            | 11.6%             |
| Twitter (X)                        | 52            | 10.4%             |
| Facebook                           | 17            | 3.4%              |
| Netflix and streaming              | 30            | 6.0%              |
| Podcast                            | 13            | 2.6%              |
| Interactive Social App             | 9             | 1.8%              |
| Online Search Engines              | 22            | 4.4%              |
| Newspaper and Magazine             | 6             | 1.2%              |
| Television                         | 21            | 4.2%              |
| Pinterest                          | 10            | 2.0%              |
| Radio                              | 2             | 0.4%              |

The entries were categorised into four thematic areas used to inform data analysis. The first thematic area highlights the media platforms utilised; the second, the types of media content consumed; the third, average time spent consuming media content; and fourth, the impact of the media on their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours:



### Theme 1— Media Platforms and Daily Media Consumption Patterns

As shown in Table 2, the findings show that Instagram emerged as the most frequently used platform, accounting for 91 instances (18.3% of consumption), followed by YouTube, which had 65 instances (13.1%), and Snapchat, with 64 cases (12.9%). TikTok and WhatsApp were also popular, with 38 cases (7.6%) and 58 instances (11.6%) respectively. Twitter (X) accounted for 52 cases (10.4%), indicating its role as a significant platform among users. This heavy usage was associated with negative consequences, as reported by participant #3: *“I couldn't sleep that day because I spent a lot of time watching social media, which led to pain in my hands and head”*.

In contrast, traditional media such as newspapers and magazines were used less frequently, with only six recorded instances (1.2%). Similarly, radio accounted for the least media consumption, with just two cases (0.4%). The findings also show that platforms such as Facebook (17 instances, 3.4%), podcasts (13 instances, 2.6%), and interactive social apps (9 cases, 1.8%) were also used less frequently.

**Table 2. Daily Media Consumption Patterns (n= 53)**

| SN | Media Platform         | Frequency  | Percentage  |
|----|------------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1  | Instagram              | 91         | 18.3%       |
| 2  | YouTube                | 65         | 13.1%       |
| 3  | TikTok                 | 38         | 7.6%        |
| 4  | Snapchat               | 64         | 12.9%       |
| 5  | WhatsApp               | 58         | 11.6%       |
| 6  | Twitter (X)            | 52         | 10.4%       |
| 7  | Facebook               | 17         | 3.4%        |
| 8  | Netflix and streaming  | 30         | 6.0%        |
| 9  | Podcast                | 13         | 2.6%        |
| 10 | Interactive Social App | 9          | 1.8%        |
| 11 | Online Search Engines  | 22         | 4.4%        |
| 12 | Newspaper and Magazine | 6          | 1.2%        |
| 13 | Television             | 21         | 4.2%        |
| 14 | Pinterest              | 10         | 2.0%        |
| 15 | Radio                  | 2          | 0.4%        |
| 16 | <b>Total</b>           | <b>498</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### Theme 2- Type of Content Consumed

The findings in Table 3 indicate that entertainment was the most frequently consumed content category, with 125 recorded instances representing 34.1% of the total consumption. In contrast, social interaction and educational content were equally prominent, each with 91 cases (24.8%), as shown in Table 3. Additionally, political content accounted for 20 instances (5.4%), while news was recorded 17 times (4.6%), suggesting moderate engagement with current events and political discussions. Less frequently consumed content included culture and religion (11 instances, 3.0%), shopping (8 cases, 2.2%), and business-related content (3 instances, 0.8%). The study found that spending a long time on entertainment adversely affected the students, as this participant reports: *“Watching the videos caused me to suffer from eye headaches and severe back pain, which led to me not getting up early in the morning”* (Participant #27).

**Table 3. Daily Frequency of Media Content Consumption (n= 53)**

| SN           | Type of Content      | Frequency  | Percentage  |
|--------------|----------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1            | News                 | 17         | 4.6%        |
| 2            | Entertainment        | 125        | 34.1%       |
| 3            | Social Interaction   | 91         | 24.8%       |
| 4            | Political content    | 20         | 5.4%        |
| 5            | Educational          | 91         | 24.8%       |
| 6            | Beauty               | 1          | 0.3%        |
| 7            | Business             | 3          | 0.8%        |
| 8            | Culture and Religion | 11         | 3.0%        |
| 9            | Shopping             | 8          | 2.2%        |
| <b>Total</b> |                      | <b>367</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### ***Theme 3 – Time Spent Consuming Media Content***

As shown in Table 4, the findings indicate that most participants spend between 2 to 5 hours per day on media consumption, accounting for 114 instances (40.0%). This significant time spent on media platforms resulted in students having negative outcomes such as information overload, anxiety and sleep deprivation, as this participant narrated:

*“I experienced information overload, which increased my anxiety levels and made it difficult to focus on my work... I often felt mentally exhausted and irritable... impacting my sleep and overall mood negatively”.* (Participant #51).

This indicates that a significant portion of students engage with media for extended periods daily. Following this, 1-2 hours of media use was observed in 90 instances (31.6%), suggesting that many students use media moderately. Shorter durations of usage of less than 1 hour per day were reported in only 35 instances (12.3%), while extended durations of usage of more than 10 hours were recorded in 9 cases (3.2%).

**Table 4. Average Time Spent Consuming Media Content (n= 53)**

| SN           | Media Platform     | Count of usage category per day | Percentage  |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 1            | Less than 1 hour   | 35                              | 12.3%       |
| 2            | 1-2 Hours          | 90                              | 31.6%       |
| 3            | 2-5 hours          | 114                             | 40.0%       |
| 4            | 5-10 hours         | 37                              | 13.0%       |
| 5            | More than 10 hours | 9                               | 3.2%        |
| <b>Total</b> |                    | <b>285</b>                      | <b>100%</b> |

### ***Theme 4 – Impact of Media Consumption on Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviour***

The findings, as displayed in Table 5, show the highest proportion of impact in the behaviour category, with 101 instances representing 44.3%. This suggests that media consumption considerably influenced participants' actions related to behaviours. The study also found that feelings were the second most impacted area, accounting for 98 instances (43.0%). This indicates that media exposure significantly affected participants' emotional states. On the other hand, the impact of media

consumption on students' thoughts was reported less frequently, with 29 instances representing 12.7 percent.

**Table 5. Daily Patterns of Impact on Users (n= 53)**

| SN | Effect       | Count of Impact | Percentage  |
|----|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1  | Thoughts     | 29              | 12.7        |
| 2  | Feelings     | 98              | 43.0        |
| 3  | Behaviours   | 101             | 44.3        |
|    | <b>Total</b> | <b>228</b>      | <b>100%</b> |

When asked to explain how media use influences their thoughts, feelings, and behaviour, many participants reported experiencing both positive and negative impacts. The negative effects of media usage is illustrated by the verbatim descriptions below:

*“I felt envious of other people's seemingly perfect lives after spending so much time on Instagram. My own self esteem was adversely affected by this comparison, resulting in a feeling of inadequacy and diminished worth”* (Participant #12).

*“Sitting for a long period of time on social media platforms led to difficulty sleeping”* (Participant #23).

Overall, spending long hours on media platforms negatively impacted users' thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. In contrast, satisfying experiences highlighted the positive impact of media use: *“It was satisfying to engage in community groups”* (Participant #1).

The positive impact of media usage seems to be linked with shorter time spent on consuming media content as this participant declares: *“While I enjoyed the entertaining and educational content, I felt I was spending too much time on the app. I felt fatigued from long hours in front of the screen, impacting my sleep and study time”* (Participant #3).

## DISCUSSION

Daily diary entries of media consumption patterns were analysed under four categories: platforms, content, duration and impact on students' thoughts, feelings and behaviour:

### ***Media Platforms Utilised***

Instagram was the most used platform, followed by YouTube and Snapchat in third place. This observation is similar to the findings by Qin et. al (2022) in a study conducted among Chinese college students. The Chinese study found that Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube were the most used platforms. Similarly, Issa et al. (2021), in a survey conducted in the 3 Middle Eastern countries - Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey noted that Facebook and X (Twitter) were most popular among students. Kolhar, Kazi, & Alameen (2021) report similar in a study among university students in Saudi Arabia.

In contrast, traditional media such as newspapers, magazines and radio were the least used platforms. This decline in traditional media usage among this group of users is similar to the findings by del Ama, Mealy, and Kim (2021) in a study conducted in the United States, which found that traditional media, even in their online versions, seems to be in an unstoppable decline. In their study, del Ama and others found that 75% of study participants rarely read daily newspapers or magazines or watched traditional TV news.

This finding indicates a strong engagement with various media platforms among students, suggesting that media consumption is a prevalent aspect of their daily lives. Students predominantly engage with social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat, while their consumption of traditional media and radio remains relatively low. This usage pattern suggests a preference for visual and interactive content, which is consistent with the media consumption pattern among young people globally.

### ***Type of Media Content***

Regarding content consumed, entertainment emerged as the most frequently consumed category. This suggests a strong preference for leisure activities such as streaming videos, watching movies, or engaging with entertaining social media posts. This observation agrees with a recent finding based on an Indonesian study that concluded that university students consumed entertainment content for relaxation and escapism, significantly decreasing their overall productivity and academic performance (Sudarsono et al., 2023).

Social interaction was the second most consumed media content after entertainment. This finding indicates that students utilize media platforms to maintain social connections with their families and peers. It is similar to that reported by Ho and Ito (2019), who investigated media consumption-oriented engagement among college students in Canada. The authors noted that students connecting with family and friends online helps to ease academic pressure, thereby promoting emotional well-being.

In addition to entertainment and social interaction, students utilise media platforms to acquire knowledge or information relevant to their studies. Al-Khawaldeh and colleagues (2024) found similar results in their research that explored digital educational content and students' motivation towards learning among university students in Jordan. The utilisation patterns highlight a clear preference for entertainment, social interaction, and educational materials, reflecting the varied motivations behind students' media usage.

Inversely, the low engagement with business and beauty content might be due to a perception that it is less entertaining or inapplicable to their current stage in life. The authors infer that many participants may not yet be focused on career and business-related topics, given that most of the students were in their young age of 21-22. Besides, these youthful students might feel overwhelmed by their academic expectations. Furthermore, the low engagement with shopping content suggests that many college students may be operating on tight budgets, which makes them prioritise essential expenses.

### ***Time Spent on Media***

Most participants spent 2 to 5 hours consuming media daily, implying that 4 of every 10 students engaged with media for extended periods daily. This was closely followed by students who

spent 1-2 hours on media, implying that over 70% of students spend between 1-5 hours on social media daily. This is comparable to a cross-sectional study conducted among Hong Kong university students (Wong, et al., 2020). This trend of heavy social media usage reported in the current study is comparable to a United Arab Emirates study by Alkhady (2024), who found that a substantial number of university students spent over seven hours daily on digital media for entertainment.

This pattern of usage suggests that most students spend considerable time engaging with media, with over 53% consuming media for over two hours daily. Such extended time spent on digital media has far-reaching implications for students' academic performance and well-being, as Junejo et al. (2022) report based on a Pakistan-based survey.

### ***Impact of Media Utilisation***

The findings reveal that digital media usage has both positive and negative outcomes. The primary positive outcome was enhanced connectivity with peers and family members, while adverse effects included reduced sleep, heightened stress and reduced concentration.

The most impact of media usage was reported in the behaviours category, suggesting that media consumption influenced participants' actions, such as daily routines, social interactions, or decision-making. Students reported that the interactive media enhanced connectivity with peers and family members. These findings are comparable to a study by Bashir et al. (2021) conducted in Pakistan, which found that most students were frequent social media users, which affected their educational goals. Such findings indicate social media use is deeply embedded in students' daily lives, facilitating academic performance when used moderately but compromising their performance when used heavily. This highlights the importance of digital literacy and time management training to help students balance academic goals and online activities.

Another behaviour pattern observed was social media multitasking, leading to decreased focus and productivity. This was consistent with the report of Xu et al. (2016), who observed that multitasking compromised students' productivity because switching between academic tasks and social media use disrupts students' focus and concentration.

The scholars observed that frequent shifting causes cognitive overload, which makes it harder for students to retain information and comprehend complex subjects (Xu et al., 2016). This is due to mind wandering, absent-mindedness, and reduced attention. Overall, social media multitasking significantly diminishes academic performance by creating divided attention, promoting absent-mindedness, and hindering productivity, thus making it challenging for these undergraduate students to achieve their educational goals (Alghamdi et al., 2020).

The second impact category was linked to student's feelings, indicating that media exposure significantly affected participants' emotional states, including changes in mood, stress levels, or general emotional well-being. These findings are consistent with the findings by Iwamoto and Chun (2020), who observed that while digital media acts as a form of social support, it also negatively affects their mental health as a result of the students using social media for self-comparison or setting unrealistic expectation of themselves and other individuals, which resulted in lower self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-worth.

The third and last category of impact was how media affected their thoughts. This category reflects the cognitive influence of media content on changes in opinions, awareness, or perceptions.

This observation agrees with the broader perspective that social media is designed to trigger immediate emotional reactions through features like likes, comments, shares, and notifications. These elements provide instant gratification or disappointment, impacting users' feelings more directly (Al-Rawi, 2019), affirming that social media usage has powerful effects on user's emotions (Steinert & Dennis, 2022).

Furthermore, social media often encourages users to compare themselves with others. For university students navigating academic, social, and personal identities, seeing posts highlighting others' successes or curated lifestyles can lead to feelings of inadequacy or envy (Iwamoto & Chun, 2020). This comparison impacts emotional well-being and behaviours but does not alter their core beliefs or thought processes. This explains why students' thoughts were less affected by social media than their feelings and behaviours because media shapes how they feel and act rather than how they think.

## CONCLUSION

The study highlights the central role of digital media in students' daily lives, as evidenced by their spending between 2 and 5 hours daily on social media platforms. While these platforms enhance connectivity with peers and family, they often lead to adverse outcomes, such as reduced sleep and poor academic performance, which require careful management. Future research should, therefore, explore strategies for promoting balanced media use with an emphasis on mitigating the adverse effects of media and maximising the benefits of media usage for enhancing university students' academic performance and well-being.

The researchers also recommend that higher education educators encourage students to practice mindful media consumption by setting specific usage limits. Students should also be encouraged to have dedicated study periods free from digital distractions to focus and retain information, a strategy to overcome the pervasive multitasking pattern. Finally, higher education institutions should implement college-wide awareness programs to educate students on the impact of excessive media use on their behaviour, performance, productivity, and overall well-being.

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