

A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN THE FACULTY OF TOURISM AT HAI PHONG UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: Through the study, the authors analyzed the impact of social media use on undergraduates' academic performance in the Faculty of Tourism at Hai Phong University. The research focuses on the relationship between students' usage habits, purposes of access and the role of social media platforms in either supporting or hindering students' learning activities. The research findings confirm that social media has become an inseparable part of students' daily lives, serving both academic needs and entertainment purposes, as well as other personal interests of users. While uncontrolled use tends to undermine time management ability and learning efficiency, purposeful use fosters opportunities for knowledge sharing, collaborative problem-solving and access to abundant academic resources. By highlighting both the benefits and drawbacks, the study underscores the dual nature of social media in higher education. Especially, the study complements new empirical evidence within the specific context of tourism students, a group that requires strong technological and communication competencies. This research not only reaffirms the bidirectional impact of social media on learning but also points out the distinctive characteristics of Tourism students.

Keywords: Impact, social media, students' academic performance, Faculty of Tourism, Hai Phong University.

NGHIÊN CỨU TÁC ĐỘNG CỦA VIỆC SỬ DỤNG MẠNG XÃ HỘI TỚI KẾT QUẢ HỌC TẬP CỦA SINH VIÊN KHOA DU LỊCH, TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC HẢI PHÒNG

Tóm tắt: Thông qua nghiên cứu, nhóm tác giả đã phân tích tác động của việc sử dụng mạng xã hội đối với kết quả học tập của sinh viên Khoa Du lịch, Trường Đại học Hải

Phòng. Nội dung nghiên cứu tập trung vào mối quan hệ giữa thói quen sử dụng, mục đích tiếp cận và vai trò của các nền tảng mạng xã hội trong việc hỗ trợ hoặc gây cản trở hoạt động học tập. Kết quả nghiên cứu khẳng định mạng xã hội đã trở thành một phần không thể tách rời trong đời sống hằng ngày của sinh viên, vừa đáp ứng nhu cầu học thuật, vừa phục vụ các mục đích giải trí cũng như các mục đích khác của người dùng. Việc sử dụng thiếu kiểm soát mạng xã hội có xu hướng làm suy giảm khả năng quản lý thời gian và hiệu quả học tập, trong khi việc sử dụng có định hướng lại mở ra cơ hội chia sẻ tri thức, hợp tác giải quyết vấn đề và tiếp cận nguồn học liệu phong phú. Bằng việc chỉ ra cả lợi ích và hạn chế, nghiên cứu nhấn mạnh tính hai mặt của mạng xã hội trong giáo dục đại học. Đặc biệt, công trình bổ sung bằng chứng thực nghiệm trong bối cảnh đặc thù của sinh viên du lịch - nhóm đối tượng đòi hỏi cao về năng lực công nghệ và giao tiếp. Nghiên cứu này không chỉ khẳng định tác động hai chiều của mạng xã hội đến học tập mà còn chỉ ra đặc thù của sinh viên Du lịch.

Từ khóa: Tác động, mạng xã hội, kết quả học tập của sinh viên, khoa Du lịch, Trường Đại học Hải Phòng.

1. Introduction

In the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, social media has become an indispensable part of daily life, particularly for university students. The use of social media brings numerous benefits such as expanding social connections, providing rapid access to information, and supporting academic activities. However, excessive or inappropriate use may lead to negative impacts on students' academic performance and personal lives.

Hai Phong University, with its mission to train high-quality human resources for society, must gain a clear understanding of how social media influences its students, especially those in the Faculty of Tourism. The tourism industry requires students not only to

acquire specialized knowledge but also to develop communication skills, along with the ability to utilize technology and social media effectively. Therefore, research on the influence of social media on the academic performance of tourism students is both necessary and urgent.

This study aims to identify the extent and mechanisms through which social media affects students' learning outcomes. Based on these findings, the research proposes solutions to maximize the benefits while minimizing the drawbacks of social media usage.

2. Literature review, theoretical framework, and methodology

2.1. Literature review and relevant theoretical framework

The advent of the Internet and social

media platforms has enabled individuals to connect, interact, search for resources, and engage in learning activities across diverse spaces and times. Social media, in particular, allows young people, including university students, to pursue personal interests, passions, and self-expression more intensively. According to the *We Are Social* report, as of January 2025, Vietnam had 76.2 million social media users, accounting for 75.2% of the total population¹. The growth rate of social media users in Vietnam is remarkable, with an increase of 3.5 million users (+4.8%) from early 2024 to early 2025. This indicates that social media continues to expand rapidly and has become a prevalent channel for information consumption [2].

Article 3, Clause 22 of Decree No. 72/2013/NĐ-CP defines a social network as: “An information system that provides users with services of storage, provision, use, search, sharing, and exchange of information with one another, including services for creating personal webpages, forums, online chats, sharing audio and visual content, and other similar services.” [3]

Based on this definition, social networks can be simply understood as systems (networks) that enable people to connect with one another. Through social

media, individuals can share information, images, and audio content, as well as seek friends and expand their connections. In Vietnam, popular social media platforms include Facebook, Zalo, YouTube, Twitter, TikTok...

Most young people in Vietnam, including university students, actively use social media. To prepare for the draft of the *Political Report of the 11th National Congress of the Vietnam National Union of Students for the 2023 - 2028 term*, the Secretariat of the Central Committee conducted a study entitled “*The Lifestyle and Value Orientation of Today’s Students*.” The study surveyed 26,331 students from universities and colleges nationwide. Findings revealed that nearly all students use Facebook and Zalo, with remarkably high rates of 97.8% and 97% respectively. A notable trend is that students often use multiple social media platforms simultaneously. Moreover, 85.1% of students reported that “accessing social media” is part of their daily routine [1].

Academic performance serves as an important indicator in evaluating the effectiveness of a learner’s educational process. It goes beyond mere grades, reflecting the extent to which students have absorbed knowledge, developed skills, and cultivated attitudes during a

¹ These data may not accurately reflect the number of unique individuals due to user duplication across multiple platforms.

given period of study [4]. Academic performance also demonstrates cognitive abilities, problem-solving capacity, and the ability to apply knowledge in practice. This not only enables learners to self-assess but also assists instructors in determining the appropriateness of their teaching methods.

The issue of how social media usage affects academic performance has attracted significant scholarly attention. However, students from different institutions, and even different faculties within the same institution, may exhibit varying characteristics and behaviors. Therefore, conducting research within the Faculty of Tourism at Hai Phong University will provide the university in general, as well as academic advisors and lecturers in particular, with valuable insights to develop measures supporting students in leveraging social media effectively for their academic endeavors.

2.2. Theoretical framework of the study

* *Theoretical foundations* applied to explain the relationship between social media and academic performance in this study include:

- Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G)²: This theory posits that students actively select and utilize media to satisfy

specific needs. Within the scope of this study, social media is used by students to meet demands such as social connection, entertainment, learning, or information seeking. The purposes for which they engage with social media may exert different impacts on their academic performance.

- Social Learning Theory³: Social media can serve as a social learning environment where students acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes from peers, lecturers, or online academic communities. However, it can also expose them to behaviors that distract from academic engagement.

* *Key variables in the research model*:

- Independent variables: Social media usage time, purposes of social media use, social media platforms, usage frequency, etc.

- Dependent variables: Students' academic performance, level of participation in academic activities, etc.

- Mediating variables: Time management, level of virtual social interaction, etc.

2.3. Methodology

* Study site and participants: The study surveyed students in the Faculty of

² The theory was credited to Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz in 1974 in their article 'The Uses of Mass Communications: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research'.

³ Albert Bandura's theory emphasizes that individuals learn through observing others within a social environment.

Tourism at Hai Phong University. This is a cross-sectional study employing convenience sampling. The questionnaire was designed with 28 questions, divided into 6 parts: General demographic information, Frequency and duration of access, Purpose of using social networks, Means and locations of accessing social networks, Social network usage activities

and Learning activities. The research focused on groups of students from the 2nd to 4th year. In the sample, female students accounted for a higher proportion than male students (67% vs. 32.3%), while a small proportion preferred not to disclose their gender. The demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the research sample

Total N = 443	Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Gender	Male	143	32.3
		Female	297	67
		Other	3	0.7
	Cohort	K25 (Year 2)	200	45.1
		K24 (Year 3)	124	28
		K23 (Year 4)	114	25.7
		K22 and earlier (awaiting graduation)	5	1.2
	Residence	Dormitory	29	6.7
		Rented house	76	17.2
Relatives' house		11	2.5	
Family home		323	72.9	
Other		4	0.7	
Cumulative GPA	Excellent	7	1.6	
	Very good	29	6.5	
	Good	246	55.5	
	Average	140	31.6	
	Poor	19	4.3	
	Not specified	2	0.5	

Source: Authors' survey, 2025

- Within the scope of this study, the authors focused on examining patterns of social media use such as usage time, locations, and access devices; social connections; purposes of use; and perceptions of the usefulness of social media in learning.

* *Research methods:* This study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the effects of social media on students' academic performance, while also seeking solutions to optimize its benefits for learning and career development. For the quantitative method, the researchers designed a questionnaire, collected data, and processed it using Excel and SPSS software.

3. Results

3.1. The current situation of social media use among Tourism students at Hai Phong University

* *Social media platforms used by students:* The survey results show that among 443 students, 432 (97.5%) reported using social media. This indicates that social media use is highly prevalent among students in the Faculty of Tourism. Among the platforms used, Facebook was the most popular, accounting for 93%, followed by Zalo and

TikTok, each with approximately 84%. YouTube ranked next, with 69.3% of students using the platform. These are the three most frequently used platforms among the students. In addition to these well-established platforms, some newer platforms such as TikTok (emerging use) or Locket have also been adopted, though at lower rates.

* *Frequency of social media use:* Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Zalo remain the four most frequently used platforms. TikTok was the most favored, followed by Facebook. The popularity of this pair highlights users' dual needs: maintaining core social connections (via Facebook) and staying updated with trends or instant entertainment (via TikTok). The simultaneous use of these two platforms illustrates students' search for a multifunctional digital ecosystem - where Facebook supports "real-life" communication and socialization, while TikTok provides entertainment and passive content consumption. The frequency distribution shows that most students use more than two platforms, with an average of about five platforms per student, and some using up to seven or eight. This demonstrates that multi-platform use is a common characteristic of this group.

* *Daily time spent on social media:* Survey data indicate that most students

spend between 1 to 3 hours per session on social media (43.1%), followed by 21% who spend less than one hour. Notably, 77 students (7.4%) were identified as “high-intensity users,” dedicating more than five hours per session. The presence of such heavy users suggests potential risks, including tendencies toward social media dependency and possible adverse effects on physical and mental health.

* *Devices used to access social media:* Mobile phones were the most common devices used to access social media, with only 2% of students reporting otherwise. The second most frequently used device was laptops. Compared to desktops, laptops were preferred due to their portability and convenience,

allowing students to access social media anywhere.

* *Purposes of social media use:* Students reported diverse purposes for social media use, with four main categories emerging: updating news and trends, chatting, learning and academic discussions, and entertainment. Each of these purposes was reported at relatively high and comparable rates. Specifically, 77.2% of students used social media for entertainment, 79.9% for staying updated on news and trends, and 62.8% for chatting. This also explains why many of the platforms they use (e.g., Facebook with Messenger, Zalo, TikTok) emphasize communication features.

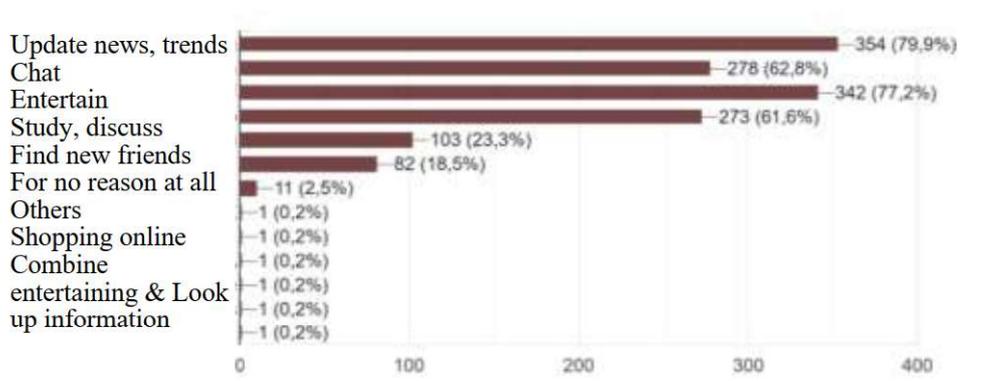


Figure 1. Purposes of social media use among Tourism students

Source: Authors' survey, 2025

Learning, discussion, and knowledge-sharing were also identified as major purposes, with 61.6% of students using social media for such activities. This reflects the growing number of online groups and pages created for

academic sharing and support, including class or course-based study groups.

Beyond these purposes, 18.5% of respondents indicated that they accessed social media purely out of habit, without any particular goal. Although this

proportion is not high, it reveals signs of dependency among some students. In such cases, students may find it difficult to carry out other tasks without using social media, with some even requiring its use before or during other activities.

3.2. Relationship between social media use and students' academic performance

Based on the data obtained from individual variables, the study analyzed some correlations to accurately assess the impact of social media use on students'

learning outcomes. Through the survey of students' social media usage time and the proportion of time spent on academic purposes, the research team obtained the following results:

** Usefulness of social media in learning:* The use of social media for learning is considered highly necessary, serving as a foundation for subsequent research steps to be effective. Students' evaluations are illustrated in the following figure:

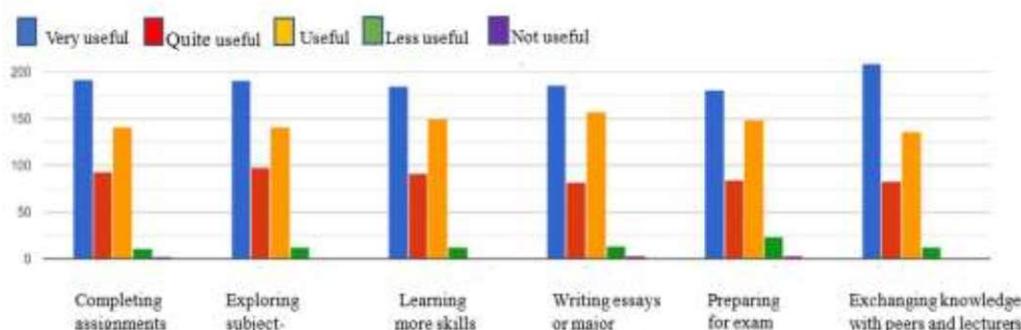


Figure 2. Levels of usefulness of social media for academic activities

Source: Authors' survey, 2025

An analysis of the results shows that students generally rated social media as quite useful across most learning activities.

- Most highly rated activity: Students rated social media as “very useful” for exchanging knowledge with peers and lecturers when completing assignments. Completing assignments and exploring subject-related knowledge ranked second and third, with almost

equal frequency. This indicates that social media is an effective tool for tasks requiring collaboration or rapid information retrieval.

- Moderately useful activities: Social media was evaluated as moderately useful for writing essays or major assignments, as well as for acquiring additional skills related to their field of study. Although the percentage of students rating it as “very useful” was

slightly lower, the combined proportion of “quite useful” and “very useful” remained dominant.

- Low percentage of non-usefulness: For all activities, the proportion of students rating social media as “not useful” was minimal (below 3%). This affirms the positive role of social media in modern academic environments.

Overall, the statistical analysis indicates that social media has become an indispensable part of students’ learning processes - from simple tasks to large-scale projects, and in maintaining connections and knowledge exchange with peers and instructors.

* *Correlation between daily social media usage time and students’ academic performance (GPA¹):* The relationship was analyzed using Pearson’s correlation test. The results show:

- Correlation coefficient (r): -0.217
- p-value (Sig.): < 0.001

Since the p-value is lower than the 0.05 significance level, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between time spent on social media and GPA. However, the correlation coefficient (r = -0.217) indicates a weak negative correlation.

¹ For comparability, GPAs were converted to the 4-point grading scale, the prevalent system in Vietnamese higher education.

This means that as social media usage time increases, GPA tends to decrease, although the effect size is not strong.

Students were divided into groups based on their daily social media usage time, and the average GPA of each group was calculated as follows:

Table 2. Relationship between daily social media usage time and academic performance (GPA)

Daily social media usage	GPA
Less than 1 hour	3.10
1 - 3 hours	2.89
3 - 5 hours	2.75
More than 5 hours	2.50

* *Relationship between frequency of using social media for learning and perceived usefulness:*

Survey data revealed a clear trend: students who frequently used social media for academic purposes (e.g., “Very often” and “Fairly often”) were more likely to rate social media as “Very useful” or “Useful” for learning activities. Conversely, those who used it less often (“Occasionally”) still acknowledged its value, indicating that even infrequent use

is perceived as beneficial in academic contexts.

3.3. Recommendations from the study

Social media has become an indispensable part of students' lives. However, spending excessive time on social media may negatively affect academic performance. To mitigate such impacts, both students and the university should implement specific and effective measures as follows:

* For students: Social media should be used purposefully. Instead of browsing aimlessly, students should participate in online study groups, follow educational and scientific pages, or use social media to search for learning materials. This would turn social media into an effective learning support tool. Students should also develop clear plans and schedules for accessing social media, deciding appropriate times of the day and setting reasonable durations for each session.

* For the university: Rather than prohibiting students from using social media, the university should facilitate its effective use by providing free internet access to minimize the tendency of students spending long hours in cafés. At the same time, it should regularly remind and educate students about responsible

social media use to prevent exposure to harmful online behaviors. Instructors, during their classes, should guide students in essential skills such as accessing academic information, searching for relevant study materials effectively, and managing their online interactions. Additionally, lecturers should support the establishment of online study groups, helping students recognize the value of collaborative learning in the digital environment.

4. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that social media plays an increasingly significant role in the lives of students in the Faculty of Tourism at Hai Phong University. It provides many benefits, such as supporting learning and enhancing social connections, but it also presents challenges, including time management and the negative influence of online content. Encouraging students to participate in professional communities and share knowledge is a key factor. Moreover, the university and faculty should integrate educational content on safe and effective social media use into their programs, helping students avoid potential risks and maximize the benefits of social media in their academic and personal development.

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