

Social Media Use and Overall Well-Being Among University Accounting Students

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to describe patterns of social media use (time, purpose, and content) and their relationship with emotional experiences and students' perceptions of its impact on their daily lives. Accordingly, the following research question was formulated: How are patterns of social media use characterized, and how are they related to students' emotional well-being and perceptions of their impact on their lives? This research was conducted using a quantitative approach, which focuses on the study of phenomena through the collection of numerical data and statistical analysis. This approach makes it possible to objectively measure variables, identify patterns within the data, and explore relationships or associations among different factors, thereby facilitating a structured and empirically verifiable understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. To determine the study sample, a non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed, resulting in a sample of 100 students enrolled in the Bachelor's Degree in Accounting in the blended-learning program at the Autonomous University of Nayarit. The collected data were processed using SPSS statistical software. The results indicate that 81.8% of the surveyed students use social media for four to six hours per day or more than six hours per day. In addition, entertainment was identified as the primary reason for using these platforms. Finally, 45.5% of the students reported having voluntarily taken breaks from social media, while only 4.5% had sought professional help to address issues related to anxiety and stress levels.

Keywords: health, social media, society, students, technology.

Introduction

Technology has undergone rapid development since the final decades of the twentieth century and throughout the twenty-first century, profoundly transforming the ways in which people access information, generate knowledge, communicate, and interact. This process has contributed to the consolidation of what is known as the information and knowledge society, characterized by increasing global interconnectedness and the widespread presence of digital technologies in virtually every area of social life. In this context, the expansion of these tools represents both an opportunity and a challenge, since ensuring their availability and accessibility alone is not sufficient. Consequently, the incorporation of social media into students' daily lives has brought about significant changes. However, social media platforms do not always communicate information accurately or appropriately. In this regard, the adoption of these virtual environments may create challenges for students and the general population, particularly in relation to the emotions they may experience after spending excessive amounts of time connected to social media. Prolonged exposure may contribute to emotional disturbances, digital harassment, and other experiences that can negatively affect mental health. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to describe patterns of social media use (time, purpose, and content) and their relationship with emotional experiences and students' perceptions of its impact on their daily lives. With this in mind, it can be argued that the growing complexity of contemporary society has transformed the role of connectivity, as individuals increasingly turn to virtual environments to address different needs. This transformation has required adaptations to meet emotional and social needs, shifting certain forms of interaction from physical environments to the recreated or simulated spaces provided by social media platforms (León & Hernández, 2024). Furthermore, technology has become deeply integrated into people's daily lives, serving as a common resource for academic, professional, social, and personal activities (Martínez-Ferrer & Ruiz, 2017). Its widespread presence has transformed the ways in which individuals access information, communicate, and maintain relationships with others. Likewise, the continuous

development of digital devices, applications, and online platforms has contributed to the increasingly prominent role of these technologies within the dynamics of contemporary society.

Web 3.0 Context

Web 3.0 is regarded as a social web that has evolved over time, becoming increasingly consolidated within a highly digitalized and interconnected society shaped by new developments on the Internet. This evolution has resulted in significant advances in the current technological era. Likewise, technological innovations have sparked students' interest in discovering new ways of learning through these tools, thereby creating a source of support throughout their professional development. In addition, these technologies encourage active participation, collaborative and competitive work, and interaction through blogs, social media, forums, and other forms of digital communication (Ayasheva & Nurkenova, 2026).

In this context, Web 3.0 can be defined as an intelligent web whose characteristics and capabilities are associated with the implementation of automated systems supported by artificial intelligence (AI), which has contributed to a significant transformation of the Internet. Thus, the term Web 3.0 is associated with technologies capable of interacting with users and enabling the automation of different processes and strategies. These technologies support tools capable of understanding and processing multimedia content, providing new possibilities for educational processes and for the development and evolution of digital environments, including social media platforms.

In this regard, Küster and Hernández (2013) argue that Web 3.0 establishes the foundations for creating a knowledge base composed of semantic and qualitative information. Its purpose is to store and process users' preferences and characteristics, including their interests, habits, connectivity, interactivity, and usability patterns, while simultaneously integrating this information with existing content available through social media and the mobile Internet.

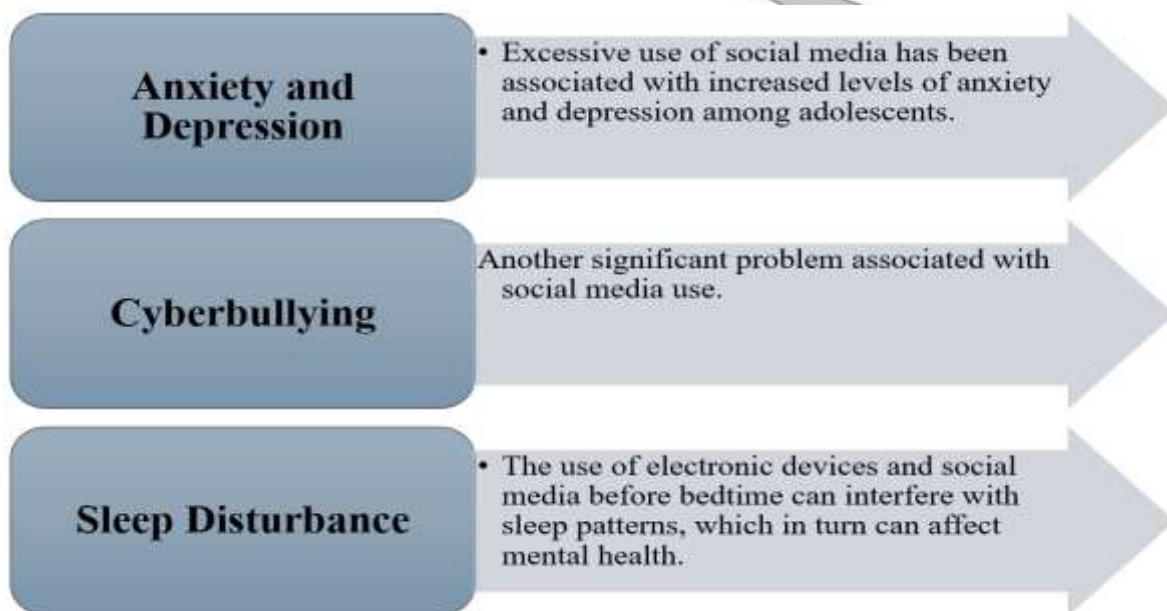
Social Media and Mental Health

The rise of social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube, along with other widely used platforms, has led to a significant increase in their use and consumption, particularly among young people. Their growing presence in everyday life has generated considerable interest in examining their potential effects on individuals' well-being, with particular attention to mental health. Spending excessive amounts of time on these platforms may have emotional, social, and behavioral consequences. In 2008, Facebook became one of the most widely used social networking platforms worldwide, with more than 200 million users, a figure that subsequently surpassed 800 million. It evolved into a social network capable of facilitating communication and enabling users to share opinions and even emotions (Prieto et al., 2019). In this sense, social media can be understood as a digital tool that enables users to create and maintain networks of interaction.

It should be noted that these aspects are associated with cultural factors and are also influenced by the social environment, which may shape individuals' behaviors and perceptions. According to Anchundia-Garcia et al. (2023), approximately 350 million people worldwide live with depression. This highlights the importance of considering how intensive social media use may be associated with various personal consequences among young people and adults, particularly when its use is not appropriately moderated. People of different ages are increasingly immersed in digital environments, where they continuously consume content and interact through social media platforms (Barrón-Colin & Mejía-Alvarado, 2021). Furthermore, social media provides immediate access to a wide variety of content, news, and opinions. However, its constant use also presents challenges related to digital habits and the amount of time devoted to these platforms, potentially affecting daily routines, sleep patterns, interpersonal relationships, academic activities, work responsibilities, and participation in physical and recreational activities.

At the same time, excessive social media use may have negative effects on individuals' mental health. Symptoms such as anxiety and depression have been associated with intensive or problematic use of these digital platforms. Figure 1 presents some of the potential negative effects associated with social media use.

Figure 1. Negative Effects of Excessive Social Media Use



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Frías et al. (2025)

General objective

To describe patterns of social media use (time, purpose, and content) and their relationship with students' emotional experiences and perceptions of their impact on daily life.

Specific objectives

- To determine the amount of time students spend using social media.
- To identify problems associated with social media use that may affect students' mental health.

Research question

How are patterns of social media use characterized, and how are they related to students' emotional well-being and perceptions of their impact on daily life?

Methodology

This study was conducted using a quantitative approach, which focuses on the examination of phenomena through the collection of numerical data and statistical analysis (De Jesús, 2024). This approach makes it possible to objectively measure variables, identify patterns in the data, and explore relationships or associations among different factors, thereby providing a structured and empirically verifiable understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

To determine the study sample, a non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed. This technique allows researchers to select participants based on their accessibility and availability according to the requirements of the study (Hernández, 2021). Based on this procedure, a sample of 100 students was selected.

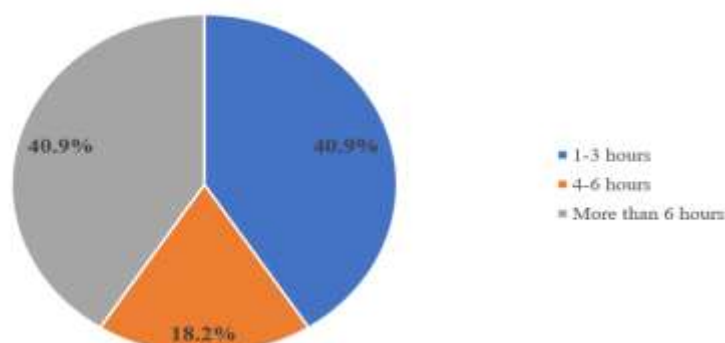
Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of closed-ended questions administered to students enrolled in the Bachelor's Degree in Accounting in the blended-learning program at the Autonomous University of Nayarit during the January–June 2025 semester. The collected data were processed using SPSS statistical software, which was used to generate frequency tables and graphs to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of the results.

Results And Discussion

Regarding the question, "How many hours per day do you spend using social media?", the analysis of the data shows that a considerable proportion of students (40.9%) spend more than six hours per day on social media.

Similarly, an equal proportion of respondents (40.9%) reported spending between one and three hours per day on these platforms. The remaining 18.2% reported an intermediate level of use, ranging from four to six hours per day (Figure 2).

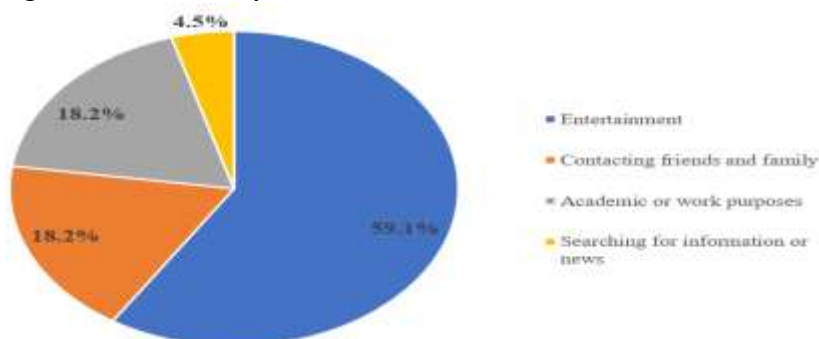
Figure 2. How Many Hours per Day Do You Spend Using Social Media?



Source: Authors' own elaboration

Regarding the question, "For what purpose do you use social media?", the results indicate that entertainment is the primary reason students use social media, accounting for 59.1% of the responses. Maintaining contact with friends and family is the second most frequently reported purpose, representing 18.2%. An identical percentage (18.2%) reported using social media for academic or work-related purposes. Finally, a smaller proportion of students (4.5%) use these platforms to search for information or news (Figure 3).

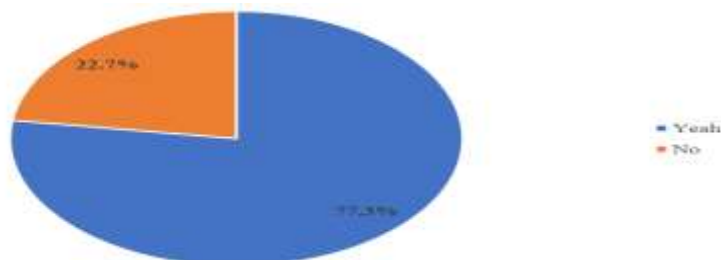
Figure 3. For What Purpose Do You Use Social Media?



Source: Authors' own elaboration

Regarding the question, "Have you experienced anxiety or depressive symptoms as a result of comparing yourself with others on social media?", a relevant finding of the study is that a considerable proportion of the surveyed students (77.3%) reported experiencing feelings of anxiety or depressive symptoms as a result of comparing themselves with other users on social media (Figure 4).

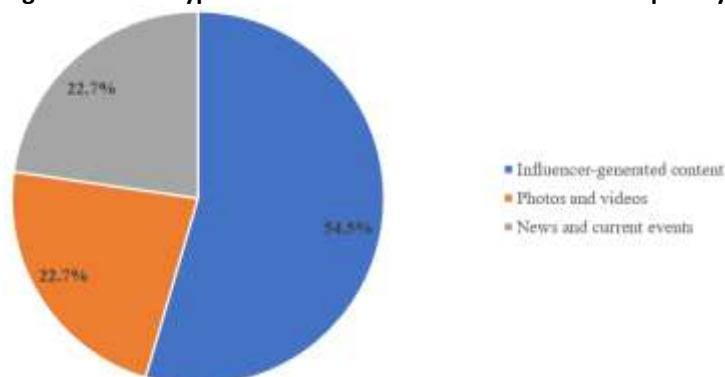
Figure 4. Have You Experienced Anxiety or Depressive Symptoms as a Result of Comparing Yourself with Others on Social Media?



Source: Authors' own elaboration

Regarding the question, “What type of content do you consume most frequently on social media?”, more than half of the surveyed students (54.5%) reported primarily consuming content created by influencers or celebrities. In contrast, 22.7% indicated that they most frequently engage with photos and videos shared by friends and family, while another 22.7% reported primarily consuming news and current affairs content. Notably, educational or informational content appears to play a less prominent role, with no significant representation among the responses obtained (Figure 5).

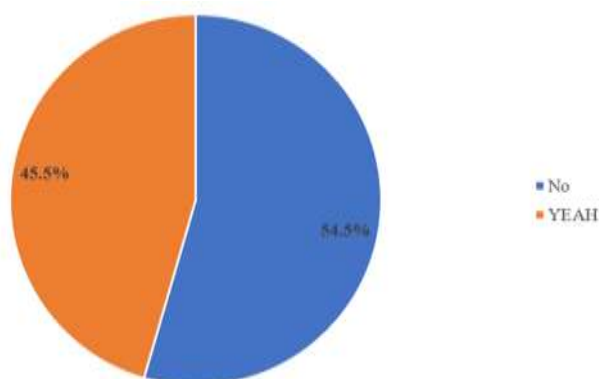
Figure 5. What Type of Content Do You Consume Most Frequently on Social Media?



Source: Authors' own elaboration

Regarding the question, “Have you ever taken a break from social media?”, more than half of the surveyed students (54.5%) reported that they had never taken a break from social media use, while 45.5% indicated that they had taken a break at some point (Figure 6).

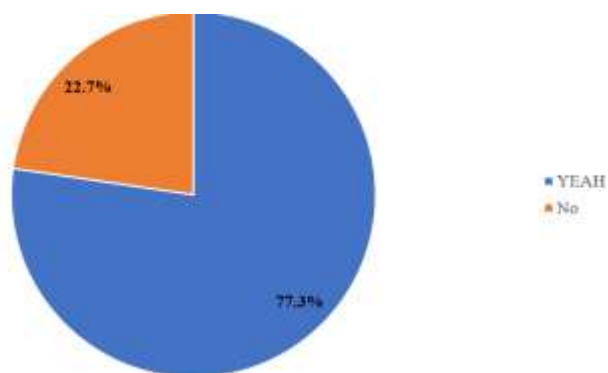
Figure 6. Have You Ever Taken a Break from Social Media?



Source: Authors' own elaboration

Regarding the question, “Do you think social media can have a positive impact on your life?”, a clear majority of the surveyed students (77.3%) believe that social media has a positive impact on their lives, while 22.7% reported that they do not perceive such a positive impact (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Do You Think Social Media Has an Impact on Your Life?



Source: Authors' own elaboration

Based on the results obtained, 81.8% of the surveyed population uses social media for four to six hours per day or more than six hours per day. In addition, entertainment was identified as the primary reason for using these platforms. According to the survey administered to the 100 students, the most frequently consumed content is that generated by influencers or celebrities, accounting for 54.5%, whereas educational or informational content is the least frequently accessed. These findings suggest that students are highly engaged with social media content and use these platforms primarily as a source of entertainment and as a way to cope with boredom. Conversely, when access to these technologies is unavailable, some individuals may experience frustration, anger, or irritability, which may represent a potential risk associated with excessive reliance on digital platforms (Rodado et al., 2021). Likewise, problematic social media use may contribute to dependency and may be associated with symptoms of depression or anxiety among students, potentially affecting their social relationships, health, and academic performance (Varona-Fernández & Hermosa-Peña, 2020).

It is important to note that most students reported not feeling pressured to present a perfect image of themselves on social media. Similarly, they generally perceive these platforms as having a positive impact on their daily lives. Finally, 45.5% of the students reported having voluntarily taken breaks from social media, while only 4.5% had sought professional help to address problems associated with its use. The findings also indicate that students use social media as a means of communication and social interaction; however, intensive use may contribute to emotional dependence and negatively affect self-esteem. Social media use has also been associated with higher levels of anxiety and stress, highlighting the importance of promoting responsible digital habits (Becerra-Baños et al., 2025).

Furthermore, an aspect that requires particular attention is constant social comparison and the search for validation in digital environments. These experiences may have a greater impact on adolescent girls due to their frequent exposure to content portraying idealized lifestyles, stereotypes, and expectations that may be difficult to achieve (Sancarranco, 2025). Continuous interaction with this type of content may negatively influence self-perception, generate feelings of dissatisfaction or inadequacy, and contribute to unhealthy emotional behaviors, such as social withdrawal or an increased dependence on the approval and acceptance of others.

Conclusion

Social media platforms provide rapid access to information and a wide variety of content while allowing users to express their ideas, opinions, and experiences. However, their continuous use also presents important challenges, particularly regarding the amount of time spent on these platforms and the type of content consumed. Excessive use may affect different aspects of daily life, including sleep patterns, relationships with family and friends, and the fulfillment of academic or work-related responsibilities.

Therefore, it is important to examine not only the amount of time individuals spend on social media but also their reasons for using these platforms and the digital practices they adopt. This issue is particularly relevant among university students, who regularly use social media for academic purposes, communication, social interaction, and entertainment. Consequently, understanding how social media use is related to students' habits, emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, and overall quality of life is essential for promoting healthier and more responsible digital practices.

In this context, social media has undergone significant development, offering users increasingly diverse opportunities to communicate, interact, and share content in digital environments where they may feel comfortable expressing themselves. Nevertheless, these benefits should be accompanied by responsible and balanced use to minimize potential negative effects and encourage social media practices that contribute positively to students' daily lives and overall well-being.

In this regard, the sustained growth of social media and the continuous diversification of the digital applications and services associated with these platforms demonstrate that they have moved beyond being merely a technological trend to become relevant components of contemporary society (Hunter, 2026). Their integration into everyday life has transformed the ways in which people communicate, interact, access information, and generate and exchange knowledge. Within this context, the educational field has also undergone significant changes resulting from the integration of these technologies. The emergence of new platforms, resources, and digital tools has contributed to the development of innovative teaching and learning strategies, transforming certain traditional educational practices and creating new forms of participation and interaction between students and faculty.

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