INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SOCIAL AVOIDANCE AND

ACADEMIC PERRFORMANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

MEDIATING EFFECT OF SOCIAL COMPARISON

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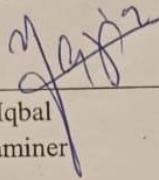
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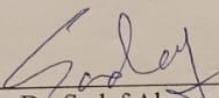
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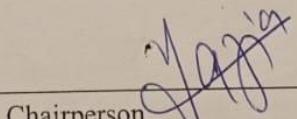
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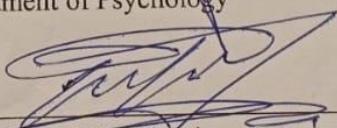
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DECLARATION

I, Ms. ALINA, Registration No. **356-FSS/MSEP/F23** student of **MS** in the subject of Psychology, session **2023-2025**, hereby declare that the matter printed in the thesis titled: <u>Influence of Social Media Social Avoidance and Academic Performance Among University Students Mediating Effect of Social Comparison</u> is my own work and has not been printed, published, and submitted as research work, thesis or publication in any form in any University, Research Institution etc. in Pakistan or abroad.

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It is certified that the research work in this thesis entitled "*INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SOCIAL AVOIDANCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS : MEDIATING EFFECT OF SOCIAL COMPARISON*" has been completed by Ms. Alina, Reg.no, 356-FSS/MSEP/F23 under my supervision. This thesis has sufficient material and meets prescribed standards for the award of degree in MS Educational Psychology, under Department of Psychology, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to all those brave souls embarking on the profound journey of self-discovery and healing, and those who are eager to bring positive change in the lives of others in one way or another.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Annexures

List of Abbreviations

SMUS   Social Media Use Scale

SADS   Social Avoidance/Distress Scale

APS   Academic Performance Scale

SCS   Social Comparison Scale

SPSS   Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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Abstract

Concerns about social media's effects on behavior, particularly social comparison and social avoidance have been raised by university students growing use of the platform. This study used social comparison as a mediator to investigate how social media affects social avoidance and academic performance among university students. A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit a total of 300 university students of Islamabad. Social media user and students from 2nd semester and onward to have their CGPAs were participated. The factors were evaluated using following scales The Social Media Use Scale (Tuck & Thompson, 2024), Social Comparison Scale (Allan & Gilbert, 1995), Social Avoidance/Distress Scale (Watson & Friend, 1969) and Academic Performance Scale (McGregory et al., 2015). Questionnaires were distributed among the students. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Regression analysis, t test and ANOVA were run in SPSS version 23.0 to determine direction and degree of correlations between the variables. Hayes Process Macro version 4.2 (Model 4) was used for mediation purpose. The results of this study showed that there was significant positive effect of Social Media on Social Avoidance and negative effect on Academic Performance. Social Comparison mediated Social Avoidance and Academic Performance among University Students. There were significant effects of social media on Hostilities and Day scholars. The differences in demographic variables like employment status, education, no. of hours spend on social media and beauty related social media sites were explored from respective study. It was found that Hostilities used more social media than Day Scholars. These results offered insightful information about psychological effects of social media on student's mental health and on academics. The results have major implications for the emotional, social, and educational domains.

Keywords: social media, social comparison, social avoidance, academic performance,

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the present era, social media greatly affects opinions of the world, culture, and economics. It is a platform that enables individuals to communicate, ask and give advice, and engage together and share ideas. Social media use has grown rapidly over the past decades and it became an essential part for many people's lives. Social media has transformed ways of communication. Numerous social media platforms allow users to connect with one another and exchange their own thoughts, opinions, and other details. Social media has turned into an essential part of everyday life in recent years, particularly for students. Social comparison, freedom of expression, entertainment, and academic cooperation are all facilitated by platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter (X), TikTok, and Snapchat in addition to communication. While social media has many advantages and disadvantages like excessive or inappropriate use leads to worries about how it may affect student's social behaviors, academic performance, and psychological health.

University students face a variety of academic, social, and psychological difficulties, throughout their time in higher education. Social media's rapid growth has fundamentally changed how students communicate, obtain information, and view themselves in relation to their peers. Others suffer from negative consequences like distraction, delay, and increased social comparison, which can affect academic performance and self-worth, whereas others utilize these platforms for academic performance and keeping social connections (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Vogel et al., 2014). Observation of peer's accomplishments might change social interaction, lower motivation, and increase feelings of inferiority. Thus, it is crucial to understand

how social media affects university students' interpersonal interactions as well as their academic performance.

In a university setting, students often fall into two groups: day scholars, who come every day from their homes, and hostelites, who live in hostels. Hostelites tend to spend more time with their peers, which might improve their socialization and group learning possibilities. However, they might also experience homesickness and lack of direct family support (Kumar & Raj, 2016). On the other hand, day scholars enjoy the comforts of home and the support of their parents, but their social interaction on campus may limited (Iqbal et al., 2020). These differences in living situations might influence social media usage habits like social media usage, the kinds of social comparisons students engage in and ultimately affect their academic performance.

University Students who spend too much time online are increasingly exhibiting social avoidance, which is characterized as a tendency to withdraw from social situations out of anxiety, nervousness, or disinterest. Social avoiders tend to be less comfortable of their social connections and like to work alone. People who are socially anxious tend to distance themselves from other people (Asendorpf, 2000). Social media has taken a central role in university student's everyday life in the current digital era, as impacting their connections, communication, and self-perceptions. Although it provides advantages like peer support, guidance and knowledge access, it also exposes students to ongoing social comparisons that may be harmful to their mental health. The academic performance of students may eventually suffer as a result of these comparisons, which frequently cause inferiority, social disengagement, and increasing insecurity (Vogue et al., 2010).

Social Media

Social media refers to online applications and interactive sites that enable users to create, publish, modify, and discuss their own content (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010; Kietzmann et al. 2011). Social media is a group of Web-based tools that develop on the conceptual and technological fundamentals of the web by facilitating the creation and publication of content created by users (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). This significantly heightens the importance, as social media has emerged as an essential part of how billions of people interact with one another and learn about the world at large. It has totally transformed how individuals engage, communicate, and get information. Other benefits include connections, sharing thoughts and ideas on a platform, and reuniting with family and friends. According to Kuppuswamy & Shankar (2010), social media sites attract the attention of pupils before diverting it to inappropriate and non-educational activities like meaningless small talk.

Social networking sites are 21st-century digital platforms that offer people especially university students to make their own profiles, exchange material, and communicate with others in social and academic settings. Social media sites including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Twitter, and YouTube are often used. In addition to offering real-time connection through chat, likes, and comments, these programs allow users share their thoughts, photos, videos, and status updates.Social networks have been very popular and widely used in recent years. According to Cain (2009), social networking sites facilitate communication between individuals. Following linking, news, instructional materials, and other materials like pictures and videos can be uploaded. Kietzmann et al. (2011) define social media as a group of web- and mobile-based technologies that enable highly collaborative platforms for the public, in addition to people, to share, create, discuss, and then handle content generated by workers.

Collectively, these ideas demonstrate how social media facilitates communication, content sharing, and the development of online communities. The term "social media" describes an extensive variety of platforms, each of which serves a certain purpose and facilitates many kinds of interactions. On social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn, users may make personal profiles and interact with friends, family, and coworkers (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Microblogging platforms such as Tumblr and Twitter allow users to post quick updates or messages, providing a practical means of sharing knowledge to a network of followers (Muzaffar, Chohdhry & Afzal, 2019; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). On platforms like Flickr, YouTube, and Instagram that are devoted to sharing images, videos, and music, users may post, share, and consume rich media (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Some content communities like Reddit and Quora facilitate the exchange and discussion of certain types of information among users with same interests (Shao, 2009). Social comparison has been established in our daily lives due to the influence of social media platforms, which cause people to evaluate their own worth and achievements in relation to those of others. Numerous studies have examined social avoidance and social comparison, highlighting their significant impact on psychological health (Festinger, 1954; Oberle et al., 2010). According to the study held in Turkey by Mehmet Kavakli and Gulten Unal (2021) university students increasingly using social media as a main site for social comparison, where they regularly exposed to peers representations of success, lifestyle, and looks. Such exposure frequently creates social comparison processes, both upward (perceiving others as better off) and downward (perceiving others as worse off), which can have a significant effect on one's feeling of self-worth, sense of belonging, and become socially avoidant.

According to a recent qualitative study conducted among university students in Pakistan, excessive usage of social media increases feelings of inferiority by increasing social comparison, highlighting the widespread psychological effects of this platform (Sohail et al., 2024). Due to these comparisons they become socially anxious and avoid social interaction. People who are socially uncomfortable likely to be more at risk of using social media more. People with social anxiety feel scared and anxious when they are in social situations where they might be negatively assessed or criticized by others, which can reduce their chances of forming meaningful social relationships (Hoffman, 2007). Furthermore, socially avoidant people might prefer online interaction over in-person interactions due to their improper social beliefs, which increases the possibility that they will interact online more frequently (Weidman et al., 2012). According to research, people who are socially avoidant may find that interacting online is generally more comfortable for them, which influences their opinion and decision to interact online rather than in person (Erwin et al., 2004). An endless cycle of negative thoughts and avoidance behaviors can develop from social comparisons with more successful competitors, which can heighten anxiety and the desire to succeed (Orji et al., 2019).

Social Avoidance

Social avoidance is the practice of avoiding social settings, connecting with people, or withdrawing from them for any reason. A desire for isolation and a tendency to avoid social interaction due to anxiety are the features of social avoidance, a different kind of social withdrawal (Asendorpf, 1990). Building relationships, taking part in social gatherings, and participating in class discussions are all important for both academic and personal growth. These are sometimes difficult for socially avoidant people. Social avoidance can result in loneliness, a lack of peer support, and fewer opportunities for learning together, all of which have a negative effect on emotional health and academic

achievement (Alden & Taylor, 2004). The social avoidance may make it more difficult to communicate with people both personally and academically, which could lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation (Primack et al., 2017). Feelings of loneliness and social isolation have been connected to heavy social media use.

People may feel isolated from their real-life social activities if they choose online communication over face-to-face interactions (Primack et al., 2017). The idealized portraits of other people's lives that are commonly posted on social media may make users feel more inferior and increase their tendency to avoid social interactions (Vogel et al., 2014). Long-term social comparison can lead to chronic social avoidance, a condition in which people routinely withdraw from social interactions. A person's interpersonal relationships and overall quality of life may suffer as a result (Frison & Eggermont, 2016). Avoidance behavior has been connected to increased levels of anxiety and depression because it can worsen feelings of loneliness and damage support systems (Cohen & Janicki, 2016). The term "social avoidance" refers to any behavior that involves avoiding, conversing with or fleeing from others for whatever cause. Perceived feelings of unhappiness are linked to the condition known as distress. It includes intense anxiety, sadness or discomfort. Watson and Friend (2009) defined social distress as either the perceived absence of positive feelings (e.g., being relaxed) or a sense of a negative feeling (e.g., being unhappy, nervous in social interactions). Withdrawing from social interactions is a common behavior among those who are socially anxious.

People with high levels of social avoidance or anxiety find social interactions uncomfortable and would rather be by themselves. Another study indicated that those with high levels of social avoidance or anxiety also have lower levels of self-confidence, need for connection and desire for changes (Torrance, 1999). According to Clark and Wells (1995) cognitive model of social anxiety, those who suffer from social anxiety

frequently have negative feelings about both themselves and other people. They think others are more capable, attractive, or self-confident than they are, and they see themselves as socially inferior. These false beliefs lead to avoidance and isolation by increasing self-consciousness and exaggerating the fear of social evaluation (Cororve & Gleaves, 2022). Youth who are socially disengaged are more likely to experience social, emotional, and academic maladjustment because they avoid peer relationships and often act alone in social situations (Rubin et al., 2009). The social connection of female students has been affected by particularly challenging social tasks including public speaking, oral reporting, questioning, and taking part in extracurricular activities and events. This has resulted in avoidant behaviors and higher dropout rates in academics (Baptista et al., 2012). The students socially withdraw from their professors and peers when the normal assignments gave to them. When a social interaction or social situation arises, socially avoidant students stray away from these interactions (Campbell, Bierman & Molenaar, 2016). The more frequently these students avoid social situations, the more likely it is to form a trend, which will make them think they are not adjusting in life and ultimately make them more likely to drop out of academics performance.

Socially avoidant students may put pressure on themselves to make themselves feel better because they avoid circumstances that might cause them any difficulty because they fear being negatively assessed by others (Purdon et al., 2001). Reluctance to participate in peer or group activities is a sign of social avoidance, which can restrict the access to peer support, decrease shared learning opportunities, and have a negative impact on class participation. These behaviors are all associated with lower academic outcomes (Adil et al., 2022). Avoiding group conversations and peers restricts possibilities for collaborative learning, which are crucial for sharing information, finding solutions, and improving critical thinking abilities (Wentzel & Watkins, 2002). Less involvement in

class can result in difficulties with teachers and less access to academic support and feedback (Jiang et al., 2018). Feelings of loneliness are common among socially withdrawn individuals and have been connected to lower academic achievement and a higher likelihood of dropping out (Thomas, 2000).

Academic Performance

The degree to which a student has met their current or long-term educational goals is referred to as academic performance. It is frequently assessed using test results, grade point average (GPA), or self-reported academic achievement. Numerous environmental, social, and psychological factors affect academic success. According to studies, academic achievement can be negatively impacted by high levels of distraction, delays, or emotional distress, which are frequently associated with excessive use of social media or social avoidance (Junco, 2012).There is a direct correlation between university students' use of social media and their academic performance. However, the drawbacks of technological progress have resulted in issues such as a loss of basic life values, especially among students, who account for a majority of users on social networking sites.

The primary objective of online social networking platforms is to create and reflect social connections between people who share similar hobbies or interests. Because there are so many social networking sites available online, students are attracted to skip reading and coursework in favor of online discussions with friends. Many students today become glued to the new internet craze, which includes social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. Social networking sites attract students' attention before directing them to inappropriate and non-educational activities, like meaningless small talk, according to Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010). According to Ahn (2011), social networking can

improve learning by encouraging social interaction and knowledge sharing, even though it can also divert students. Tinto (1997) asserts that extracurricular and academic activities alone are insufficient to satisfy some students who experience social networking isolation. This explains how social networks help students by improving their educational experiences and academic careers. While social media platforms might help students with their studies, excessive usage of them is mostly associated with poor academic achievement in college (Noreen et al., 2024). It has been demonstrated that participating in academic conversations, cooperative study groups, or online forums improves learning outcomes, increases satisfaction, and promotes efficient information exchange (Al-Rahmi et al., 2022; Ashraf et al., 2021). Non-academic goals, such as social media browsing or enjoyment, might result in distractions, higher cognitive load, and decreased attention, all of which are linked to poorer results. (Giunchiglia et al., 2020; Lau, 2017).

Social Comparison

Social comparison is a judgment people make of their own bodies in comparison to those of others. Teenagers may become less confidence in themselves if they compare their bodies to the idealized, media-promoted standards of beauty (Vartanian & Dey, 2013). It is thought that people constantly want to compare themselves to other people. When someone compares themselves to superiors who have positive traits, this is known as upward social comparison; conversely, when someone compares themselves to inferiors who possess negative traits, this is known as downward social comparison (Wills, 1981; Wood, 1989). Likes, comments, and shares are frequently highlighted on social media platforms, which may increase the desire for outside validation. Comparing one's social media activity to that of others may have an additional impact on one's sense of self-worth (Rudolph et al., 2016).

As stated by Newton-John and Cohen (2019), body dissatisfaction and social comparison are closely related, and this can result in disordered eating patterns and other mental health issues. Social media platforms usually display photographs that have been edited and filtered, which may affect people's views of what makes an attractive body. Constant exposure to such content can lead to long-term issues with body image (Perloff, 2014). Instagram did not increase social anxiety, according to Jiang and Ngien's research.

Theoretical Framework

Social Comparison Theory

In 1954, social psychologist Leon Festinger presented the SCT for the first time. According to this theory, social comparison is a means of satisfying people's basic human desire to assess themselves. Theory states that people evaluate themselves against those who are similar to them in certain ways, such age, gender, or profession. Comparing oneself to others allows them to assess their own development and identify their own positive and negative aspects. It is the widely recognized psychological theory that describes how people assess others and themselves through social comparison. According to this, People evaluate their own skills, attitudes, and beliefs by comparing them to those of others. Social comparison can affect motivation, self-worth, and self-esteem. Depending on the reference group, it might be upward or downward. Comparing oneself to a person who is viewed as being greater is known as upward comparison, and it can inspire drive and adoration as well as sense of inadequacy and jealously and on the other hand comparing oneself to a person who is viewed as inferior is known as "downward comparison," and while it can temporarily increase one's sense of self-worth, it can also lead to satisfaction.

Additionally, according to the theory, social comparison can have benefits as well as drawbacks. For instance, people's self-esteem may increase when they contrast themselves with those who are less fortunate. On the other side, people may feel less confident and inferior when they contrast themselves with those who are more successful. It has been proven that people use comparison to establish their position in a certain field, and they usually stop comparing as soon as they have a good understanding of it (Gerber, 2020).Social media sites enhance these comparisons in the digital age. Students at universities are regularly exposed to selective posts that highlight their friends' social achievements, academic success, beauty, and lifestyles. Frequent upward comparisons can make students feel less competent or successful, which lowers their level of confidence and causes them to become more socially isolated and less motivated to study. As a result, this theory supports up the idea that social comparison mediates the relationship between academic achievement and social media use. According to this theory, the constant social comparisons caused by social media can lead student who consider themselves inferior to others to become more socially avoidant. People compare themselves to others in order to evaluate their own and society's worth. It clarifies how individuals contrast their own actions, accomplishments, and viewpoints with those of others. Because upward comparisons create a sense of inferiority, they are typically associated with negative changes in self-concept, according to social comparison theory. But according to new research, upward comparisons can actually encourage positive changes in one's self-concept, depending on the circumstances.

According to this theory, people usually evaluate their abilities and sense of worth by comparing themselves to others, particularly in environments where accomplishments are publicly displayed. Social media sites allow users to exchange well selected and idealized content, which increases these comparisons. People evaluate themselves against

individuals they believe to be more attractive, successful, or sociable, a phenomenon known as upward social comparisons. Students are more likely to make social comparisons on social media, which could affect their mental well-being and sense of self. The idea clarifies how student's heightened social avoidance when they feel they do not fit in can be caused by social comparison practices.

The Uses and Gratification Theory

The Uses and Gratification Theory, first presented by Blumler and Katz in 1974, claims that media consumers are active consumers who actively select media sites that best meet their individual requirements. Instead of being passive consumers, people actively interact with media content in order to satisfy particular psychological or social needs like entertainment, self-development, or information gathering. The impact of the media on humans is examined under the Uses and Gratification theory. It describes how people utilize the media to suit their own wants and feel satisfied when those needs are met. To put it another way, the idea explores what people do with media instead than what media does to people.

This theory relates to my study as many university students actively utilize social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to meet tasks involving expressing themselves, academic assistance, social engagement, and emotional control. In order to get online approval or to divert their attention from responsibilities in real life, many students use social media as a coping mechanism for stress, loneliness, or academic pressure. In light of this, the Uses and Gratification Theory contributes to the understanding of why students use social media, how these gratifications connect to their academic and emotional health, and how social comparison regulates these effects.

Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura created the social cognitive theory (SCT), also referred to as the social learning theory (SLT), in the 1960s. In 1986, it evolved into the social cognitive theory, which holds that behavior, environment, and people all interact actively and reciprocally in a social setting throughout learning. This theory is based on a belief that humans learn knowledge through social interactions with other people. Separately, people learn to behave similarly by seeing the actions of others. Individuals learn and repeat the behavior of others after observing it, particularly if the observational experience is favorable or involves benefits associated with the conduct.   Bandura believes that imitation consists of the real replicating of observed motor behaviors (Bandura, 1977).

This theory relates in the context that students acquire knowledge through social observation, particularly in online settings like social media. Social approval, success, or appreciation can influence self-worth, promote social comparison, and motivate actions like social avoidance or academic disinterest.   This clarifies how social media, particularly social comparison as a mediating component, indirectly affects academic achievement.

Time Displacement Theory

This theory is given by Putnam (2000). According to Putnam's (2000) time displacement concept, people who watch a lot of television and use the Internet have les in person interaction. According to the concept older communication is replaced by newer communication. Spending more time on new media reduces time for in-person interactions and impacts relationships. According to this theory, time is finite and spending it on one activity (like social media) ultimately takes time away from other activities (like studying or academic work). Overuse of social media can be result in less

time for academic pursuits, which will have a negative effect on academic achievement like low GPA, less concentration in studies. Additionally, it restricts in-person interaction with others, avoid one to one interaction with other students which can lead to avoidance or social disengagement.

Self Discrepancy Theory

This theory proposed by Edward Tory Higgins in 1987. According to this theory, people compare their "actual" selves with internalized standards or the ideal/ought self. Discrepancies between actual, ideal and ought (individual feel they should be or should become) are linked to emotional discomforts. The difference between two of these self-images that causes negative feelings is known as self-discrepancy.

This theory relates as students are continuously exposed to idealized representations of other people's lives in the era of social media, which point out their weaknesses in terms of relationships, academic achievement, and physical appearance. A lack of self-worth and self-criticism result from this exposure which increases the gap between their ideal or ought self and their real self. Social comparison, especially upward comparison can be triggered by these psychological consequences leading students to perceive others as more achieved. Many students could thus start to distance themselves from academic and social activities in real life. This social avoidance is a coping strategy for feelings of failure or inadequacy. It might become established over time and affect their academic development. Students may lose interest in studying, stop contributing in class, and ignore group projects. Self-discrepancy-related emotional stress also affects concentration and causes laziness. Distraction and emotional stress can have a negative impact on academic achievement. Digital exposure can significantly affect academic performance and self-esteem, as explained by the self-discrepancy theory.

Literature Review

For a while now, the more complex and enhanced use of social media sites like Facebook has spread around the world. Nicole (2007) asserts that students in particular have come to identify these social media platforms as a means of communicating with their classmates, exchanging information and showcasing their social lives. There is a negative association between social anxiety and problematic social media use, according to recent research on the mediating role of problematic social media use in the relationship between social avoidance and distress and self-esteem (Ahmed et al., 2021). Excessive social media use has been linked to social avoidance and distress, which are factors that contribute to anxiety about social situations, according to certain theories. The social compensation theory states that online contact is more beneficial to those with weak friendships than face-to-face interactions.

Tabassum et al. (2024) conducted a quantitative study to examine the effects of social media use on social avoidance, among 220 university students. The researchers discovered that social media gaming and browsing were substantially linked to increased degrees of social alienation among students. These results demonstrate how excessive or unplanned social media use might exacerbate feelings of loneliness and alienation from one's social circles. Individuals with greater degrees of social nervousness isolate themselves and stay away from social situations in order to avoid the unpleasant emotions they expect from social interaction (Leary, 2001). They can communicate online and reduce their uneasiness by using social media. Higher social anxiety levels were associated with a lower fear of getting negative feedback when conversing online as opposed to in person, according to Yen et al., (2005). According to Nalwa & Anand (2003), people who are hooked to the internet tend to neglect their personal and professional obligations, which ultimately leads to bad grades. According to a separate

study by Shana (2012), students mostly utilize platforms for friend-making and conversation.

According to a research by Young (2006) titled "The Consequences of Internet and Social Platforms on Students' Academic Growth," the internet has grown to include teenagers' educational lives. Young also noted that students are increasingly relying on the internet to obtain information relevant to their academic lives. Young added that although using the internet takes a lot of time, it has less of an effect on academic performance. Wang (2011) noted that the influence of social media platforms depends on the level of usage. Jeong (2005) found a significant and unfavorable correlation between students' academic performance and internet use. Qiu (2024) examines social comparison on social media from the perspective of media and communication. Furthermore, Qiu (2024) states that algorithmic selection makes this situation worse by giving preference to content that makes people uncomfortable and jealous which feeds back into feedback loops that increase social evaluation and students' stress and insecurity. The existence of influencers worsens this problem seen as both relatable and idealized, influencers act as unrealistic comparisons, causing students to compare themselves to them more and feel inadequate because they see them as realistic peers (Qiu, 2024). Despite being seen as a valuable educational tool today, research indicates that students use social networking sites like Facebook for leisure, to pass the time, to connect with friends they already have or to meet new ones (Steinfield 2007). While it has been suggested that students spend a lot of time engaging in social media use, and many students link their decreasing grade point averages to the various social networking sites (Kimberly, 2009), it also reveals that few students are aware of the professional and educational opportunities for networking these sites provide. Students are using social media at extremely high levels, which has impacted their academic performance, caused them to use bad language and misspell

words while interacting with others on social media, and distracted them from their academics (Ndaku, 2013).

According to Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) study, people who used Facebook frequently studied less and had poorer GPAs. Social networking has positive as well as negative impacts on academic achievement, according to empirical research. On the other hand, Paul, Baker, and Cochran (2012) discovered that heavy social networking use was linked to poorer academic performance, and Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) and Muzaffar et al. (2020) observed that Facebook users had lower GPAs. According to Rosen, Carrier, and Cheever (2013), students who often checked social media during study sessions had shorter attention spans and performed worse academically. On the positive side, Junco, Heiberger, and Loken (2011) discovered a correlation between Twitter use and better grades. According to Gikas and Grant (2013), social media and smart phones improved student involvement and learning experiences.

Academic performance is enhanced when social media is utilized for educational reasons, but there are drawbacks as well (Rithika & Selvaraj, 2013). The usage of social media in academics has more drawbacks than benefits, claim Englander et al. (2010). Students' educational achievement is significantly impacted by social media. Junco et al. (2010) define social media as a collection of online platforms, services, and behaviors that encourage cooperation, community development, involvement, and sharing. Numerous studies on students' usage of social media sites, including those by Choney (2010) and Enriquez (2010), have shown that social media use has negative effects on the academic achievement of students. According to a June 2010 Nielsen Research report, social media networks account for about 25% of students' online time (Jacobsen & Forster 2011). Social media consumers study less and receive poorer scores, according to research conducted by the American Educational Research Association, which was

announced at their yearly meeting in San Diego, California, in 2009 (Abaleta et al, 2014). San Miguel (2009) examined the relationship between Facebook usage and students' academic achievement.   Overall, the results showed that "more Facebook time spent equals slightly poorer grades."

According to a 2015 study by Peter Osharive, social media has negative effects such breaches privacy, diverting students' attention from their studies, consuming the majority of their productive time, and more, but it also has advantages and may be used properly. The study looked at how social media affected Bangladeshi university students' academic achievement.   According to the results, social media is now an everyday element of students' life and can have positive and negative impacts on their academic achievement. Positively, students can benefit from social media by using it to connect with experts, learn together, share resources, and stay up informed about their subject of study. Overuse of social media can impair academic performance by causing distractions, putting off tasks, and lack of attention.   Additionally, it may expose students to cyberbullying and have an effect on their mental health. According to a Hong Kong study, academic performance decreases when social media is used for non-academic activities like video gaming and social media overloading.   Teachers can encourage students to prioritize their academic goals and teach them how to use social media responsibly (Lau, 2017).

The study by Ahmad et al., (2024) explores Instagram and the relationship between social comparison, depression, and social media use. After making a difference between active and passive Instagram users, the study comes to the conclusion that those who are active are more prone to feel depressed and avoid socially due to upward social comparisons.   Active users may experience greater social support by like and commenting on content more frequently, which may reduce some of the negative effects.

However, frequent exposure to well selected photographs may worsen feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem and social avoidance. The authors argue that the design of Instagram encourages slow viewing, which in turn encourages social comparison and depression which leads to social avoidance. It was also expounded that passive social media use, or browsing through feeds without actively using the platform, shows a significant negative correlation with depression in young adults (Ahmad et al., 2024). In particular, upward comparisons that highlight the achievements and happiness of others lead to higher levels of social comparison. These comparisons lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem, which ultimately lead to social avoidance. The study claims that social media platforms like Instagram increase these negative effects by promoting carefully selected, idealized content, which feeds user's anxieties and feelings of failure.

According to a thorough analysis by Mehmet Kavakli and Gulten Unal (2021), social comparison serves as a major mediating mechanism in the relationship between university student's self-esteem and sense of belongingness and social media addiction. He took 311 Turkish university students who took validated tests. The results revealed that the association between social media addiction and self-esteem was strongly mediated by social comparison, suggesting that more addiction results in comparisons, which in turn reduce self-esteem and lead to social avoidance. Students online self-comparison reduces their sense of social belonging, and a similar mediation impact was found between social media addiction and overall belongingness.

According to the study, social comparison behavior is made worse by modern measures of success like algorithmic selection and influencers, particularly among young people. Social media platforms algorithms and structure encourage upward social comparisons by collecting information that presents idealized views of life. This has

negative consequences like mental health issues, low self-esteem, and jealousy. According to Qiu (2024), social media platforms technological facilities and cultural environments are purposefully built to encourage comparison, allowing for continuous evaluations of individual worth based on observable indicators like likes, follower counts, and comments. This feeling, which has its roots in Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory which holds that people evaluate their own skills and opinions by contrasting them with those of others, is heightened in the digital age as students are constantly exposed to carefully edited representations of the lives of their peers and influencers. When students compare the flawless internet images with their unfiltered, everyday realities, it frequently leads to emotional consequences like feelings of inadequacy, jealously, and low self-esteem. Students could withdraw from both online and in-person social or academic contacts as a result of these negative emotional effects, which may trigger social avoidance as a psychological defense mechanism (Qiu, 2024). For younger users in particular, it is difficult to escape the cycle of comparison that these platform features generate. Anxiety about receiving a poor evaluation was found to be negatively correlated with social avoidance/distress by Stewart, Morris, Mellings, and Komar. Consequently, social avoiders become nervous and communicate with people less. Because they had limited experience with social interactions, these individuals have fewer appropriate social skills. Men expressed more social avoidance and distress than women, according to Watson and Friend.

The study describes psychological impacts, such as emotional dysregulation and indicators of depression, that are empirically connected to decreased academic performance, even though it does not directly assess academic achievement. This is supported by Vogel et al. (2015), who discovered that constant social comparison on sites like Facebook is linked to unstable emotions and low self-worth. The results show that

the more learners use Facebook, the worse their academic performance is. According to Oye (2012), students mostly utilize social media platforms for socializing purposes rather than for educational ones. Furthermore, according to (Oye, 2012), the majority of students believe that social media platforms enhance academic development.

A study including 390 Egyptian participants, examining the negative impact of social media use on life satisfaction and the ways in which social comparison, jealousy, and self-esteem mediated this relationship (Abdellatif 2022). Based on Festinger's social comparison theory from 1954, the study emphasizes how people frequently make upward social comparisons by comparing themselves to the frequently idealized representations of their peers on social media sites like Facebook and Instagram. In turn, these comparisons create feelings of inferiority and jealousy, which have been shown to reduce pleasure and self-worth. The study discovered that because people who regularly follow the lives of others on social media are often unhappy with their own situation, envy mediates the negative relationship between social media use and life happiness. By encouraging users to gauge their own value based on measurable feedback like likes and comments, social media creates an atmosphere where self-evaluation is influenced by outside factors.

Abdellatif's findings support the frequency of negative psychological outcomes, especially when mediated by social comparison and envy, even though some earlier research referenced in the paper found positive associations between social media and variables like perceived social support and a sense of belonging Crucially, the research also found that demographic variables like age and gender had less impact on the overall patterns, suggesting that the psychological processes involved are widely experienced. The results highlight how crucial it is to understand how social comparison mediates the relationship between social media use and important psychological consequences.

According to a study, those with higher upward social comparison scores on Facebook may also have poorer self-esteem (Vogel et al., 2014). Likewise, a different study suggested that Facebook use and low levels of social comparison could be positively correlated (de Vries & Kuhne, 2015). Nowadays, the majority of students and young people have Facebook accounts. The explanation why the majority of them do poorly in school may not be unreasonable. Although many people may be quick to criticize the low quality of teaching (Oche & Aminu, 2010). According to Olubiyi (2012), students are so absorbed in social media these days that they spend nearly all of their time online. It has been noted that some students are constantly facebooking and texting during lectures, in both lecture halls and classrooms.

Students are encouraged by their teachers to utilize the Internet to obtain knowledge more quickly. Students turn to the Internet for pleasure if they are having problems integrating into academic life. They defend those who use the internet to look for information but get involved with things unrelated to their education (Heimonen, 2009). According to a Gallup poll in 2015, Newport discovered that American students in their teenage years to mid-twenties check their phones frequently, sometimes each few seconds, and frequently act like addicts by refusing to acknowledge that they consume them overly (Richter, 2015). The Internet has frequently been held responsible for people's reduced family time; it damages interactions, reduces work efficiency, and can lead to psychiatric issues (Beard, 2002).

According to the Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), people assess themselves by contrasting themselves with others, particularly in the absence of objective norms. The impact of social media's ongoing exposure to carefully chosen content and idealized self-presentations has increased the likelihood of these comparisons. There are two main types of social comparison exist one is comparing oneself to those who are seen

to possess higher qualities or attributes is known as upward social comparison. Negative psychological effects including low self-esteem and elevated anxiety and sadness are frequently linked to it (Vogel et al., 2014; de Vries & Kuhne, 2015). Comparing oneself with those who are seen to be less fortunate is known as downward social comparison, and it can support or improve one's sense of self-worth and wellbeing (Johnson & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2014).

According to Iwamoto and Chun (2020), students may be influenced to start comparing themselves to others or to have extremely irrational expectations of themselves or others as a result of social media posts, particularly given the growing dependence on social media in daily life. This can have a number of affective consequence on their academic performance. According to Alahmar (2016), social media introduces individuals, particularly the younger generation, to brand-new, fascinating events and activities that may draw them in and keep them occupied for hours on end with various media settings and comparison. According to Alahmar (2016), it typically results in decreased academic performance, decreased productivity, and an addiction to continuous media consumption.

Naushad et al. (2025) reported that 81% of medical students in Peshawar were hooked to social media, with a substantial connection to academic procrastination (r = 0.539). Additionally, compared to day scholars, hostelites reported greater levels of addiction, which suggests that living away from home may lead to more uncontrolled social media usage. This lends credence to the notion that excessive social media usage, particularly among hostel residents, might impair academic achievement. Combining work and education can have both advantages and disadvantages, as indicated by Robotham 2009 and 2012 research. Robotham (2009) developed a poll with particular questions on the potential benefits and drawbacks of being a student with a job in order to

determine whether such impacts existed. 60% of respondents stated that working while in school enhanced their interpersonal skills and communication abilities when asked about the benefits of employment (Robotham, 2009). When asked about the drawbacks of working as a student, 67% of respondents said that having to work was linked to having to perform fewer things or read for coursework and to being forced to cut back on social   activities (Robotham, 2009). After reviewing the answers of 83 University of Canterbury students, the researchers discovered a number of common concerns on the difficulties that students have in managing their studies and jobs. Over 50% of respondents said that having a job hindered their ability to complete their coursework and left them with less time for academic study than they would have liked. This was the most unfavorable response regarding employment. Although these students acknowledged the negative impacts of employment, more than half of them said that working while enrolled in classes enabled them to " learn how to manage their studies more effectively" (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005). Examining socially avoidant students and academic adjustment was the aim of the Arjanggi et al. (2016) study. The 439 students volunteered to participate in the research. The results of their investigation indicate that social avoidance negatively affects academic performance. That is to say, a student will have difficulty adjusting to educational life if they were worried about what other people think and feel uneasy in social situations and when they meet new people. According to a study done on Peshawar students, students who worked part-time jobs typically as a result of financial pressure performed worse academically than those who did not work. Teachers explained this on working students fatigue and lack of attendance.

Although a lot of research has been done on how employment affects GPA, the findings have been conflicting, showing both good and negative impacts (Dundes & Marx, 2006; Torres, 2010). According to research, examining how employment affects

GPA has yielded varying findings. While other researches, like Kalenkoski and Pabilonia (2008), came to the conclusion that for some groups, such those found at local universities, GPAs increase, Salamonson and Andrew (2006) discovered that work had a negative influence. Facebook use and grades did not correlate, according to Pasek et al. (2009), who looked at the connection between Facebook use and academic achievement.

Rationale

The universal use of social media has completely transformed how university students engage, communicate, and build connections. Although these platforms facilitate networking and information exchange (Appel et al., 2016). There are many previous studies on social media use and its effects on users. Even though social media has both positive and negative effects on people lives. These social media platforms have tendency to change individual's perception about their life and society. There are several Pakistani studies which have focused on the direct effects of social media on social avoidance and academic performance while ignoring mediating role of social comparison as a mediator.

University students excessive use of social media was linked to a rise in social comparisons and feelings of inadequacy (Sohail et al., 2024). The study utilized qualitative methods particularly thematic analysis to explore relation between variables. This study aim to address this gap by applying quantitative analysis to provide empirical evidence. This study does not explore that how social comparison mediates social avoidance and academic performance among students.

These studies highlight a significant gap in the Pakistani context , there is currently limited research looking at these factors collectively, especially the mediation role of social comparison. Therefore, the present study fills the gap by investigating how

social media affects academic performance and social avoidance, as well as how these associations are mediated by social comparison tendencies in university students which regularly expose themselves online and compare themselves to others which encourage unrealistic self-presentations and lead to feelings of inferiority, withdrawal, and academic detachment. Rare studies examined the effect of social media differences between hostelities and day scholar university student's. The present study filed gap by focusing their living status effect on social media usage. This study will explore how it would facilitate the development of interventions and support systems for those experiencing negative outcomes from frequent social media engagement. This study will useful to understand how social media effects the life of a university students in their academics and it contribute to current psychological and educational frameworks and offering insight into how internal evaluations influenced by digital content can affect students' behaviors and achievements. The results of this study can help guide media literacy plans and mental health interventions meant to encourage better social media practices and lessen the negative impacts of online comparison. These insights could be used by parents, educators, counselors to promote students' academic achievement and mental health.

Objectives

1. To examine the effect of social media usage on social avoidance and academic performance among university students.

2. To study the mediating role of social comparison in social media usage, social avoidance and academic performance in university students.

3. To evaluate the differences among various demographic variables (gender, age, time spend on social media, types of social media platforms, living status,

employment status) on social media usage, social avoidance and academic performance.

Research Questions/ Hypotheses

1. Higher social media usage increases social avoidance among university students.

2. Higher social media usage decreases academic performance among university students.

3. Social comparison mediates the relationship between social media usage and social avoidance among university students.

4. Social comparison mediates the relationship between social media usage and academic performance of university students.

5. University Hostilities use higher social media than day scholars

6. Academic performance is higher among unemployed than employed university students.

Conceptual Framework
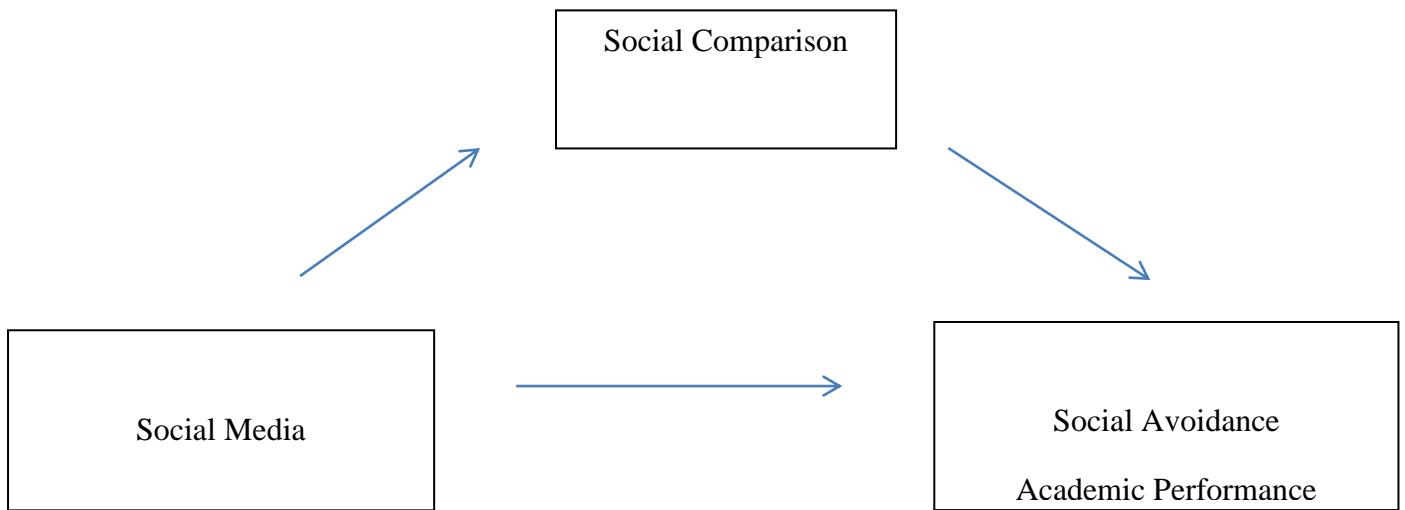
Figure 1

Simple Mediation Model

METHOD

Chapter 2

Method

Research Design

Measuring the relationship between the variables under investigation would be done using the correlational research design. Information from the target group would be gathered via the survey method.

Sample/Participants

There would be 300 university students Age range from 18-24 included undergraduates and graduates and hostilities and dayscholars., who had access to social media sites like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and others. They would be chosen from several universities.

Purposive sampling would be used to gather the data. Data collection would be conducted by the survey method and questionnaires would be distributed among university students.

Inclusion criteria. Informed consent of participants and they must be a social media users. Participants must be a university student. Students from second semester and onward. Required CGPA.

Exclusion criteria. Individuals who are not university students. Individuals with cognitive and physically impairment. Students of 1st semester.

Operational Definitions

Social Media. Social media is characterized as a connection between system of people (Walter & Riviera, 2004).The word "social media" describes the different online communities that allow people to communicate both visually and vocally (Carr & Hayes, Citation 2015). In this study it relate how often and how long university students spend time using social media sites (including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and others). Social media operationalized from the score of respondents on The Social Media Use Scale (Lin et al., 2016).

Social Avoidance. When a person intentionally tries to avoid social engagement and simultaneously seeks isolation, this is known as social avoidance (Asendorpf, 1990). In this study, it describes the avoidance of social situations as a result of feeling inadequate or fear of being poorly judged by students. Participants who obtain score on social avoidance and distress scale (Watson, D., & Friend, R.1969) shows need for social control, dominance, social connectedness, and selfconfidence. Based on respondents' scores on the Social avoidance and distress, social avoidance will be operationalized.

Social Comparison. A practice whereby we evaluate ourselves more accurately by comparing other people's behaviors, beliefs, status, and achievements to our own (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007).The act of evaluating oneself against others, especially with respect to appearance. Respondents who obtained scores on Social Comparison Scale by Allan & Gilbert indicates social comparison orientation.

Academic Performance. Academic performance refers to academic outcomes, such as grade point average (GPA), course grades, or test scores (e.g., Junco & Cotten, 2012; Wood et al., 2012). Based on respondent's score on the Academic Performance scale, academic performance will be operationalized.

Instruments

Demographic sheet. It comprised of age, gender, birth order, family structure, university, department, semester, previous CGPA, living status, marital status, employment status, social media users (yes/no), platform mostly used, no. of hours spent on social media, purpose of social media usage, do you think social media affects academic performance, beauty related social media platforms.

Social Media Use Scale (SMUS). This scale is given by Lin, Wang and Chen (2016). It consists of 22 items. It generally demonstrates good reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients often exceeding 0.83, indicating acceptable internal consistency. A 5-point Likert scale, with 1= never and 5 = very often, is used to rate each item. Higher scores on items indicate less social media use.

Social avoidance and Distress scale (SADS). There are 28 true or false items on the Social Avoidance and Distress Scale (SADS). It is developed by Watson, D., & Friend, R. (1969) and presented by Borecki and Geist (1982). It measures the degree of discomfort, fear, avoidance, and distress associated with social anxiety. High SADS scores were linked to significantly lower levels of self-confidence, need for change, affiliation drive, and need for dominance, according to Geist and Borecki (1982). The reliability was 0.84. It has been demonstrated that people with extremely low SADS scores have a greater need for social control and dominance (Geist & Borecki, 1982). Thus, very low scorers may be resistive to prosocial efforts. Higher SADS scorers had higher needs for deference, low needs for dominance, low needs for social attachment, and lower levels of self-confidence.

Social Comparison Scale (SCS). This scale is designed by Gilbert and Allan (1995). In order to assess self-perceptions of social ranks and an individual's relative

social standing. It is based on semantic differential methodology and contains 11 bipolar constructs. Participants are asked to score themselves on a ten point scale by making a universal comparison of themselves to other people. The scale has been proven to be quite reliable with Cronbach alphas of 0.97

Academic Performance Scale (APS). This scale was given by Carson Birchmeier, Emily Grattan, Sarah Hornbacher, and Christopher McGregory of Saginaw Valley State University. It consists of 8 items and based on 5 point likert scale range from (strongly agree=5 to strongly disagree=1. It has 0.88 reliability.

Ethical Considerations

Obtaining ethical approval from the Ethical Review Board and Department of Psychology, IIUI and Chairman and Ethics committee of institute. The respondent's private information regarding the topics was secured and their informed consent was obtained.

Procedure

The study supervisor formally granted authorization in order to make data collecting easier. This letter was used to gather information from several Islamabad-based universities. Prior to distributing the questionnaires, participants were given an overview on the study's objectives and given the assurance that their answers would be kept private and utilized exclusively for academic use prior to data collection. Their informed consent was acquired. They were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they might leave the study at any time without facing consequences. Both day students and hostel residents were included in the sample, and participants were reached from a variety of educational institutes of Islamabad. The surveys were

distributed through online (via Google Forms) and manual versions, depending on the ease of use and preference of the participant.

RESULTS

Chapter 3

Results

Total data was comprised of 300 university students. After a gathering of data, the responses were coded and then analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. To investigate the relationship between the variables, Pearson Correlation Coefficient and regression analysis used. To compare the means of the demographic variables under study, T-test and ANOVA will be used. Descriptive statistical analyses will be performed. Mediation analyses were performed by using Hayes Macro Analysis.

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentage of Demographic Variables of Study (N=300)

Variables	Categories	f	%
Age	Late adolescents	179	59.7
	Young adults	121	40.3
Gender	Male	150	50.0
	Female	150	50.0
Degree	Undergraduate	230	76.7
	Graduate	70	23.3
Birth Order	1st born	53	17.7
	Middle born	57	19.0
	Last born	108	36.0
	Only born	82	27.3
Living Status	Hostilites	206	68.7
	Day scholars	94	31.3
Marital Status	Married	84	28.0

	Unmarried	216	72.0
Employment Status	Employed	50	20.0
	Unemployed	240	80.0
Social Media User	Yes	300	100.0
Which social media	Youtube	14	4.7
platform you used	Facebook	52	17.3
mostly	Instagram	87	29.0
	Twitter	9	3.0
	Snapchat	74	24.7
	Tiktok	35	11.7
	Watsapp	29	9.7
No. of Hours spend	4-6hrs	42	14.0
on social media (per	7-9hrs	51	17.0
day)	10-12hrs	111	37.0
	13-15hrs	56	18.7
	16-19+hrs	40	13.3
Purpose of social	Non academics	211	70.3
media usage	Academics	89	29.7
Do you think social	Yes	230	76.7
media affects your	No	70	23.3
academic			
performance			
Answer following	i) Appearance	240	80.0
according to beauty	Focused Beauty		

related social media sites	filters, Photoshop , Selfie taking , Status uploading , Beauty related videos		
	ii) Interaction Focused Commenting, Sharing , Tagging, Group chat	60	20.0

Note. f= frequency; %= percentage

Table 1 indicates the frequency and percentage of the demographic variables of the study. In the Age that includes Late Adolescents (f =179, % = 59.7) and Young Adults (f = 121, % = 40.3). The respondents are equal in numbers as female (f=150, %=50.0) and male (f=150, %=50.0). The education level of participants includes Undergraduates (f=230, 76.7%) and Graduates (f=70, 23.3%). Participants are 1stborn(f=53,%=17.7), Middle born(f=57,%=19.0) Last born(f=108,%=36.0) and (f=82,%=27.3) of Only born. Participants belongs to Nuclear (f=223, %=74.3) and Joint (f=77, %25.7) family structure. Hostelite (f=206, %=68.7) and Day scholars(f=94, %=31.3). Participants Married (f=84, %=28.0) and Unmarried (f=216, %=72.0) which were employed (f =50, %=20.0) and unemployed (f = 240, %=80.0). All Participants were social media user (f=300, %=100.0). Social media platforms mostly used by participants include YouTube (f = 14, % = 4.7) , Facebook (f = 52, % = 17.3), Instagram (f = 87, % = 29.0), Twitter (f = 9, % = 3.0), Snapchat (f = 74, % = 24.7) , Tik Tok (f = 35, % = 11.7) and Watsapp (f=29,

%=9.7). The no. of hour spent on social media per day of 4-6 hours ($f = 42$, % = 14.0), 7-9 hours ($f = 51$, % = 17.0), 10-12 hours ($f = 111$, % = 37.0), 13-15hours($f = 56$, % = 18.7), 16-19+hrs($f = 40$, % = 13.3). Purpose of social media usage of participants were Non Academics ($f = 211$, % = 70.3) and Academics ($f = 89$, % = 29.7). ($f = 230$, % = 76.7) participants think that social media affects academic performance and participants who answers No ($f = 70$, % = 23.3). Participants answer Appearance focused social media sites includes ($f = 240$, % = 80.0) and ($f = 60$, % = 20.0) interaction focused.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Continuous Variables of Study (N=300)

Variables	Mean	SD	Range
Semester	4.42	1.912	2-8
Previous CGPA	2.95	.592	2-4

Note. SD= Standard deviation; CGPA= Cumulative Grade Point Average

This table 2 shows Participants in this study were enrolled from the 2nd to the 8th semester, for an average of 4.42 semesters (SD = 1.91). Their previous CGPA ranged from a minimum of 2.00 to a maximum of 4.00, with an average of 2.95 (SD = 0.59).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities Coefficient of Scales (N=300)

Variables	*k*	A	M(SD)	Range		Skew.	Kurt.
				Actual	Potential		
SM	22	.83	76.00(11.23)	54-97	22-110	-0.056	-1.436
SA	28	.84	16.65(6.10)	4-27	0-28	-0.065	-1.505
AP	8	.88	24.16(7.46)	11-38	8-40	0.006	-1.580
SC	11	.97	65.52(22.34)	37-98	11-110	0.021	-1.927

Note. k=No. of items;α = Reliability; SD= Standard deviation; Skew= Skewness; Kurt= Kurtosis; SM= Social Media; SA=Social Avoidance; AP= Academic Performance; SC= Social Comparison

Table 3 shows the psychometric properties of used scales in this study. All scales have satisfactory alpha values and it's acceptable which is between 0 and 1. Kurt and Skewness values are standardized which means data has been distributed normally. Kurtosis values should be less than 10 and the values for skewness should be less than 3 (Kline, 2016).

Table 4

Correlation coefficient between Social Media, Social Avoidance, Academic Performance scale (N=300)

	Variables	1	2	3	4
1	Social Media	-	.733**	-.831**	.905**
2	Social Avoidance	-	-	-.860**	.908**
3	Academic Performance	-	-	-	-.929**
4	Social Comparison	-	-	-	-

Note. **$p < .01$

Table 4 shows that The findings show a significant positive correlation between social avoidance and social media use (r =.733, p <.01), indicating that students who use social media more often are more likely to be socially avoidant. Additionally, there is a negative connection between social media use and academic performance (r = -.831, p <.01), suggesting that higher use of social media is linked to worse academic performance. Furthermore, social media usage and social comparison have moderately positive correlation (r =.905, p <.01), and social avoidance and social comparison have a moderately positive correlation (r =.908, p <.01). While social avoidance and the academic performance have a very weak and non-significant connection (r = -.860), academic performance has a negative correlation with social comparison (r = -.929, p <.01). All things considered, these results imply that increased social media usage and social avoidance are associated with increased social comparison and might be detrimental to academic achievement.

Table 5

Simple Linear Regression showing Social Media as Predictor of Social Avoidance (N=300)

Predictors	B	SEB	β	T	P
Constant	-17.89	1.32	-	-13.46	.000
Social Media	.45	.01	.73	26.28	.000

Note.R= .733 R^2 = .53 *p<0.01*

In Table 5 Linear regression results reveals that Social Media Use strong positive predictor of Social Avoidance among population (β =.73, p < .05) .The value or R^2 is 0.53 means social media use are responsible for 53% variation in social avoidance [F (1, 298) = 690.74, $p < .05$]. The Social Media Use (B=.45, t=26.28, $p<.001$) indicates that for each one unit increase in social media, social avoidance increase by 0.45 units.

Table 6

Simple Linear Regression showing Social Media as Predictor of Academic Performance (N=300)

Predictors	*B*	*SEB*	*β*	*T*	*p*
Constant	63.73	1.54	-	44.63	.000
Social Media	-0.58	0.02	-0.83	-29.25	.000

Note. R= .83 R^2= .68

Table 6 results of this regression analysis showed that social media use is a significant negative predictor of academic performance. The social media use B= -0.58, means Academic performance will decrease by 0.568 points if social media use increase for every 1 point. $β$ = -0.83 showed   strong negative relationship. The t= -29.255 and the p-value is $< .001$, showed that the effect are highly significant. $R^2 = 0.68$ means 68% of the variance in academic performance is explained by social media use. The overall model $F(1, 298) = 855.882$, $p < .001$ supports hypothesis.

Table 7

Mediating Effect of Social Comparison in Relationship between Social Media and Social Avoidance (N= 300)

	Predictors			Outcomes		
				Social Avoidance		
	Model	R^2	β	p	t	*95%BaCl*
						[LL, UL]
1	Constant		-17.89	.0000	-13.46	[-20.51,-15.28]
	SM	.818	0.45	.0000	26.28	[0.42, 0.48]
2	Constant		-1.60	.2866	.-1.06	[-4.55, 1.35]
	SM		0.04	.1629	1.39	[-.01, .10]
	SC	.825	0.22	.0000	14.70	[.19, .25]

Note. R^2 = Explained variance, BaCI = Biased corrected confidence interval; SM= Social Media; SC= Social Comparison

Table 7 shows mediation role of Social Comparison in relationship between Social Media Use and Social Avoidance . In model 1, findings showed that total effect of social media use significantly influenced social avoidance (β= 0.45, p <.001) which explained 81.8% of the variance (R^2 =.818). In Model 2, the model's performance greatly increased (R^2 =.825) when social comparison (β= 0.228, 95% CI [0.198, 0.259], *p* <.001). was included. The direct relationship between social media use and social avoidance, become non- significant when social comparison was taken into consideration (β= 0.042, *p* =.1629), suggesting complete mediation. Social comparison had a significant indirect effect(β = 0.41, CI [.35, .46], p < .001). These results imply full mediation, suggesting that the association between social media use and social avoidance is entirely mediated

through social comparison. In simple words, it indicated by using social media more frequently results in more social comparison, which raises social avoidance.
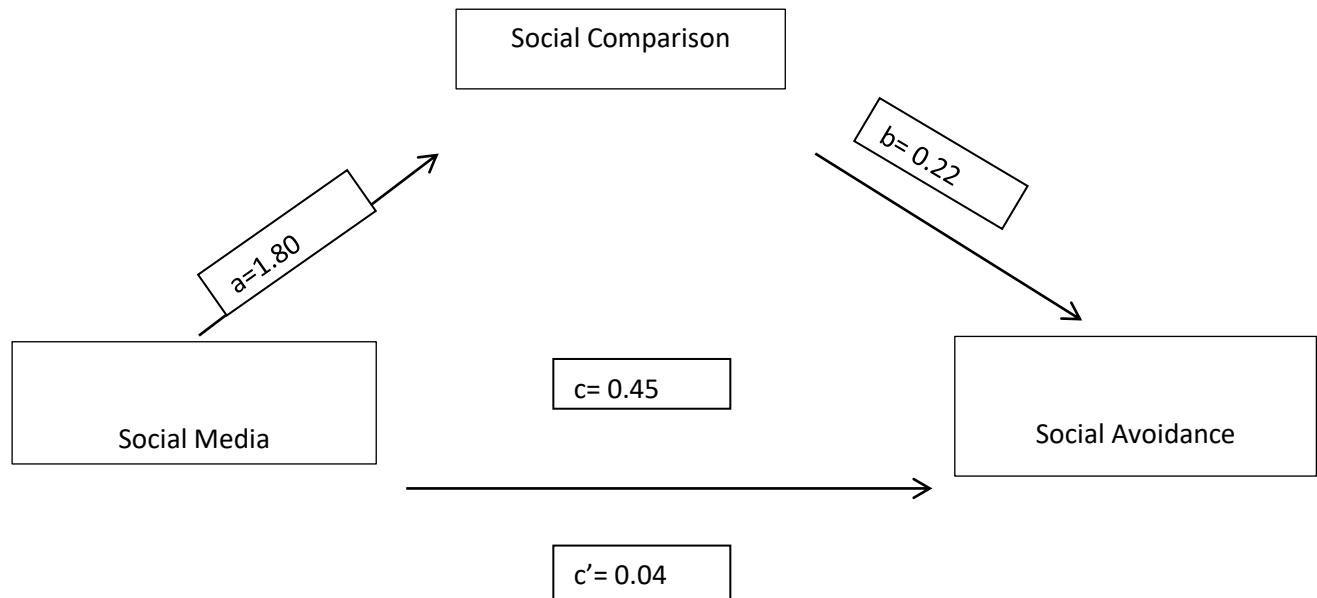
Figure 2

Mediating Effect of Social Comparison and Direct and Indirect Effect of Social Media, Social Avoidance and Academic Performance

Table 8

Mediating Effect of Social Comparison in Relationship between Social Media and Social

Avoidance (N= 300)

	Model	R^2	B	*P*	*t*	95% BaCl (LL)	(UL)
1	Constant		68.73	.0000	44.63	65.70	71.76
	SM	.818	-0.58	.0000	-29.25	-0.62	-0.54
2	Constant		48.58	.0000	29.45	45.33	51.82
	SM		-0.07	.0229	-2.28	-0.14	-0.01
	SC	.825	-0.28	.0000	-16.55	-0.31	-0.24

Note. R^2 = Explained variance, BaCI = Biased corrected confidence interval; SM= Social Media; SC= Social Comparison

Table 8 shows that the findings of Model 1 showed that social media usage explained 81.8% of the variation (R^2 =.818) and was a significant predictor of the academic performance (β = -0.586, p <.001). Poorer academic performance was linked to increased social media use. The direct effect of social media on academic performance decreased significantly (B = -0.07, p =.02) when social comparison was added as a mediator in Model 2, while social comparison itself became an effective predictor of academic performance in negatively. Higher levels of social comparison are associated with lower academic achievement, as evidenced by the significant and negative prediction of academic performance by social comparison (β= –0.283, *t* = –16.55, *p* <.001, 95% CI

[–0.3161, –0.249]. With R^2 =.825, p <.001, the whole model was significant and could account for 82.5% of the variation in academic achievement. The indirect effect of social media through social comparison (a x b) was significant (B = –0.51, 95% CI [–0.58, –0.45]), indicating that most of the negative impact of social media use on academic performance is explained by the increase in social comparison. The negative correlation between academic performance and social media use is mediated by social comparison. That is, while social media use still has a direct negative impact, increased use of social media results in more social comparison, which in turn affects academic performance.
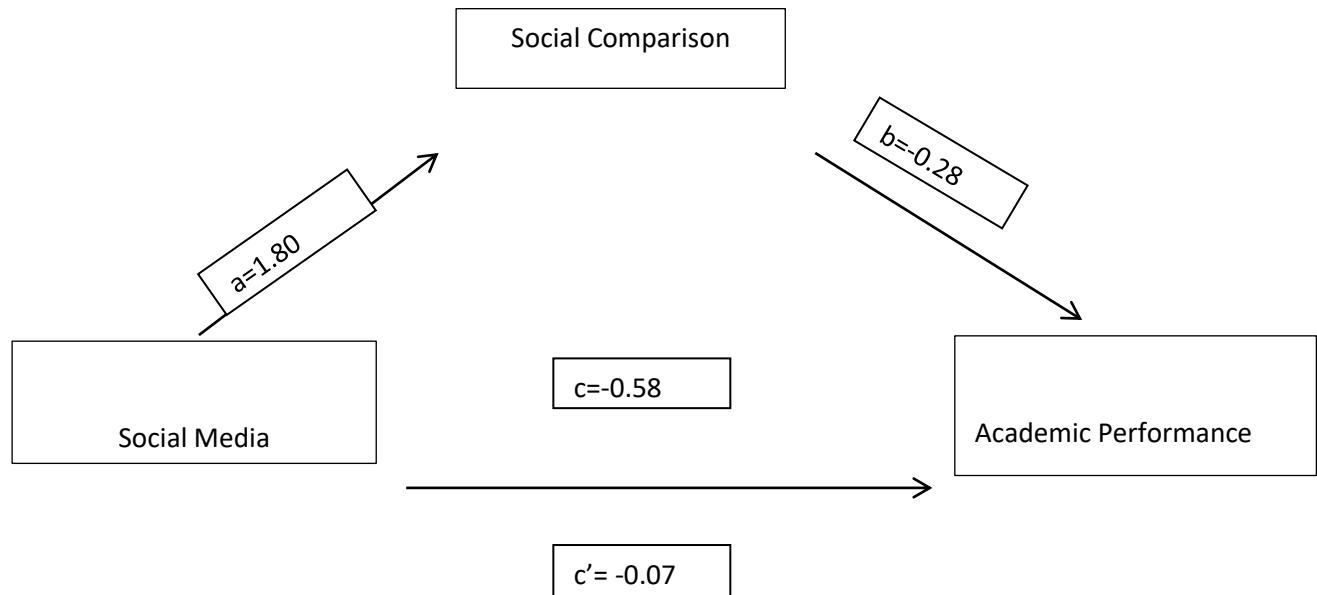
Figure 3

Mediating Effect of Social Comparison and Direct and Indirect Effect of Social Media and Academic Performance (N=300)

Table 9

Mean, Standard Deviation and t-values along Age on Variables (N=300)

Variables	Late Adolesents (n=179) M(SD)	Young Adults (n=121) M(SD)	t	p	95% CI LL	UL	Cohen's d
Social Media	76.24(11.31)	75.66(11.14)	.431	0.66	-2.02	3.18	0.05
Social Avoidance	16.66(6.08)	16.63(6.16)	.039	0.96	-1.38	1.44	0.005
Academic Performance	24.21(7.76)	24.08(7.50)	.150	0.88	-1.63	1.90	0.02
Social Comparison	65.60(22.33)	65.40(22.48)	.077	0.93	-4.98	5.39	0.01

df=298

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; *LL* = Lower Limit; *UL* = Upper Limit.

This Table 9 reveals results of independent sample t-test to analyze Age differences on variables. There are not any significant differences between the two groups on any of the measured variables, as indicated by the p-values for all variables being significantly higher than the significance level (0.05). The Cl (confidence level) for all variables contain zero which confirms that there is no significant group differences. Cohen's d values are below 0.2 that indicate small to no effect size.

Table 10

Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values along Gender on Variables (N=300)

Variables	Male (n=150) M(SD)	Female (n=150) M(SD)	T	p	95% CI LL	UL	Cohen's d
Social Media	77.02(10.95)	74.98(11.44)	1.57	0.11	-0.50	4.58	0.18
Social Avoidance	17.04(6.02)	16.26(6.18)	1.09	0.27	-0.61	2.16	0.12
Academic Performance	23.88(7.68)	24.44(7.62)	-0.64	0.52	-2.30	1.17	-0.07
Social Comparison	66.65(22.06)	64.40(22.66)	0.87	0.38	-2.82	7.33	0.10

df= 298; *p*<0.01

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; *LL* = Lower Limit; *UL* = Upper Limit.

In Table 10 there is no difference between the study variables.

Table 11

Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values along Education on Variables (N=300)

Variables	Undergraduate (n=230) M(SD)	Graduate (n=70) M(SD)	t	p	95% CI LL	UL	Cohen's d
Social Media Use	76.36(11.52)	74.84(10.20)	1.05	0.29	-1.32	4.36	0.14
Social Avoidance	17.03(6.08)	15.38(6.05)	1.99	0.04	0.02	3.28	0.27
Academic Performance	23.64(7.51)	25.85(7.89)	-2.12	0.03	-4.25	-0.16	-0.29
Social Comparison	66.88(22.42)	61.05(21.70)	1.95	0.53	-0.08	11.74	0.26

df=298

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; *LL* = Lower Limit; *UL* = Upper Limit.

This Table 11 shows Undergraduates and Graduates have no difference on social media usage ($p = 0.29$). The size of effect is small (Cohen's $d = 0.14$). Undergraduates have positive significant ($p=0.04$) difference than Graduates. Undergraduates ($M = 17.03$) reported higher levels of social avoidance than Graduates ($M = 15.38$) with the effect size of ($d=0.27$). Graduates ($M = 25.85$) are ($p=0.03$) higher on academic performance than undergraduates ($M = 23.64$) with $d=-0.29$. Technically not significant at the 0.05 level, but close to significance ($p = 0.05$).Undergraduates may participate in somewhat more social comparison than postgraduates, according to the small effect size ($d = 0.26$).

Table 12

Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values along Marital Status on Variables (N=300)

	Married (n=84)	Unmarried (n=216)			95% CI		
Variables	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*	*t*	*p*	*LL*	*UL*	*Cohen's d*
Social Media	74.57(10.82)	76.56(11.36)	-1.38	0.16	-4.83	.844	-0.18
Social Avoidance	16.16(5.96)	16.84(6.16)	-0.86	0.39	-2.22	0.87	-0.11
Academic Performance	25.41(8.32)	23.67(7.33)	1.77	0.07	-0.18	3.66	0.23
Social Comparison	62.21(21.36)	66.81(22.64)	-1.64	0.10	-10.11	0.91	-0.21

df=298

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; *LL* = Lower Limit; *UL* = Upper Limit.

Table 12 shows independent sample t test in which all of the variables, there were no differences between married and unmarried people.

Table 13

Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values along Employment Status on Variables (N=300)

	Employed (n=60)	Unemployed (n=240)			95% CI		
Variables	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*	*T*	*p*	*LL*	*UL*	*Cohen's d*
Social Media	77.98(11.29)	75.51(11.18)	1.52	0.12	-0.71	5.65	0.22
Social Avoidance	18.11(6.03)	16.28(6.08)	2.08	0.03	0.10	3.55	0.30
Academic Performance	22.28(7.67)	24.63(7.58)	2.14	0.03	4.50	1.19	0.31
Social Comparison	70.51(22.54)	64.27(22.18)	1.94	0.05	-0.08	12.55	0.28

df=298

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; *LL* = Lower Limit; *UL* = Upper Limit.

Table 13 shows no difference between employed persons and unemployed on social media use ($p = 0.12$) .Social avoidance is greater among employed people ($p = 0.03$, d=0.30). Academic performance is higher for unemployed ($p = 0.03$) with ($d = 0.31$). Social comparison is more common among employed people ($p = 0.05$). Although technically not below the 0.05 threshold, it is borderline at d=0.28.

Table 14

Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values along Purpose of Social Media on Variables (N=300)

Variables	Non Academics (n=211) M(SD)	Academics (n=89) M(SD)	t	p	95% CI LL	95% CI UL	Cohen's d
Social Media	76.40(11.23)	75.05(11.24)	0.95	0.34	-1.44	4.14	0.12
Social Avoidance	16.65(6.15)	16.65(6.04)	0.003	0.99	-1.51	1.52	0.00
Academic Performance	23.97(7.51)	24.61(7.98)	-0.668	0.50	-2.55	1.25	-0.08
Social Comparison	65.81(22.33)	64.85(22.53)	0.33	0.73	-4.61	6.52	0.04

df=298

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; *LL* = Lower Limit; *UL* = Upper Limit.

Table 14 shows there is no difference between academics and non-academics like entertainment and connections for as evidenced by the fact that all p-values were significantly higher than the.05 and that all effect sizes (Cohen's d) were small.

Table 15

Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values along Appearance focused and Interaction

focused behaviors on Social Media on Variables (N=300)

Variables	Appearance-focused (n=240) M(SD)	Interaction-focused (n=60) M(SD)	t	p	LL	UL	Cohen's d
					95% CI		
Social Media	77.02(11.10)	71.95(10.89)	3.21	.002	1.93	8.20	0.46
Social Avoidance	17.01(6.11)	15.21(5.92)	2.08	.041	0.06	3.52	0.29
Academic Performance	23.53(7.66)	26.66(7.12)	-2.99	.003	-5.20	-1.05	-0.42
Social Comparison	67.47(22.17)	57.75(21.56)	3.10	.003	3.50	15.93	0.44

df=298

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; *LL* = Lower Limit; *UL* = Upper Limit.

This table 15 showed that the Social media use was higher in Group 1 (appearance-focused) (*M* = 77.02) than in Group 2 Interaction focused (*M* = 71.95) (*t*(298) = 3.21, *p* <.002, Cohen's *d* = 0.46). The significance and meaning of the difference are confirmed by the 95% CI [1.93, 8.20]. People who participate in appearance-based social media activities use it more often and extensively. Social avoidance were much greater in Group 1 Appearance based (*M* = 17.01 vs. 15.21) (*t*(298) = 2.08, *p* <.040, Cohen's *d* = 0.29). The 95% CI [0.08, 3.50] indicates a slight but noteworthy variation. Because of being judged, appearance-related social media behaviors may be associated with higher levels of social discomfort. Academic performance was lower in group 1apperance based (*M* = 23.53) than in group 2 interaction based (*M* = 26.66).A considerable negative impact is indicated by the 95% CI [-5.20, -1.05] (*t*(298) = -2.99, *p*

<.003, Cohen's *d* = -0.42). People who use appearance-focused social media more frequently typically perform lower academically. Social comparison was significantly larger in group 1 appearance based (*M* = 67.47) than group 2(M=57.75) (*t*(298) = 3.10, *p* <.003, Cohen's *d* = 0.44). 95% CI [3.50, 15.93] indicates a moderate impact. People who use social media for appearance-based purposes are more likely to compare themselves to others, particularly in terms of popularity, lifestyles, or beauty standards.

Table 16

Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values along Hostilities and Day Scholar on Variables (N=300)

Variables	Hostelite (n=206) M(SD)	Day Scholar (n=94) M(SD)	t	p	95% CI LL	UL	Cohen's d
Social Media	80.45(10.20)	73.12(11.45)	4.57	.001	4.10	10.15	0.67
Social Avoidance	17.02(6.01)	16.18(6.45)	1.23	.21	-0.51	2.29	0.13
Academic Performance	23.91(7.42)	24.43(7.85)	-0.61	.540	-2.19	1.13	-0.06
Social Comparison	70.25(20.75)	61.33(23.10)	3.32	.074	-0.74	14.45	0.40

df=298

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviations;CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit

Table 16 shows that Hostilities and Day scholars were compared on social media use, social avoidance, academic performance, and social comparison using an independent samples *t*-test. The findings showed a difference in social media use between hostilities (*M* = 80.45, *SD* = 10.20) and day scholars (*M* = 73.12, *SD* = 11.45) (*t*(298) = 4.57, *p* <.001, Cohen's *d* = 0.67). This indicates a significant change in patterns

of use and a medium to high effect size. Hostilities   and day students have no difference in terms of social comparison ,academic performance (t(298) = -0.61, p =.54, Cohen's d =- 0.06) or social avoidance (t(298) = 1.23, p =.21, Cohen's d = 0.13). These results imply that students social comparison, academic performance and social avoidance were not significantly affected by their accommodation status.

Table 17

Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values along Do you think social media effect academic performance on Variables (N=300)

	Yes (n=230)	No (n= 70)			95% CI		
Variables	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*	*t*	*p*	LL	UL	*Cohen's d*
Social Media	79.06(10.86)	65.95(4.59)	14.51	.000	11.33	14.88	1.57
Social Avoidance	18.36(5.77)	11.01(2.97)	14.12	.000	6.32	8.38	1.60
Academic Performance	21.93(7.25)	31.50(2.78)	-16.43	.000	-10.71	-8.42	-1.74
Social Comparison	72.35(21.19)	43.08(2.91)	20.32	.000	26.43	32.10	1.93

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviations; CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit

Table 17 shows Students who felt that social media had an impact on their academic performance (Yes group) and those who did not (No group) were compared in terms of social media use, social avoidance, academic performance, and social comparison using an independent samples *t*-test. A statistically significant difference in social media use was found in the results. Students who thought social media had an impact on their academic performance (*M* = 79.06, *SD* = 10.87) gave significantly higher

scores than those who didn't ($M = 65.96$, $SD = 4.59$), $t(268.87) = 14.52$, $p < .001$. The difference's 95% confidence interval was between 11.33 and 14.89. This suggests that these students used social media more frequently, as evidenced by the relatively large effect. Similarly, the Yes group ($M = 18.36$, $SD = 5.77$) reported significantly higher scores than the No group ($M = 11.01$, $SD = 2.97$), with a 95% CI of 6.32 to 8.38 ($t(228.20) = 14.12$, $p < .001$) for Social Avoidance. This implies that people who believe social media has an impact are more likely to avoid social situations. Academic performance scores were substantially lower for students in the Yes group ($M = 21.93$, $SD = 7.25$) than for those in the No group ($M = 31.50$, $SD = 2.78$); $t(283.85) = -16.43$, $p < .001$. A significant negative impact was shown by the 95% CI for the difference, which ranged from -10.71 to -8.42. The Yes group scored significantly more than the No group ($M = 43.08$, $SD = 2.91$), with a $t(255.04) = 20.32$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [26.43, 32.10], for Social Comparison ($M = 72.36$, $SD = 21.19$). This shows that people who think social media has an impact on their academic achievement are more likely to compare themselves to others. There were statistically significant differences between the groups in all four measures.

Table 18

Mean, Standard Deviations and F-value along no. of hours usage of social media on Variables (N=300)

Variables	4-6hrs (n=42)	7-9hrs (n=51)	10-12hrs (n=111)	13-15hrs (n=56)	16-18hrs (n=30)	19+hrs (n=10)	f	p	$\eta2$
	M(SD)	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*			
SMUS	64.97(5.06)	66.74(4.94)	75.35(11.09)	86.91(3.90)	84.83(4.00)	89.30(5.85)	68.47	.000	0.53
SADS	10.88(2.74)	11.27(2.69)	16.59(6.19)	22.44(2.44)	21.46(2.04)	22.40(1.89)	63.20	.000	0.51
APS	31.11(2.36)	31.13(2.89)	24.49(7.86)	17.03(2.61)	17.16(2.81)	16.60(1.83)	68.47	.000	0.53
SCS	43.88(2.76)	43.17(3.55)	64.71(22.24)	87.57(3.36)	88.43(3.85)	87.30(3.74)	96.63	.000	0.62

df=(5,294)

Table 18 shows One way Anova to analyze difference between no. of hours on variables. Practically significant group differences are indicated by the large effect sizes (η^2) and strong significance of all variables ($p < .001$) showing that all four variables were considerably impacted by daily social media use hours. SMU increases significantly with the number of hours spent. As social media use hours rises, social avoidance will be raised. Increased use of social media use hours significantly lowers academic performance ratings and higher social comparison.

Table 19

Post hoc ANOVA Comparisons

Variable						95% CI	
	(I)	*(J)*	*(I-J)*	*MD (I-J)*	*p*	*LL*	*UL*
SMUS	4-6hrs	10-12hrs	1<3	-10.37	.000	-14.37	2.83
		13-15hrs	1<4	-21.93	.000	-26.44	-17.42
		16-18hrs	1<5	-19.85	.000	-25.13	-14.57
		19+hrs	1<6	-24.32	.000	-32.09	-16.55
	7-9hrs	10-12hrs	2<3	-8.60	.000	-12.34	-4.87
		13-15hrs	2<4	-20.16	.000	-24.44	-15.89
		16-18hrs	2<5	-18.08	.000	-23.16	-13.00
		19+hrs	2<6	-22.55	.000	-30.19	-14.91
	10-12hrs	13-15hrs	3<4	-11.55	.000	-15.17	-7.93
		16-18hrs	3<5	-9.48	.000	-14.02	-4.93
		19+hrs	3<6	-13.94	.000	-21.24	-6.65
SADS	4-6hrs	10-12hrs	1<3	-5.68	.000	-7.90	-3.46
		13-15hrs	1<4	-11.56	.000	-14.06	-9.06
		16-18hrs	1<5	-10.58	.000	-13.51	-7.65
		19+hrs	1<6	-11.51	.000	-15.83	-7.20
	7-9hrs	10-12hrs	2<3	-5.29	.000	-7.36	-3.21
		13-15hrs	2<4	-11.17	.000	-13.54	-8.79

		16-18hrs	2<5	-10.19	.000	-13.01	-7.36
		19+hrs	2<6	-11.12	.000	-15.36	-6.88
	10-12hrs	13-15hrs	3<4	-5.87	.000	-7.88	-3.86
		16-18hrs	3<5	-4.89	.000	-7.42	-2.37
		19+hrs	3<6	-5.83	.000	-9.88	-1.78
APS	4-6hrs	10-12hrs	1>3	6.62	.000	3.89	9.34
		13-15hrs	1>4	14.08	.000	11.01	17.15
		16-18hrs	1>5	13.95	.000	10.35	17.54
		19+hrs	1>6	14.51	.000	9.22	19.81
	7-9hrs	10-12hrs	2>3	6.64	.000	4.09	9.18
		13-15hrs	2>4	14.10	.000	11.19	17.01
		16-18hrs	2>5	13.97	.000	10.51	17.43
		19+hrs	2>6	14.53	.000	9.33	19.73
	10-12hrs	13-15hrs	3>4	7.45	.000	4.99	9.92
		16-18hrs	3>5	7.32	.000	4.23	10.42
		19+hrs	3>6	7.89	.000	2.93	12.86
SCS	4-6hrs	10-12hrs	1<3	-20.83	.000	-28.03	-13.62
		13-15hrs	1<4	-43.69	.000	-51.81	-35.57
		16-18hrs	1<5	-44.55	.000	-54.06	-35.04
		19+hrs	1<6	-43.41	.000	-57.41	-29.42
	7-9hrs	10-12hrs	2<3	-21.53	.000	-28.26	-14.80
		13-15hrs	2<4	-44.39	.000	-52.09	-36.69

	16-18hrs	2<5	-45.25	.000	-54.41	-36.10
	19+hrs	2<6	-44.21	.000	-57.88	-30.36
10-12hrs	13-15hrs	3<4	-22.85	.000	-29.38	-16.33
	16-18hrs	3<5	-23.72	.000	-31.90	-15.53
	19+hrs	3<6	-22.58	.000	-35.72	-9.45

df= (5,294)

Note. *** *p* <.000.

Table 19 shows the no. of hours of usage on social media use , social avoidance , academic performance and social comparison among university students. The findings revealed variations in scores. It was determined that no. of hours significantly affect social media, social avoidance, academic performance and social comparison. When compared to students who used social media for longer periods of time (10–12 hours, 13–15 hours, 16–18 hours, or 19+ hours per day), students who reported using it for shorter periods of time (4–6 hours or 7–9 hours daily) performed much better academically. On the other hand, more social avoidance and more social comparison behaviors were linked to higher social media consumption. Social avoidance and social comparison scores were consistently higher among participants in the highest usage categories, suggesting that spending too much time on social media can lead to withdrawing from in-person contacts and a greater ability to compare oneself to others.

Discussion

Chapter 4

Disscussion

The Current study goal was to investigate the relationship between Social Media, Social avoidance , academic performance and Social Comparison as a mediator in university students. Standardized instruments such as the Social Media Use Scale (SMUS), the Social Avoidance and Distress Scale (SADS), and Academic Performance Scale (APS) were used to measure this association. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 .

Descriptive analysis was used to examine the demographic factors of study. An examination of the reliability of instruments was conducted. Every instrument turned out to be a reliable predictor. The relationship between the study variables was measured using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The impact of demographic factors on the variables under investigation was examined using the Independent Sample t-test and ANOVA test. Hayes Macro Analysis (version 4.3) was used to investigate the role of social comparison as a mediator in the association between social avoidance, academic performance and social media analyses the collected data.

For first hypothesis, the study variables were subjected to the Pearson Correlation Matrix. According to the findings (see table 4), Social media showed positive correlation with social avoidance. The current study findings are consistent with the hypothesis that university students who use social media more frequently engage in more social avoidance. Social media use and social avoidance were found to be significantly and strongly positively correlated, suggesting that students who use social media platforms more frequently are more likely to be socially withdrawing and uncomfortable in face-to-face interactions. This result is in keeping with earlier studies that found excessive use of online settings might reduce interactions with others, decrease real-person social

interaction, and increase social detachment Primack et al. (2017).According to the another recent study, social avoidance and distress may be more risk factors for excessive social media usage. People with high levels of social avoidance or discomfort may feel easier interacting virtually with other social media users since they are more prone to avoid social interactions. Social media use has a negative impact on user's self-esteem (Ahmed et al., 2021).

The results of this study provide support (hypothesis 2) that university students who use social media more frequently perform bad academically. Academic performance and social media use were found to be negatively correlated in a strong and statistically significant way (see table 4). Students who spend more time on social media tend to report lower academic achievement. This implies that students who use social networking sites excessively may find it difficult to concentrate on their studies, efficiently manage their time, and develop regular study habits. These results align with previous studies. According to Junco (2012), spending more time on Facebook has a negative correlation with both overall academic involvement and college GPA. This is consistent with previous research, including findings by Cochran (2012) and Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), which indicate that excessive social media use can divert students from their studies and have a negative effect on their performance. There is a moderately negative relationship between social network usage and academic achievement like GPA, study time, and attendance at class. In particular, worse GPAs and fewer study time were associated with students who reported using social media more frequently (Noreen, Bajwa, & Yousaf, 2024). Social media use has a negative influence on academic achievement (Bhandarkar et al., 2021). According to Al-Adwan et al. (2020), social media significantly lowers the student academic achievement. They discovered that overusing social media negatively affects student's perceptions of their academic

performance by decreasing academic engagement, increasing distraction, and decreasing study time. Chowdhury (2024) examined that overuse of social media can impair academic performance by causing distractions, delays, and lack of attention. Additionally, it may expose students to cyberbullying and have an effect on their mental health. An excessive dependence on social media might reduce exposure to different viewpoints and impair critical thinking abilities. There is one more study which supports that there is significant influence of social media on the academic performance of the students (Osharive, 2015)

Social comparison mediates social media and social avoidance among university students. The study results validated (hypothesis 3). Hayes Process Macro version 4.3 was used. The suggested mediation model was validated by the results (see table 7). The total effect of social media use on Social avoidance was significant, suggesting that social avoidance increases with social media use. When social comparison was used as a mediator, the direct relationship between social media use and social avoidance, stopped to be statistically significant indicating complete mediation. Additionally, social media use had a significant indirect impact on social avoidance through social comparison. The association between social media use and social avoidance is considerably mediated by social comparison, as evidenced by the fact that the confidence interval does not include zero. The results of this has been proven by the study which suggested that social networking site usage encourages more social comparison, which raises psychological distress. According to research, more social comparison on social media is associated with greater levels of FOMO and worse levels of social acceptance and self-worth, which in turn lead to depressive symptoms and social withdrawal (Burnell et al., 2019). This result suggests that these negative outcomes like lower acceptance, social disconnection lead to withdrawal from social situations. This outcome is in accordance to our research

showing that social media use indirectly predicts social avoidance through the social comparison mechanism. Furthermore, Abdellatif (2022) offered findings that the negative effects of social media use on psychological well-being are mediated by social comparison. According to his research, using social media was associated with a lower level of life satisfaction, and social comparison and envy had a significant mediating role in this relationship. Avoidance tendencies in social domains can also result from the mechanism of negative self-evaluation through comparison. According to Vogel et al. (2014) Excessive Facebook use has been linked to reduced self-esteem because it increases exposure to upward social comparisons. Social media use (SMU) has been repeatedly linked to increased social comparison tendencies, especially upward comparisons, which have a negative impact on users' psychological states, according to previous research (Vogel et al., 2014; Appel et al., 2016). According to Nesi and Prinstein (2015), social avoidance behaviors including disengagement and a lack of confidence in social situations are closely linked to these comparing processes.

The results show that hypothesis 4 the social comparison is mediates the relationship between social media use and academic performance, with higher social media use resulting in higher social comparison, which in turn significantly lowers academic performance(see table 8). According to Oberst et al., 2017, students who use social media excessively compare themselves to others idealized representations. Negative feelings like inadequacy and insecurity are brought on by this comparison, which impairs concentration in class and encourages procrastination. According to Sohail et al. (2024), university student's continual exposure to well- groomed lives and the achievements on social media sites like Instagram and Snapchat encourages upward social comparisons, which result in low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy. These psychological effects were connected to procrastination and academic disengagement,

underscoring the indirect way that social comparison lowers academic achievement. This support to the idea that social media use affects academic performance through psychological and cognitive processes related with comparison.

This study provided the support for difference between day scholars and hostilities. The study variables were subjected to t-test and ANOVA tests for this aim. This validates the hypothesis 5. According to the study, there is difference between day scholars and hostilities usage of social media (see table 16). This implies that residing in a hostel could be linked to a higher level of social media activity. Hostel life's somewhat unstructured and independent atmosphere can give students more free time and less direct parental or academic pressure, which might encourage them to use social media more. These findings are corroborated by research by Khalid et al., 2024 which found that hostilities scored higher on social media use than day scholars. It suggests that hostilities use more social media. According to Naushad et al. (2023), social media addiction was most prevalent among smartphone users, male students, and hostilities.

A significant difference in academic performance scores (APS) between employment groups was found by using t test to analyze the data. Results revealed that there are statistically significant differences between academic performance and social avoidance (see table 13). People who are employed report avoiding social situations more. It supports the hypothesis 6 that academic performance is higher for unemployed (see table13). Employed people score better on social comparison, which is borderline significant. There are no apparent differences in social media use. This finding is consistent with a large body of research showing harmful relationships between student employment and GPA, particularly when work schedules conflict with study sessions and academic participation (Kalenkoski & Pabilonia, 2008). According to several studies, working for hours per week has a negative and significant impact on grades (Hay &

Lindsay, 1969; Augsburger, 1974; Woodster, 1979). One consequence of student work is that it makes them spend less time studying, which lowers their GPA (Gleason, 1993).There is no significant difference between late adolescents and young adults in terms of social media use, social avoidance, academic performance, or social comparison. Every group difference is statistically insignificant and small. The effects are particularly negative to younger adults (Pempek et al., 2009).

If we talk about the undergraduate and post graduate students, then undergraduates indicate significantly greater levels of social avoidance than graduates and graduates report positive significant high levels of academic performance then undergraduate. There is no difference in social media usage and social comparison of these two groups. According to Schneider (2009), almost 85% of undergraduate students use Facebook. Due to the widespread availability of mobile phones among these young people, undergraduates spend more time on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms (Martin, 2000). The academic performance of Pakistani graduate students is significantly impacted by social media platforms (Kausar & Awan, 2019).

There is no difference observed in results between married and unmarried people. An investigation on age and marital status as predictors of academic performance was carried out in Nigeria. Both male and female students participated in the study. The researcher came to the conclusion that academic performance and marital status did not significantly correlate (Amuda et al., 2016). Additionally, a research was carried out at King Faisal University to investigate how marriage affected the academic performance of female medical students. It showed that academic performance is heavily dependent on the person and is not impacted by marriage itself.

There is no difference between academics and non academics purpose of social media use on all of the variables. Students primarily use social media platforms for socializing rather than for academic purposes (Oye 2012). Learning outcomes were positively impacted when students used MySpace for educational reasons, but noneducational use had a negative effect (Greenhow & Robelia 2009). According to Pempek, (2009), the effects of social media differ according on the manner and purpose of students use of these sites. According to Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), academically linked activities often provide favorable results, but non-educational activities tend to divert students. A research by Williams and Johnson (2023) examined social media's dual nature, highlighting its abilities as a distraction as well as an educational tool. Social media can increase academic involvement, but it can also result in shorter attention spans and worse productivity, according to the study. Students may become distracted by the continual overload of messages, updates, and notifications, which may cause them to give more time to extracurricular activities and less time to academic work.

Students who spend more hours on social media have significant effect on social comparison and social avoidance than those who spend less time. Those who used social media for more hours a day shown significantly higher scores in social media use, avoidance, and comparison, but their academic performance suffered. at order to determine the impact of Facebook on students' academic performance at certain institutions, Emmanuel & Musa (2012) conducted a study on Facebook and Academic Performance in Pakistani institutions, involving 122 university students. They tested six hypotheses. The study evaluated the idea that a student's grade point average will decrease with increased Facebook use.

Limitations and Suggestions

There are some limitations that must be considered when analyzing the connection between social media, social avoidance, academic performance and social comparison. Only students from Islamabad's universities took part. Future studies should involve individuals from Pakistan's major cities in order to have a more comprehensive picture. This would increase the findings' credibility. Different cultural, regional, or institutional contexts may have distinct effects from social media and social comparison. The current study might not fully represent the variety of cultural viewpoints because it was limited to a single setting or area. It would be helpful to do additional research in various provinces or cultural backgrounds to investigate how these associations could vary in various sociocultural contexts.

Self-reported questionnaires, which are prone to social desirability bias, were used to gather the data. Instead of giving truthful answers, participants may have given answers they felt were socially acceptable, particularly when it came to challenging topics like academic performance or social avoidance. Future research should combine quantitative techniques with qualitative data (such as focus groups or interviews) to assure data quality and obtain a deeper understanding in order to lessen this bias in future studies. There were several items for each variable in the survey, some participants might have become fatigued of it and refused to finish it. This might have affected the standard of the answers. Future studies could improve response quality and lessen respondent fatigue by using shorter, more targeted instruments. So these types of instruments could be indigenously developed in future.

The current study only looked at social comparison as a mediating factor between social media use and academic performance and social avoidance outcomes.

Nevertheless, there may be additional significant moderators and mediators of these correlations, such as other personality social, academic study related factors. For a more thorough understanding, these more variables should be investigated in future studies.

Implications

With social comparison acting as a mediating factor, the current study emphasizes the significant effect of social media use on university students academic performance and social avoidance. The findings have significant implications across educational, psychological, and social fields. This study adds to the body of knowledge by revealing the excessive or uncontrolled social media use can have negative effect on students' academic performance and emotional health. Additionally, it highlights how crucial it is to know about social comparison processes in digital settings, as this may guide further future research in media psychology and educational psychology.

The results of this research can raise awareness of the psychological effects of social media, especially to compare oneself to someone else, among parents, teachers, and students. This knowledge can help in the creation of focused interventions that encourage better social media practices and lessen feelings of loneliness or academic disconnection. This study shows how important it is for educational institutions to include digital proficiency, emotional control, and social comparison knowledge in their curriculum and student support services. Better mental health and academic results can be achieved by assisting students in critically analyzing the material they access online. These results may assist parents and guardians understand how social media shapes the academic motivation and perceptions of oneself Their emotional and social growth can be improved by promoting open conversations about their experiences online and teaching them how to handle comparisons.

Additionally, social media platforms can contribute to the promotion of digital well-being by providing tools for filtering content, features that encourage positive messaging, and prompts to minimize negative comparison habits, These initiatives could improve users mental and academic functioning and lessen social avoidance. Lastly, the study can be a helpful resource for future researchers who want to investigate the deep relationship between academic achievement, mental health, and social media as well as other psychological factors that might mediate or regulate these associations.

Conclusions

Over past two decades, the Social media has significant effect on people's academic and psychological well-being, especially that of students. In addition to using social media platforms for communication and enjoyment, university students are increasingly using them to compare their lives to those of others. It has been noted that this can have beneficial as well as negative impacts.

This study emphasizes the connection between university student's academic performance, social avoidance, and social media with social comparison as a mediating variable. Data was gathered through the survey method and examined statistically. The results underscores that there were influence of social media on social avoidance and academic performance. The results showed that as higher the social media it increased social avoidance and higher the social media use then it lower the academic performance among university students. The mediation analysis found that social comparison mediated the relationship between social avoidance, academic performance and social media usage among university students. The relationships were found to be mediated by social comparison, suggesting that students who compare themselves to others on social media may have lower academic performance and higher degrees of social avoidance. There

were also differences in demographic variables like living status(hostilities/day scholars), employment status, no. of hours spent on social media, social media effect on academic performance(yes/no).

These findings enhance our knowledge of the psychological and academic effects of social media use particularly for university students. The study provides insightful information about how social comparison processes can affect student's academic motivation and emotional health. These findings can guide the creation of psychological treatments, digital literacy campaigns, and institutional regulations meant to encourage better social media practices and enhance student performance.

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ANNEXURES

Annex. A

Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Alina, an MS Scholar at the Islamic International University. We kindly request your informed consent to participate in this research, which will contribute to academic scholarship in the field. Your participation in this research will involve answering objective type questions. This survey is designed specifically for university students from 2nd semester and onwards as CGPA is required. Your active engagement and honest responses will greatly contribute to the quality and depth of the findings. It is assured that all information obtained from your participation will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your identity will remain anonymous. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time, without any negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw, any data collected up until that point will be excluded from the study.

I hear by confirm that I have read the terms mentioned above and agree with them.

Participant's signature_____

Annex. B

Demographics Sheet

Instructions: Please fill the following details. Your responses will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

Age: Late Adolescents / Young Adults

Gender: Male / Female

Degree: Undergraduate / Graduate

Birth order:

a) 1st born   b) Middle born   c) Last born   d) Only born

Semester: _____

Previous semester GPA/%: _____

Living status: a)Hostilite   b)Day scholar

Marital status: a)Married   b) Unmarried

Employment status :   i-Employed   ii- Unemployed

Social media user: a)Yes   b)No

Which social media platform you mostly used :

a)Youtube b)Facebook c)Instagram d)Twitter   e)Snapchat   f)Tiktok   g) Watsapp

No. of hours spend on social media (per day):

   a) 4-6hrs   b) 7-9hrs   c) 10-12hrs   d) 13-15hrs   e) 16-18hrs   f) 19hrs+

Purpose of social media usage :

   a) Non academics   b)   Academics

Do you think social media affects your academic performance?

a) Yes   b) No

Answer following according to beauty related social media sites on a beauty related social media platforms you use:

i)   Apperance focused : Beauty filters   Photoshop   Selfie taking
               Status uploading Beauty related videos

ii)   Interaction focused : Commenting   Sharing   Tagging   Group chat

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Annex. C

Letter of Data Collection

Respected Sir/Madam

It is certified that Ms. Alina, Registration number 356-FSS/MSEP/F23 is the student of Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, International Islamic University Islamabad. Kindly allow her to collect data for her thesis from your prestigious institute for the partial fulfillment of her degree. The information will be kept confidential and ethical concerns swill be followed.

Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Dr. Kehkeshan Arouj

Assistant Professor

Department of Psychology,

International Islamic University Islamabad

Annex. D

Social Avoidance/Distress Scale

Instructions: This questionnaire consists of a number of statements. We want you to decide for each one if it is True or False as applied to you. If the statement is True or Mostly true as applied to you. Tap the true button. If the statement is False or Mostly false as applied to you, tap the false button. Remember to give your own opinion of yourself.

		True	False
1	I feel relaxed even in unfamiliar social situations		
2	I try to avoid situations, which force me to be very sociable		
3	It is easy for me to relax when I am with strangers		
4	I have no particular desire to avoid people		
5	I often find social occasions upsetting		
6	I usually feel calm and comfortable at social occasions		
7	I am usually at ease when talking to someone of the opposite sex		
8	I try to avoid talking to people unless I know them well		
9	If the chance comes to meet new people, I often take it		
10	I often feel nervous or tense in casual get-togethers in which both sexes are present		

11	I am usually nervous with people unless I know them Well		
12	I usually feel relaxed when I am with a group of people		
13	I often want to get away from people		
14	I usually feel uncomfortable when I am in a group of people I don't		
15	I usually feel relaxed when I meet someone for the first time		
16	Being introduced to people makes me tense and nervous		
17	Even though a room is full of strangers, I may enter it anyway		
18	I would avoid walking up and joining a large group of people		
19	When my superiors want to talk with me, I talk willingly		
20	I often feel on edge when I am with a group of people		
21	I tend to withdraw from people		
22	I don't mind talking to people at parties or social gatherings		
23	I am seldom at ease in a large group of people		
24	I often think of excuses in order to avoid social engagements		
25	I sometimes take the responsibility for introducing		

	people to each other		
26	I try to avoid formal social occasions		
27	I usually go to whatever social engagements I have		
28	I find it easy to relax with other people		

Annex. E

Social Media Use Scale (SMUS)

Please answer each question using the 5-point scale to answer each question.

		Never =1	Sometimes=2	Neutral=3	Often=4	Very often=5
1	How often do you use social media to communicate with others?					
2	How often do you feel lonely and use social media to find companionship?					
3	How often do you use social media for fun and relaxation?					
4	How often do you use social media to search for news and information?					
5	How often do you use social media because it is easy and convenient?					
6	How often do you use social media to compare yourself with others?					
7	How often do you use social media to maintain existing relationships?					
8	How often do you use social media to avoid boredom?					
9	How often do you use social media as a primary source of information?					
10	How often do you use social media because it saves time?					
11	How often do you feel inferior after					

	comparing yourself to others on social media?					
12	How often do you use social media to make new friends?					
13	How often do you use social media to watch videos or view photos?					
14	How often do you use social media to get advice or recommendations?					
15	How often do you use social media because it is accessible?					
16	How often do you use social media to feel good about yourself?					
17	How often do you use social media to avoid face-to-face communication?					
18	How often do you use social media to play games?					
19	How often do you use social media to learn new things?					
20	How often do you use social media because it is free?					
21	How often do you feel jealous after comparing yourself to others on social media?					
22	How often do you use social media to plan events with others?					

Annex. F

Academic Performance Scale (APS)

Instructions :

Please answer each question using the 5-point scale to answer each question so that it accurately reflects what you do or have done as a student. Be as honest as possible because the information can be utilized to discover areas of strength.

SA - STRONGLY AGREE A – AGREE N – NEUTRAL D – DISAGREE S D -

STRONGLY DISAGREE

	Questions	SD	A	N	D	SD
1	I made myself ready in all my subjects.					
2	I pay attention and listen during every discussion.					
3	I want to get good grades in every subject.					
4	I actively participate in every discussion.					
5	I start papers and projects as soon as they are assigned.					
6	I enjoy homework and activities because they help me improve my skills in every subject.					
7	I exert more effort when I do difficult assignments.					
8	Solving problems is a useful hobby for me.					

Annex. G

Social Comparison Scale (SCS)

Please circle a number at a point which best describes the way in which you see yourself in comparison to others. For example:

Short 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Tall

If you put a mark at 3 this means you see yourself as shorter than others; if you put a mark at 5 (middle) about average; and a mark at 7 somewhat taller.

If you understand the above instructions, please proceed. Circle one number on each line according to how you see yourself in relationship to others.

In relationship to others I feel:

Inferior	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Superior
Incompetent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	More competent
Unlikeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	More likeable
Left out	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Accepted
Different	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Same
Untalented	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	More talented
Weaker	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Stronger
Unconfident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	More confident
Undesirable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	More desirable
Unattractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	More attractive
An outsider	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	An insider

Annex. H

Plagiarism Report

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
SOCIAL AVOIDANCE AND
ACADEMIC PERRFORMANCE
AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
MEDIATING EFFECT OF SOCIAL
COMPARISON

by Reg.356-fss/msep/f23 Alina

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INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SOCIAL AVOIDANCE AND
ACADEMIC PERRFORMANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
MEDIATING EFFECT OF SOCIAL COMPARISON

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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