Social Media Addiction in the Era of Digitalization: Its Influence on Fear of Missing Out and Academic Achievement among Undergraduate Students of The University of Burdwan

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
	In the era of globalization and digitalization, social media has become an integral part of students' academic and social lives. The present study explores the interrelationship among Social Media Addiction, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and Academic Achievement of undergraduate students of The University of Burdwan, West Bengal. The study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining simple quantitative and qualitative techniques. A total of 100 undergraduate students from different departments and affiliated colleges were selected for the study. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and personal interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency and percentage distribution to identify general trends and patterns, while qualitative responses were examined through thematic analysis. The findings reveal that social media plays a dual role in higher education. On one hand, it provides academic resources, facilitates peer collaboration, and inspires students—particularly those from rural and remote areas—through exposure to educational content and success stories. On the other hand, excessive use of social media leads to addiction and FoMO, which may distract students from their studies and negatively influence academic performance. The study concludes that balanced and purposeful use of social media can support academic growth, whereas uncontrolled usage may hamper scholastic

achievement. The findings highlight the need for digital awareness and responsible social media practices among university students.

1. Background of the Problem: In the contemporary era of globalization, digitalization has become a powerful force shaping social, economic, political, and educational life (Burlacu, 2021). Social media, as a major outcome of digitalization, has transformed communication systems and established the idea of a "global village." Particularly among university-level students, social media has become an integral part of daily life for information sharing, emotional expression, and social interaction. However, excessive use of social media has raised concerns regarding social media addiction and its adverse consequences on students' academic life (Andreassen, 2015).

Alongside social media addiction, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has emerged as a significant psychosocial issue in the digital age. FoMO reflects individuals' anxiety about missing rewarding social experiences, often leading to compulsive social media engagement. Empirical studies indicate that FoMO is positively associated with increased social media use and addiction, which in turn may disrupt students' concentration, time management, and academic performance (Bloemen, & De Coninck, 2020).

Academic achievement, being a multidimensional construct, is influenced by a wide range of factors including family environment, learning habits, psychological variables, and socio-cultural changes brought about by globalization. Changing family communication patterns and digital lifestyles further complicate students' academic engagement and outcomes.

2. Statement of the Research Problem: Despite the growing body of literature on social media addiction and FoMO, limited empirical research has examined their combined influence on academic achievement, particularly in the context of university-level students in West Bengal. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the interrelationship among Social Media Addiction, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and Academic Achievement of university students.

3. Research Questions

The study may be guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of academic achievement of undergraduate students in West Bengal?

2. Is there a significant relationship between social media addiction and academic achievement?

3. Is there a significant relationship between FoMO and social media addiction?

4. Does FoMO significantly predict social media addiction and academic achievement?

4. Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the study may be:

i) To find out the relationship between social media addiction and academic achievement undergraduate students in West Bengal

ii) To explore the relationship between FoMO and social media addiction.

iii) To examine the predictive role of FoMO and social media addiction on academic achievement.

5. Delimitation of the Study: The present study is delimited to undergraduate level students of The University of Budwan, West Bengal only, thereby restricting the scope of generalization beyond this specific population and geographical area. The investigation will focus exclusively on selected variables, namely Social Media Addiction, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and Academic Achievement, without considering other potential psychological, social, or environmental factors that may influence academic performance. Furthermore, academic achievement will be measured solely through students' academic records or standardized achievement scores, which may not capture other qualitative dimensions of learning and performance.

6. Operational Definitions

Social Media Addiction: Excessive and compulsive use of social networking platforms that interferes with daily life and academic functioning.

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO): A pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent.

Academic Achievement: The scholastic performance of students measured through examination scores or grades.

7. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The present study is grounded in the theoretical understanding that digitalization, as a major component of globalization, has significantly reshaped students' social interaction patterns and academic engagement. Social media, as a product of digitalization, plays a central role in influencing students'

psychological and academic lives. The conceptual framework of the study proposes that Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) acts as a psychological antecedent that increases students' engagement with social media. FoMO creates anxiety about missing rewarding social experiences, which motivates individuals to frequently check and use social networking platforms. This excessive and compulsive use may gradually develop into Social Media Addiction. Social Media Addiction, in turn, is assumed to negatively influence Academic Achievement by affecting students' time management, concentration, study habits, and academic commitment. Excessive engagement with social media may reduce study time, disrupt sleep patterns, and lower academic focus, thereby impacting scholastic performance.

8. Research Design: The present study adopted a mixed-method research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the interrelationship among Social Media Addiction, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and Academic Achievement. The quantitative component enabled the researcher to measure the level and relationship among variables statistically, while the qualitative component provided deeper insights into students' experiences and perceptions regarding social media use and its academic impact. Population and Sample: The study was confined to undergraduate-level degree course students of The University of Burdwan, West Bengal. The target population included students enrolled in different departments under various affiliated colleges of the university. A sample of 100 undergraduate students was selected from different departments of different colleges affiliated with the University of Burdwan. The sampling procedure ensured representation from diverse academic disciplines to enhance the variability and reliability of the findings. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire prepared by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of: items measuring Social Media Addiction; items measuring Fear of Missing Out (FoMO); questions related to Academic Achievement; selected open-ended questions to gather qualitative insights. The structured format ensured uniformity in responses, while open-ended items facilitated in-depth understanding of students' perceptions and experiences. The researcher personally conducted interviews with the selected 100 students using the structured questionnaire. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to the participants before data collection. Responses were recorded systematically for further analysis. Both quantitative data (numerical responses) and qualitative data (descriptive responses) were collected during the interview process. Quantitative data were analyzed using simple descriptive statistical techniques to examine relationships among variables. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify common patterns and themes emerging from students' responses.

9. Findings and Discussion: The present study explored the interrelationship among Social Media Addiction, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and Academic Achievement of undergraduate students of The

University of Burdwan, West Bengal. Based on quantitative analysis and qualitative responses collected through structured interviews, the following major findings and discussions are presented:

9.1. Positive Role of Social Media in Higher Education: The findings reveal that social media plays a significant positive role in higher education. A large number of students reported that they use social media platforms to access educational resources, stay updated with current academic trends, obtain information about competitive examinations, scholarships, internships, and higher study opportunities. Students from remote and rural areas particularly benefit from social media exposure. Through online lectures, motivational talks, and success stories shared by achievers, many rural students feel inspired and motivated to pursue higher goals. Successful individuals often share their preparation strategies, struggles, and experiences through social media, which positively influences students residing in villages who may otherwise lack proper academic guidance. Furthermore, academic groups formed on social media platforms help aspirant candidates organize themselves collectively. Students share notes, study materials, job notifications, previous years' question papers, and preparation strategies. This collaborative digital environment enhances peer learning and academic engagement. In this context, social media functions as a supportive academic network and an informal learning platform.

9.2. Social Media as a Source of Academic Collaboration: The study indicates that social media groups significantly contribute to knowledge exchange and academic cooperation. Many students reported that they clarify doubts, discuss assignments, and prepare for examinations through online study groups. Such interactions promote collaborative learning, quick information dissemination, and academic connectivity beyond classroom boundaries. Especially during recent years, digital communication has become more normalized in higher education. Students are increasingly dependent on online communities for educational discussions, career guidance, and competitive exam preparation. Thus, moderate and purposeful use of social media appears to support academic achievement.

9.3. Emergence of Social Media Addiction: Despite its benefits, the findings also highlight the growing concern of social media addiction among undergraduate students. A section of students reported habitual checking, excessive scrolling, and prolonged screen time. Quantitative analysis suggests that higher levels of social media addiction are associated with reduced concentration, poor time management, and irregular study habits. Students admitted that they often open social media platforms for academic purposes but gradually become distracted by entertainment content, short videos, reels, and non-academic posts. This shift from academic use to passive consumption reduces productive study time and negatively influences academic performance.

9.4. Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Psychological Impact: The study found a significant positive relationship between FoMO and social media addiction. Students experiencing higher FoMO tend to check social media more frequently to remain updated about peers' activities. Qualitative responses indicate that students sometimes feel anxious after viewing posts related to peers' achievements, success stories, examination results, or lifestyle displays. Seeing friends' success photos or videos may create comparison-based anxiety. Some students reported feeling inadequate or doubtful about their own abilities after such exposure. This psychological pressure sometimes leads students to forget their own skills, pace, and limitations. Instead of focusing on self-improvement, they engage in unhealthy comparison. Such comparison-driven stress hampers motivation, self-esteem, and ultimately academic achievement.

9.5. Negative Influence on Academic Achievement: The statistical findings suggest that excessive social media addiction negatively correlates with academic achievement. Students with higher addiction levels reported lower academic performance compared to those who use social media moderately and purposefully. FoMO also emerged as an indirect predictor of academic disturbance. When students continuously compare themselves with others, they may experience distraction, emotional instability, and reduced academic focus. Over time, this affects consistency in learning and examination outcomes. However, it is important to note that social media itself is not inherently harmful; rather, its impact depends on the pattern and purpose of usage. Controlled, academic-oriented use enhances learning opportunities, whereas excessive and emotionally driven use hampers academic progress.

9.6. Contemporary Context and Changing Student Behaviour: Recent trends indicate that short-form content consumption, instant gratification culture, and algorithm-driven engagement have increased students' screen dependency. Many students reported difficulty maintaining attention during long study sessions due to habitual scrolling behavior. At the same time, social media has democratized access to knowledge. Students from economically weaker and rural backgrounds now access educational content that was previously unavailable. Thus, social media simultaneously acts as both an empowering educational tool and a potential psychological distractor.

The findings suggest a dual nature of social media in higher education. On one hand, it enhances academic connectivity, provides inspiration to rural students, facilitates collaborative learning, and offers updated educational information. On the other hand, excessive usage driven by FoMO and comparison anxiety may lead to addiction, distraction, and reduced academic achievement. Therefore, the study emphasizes the importance of balanced and mindful use of social media. Educational institutions may

consider organizing digital literacy programmes, awareness workshops, and counseling sessions to help students manage social media use effectively.

10. Conclusion of the Study: The present study concludes that social media plays a dual role in the academic lives of undergraduate students of The University of Burdwan, West Bengal. On one hand, social media functions as a valuable educational tool by providing access to academic resources, facilitating peer collaboration, and inspiring students—particularly those from rural and remote areas— through exposure to success stories and educational trends. On the other hand, excessive and uncontrolled use of social media leads to addiction and is significantly associated with Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), which negatively affects students' concentration, time management, and overall academic achievement. The study establishes that FoMO positively influences social media addiction, and higher levels of addiction may hamper scholastic performance. Therefore, the impact of social media on academic achievement largely depends on the nature, purpose, and duration of its usage.

The findings of the study have important implications for higher education institutions, teachers, parents, and policymakers. Universities and colleges should promote digital literacy programmes to educate students about balanced and productive use of social media. Counseling services may be introduced to address issues related to social media addiction and FoMO. Teachers can integrate constructive use of social media into academic activities, such as creating subject-specific online discussion groups and sharing verified educational resources. Parents should also be made aware of the psychological impact of excessive social media use so that they can guide students effectively. Policymakers may design institutional guidelines and awareness campaigns that encourage mindful digital engagement while minimizing its negative consequences.

The present study opens several avenues for future research. Similar studies may be conducted with larger and more diverse samples across different universities and states to enhance generalizability. Future researchers may include additional variables such as self-esteem, anxiety, time management skills, personality traits, and family communication patterns to gain a broader understanding of academic achievement. Longitudinal studies may be conducted to examine long-term effects of social media addiction and FoMO on academic performance. Moreover, experimental or intervention-based research can be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of digital detox programmes or awareness campaigns in reducing addiction levels among students.

The study is limited to undergraduate students of The University of Burdwan, West Bengal, and therefore the findings cannot be generalized to all university students. The sample size of 100 students, though

adequate for preliminary investigation, may not fully represent the entire population. The study relied on self-reported data collected through a structured questionnaire, which may be subject to response bias. Additionally, only three variables—Social Media Addiction, FoMO, and Academic Achievement—were examined, while other potential influencing factors were not considered. These limitations should be taken into account while interpreting the results of the study.

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