

Examining the Impact of Social Media Usage on Academic Achievement and Emotional Intelligence amongst Science Trainee Teachers

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, social media usage among science trainee teachers has surged, prompting investigations into its impact on academic performance and emotional intelligence (EI). Previous research suggests a link between heightened social media dependency and decreased EI, often attributed to social media addiction and subsequent academic challenges. This study aimed to explore the social media habits of science student teachers and evaluate their academic performance and EI. Additionally, it examined gender disparities in academic achievement and EI among these trainees, along with the relationship between social media usage frequency and academic success. A sample of 140 individuals from the Faculty of Education at a public university in Selangor participated in the study, completing a quantitative questionnaire analysed using Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings indicated that most trainee teachers engage with platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube daily, maintaining an average of five social media accounts. Despite perceiving social media as beneficial for professional development, participants acknowledged its negative impact on academic performance, albeit with high self-perceived academic achievement. Furthermore, participants demonstrated proficiency in handling interpersonal conflicts empathetically, suggesting elevated EI levels. Gender differences in academic achievement and emotional intelligence (EI) were identified, as evidenced by independent sample t-tests. For academic achievement, the t-test results were $t(47.319) = -5.408, p = 0.00$ while for emotional intelligence, the t-test indicated $t(54.434) = -2.535, p = 0.014$. Pearson's Correlation test revealed $r = -0.250$ and $p = 0.003$ and it indicated a weak negative relationship between social media usage frequency and academic achievement. Excessive social media use was associated with adverse effects on academic performance and EI, highlighting the importance of digital literacy and media education in educational policies and practices. Emphasizing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is crucial, given the increasing value placed on EI in schools. By leveraging social media, trainee teachers can enhance essential EI skills to foster supportive learning environments, aligning with evolving educational needs.

Keywords: social media usage, academic performance, emotional intelligence (EI), trainee teachers

Research Problem

University students frequently utilize social media for various purposes, such as self-presentation, maintaining relationships, and expressing opinions (Ahmad et al., 2018). Al-Rahmi (2015) highlights social media's role in fostering skills like sharing, communicating, cooperating, and socializing information. In Malaysia, social media is widely popular among students, serving as a communication tool and promoting group unity (Othman et al., 2017). However, research suggests that social media can also divert students' focus from academic goals towards unproductive activities (Lupus & Shankar, 2010; Iqbal et al., 2018). Despite potential distractions, social media offers significant benefits in higher education (Sivakumar, 2020).

Social media's impact on emotional intelligence (EI) presents both benefits and drawbacks. While it provides avenues for maintaining relationships and broadening social circles (Pino & Mastromarino, 2023), excessive

usage is associated with adverse effects on EI, including heightened stress and reduced psychological well-being awareness (Ye, 2023). Ehibudu (2023) observed a negative correlation between time spent on platforms like WhatsApp and EI. Recognizing emotions' role in personal identity formation, researchers emphasize EI's significance in students' personality and performance (Daud et al., 2020; Karsodikromo et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2008).

Social media platforms have been utilized to promote academic achievement and facilitate teacher-student engagement (Iqbal et al., 2018). They serve as crucial communication networks enhancing relationships among students, teachers, and classmates (Jamil et al., 2020). During the pandemic, social media has been instrumental in facilitating educational endeavors (Sivakumar, 2020). Extensive research focuses on students' use of social media and mobile devices for academic purposes (Ansari & Khan, 2020). Leveraging social media in the classroom enhances collaborative learning and motivates students (Monika, 2020).

Managing emotions amidst academic pressures is a significant challenge for trainee science teachers (Brackett et al., 2011). Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in mitigating stress and maintaining focus, essential for academic success. Recognizing and addressing the interplay between emotional intelligence and motivation is vital for trainee teachers' academic success (Brackett et al., 2011). Effective communication, guided by emotional intelligence, fosters a positive and inclusive classroom environment (Parker et al., 2006). Supporting trainee science teachers in enhancing their emotional intelligence is essential for their academic success and effectiveness as educators.

Research Objectives

Four main objectives want to be achieved in this research. Below are the objectives outlined:

1. To identify the usage of social media among science trainee teachers.
2. To examine the science trainee teachers' academic achievement and emotional intelligence.
3. To investigate the significant difference between gender for science trainee teachers' academic achievement and emotional intelligence.
4. To investigate the significant relationship between the frequency of usage of social media and academic achievement.

Research Questions

From the outlined research objectives, four research questions need to be answered. The research questions are:

1. What is the usage of social media among science trainee teachers?
2. What are the science trainee teachers' academic achievement and emotional intelligence?
3. Is there any significant difference in gender between science trainee teachers' academic achievement and emotional intelligence?
4. Is there any significant relationship between the frequency of social media usage and academic achievement among science trainee teachers?

Research Hypothesis

Below are the research hypotheses corresponding to the above research questions

Research Question 3

HO1: There is no significant difference in gender between science trainee teachers' academic achievement and emotional intelligence.

HA1: There is a significant difference in gender between science trainee teachers' academic achievement and

emotional intelligence.

Research Question 4

HO2: There is no significant relationship between the frequency of social media usage and academic achievement among science trainee teachers.

HA2: There is a significant relationship between the frequency of social media usage and academic achievement among science trainee teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Goleman's (1998) emotional intelligence theory comprises five primary components that assess emotional intelligence. The first aspect is self-awareness, which refers to an individual's capacity to recognize and comprehend their feelings in any situation. This awareness allows individuals to prioritize and evaluate their self-worth and self-regard. Self-control is also of utmost importance. Emotional intelligence involves effectively regulating and controlling emotions such as anger, fear, sadness, and excessive anxieties in a balanced manner while fostering a healthy sense of self-worth. Consequently, individuals can rapidly recuperate from psychological strain.

Building on the concepts of emotional intelligence, the role of social media in contemporary communication and connection is significant. Its use can affect people's mental and intellectual growth in both positive and negative ways (Knorr et al., 2018). For instance, social media can be used to share educational material, connect with classmates, and access academic resources, all of which can help students perform better in school. However, excessive or improper use can cause distractions, reduce study time, and lead to information overload, negatively impacting academic performance (Li & Ren, 2017).

Expanding on this, social media can also influence emotional intelligence. Science trainee teachers' emotional intelligence can be affected by social media use in several ways, including how well they understand and control their emotions. Constant exposure to a wide range of emotions and views on social media can help people better recognize and understand their emotional responses. However, it can also lead to issues such as social comparison, which can harm self-esteem and self-control (Etepanişen & Baykal, 2020). Interacting with others on social media can improve social and empathy skills by exposing individuals to different perspectives and encouraging helpful interactions. On the other hand, the impersonal nature of online contact could hinder the development of real empathy and social skills useful in real life.

Zeitel-Bank and Tat (2014) further examine the influence of social media on individuals and society, specifically exploring its effects on cognitive processes and interpersonal conduct. Their comprehensive analysis of the present state of social media uses factual data and statistics to demonstrate its extensive adoption and impact. The report provides an impartial perspective, elucidating both the benefits and drawbacks of social media. It emphasizes the significance of proper utilization and underscores the potential dangers it presents to individuals and society. The study poses relevant inquiries regarding the impact of emerging technologies, particularly on the younger generation, and expresses apprehensions over their effects on identity, attention spans, and cognitive development.

Furthermore, the paper delves into the democratization of technology and the role of social media in global communication and participation. It underscores the need for conscious and responsible use of social media, given its rapid development and profound impact on our daily lives and behaviour. The findings highlight that social media impacts the human brain and overall quality of life. Emotions are pivotal in human communication, and while social media offers benefits, it also presents potential threats to individuals and society. The research particularly emphasizes the importance of responsible interaction in the digital realm. Additionally, it reveals that social media can influence social interaction, especially among young individuals, which, in turn, can affect broader social systems. Social media can also impact individuals' ability to think independently and make decisions, as they are susceptible to peer pressure within their social networks. Notably, the time individuals spend deciding significantly predicts whether they may later reverse their

choices, underlining the intricate relationship between social media, decision-making, and human behavior.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed for this research is quantitative. The study involved conducting a survey in which respondents selected responses by marking checkboxes in a questionnaire. This approach enabled the collection of data from a substantial sample size within a brief timeframe. Furthermore, the results can be extrapolated to the entire population.

The research was designed as descriptive research, which aims to explore deeper insights into a specific population's thoughts, actions, and feelings. Descriptive research relies heavily on the instrumentation part as the medium to record the studied elements (Effendi & Hendriyani, 2018). In this case, the survey was conducted to distribute questionnaires among science trainee teachers. Typically, studies of this type involve the statistical analysis of instrument scores such as questionnaires.

The population under study comprises science trainee teachers enrolled in the Faculty of Education at a public university. The sample consists of science trainee teachers from three programs within the university. The faculty has approximately 639 trainee teachers enrolled in final year. The average number of trainee teachers in the science programs—specifically Biology, Chemistry, and Physics—is around 183. This study initially targeted a sample size of 123 trainee teachers from the Biology, Physics, and Chemistry programs. However, 140 surveys were received and successfully completed during data collection. Hence, this study comprises a final sample size of 140 respondents.

For the sampling technique, the researchers used probability sampling to investigate the usage of social media and its effect on science trainee teachers' academic achievement and emotional intelligence. Probability sampling ensures that every person in the population has an equal chance of being chosen as a research subject, guaranteeing that the selection process is fully randomized and impartial. This approach allows the findings to be generalized to the population (Bhardwaj, 2019).

The specific method employed was simple random sampling, which best suits the sample size. In simple random sampling, members of the sample are chosen entirely by chance, ensuring that each member has an equal probability of being selected. As a result, the sample's quality is unaffected by bias. This sampling method is ideal for populations with a high degree of homogeneity (Bhardwaj, 2019). Using this method ensures that each unit or subject has an equal chance of being selected as a respondent.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Usage of Social Media among Science Trainee Teachers

Table 1: Social Media Platforms used by the Respondents

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Social media platforms ^a	X	84	13.6%	60.0%
	Facebook	135	21.9%	96.4%
	Instagram	121	19.6%	86.4%
	WhatsApp	130	21.1%	92.9%
	Pinterest	12	1.9%	8.6%
	YouTube	134	21.8%	95.7%
Total		616	100.0%	440.0%

This item pertains to the first and fourth objectives of this study: identifying the usage of social media among

science trainee teachers and investigating the relationship between the frequency of social media usage and academic achievement. A frequency analysis was conducted for this item. Table 4.7 shows the social media platforms that trainee teachers used. The analysis reveals that 84 (13.6%) trainee teachers use X (formerly Twitter), while 121 (19.6%) use Instagram. Additionally, 130 (21.1%) use WhatsApp, and 134 (21.8%) use YouTube. The highest usage was observed for Facebook, with 135 (21.9%) trainee teachers using it, while Pinterest had the lowest usage, with 12 (1.9%) trainee teachers using it. These results indicate that most trainee teachers prefer to use Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube in their daily lives.

The gender role in determining science trainee teachers' academic achievement and emotional intelligence

Table 2: Independent Sample T-Test for Gender between Science Trainee Teachers' Academic Achievement and Emotional Intelligence

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Academic Achievement	Equal variances assumed	9.763	.002	-6.242	138	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.408	47.319	.000
Emotional Intelligence	Equal variances assumed	.216	.642	-2.645	138	.009
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.535	54.434	.014

An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether male and female science trainee teachers significantly differ in their academic achievement and emotional intelligence. The results are shown in Table above. For academic achievement, the t-test revealed that $t(47.319) = -5.408, p = 0.00$. For emotional intelligence, the t-test indicated $t(54.434) = -2.535, p = 0.014$. These results suggest a significant difference in both academic achievement and emotional intelligence between male and female science trainee teachers.

The mean academic achievement for males ($M = 3.397, SD = 0.16253$) is lower than that for females ($M = 3.5015, SD = 0.12153$). Similarly, the mean emotional intelligence for males ($M = 19.1429, SD = 2.17622$) is lower than that for females ($M = 3.5015, SD = 0.12153$). In other words, there are significant gender differences in academic achievement and emotional intelligence among science trainee teachers. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Relationship between the frequency of social media usage and academic achievement among science trainee teachers

Table 3: Pearson Correlation for the Frequency of Social Media Usage and Academic Achievement Among Science Trainee Teachers

		Frequency of Social Media Usage	Academic Achievement
Frequency of Social Media Usage and Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	1	-.250**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	140	140

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson correlation test was conducted to determine the relationship between the frequency of social media usage and academic achievement among science trainee teachers. Based on Table 4.43, the results show that $r = -0.250$ and $p = 0.003$, which is smaller than 0.05. This indicates a significantly weak negative relationship

between the frequency of social media usage and academic achievement. In other words, as the frequency of social media usage decreases, academic achievement increases. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION

Research on the usage of social media and its effect on science trainee teachers' academic achievement and emotional intelligence has provided valuable insights into its implications. Here are some of the key findings supported by research.

The first implication of this study is that social media can serve as an effective teaching tool for aspiring science teachers. Platforms like X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook provide opportunities for teachers to interact, share information, and engage in professional development communities. Trainee teachers can leverage these platforms to expand their knowledge, access research findings, and adopt innovative teaching practices. The interactive nature of social media fosters enhanced learning outcomes by exposing students to diverse teaching methods and facilitating the exchange of ideas with experienced educators worldwide. However, as noted by Ezeonwumelu (2021), the widespread use of social media among students can sometimes lead to overdependence, resulting in an excessive reliance on online networking platforms. This highlights the need for a balanced and purposeful use of social media in education. In certain instances, students' learning abilities and research capabilities are declining due to their engagement with these websites, leading to decreased academic performance (Siddhartha et al., 2020).

An independent sample t-test was used to analyse the difference in gender between science trainee teachers' academic achievement. It is found that there is a significant difference in the science trainee teachers' academic achievement between genders. In other words, male and female students have different academic achievement. These findings indicate that in the context of teacher training, female trainee teachers often surpass male trainee teachers in terms of academic accomplishments. This is corroborated by the preceding research conducted by Oguguo et al. (2020), which specifically studied accounting students' academic performance and found that female students exhibited a superior average academic performance compared to their male peers. Similarly, Brown (2020) demonstrated in his study, which focused on the impact of social media usage on academic performance, that female students achieved higher scores than their male counterparts. This phenomenon was linked to the belief that male students devoted excessive time to social media, while female students, who were prohibited from accessing social media, focused more on studying.

Social media usage can affect the emotional intelligence of science trainee teachers and their academic achievements. Social media sites frequently expose individuals to a plethora of viewpoints, discussions, and sometimes conflicts. Navigating these virtual realms requires a heightened degree of emotional intelligence to participate in productive dialogues effectively, manage differing opinions, and differentiate sincere information from falsehoods. Active engagement in online forums may enhance the emotional intelligence of science trainee teachers by enabling them to navigate various perspectives and adeptly respond to differing views. Conversely, the negative consequences of social media, such as cyberbullying and the pressure to conform to unrealistic standards, can significantly harm the emotional well-being of science trainee teachers. The constant comparison with peers, the fear of exclusion, and the desire for social validation can contribute to increased levels of stress and anxiety, potentially affecting their emotional intelligence. Hence, it is vital for educators and academic institutions to recognize and address the emotional challenges associated with social media use. They should offer support and guidance to help science trainee teachers navigate these virtual platforms more skilfully.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to observe the relationship between the frequency of social media usage and academic achievement among science trainee teachers. It is found that there is a significant weak negative relationship between the frequency of social media usage and academic achievement among science trainee teachers. In other words, as the frequency of social media usage decreases, academic achievement will increase. Science trainee teachers mostly use Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube in their daily lives and the majority of trainee teachers spend 2 to 4 hours on social media. The results agree with the study conducted by Rathi et al. (2020) which showed a negative association between the amount of time dedicated to social media usage and academic achievement. Azizi et al. (2019) provided evidence for the notion that there is a strong and

unfavourable association between addiction to social networking and the academic performance of students. This discovery indicates that a rise in the excessive use of social networks leads to a decline in academic performance. Ahmadi and Zeinali (2018) conducted a study demonstrating the detrimental effects of social networking addiction on academic achievement. This addiction leads to academic procrastination, compromised sleep quality, and heightened academic stress.

Ultimately, the incorporation of social media into the lives of science trainee teachers has both beneficial and detrimental effects on academic performance and emotional aptitude. While social media can facilitate collaboration, provide instructional resources, and promote emotional intelligence by exposing individuals to diverse viewpoints, it also poses risks related to distractions and emotional challenges. For science trainee teachers to fully leverage the benefits of social media, it is necessary to incorporate it into their practices cautiously, provide guidance on safe usage, and establish support systems to address any potential drawbacks. In the digital age, trainee teachers must comprehend and navigate the impact of social media on education to create a well-rounded and effective learning environment.

CONCLUSION

In summation, this chapter is pivotal as it unveils the key findings of the study, enlightening readers about the outcomes and aligning them with the literature reviewed in chapter two. The study fulfils its objectives by charting the social media landscape among science trainee teachers, scrutinizing their academic achievements and emotional intelligence, examining the gender disparities in these domains, and probing into the nexus between social media usage frequency and academic performance. The research highlights the predominant use of platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube among science trainee teachers, who acknowledge the benefits of social media for their academic and professional growth. Yet, it also points out the nuanced influence of social media on emotional intelligence and academic results, recognizing positive aspects such as network building and resource accessibility while raising concerns over potential downsides like empathy decline, distractions, and academic performance deterioration.

The study notes that most trainee teachers manage multiple social media accounts, spending 2 to 4 hours daily on these platforms, and feel a sense of disconnection from peers in the absence of social media engagement. Nonetheless, they perceive themselves as capable of addressing interpersonal conflicts constructively and empathetically. Findings indicate a high self-assessment of academic achievement and emotional intelligence among trainee teachers, with significant gender differences and a slight negative correlation between the frequency of social media use and academic success. This research delves into the usage patterns of platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp, recognizing their dual role as educational aids and potential distractions. It navigates the intricacies of emotional intelligence, particularly self-awareness and self-regulation, in the context of social media interactions. Acknowledging the issues surrounding excessive internet dependency, the research underscores potential adverse effects on academic performance and emotional wellness, aiming to inform future educational policies and interventions.

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