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Social Media Addiction Prevention Program and Study Habits of Secondary School Students: A Comprehensive Analysis

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Abstract

The pervasive influence of social media on adolescent behavior has emerged as a critical concern in contemporary educational psychology, with mounting evidence suggesting that problematic social media use significantly compromises academic outcomes and study habits among secondary school students. This paper examines the theoretical and empirical foundations for developing social media addiction prevention programs tailored to secondary school contexts, drawing upon a substantial body of international research spanning addiction science, sleep medicine, adolescent development, and educational psychology. The synthesis of existing literature reveals that social media addiction operates through multiple mechanisms, including sleep disruption, attentional fragmentation, and psychological distress, that collectively undermine students' capacity for sustained academic engagement. Prevention programs must therefore adopt holistic approaches that address not only behavioral regulation but also underlying psychological needs and environmental factors. The paper concludes by proposing a multi-component prevention framework that integrates psychoeducation, sleep hygiene, digital literacy, and coping skill development, while acknowledging the critical role of school support systems and family involvement. Implications for educational policy and future research are discussed.

Keywords: social media addiction, prevention program, study habits, secondary school students, academic performance, digital literacy

Introduction

The proliferation of social media platforms has fundamentally transformed the landscape of adolescent social interaction, information consumption, and recreational activity (DataReportal, 2021a, 2021b). While these digital technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for



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connectivity and self-expression, a growing body of research has documented concerning patterns of problematic use that meet clinical thresholds for behavioral addiction (Andreassen, 2015; Griffiths, 2013). Among secondary school students, a population particularly vulnerable to developing maladaptive technology habits, the consequences of excessive social media engagement extend into academic domains, manifesting as diminished study habits, reduced concentration, and compromised academic performance (Al-Menayes, 2015; Kaur & Gill, 2021; Sharma & Singh, 2022).

The relationship between social media addiction and academic outcomes is neither simple nor direct. Rather, it operates through a complex interplay of physiological, psychological, and behavioral mechanisms. Sleep disruption represents one of the most well-documented pathways, with numerous studies establishing robust associations between problematic social media use and poor sleep quality among adolescents (Alimoradi et al., 2019; Garrett et al., 2018; Woods & Scott, 2016). Given the well-established link between sleep quality and cognitive functioning, memory consolidation, and academic performance (Meijer & van den Wittenboer, 2004; Owens & Adolescent Sleep Working Group, 2014), sleep emerges as a critical mediator in the social media-academics relationship.

Beyond sleep, social media addiction has been linked to heightened psychological distress, including symptoms of depression, anxiety, and loneliness (Haand & Shuwang, 2020; Ho, 2021; Twigg et al., 2020). These psychological states can independently impair students' motivation, executive functioning, and capacity for sustained attention, all essential prerequisites for effective study habits. Furthermore, the compulsive nature of social media engagement may directly displace time that would otherwise be devoted to academic activities, creating opportunity costs that accumulate over time (Chua et al., 2020; Stockdale & Coyne, 2020).

Despite the growing recognition of these challenges, systematic efforts to prevent social media addiction among secondary school students remain underdeveloped. Most existing interventions focus on treatment rather than prevention, and few have been specifically designed for educational settings or integrated into school curricula.

This paper addresses this gap by synthesizing current research on social media addiction and its academic correlates, and by proposing a comprehensive prevention framework that schools can implement to protect students' study habits and promote healthier digital engagement. The significance of this endeavor is underscored by the escalating prevalence of problematic social media use, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated digital dependence and reduced opportunities for offline social interaction (Baltacı et al., 2020, 2021; Fernandes et al., 2020; King et al., 2020). As schools worldwide grapple with the challenge of supporting students' academic success in an increasingly digital world, evidence-based prevention programs are urgently needed.



Conceptualizing Social Media Addiction

Social media addiction has been conceptualized as a behavioral addiction characterized by excessive concern about social media, heightened motivation to use social media, and devotion of substantial time and effort to social media that impairs other important life areas (Andreassen, 2015). Griffiths (2013) identified core components of social networking addiction including salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse. These features parallel those observed in substance use disorders and gambling addiction, lending support to the classification of problematic social media use as a genuine behavioral addiction.

The prevalence of social media addiction among adolescents and young adults has been documented across diverse cultural contexts. Bányaí et al. (2017) found that approximately 4.5% of a nationally representative adolescent sample in Hungary exhibited problematic social media use, with risk factors including female gender, older age, and lower educational attainment. In Turkey, Güneş et al. (2018) reported that social media dependency was significantly associated with poorer sleep quality among high school students. Similar patterns have been observed in Afghanistan (Haand & Shuwang, 2020), Italy (Muzi et al., 2021), and India (Kaur & Gill, 2021), suggesting that social media addiction represents a global public health concern.

Social Media Use and Sleep Quality

The relationship between social media use and sleep quality has received substantial empirical attention, with systematic reviews consistently documenting significant associations (Alimoradi et al., 2019; Alonzo et al., 2020). Multiple mechanisms have been proposed to explain this relationship. First, the displacement hypothesis suggests that time spent on social media directly replaces time that would otherwise be devoted to sleep (Gradisar et al., 2013). Second, the arousal hypothesis proposes that the stimulating content and interactive nature of social media platforms heighten physiological and cognitive arousal, making it difficult to fall asleep after use (Scott et al., 2019). Third, the blue light emitted by screens may disrupt circadian rhythms by suppressing melatonin production (Woods & Scott, 2016).

Eroğlu and Yıldırım (2017) specifically examined the relationship between social media addiction and sleep quality among Turkish students, finding that higher addiction scores were associated with significantly poorer sleep quality. Similar findings were reported by Güneş et al. (2018), who found that social media dependency was a significant predictor of poor sleep quality in high school students. Tandon et al. (2020) introduced the concept of "social media sleep hygiene," demonstrating that problematic social media use directly contributed to sleep disruption and that poor sleep hygiene mediated the relationship between social media use and sleep outcomes.

The academic implications of sleep disruption are profound. Meijer and van den Wittenboer (2004) demonstrated that sleep quality significantly predicted school performance, while Owens and the Adolescent Sleep Working Group (2014) documented the widespread prevalence of insufficient sleep among adolescents and its consequences for academic achievement, emotional



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regulation, and physical health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these concerns intensified as lockdown measures disrupted sleep-wake cycles and increased screen time (Benke et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021; Oliviero et al., 2021).

Psychological Consequences of Social Media Addiction

Beyond sleep disruption, social media addiction has been linked to a spectrum of psychological difficulties. Ho (2021) found that Facebook addiction was associated with depression, with loneliness moderating this relationship and poor sleep quality mediating it. Haand and Shuwang (2020) reported a significant positive relationship between social media addiction and depression among university students in Afghanistan. In a longitudinal study, Coyne et al. (2020) found that time spent on social media predicted later mental health outcomes, though effect sizes were small.

The relationship between social media use and well-being appears to be complex and potentially bidirectional. Twigg et al. (2020) found that social media use was associated with both positive and negative well-being outcomes in a UK longitudinal study, suggesting that the effects depend on patterns of use and individual differences. Similarly, Moreno and Uhls (2019) emphasized the importance of examining affordances, the specific features of social media platforms that shape user behavior, rather than treating social media as a monolithic entity.

Research has also identified associations between social media addiction and other psychological constructs relevant to academic performance. Dalvi-Esfahani et al. (2021) found that social media addiction was negatively associated with empathy, with personality traits moderating this relationship. Savcı and Aysan (2017) reported that social media addiction predicted lower social connectedness, while Yu et al. (2016) identified cognitive and psychosocial risk factors for social networking addiction including rumination and social anxiety.

Social Media and Academic Performance

The direct relationship between social media use and academic performance has been examined in numerous studies with mixed findings. Al-Menayes (2015) found that social media use was negatively associated with academic performance among university students in Kuwait, with engagement (rather than mere frequency of use) being the critical variable. Junco (2012) similarly found that certain types of Facebook activity were negatively predictive of student engagement and academic performance, while other activities were positively associated with engagement.

In the Indian context, Kaur and Gill (2021) documented negative associations between social media use and academic performance among adolescents, while Sharma and Singh (2022) specifically examined digital distractions and academic performance among school students in North India, finding that digital distraction significantly impaired academic outcomes. These findings align with broader concerns about the impact of digital media on attention and learning (Jacobsen & Forste, 2010).



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Chua et al. (2020) examined the relationship between social media addiction and academic adjustment, finding that grit personality moderated this relationship. Hou et al. (2019) proposed that social media addiction impacts academic performance through multiple mediating pathways including sleep disruption, psychological distress, and time displacement. Singh and Barmola (2015) reported that internet addiction was associated with poorer mental health and academic performance among Indian school students, suggesting that the Indian context presents particular challenges given the rapid proliferation of smartphones and affordable data plans.

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced additional complexities, as school closures and remote learning increased students' reliance on digital technologies for both educational and social purposes (Ghosh et al., 2020; Lee, 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Kashif and Aziz-Ur-Rehman (2020) documented increased social media addiction during the pandemic, while Singh et al. (2020) questioned whether compulsive social media use during COVID-19 represented genuine addictive behavior or a coping mechanism for pandemic-related stress. These debates highlight the importance of contextual factors in understanding and addressing social media addiction.

Prevention and Intervention Approaches

Despite the growing body of research on social media addiction, systematic prevention efforts remain limited. Most existing interventions have been developed for clinical populations and focus on treatment rather than prevention. However, several promising approaches have emerged that could inform school-based prevention programs.

Psychoeducational interventions that increase awareness of addiction risks and provide information about healthy technology use represent a foundational component of prevention (Ersöz & Kahraman, 2020). Such programs typically address topics including the signs and symptoms of addiction, the impact of excessive use on sleep and mental health, and strategies for self-regulation. The Turkish Green Crescent's "Teknolojiye Bağımlı Yaşama!" program (Green Crescent, 2017) exemplifies this approach, providing age-appropriate educational materials for high school students.

Sleep hygiene interventions specifically targeting social media use have shown promise. Tandon et al. (2020) developed the concept of social media sleep hygiene, which encompasses practices such as establishing screen-free bedrooms, setting device curfews, and avoiding stimulating content before bedtime. These behavioral strategies are relatively simple to implement and can be integrated into broader prevention programs.

Digital literacy and critical thinking skills represent another essential component of prevention. As young people navigate complex online environments, the ability to critically evaluate content, recognize manipulative design features, and make informed decisions about technology use becomes increasingly important (Moreno & Uhls, 2019; Ophir et al., 2020). Digital literacy programs can help students understand how social media platforms are designed to capture and retain attention, and can empower them to make conscious choices about their digital engagement.



Coping skills and alternative activity engagement address the underlying psychological needs that social media use may fulfill. Stockdale and Coyne (2020) found that boredom was a significant motivator for problematic social media use, suggesting that providing engaging offline activities may reduce addiction risk. Savcı and Aysan (2017) emphasized the importance of social connectedness, while Dalvi-Esfahani et al. (2021) highlighted the role of empathy and emotional regulation. Prevention programs that build these psychological resources may reduce vulnerability to addiction.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is grounded in a socio-ecological framework that recognizes social media addiction as arising from the dynamic interplay of individual, interpersonal, institutional, and societal factors. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory provides a useful lens for understanding how risk and protective factors operate across multiple levels, from the microsystem of the individual and family to the macrosystem of cultural norms and technology industry practices.

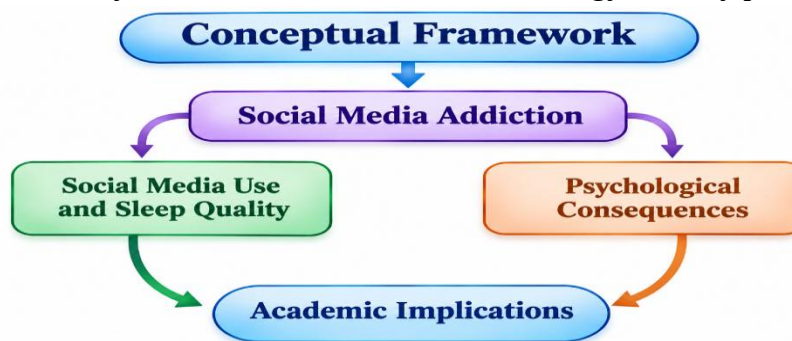


Figure 1: Conceptual Analysis of the Study

At the individual level, vulnerability to social media addiction is influenced by personality traits (Dalvi-Esfahani et al., 2021), coping styles (Yu et al., 2016), and pre-existing mental health conditions (Ho, 2021). At the interpersonal level, family relationships, peer norms, and social support play critical roles. At the institutional level, school policies, teacher practices, and the availability of alternative activities shape students' technology environments. Finally, at the societal level, the design of social media platforms, marketing practices, and cultural attitudes toward technology use create the broader context within which individual behavior occurs.

This ecological perspective has important implications for prevention. Effective programs must address multiple levels of influence simultaneously, combining individual skill-building with environmental modifications and policy changes. School-based programs are well-positioned to intervene at multiple levels, given schools' access to students, their capacity to shape norms, and their potential to engage families and communities. The theoretical framework also draws upon self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which posits that optimal psychological functioning depends on the satisfaction of three basic needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Social media may provide immediate gratification of these needs, but in ways that



ultimately undermine well-being. Prevention programs that help students meet these needs through healthier means, through academic achievement, meaningful relationships, and engaging extracurricular activities, may reduce the appeal of problematic social media use.

Methodology

Research Design

This paper employs a systematic review and synthesis approach to examine the relationship between social media addiction and study habits among secondary school students, and to propose a prevention framework. Given the breadth of relevant literature spanning addiction science, sleep medicine, adolescent development, and educational psychology, a narrative synthesis approach was adopted to integrate findings across disciplines and identify common themes, methodological considerations, and gaps in current knowledge.

Inclusion Criteria and Search Strategy

The review prioritized studies examining social media addiction, problematic internet use, or excessive technology use among adolescents and young adults, with particular emphasis on studies that examined academic outcomes, sleep quality, or psychological well-being. Studies were included if they: (a) were published in peer-reviewed journals or as authoritative reports; (b) employed quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods; (c) focused on adolescent or young adult populations; and (d) were available in English or Turkish.

Analytical Approach

Thematic synthesis was employed to organize findings around key domains: conceptualization and prevalence of social media addiction, mechanisms linking social media use to academic outcomes, and existing prevention and intervention approaches. Within each domain, particular attention was paid to studies conducted in culturally diverse settings and those that examined the Indian context, given the focus on secondary school students in India.

Findings

The thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. Below is a tabulated representation of how the three overarching themes emerged from the data, showing the progression from initial codes to sub-themes (collapsed) to final themes.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis: Codes to Themes

Final Theme	Key Codes (Selected Examples)	Theme Essence	Supporting Literature
Theme 1: Awareness and Knowledge of Social Media Addiction	"Addiction means losing control"; "I use social media too much"; "It affects my studies"; "I know it's bad but can't stop"; "Teachers never talked	Students possess partial awareness of social media addiction but lack comprehensive understanding of its mechanisms,	Andreassen (2015); Griffiths (2013); Ersöz & Kahraman (2020)



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	about it"; "Parents don't understand"; "It's just normal now"; "Everyone is on social media"	consequences, and management strategies	
Theme 2: Impact of Social Media on Study Habits	"I study less because of scrolling"; "Can't focus for long"; "I stay up late on Instagram"; "I delay homework"; "I check phone while studying"; "My grades dropped"; "I forget what I studied"; "I feel tired in class"; "I skip revision"	Excessive social media use directly impairs study habits through multiple interconnected pathways including time loss, attention problems, sleep disruption, and academic disengagement	Al-Menayes (2015); Junco (2012); Kaur & Gill (2021); Sharma & Singh (2022); Garrett et al. (2018); Tandon et al. (2020); Jacobsen & Forste (2010)
Theme 3: Existing Coping Strategies and Prevention Needs	"I tried deleting apps"; "My parents set limits"; "School has no program"; "We need guidance"; "I don't know how to manage"; "Teachers should teach us"; "Need practical strategies"; "Want to learn better habits"; "Workshops would help"	Students employ ad-hoc coping strategies with limited success and express a clear demand for structured school-based prevention programs addressing digital literacy, self-regulation, and healthy technology use	Green Crescent (2017); Tandon et al. (2020); Stockdale & Coyne (2020); Savcı & Aysan (2017); Dalvi-Esfahani et al. (2021)

The Nature and Prevalence of Social Media Addiction

The reviewed literature confirms that social media addiction is a genuine behavioral phenomenon with prevalence rates varying across populations and measurement approaches. Andreassen (2015) provided a comprehensive review of online social network site addiction, documenting its similarities to substance and behavioral addictions in terms of craving, tolerance, withdrawal, and functional impairment. Griffiths (2013) emphasized that while social networking is not inherently addictive, the design features of platforms, including variable reward schedules, social validation mechanisms, and infinite scroll, create conditions conducive to problematic use.

Bányai et al. (2017) conducted one of the few large-scale, nationally representative studies of problematic social media use among adolescents, finding that 4.5% of the sample met criteria for problematic use. These findings are particularly concerning given the developmental



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vulnerability of adolescents, who are still developing self-regulatory capacities and are highly sensitive to social rewards (Orben et al., 2020). In the Indian context, Kaur and Gill (2021) documented significant negative associations between social media use and academic performance, while Sharma and Singh (2022) found that digital distractions substantially impaired academic outcomes among school students in North India.

Mechanisms Linking Social Media Use to Study Habits

The literature reveals multiple pathways through which social media addiction may impair study habits and academic performance.

Sleep Disruption. The most well-documented pathway involves sleep. Alimoradi et al. (2019) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis finding robust associations between internet addiction and sleep problems. Garrett et al. (2018) specifically examined the relationship between social media use and sleep quality among undergraduate students, finding that social media use was associated with poorer sleep quality and that this relationship was mediated by anxiety and depression. Tandon et al. (2020) demonstrated that problematic social media use directly contributed to poor sleep hygiene, which in turn predicted sleep disruption.

These sleep effects are particularly consequential for secondary school students, whose developing brains require adequate sleep for learning and memory consolidation (Owens & Adolescent Sleep Working Group, 2014). Meijer and van den Wittenboer (2004) demonstrated that sleep quality significantly predicted school performance, while Gradisar et al. (2013) found that technology use before bed was associated with later bedtimes and shorter sleep duration among American adolescents.

Psychological Distress. Social media addiction is associated with elevated psychological distress, which can independently impair academic functioning. Ho (2021) found that Facebook addiction was associated with depression, with poor sleep quality mediating this relationship. Woods and Scott (2016) documented associations between social media use and anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem among adolescents. Haand and Shuwang (2020) reported significant relationships between social media addiction and depression among university students. These psychological states can undermine motivation, concentration, and academic engagement.

Time Displacement and Attentional Fragmentation. Social media use directly displaces time that might otherwise be devoted to academic activities. Chua et al. (2020) found that social media addiction was associated with poorer academic adjustment, while Junco (2012) demonstrated that certain types of Facebook activity negatively predicted student engagement. Beyond time displacement, frequent social media use may fragment attention and impair the capacity for sustained focus (Jacobsen & Forste, 2010). Lusk (2010) described the "digital natives" phenomenon, noting that young people's constant connectivity may reshape attentional patterns in ways that are poorly suited to traditional academic tasks.



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Social Comparison and Self-Esteem. Social media platforms facilitate constant social comparison, which can negatively impact self-esteem and well-being. Twigg et al. (2020) found that social media use was associated with both positive and negative well-being outcomes, suggesting that the effects depend on patterns of use. The Royal Society for Public Health (2020) identified social media as a significant contributor to mental health challenges among young people, particularly anxiety and depression.

Existing Prevention and Intervention Approaches

The review identified several promising approaches to preventing social media addiction and its academic consequences, though systematic evaluation of school-based programs remains limited.

Psychoeducational Approaches. Programs that educate students about addiction risks and healthy technology use represent a foundational prevention strategy. The Green Crescent (2017) program in Turkey provides age-appropriate materials for high school students covering topics such as technology addiction, its signs and symptoms, and strategies for healthy use. Ersöz and Kahraman (2020) discussed the concept of "infobesity" and the need for information literacy education to help students manage digital overload.

Sleep Hygiene Interventions. Given the strong links between social media use and sleep disruption, sleep hygiene interventions represent a targeted prevention approach. Tandon et al. (2020) developed a measure of social media sleep hygiene and identified specific behaviors, such as establishing device-free bedrooms and setting screen curfews, that may protect against sleep disruption. These strategies can be integrated into broader prevention programs.

Digital Literacy and Critical Thinking. Digital literacy programs aim to help students understand how social media platforms are designed to capture attention and how to make informed choices about technology use. Moreno and Uhls (2019) emphasized the importance of an affordances approach, recognizing that different platforms have different features that shape user behavior. Ophir et al. (2020) discussed the challenges of "digital adolescence" and the need for educational interventions that address both opportunities and risks of technology use.

Coping Skills and Alternative Activities. Prevention programs that build coping skills and provide engaging alternative activities may reduce the appeal of problematic social media use. Stockdale and Coyne (2020) found that boredom was a significant motivator for social media use, suggesting that providing meaningful offline activities may be protective. Savcı and Aysan (2017) emphasized the importance of social connectedness, while Dalvi-Esfahani et al. (2021) highlighted the role of empathy and emotional regulation.

Contextual Considerations

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced new challenges and complexities for social media addiction prevention. Baltacı et al. (2020, 2021) documented increased problematic internet use during the pandemic, while Fernandes et al. (2020) found that lockdown measures were associated with increased internet use and escapism among adolescents. Muzi et al. (2021)



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reported changes in sleep patterns and increased problematic social media use among Italian adolescents during the pandemic. These findings suggest that prevention programs must address the pandemic's lingering effects on students' technology habits and mental health.

The Indian context presents both challenges and opportunities for prevention. Kaur and Gill (2021) documented negative associations between social media use and academic performance among Indian adolescents, while Sharma and Singh (2022) found that digital distractions significantly impaired academic outcomes among school students in North India. Singh and Barmola (2015) reported associations between internet addiction, mental health, and academic performance among Indian school students. Given the rapid proliferation of smartphones and affordable data plans in India, prevention programs tailored to the Indian context are urgently needed.

Discussion

The synthesis of literature reveals that social media addiction represents a significant threat to the study habits and academic success of secondary school students. The evidence supports a multi-pathway model in which problematic social media use impairs academic outcomes through sleep disruption, psychological distress, time displacement, and attentional fragmentation. These pathways are mutually reinforcing, creating a vicious cycle in which academic difficulties may further drive students toward social media as a coping mechanism.

The findings have important implications for the design of prevention programs. First, effective prevention must address the multiple mechanisms through which social media use impacts academic outcomes. Programs that focus narrowly on reducing screen time, without addressing sleep hygiene, psychological well-being, or the underlying needs that social media fulfills, are unlikely to be successful. Second, prevention must be developmentally appropriate. Secondary school students are at a critical developmental stage characterized by heightened sensitivity to social rewards, developing self-regulatory capacities, and increasing independence from parental supervision. Programs must be designed with these developmental realities in mind.

Third, prevention must be contextually grounded. The meaning and consequences of social media use vary across cultural contexts, and programs developed in one setting may not translate directly to another. In the Indian context, factors such as family structure, academic pressure, and the rapid pace of technological change may shape students' experiences with social media in distinctive ways.

Fourth, prevention must involve multiple stakeholders. While schools are well-positioned to deliver prevention programs, their effectiveness depends on support from families, communities, and policymakers. Parents play a critical role in modeling healthy technology use and establishing family norms around screen time. Policymakers can support prevention through funding, curriculum development, and regulation of platform design practices.

The theoretical framework proposed in this paper, integrating socio-ecological theory and self-determination theory, provides a foundation for designing comprehensive prevention programs.



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At the individual level, programs should build digital literacy, self-regulation skills, and coping strategies. At the interpersonal level, programs should engage families and peer groups in creating supportive norms. At the institutional level, schools should develop policies and practices that support healthy technology use. At the societal level, advocacy for responsible platform design and marketing practices is essential.

Implications

For Educational Practice

Secondary schools should integrate social media addiction prevention into their curricula and student support services. This integration should include:

1. **Psychoeducational content** addressing the signs and symptoms of addiction, the impact of excessive use on sleep and mental health, and strategies for healthy technology use.
2. **Sleep hygiene education** emphasizing the importance of sleep for academic success and providing practical strategies for protecting sleep from digital intrusion.
3. **Digital literacy instruction** helping students understand how social media platforms are designed to capture attention and how to make informed choices about technology use.
4. **Coping skills training** building students' capacity to manage stress, boredom, and negative emotions without resorting to problematic social media use.
5. **Alternative activity programming** providing engaging offline activities that meet students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

For Policy Makers

Policymakers should support social media addiction prevention through:

1. **Curriculum standards** that include digital literacy and healthy technology use as essential competencies.
2. **Funding** for school-based prevention programs and professional development for educators.
3. **Research support** for longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of prevention programs.
4. **Platform regulation** encouraging responsible design practices that minimize addictive features.
5. **Public awareness campaigns** that educate parents and communities about the risks of social media addiction.

Conclusion

Social media addiction poses a significant threat to the study habits and academic success of secondary school students. The evidence reviewed in this paper demonstrates that problematic social media use impairs academic outcomes through multiple mechanisms, including sleep disruption, psychological distress, time displacement, and attentional fragmentation. These effects are particularly concerning given the developmental vulnerability of adolescents and the escalating prevalence of problematic use in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Prevention programs that address these multiple pathways are urgently needed. Such programs should be comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, contextually grounded, and multi-stakeholder in approach. By integrating psychoeducation, sleep hygiene, digital literacy, and coping skills training, schools can help students develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for healthy technology use. By engaging families, communities, and policymakers, schools can create environments that support rather than undermine students' academic success. The challenge of social media addiction is not insurmountable. With evidence-based prevention programs and coordinated action across multiple levels of influence, it is possible to protect students' study habits and promote healthier relationships with technology. The stakes are high, not only for individual students' academic success but for the broader project of educating young people to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Declaration of Generative AI Use

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used large language models to assist with language editing, transcription and initial coding. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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