

นิพนธ์ต้นฉบับ

Original article

Effects of Social Media on Nursing Students in Private University

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Abstract

Social media has become an integral part of university students' daily lives, impacting their education, social interactions, and overall well-being. This descriptive research examines the effects of social media usage among first-year nursing students at a private university in Thailand, focusing on physical, mental, and social aspects. The study involved 121 participants, primarily female, aged between 18–20 years. Data was collected through questionnaires covering demographics, the effects of social media, and strategies for reducing its negative impact. The reliability of the questionnaire was verified using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a score of 0.80, confirming its validity. The results indicate that while social media facilitates learning and networking, excessive use contributes to adverse effects such as headaches, decreased concentration, and social media addiction. To mitigate these negative impacts, students suggested strategies such as engaging in offline activities, limiting screen time, reducing online shopping, and increasing the use of libraries for academic purposes. This study emphasizes the importance of balanced social media usage to maximize benefits while minimizing negative consequences. Recommendations include developing digital literacy programs and fostering collaboration between universities and parents to promote responsible social media use among nursing students.

Keywords: social media; nursing students; health impact; education; mitigation strategies

Introduction

Social media has played an important role nowadays, progressively embedding itself into daily life as a modern communication tool, spanning various facets such as education, professional communication, internet entertainment, and leisure activities.^(1,2)

A survey encompassing 15,318 Thai children aged 6–18 from across the nation revealed that a substantial proportion, 39% of them, spent 6 to 10 hours daily on the internet, primarily for leisure and entertainment purposes, constituting 67% of their online activity.⁽³⁾ Additionally, there has been a significant increase in the popularity of online social games among Thai children and youth aged 11 to 14 in Bangkok, with 53% engagement, up from 40% in 2005. These individuals devoted three hours daily to gaming, with monthly expenditures of averaging baht 537. Furthermore, studies revealed the prevalence of late-night social media usage among Thai youngsters, often congregating in internet cafes and bars.^(4,5)

The Coordinating Center for the Promotion and Protection of Children and Youth in the Use of Online Media, in collaboration with the Research Internet Foundation for the Development of Thai Studies, conducted a survey in 2020 involving 14,945 secondary school students aged 12 to 18. This study revealed alarming trends, such as a 43% decrease in interest in extracurricular activities, 13% experiencing strained family relationships, and 20% reporting diminished academic performance.⁽⁶⁾ Moreover, 45% of adolescents admitted to excessively playing video games, while 34% displayed irritability when instructed to cease such activities.

A study in Thailand in 2006 found that the

prevalence of online game addiction was 15%,⁽⁷⁾ which serves as evidence of the impact of social media usage on the younger generations' physical, mental, and social behavioral health. Therefore, the problem of social media addiction is associated with public health problems, especially among students who have easy access to social media, causing academic problems and physical and mental health problems. The problem persists in the younger generation of Thailand.⁽⁸⁾

This study aimed to investigate the consequences of social media utilization among first-year nursing students enrolled at a private university. Strategies for mitigating the repercussions of social media use among first-year nursing students were explored.

Methods

This study employed a survey to gather information from its participants. The data collection process involved 121 first-year nursing students from Metharath University, Thailand.

All the subjects of the study were acknowledged for the purpose of the study, with concerns given to publishing the data collected from the survey. The anonymity of the respondents was preserved in the data analysis. This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Shinawatra University (Approval Number: IRB23/21) on May 15, 2023, ensuring that all procedures adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving human participants.

This research employs a descriptive research approach. For data collection, the researcher utilized a questionnaire tool adapted from Srida T.⁽⁹⁾ Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated based on responses from 30 private university students,

resulting in a coefficient of 0.80. This score exceeded the threshold of 0.7, indicating the questionnaire's data collection tool's quality and reliability.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections: the general characteristics of the study population, the impact of social media usage, and an open-ended section exploring strategies to reduce its negative effects. The key variables included:

1. Length of using online media – the total duration students have been engaged with social media.
2. Time spent on social media – the daily amount of time students dedicate to social media platforms.
3. Frequency of social media use – how often students access and interact with social media.
4. Familiarity with websites – how students discover and become acquainted with different social media platforms.
5. Reasons for using social media – the motivations

behind students' engagement with social media.

6. Social networking experiences – the nature and quality of interactions students have on social media.

Additionally, the study examined solutions and strategies for responsible social media use.

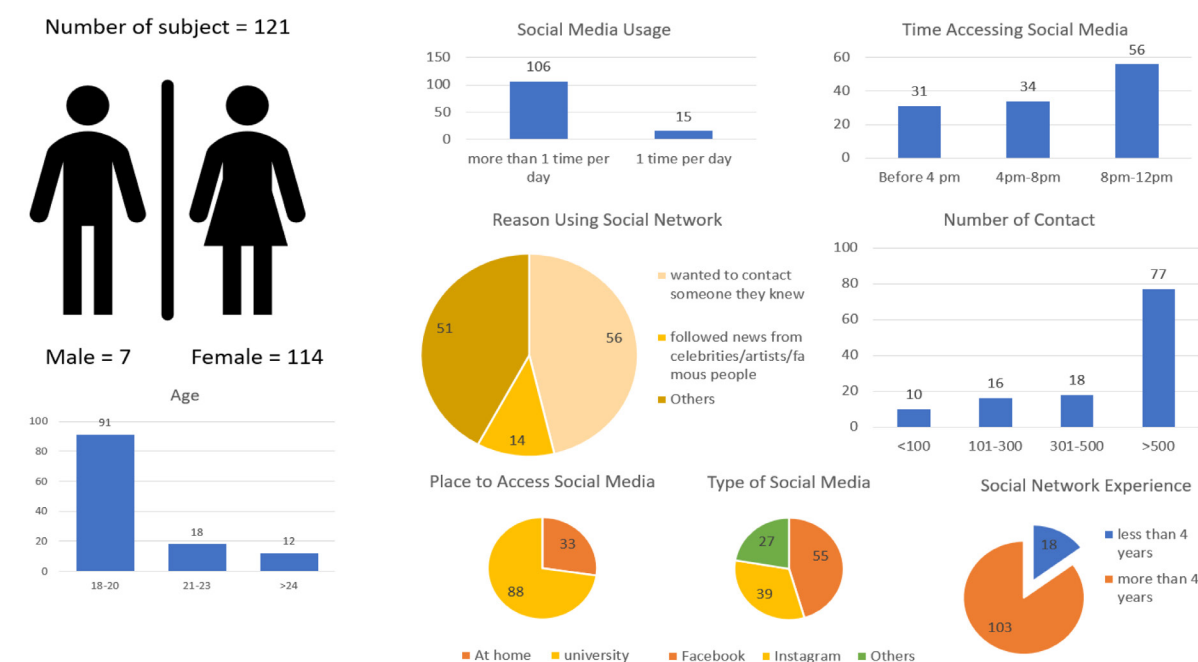
The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, presenting the results in terms of frequency and percentage.

Data on solutions for mitigating the consequences of social media usage, obtained through open-ended questionnaires, were summarized using descriptive statistics. The content collected was analyzed to identify common themes and their respective frequencies among the responses.

Results

The participants of this study included 114 females (93.3%) and 7 males (6.7%), as shown in Figure 1. Most of them were 18–20 years old (75.21%), followed by 21–23 (14.88%) and >24 (9.92%).

Figure 1 The demographic and the usage of social media



When it came to the frequency of social media use, an overwhelming 87.60% disclosed they accessed it more than once daily. Furthermore, the average score of the duration of daily social media use revealed that a significant portion, 71.10%, spent over 3 hours each time. This study also found that 72.70% of respondents accessed social media platforms while at their university.

In terms of the time of social media usage, 46.30% of the students used online social media between 8 p.m. – 12 a.m. followed by 28.10% who used it between 4 p.m. – 8 p.m., indicating the majority of the students used social media after their daily lectures. The predominant social media platform employed by students was Facebook, with a usage rate of 45.50%, followed by Instagram at 32.20%. This finding showed that Facebook and Instagram were the most preferred social media for the students, which were used mainly to connect with others and to follow trending events and people. Around 95.80% of the students were self-initiated users of online social networks. Examining the experience of using social networks, an overwhelming 85.80% of respondents had more than 4 years of experience in this domain, indicating the penetration of social media among youngsters, as early as they were studying in secondary schools.

Exploring the reasons behind social media usage, the study revealed that the majority, 46.30%, sought to connect with others, whether known or unknown individuals, while 11.60% primarily utilized social media to stay updated on news related to celebrities, artists, or famous personalities. In terms of friend counts on social networking sites, it was found that a significant 63.60% of participants had more than 501 friends on these platforms.

The study on the effects of social media, in terms of physical impact, it was observed that students experienced both positive and negative consequences (Table 1). The most prevalent positive aspect was using media to acquire additional knowledge, with an average score of 4.02. This was followed by skill development in social networking, with the average score of 3.71.

Other mental effects encompassed social media addiction, with an average score of 3.37, persistent thoughts about social media regardless of ongoing activities, average score 3.33, and exhibiting autistic symptoms related to social media usage, average score 3.17. Moreover, students reported experiencing depression when not using social media, with a mean score of 2.86, and making comparisons between their own lives and those of others on social media, with a mean score of 2.83. The outcome exhibited some negative impacts of social media on the students' daily lives. In terms of social impact, it was evident that students were conscious of the influence exerted by social media, the average score was 3.67. Social media also had an impact on their needs, with an average score of 3.40.

The social media platforms have ushered in a new era of connectivity and information dissemination, with both positive and negative impacts. However, the omnipresence of these platforms, coupled with the addictive nature of social media engagement, has raised concerns amongst the students as well. In response to these concerns, the students provide a series of strategies to regain control over their digital lives while simultaneously enriching their offline experiences (Table 2).

ผลกระทบต่อการใช้สื่อสังคมออนไลน์ของนักศึกษาพยาบาลศาสตร์ชั้นปีที่ 1 ของมหาวิทยาลัยเอกชน

Table 1 The effects on the usage of social media

Effects	Outcomes	
Physical effect	μ	σ
Use media to gain additional knowledge	4.02	0.95
Followed by skill development in social networking	3.71	0.88
Headaches after using social media	3.55	1.17
Lack of concentration in learning	3.23	1.37
Poor academic performance	2.79	1.49
Average	3.46	1.12
Mental effect	μ	σ
relieve stress	3.74	0.97
social media addiction	3.37	1.39
threat in various forms	3.40	1.15
thinking about social media regularly no matter what you are doing	3.33	1.36
have autistic symptoms using social media	3.17	1.58
There was depression when not using social media	2.86	1.66
comparing their own lives with others on social media	2.83	1.48
Average	3.64	1.56
Social effect	μ	σ
aware of the impact of social media	3.67	1.33
Social media on your needs	3.40	1.15
Average	3.26	1.41

Table 2 Solving problems affecting the use of social media

No	Item	Frequency
1.	Good use of free time, such as traveling with your family, hanging out with friends	35
2.	Find other activities to do during your spare time	35
3.	Change online shopping to shopping in-store	26
4.	Set a time limit for using social media	20
5.	Go to the library to read instead of reading on the internet all the time	5
Total		121

A total of 35 students mentioned “good use of free time”, “traveling with family”, and hanging out with friends” as approaches to curbing social media addiction. Activities such as traveling with family and spending quality time with friends were explored as avenues for fostering interpersonal relationships

and creating memorable experiences. Traveling with family offered educational and cultural enrichment while socializing with friends strengthened social bonds and emotional well-being. That was a good strategy for making good use of time as well. Another 35 students found “getting other activities to do during their spare time”, such as incorporating new hobbies and interests into their daily routines helped reduce reliance on social media. The strategy of diversified leisure activities not only distracted from social media but also facilitated personal growth and development.

The shift from online shopping to in-store purchases was being examined to reduce screen time associated with e-commerce via social media. Physical shopping experiences encouraged physical activity, face-to-face interactions, and exposure to real-world retail environments, thereby minimizing the time of using social media and minimizing the effects of being online for a long time. This strategy was adopted by 26 students.

Students found self-discipline was important in limiting the time spent on social media. The establishment of time limits for social media usage. It was proposed by 20 students as an effective self-regulation strategy. Another 5 students stated that utilizing the library instead of reading from the internet helped them to move away from social media. Promoting library usage as an alternative to constant online reading was recommended. Libraries offered access to diverse literature and resources, fostering intellectual curiosity while diminishing reliance on digital platforms for information consumption.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the significant impact of social media usage on first-year nursing students at a private university, revealing both beneficial and adverse effects across physical, mental, and social dimensions. These results align with existing literature, highlighting the dual nature of social media’s influence on students’ well-being and academic performance.

Physical Impact

Social media served as a valuable educational tool, allowing students to acquire additional knowledge and develop social networking skills. This is consistent with previous studies that emphasize the role of digital platforms in facilitating learning through interactive and accessible content.^(10,11) Social media content, such as short videos, podcasts, vodcasts, and lectures could be helpful in the learning process and help in developing communication competency.⁽¹²⁾ However, the excessive use of social media led to notable negative consequences, including headaches, lack of concentration, and declining academic performance. These adverse effects are supported by prior research indicating that prolonged screen exposure can result in physical discomfort and reduced cognitive function.^(13,14)

Mental Impact

The study revealed that students frequently turned to social media to alleviate stress, a finding consistent with⁽¹⁵⁾ who noted that social media could provide an escape from loneliness and anxiety. However, excessive reliance on these platforms increases the risk of addiction, constant preoccupation with social media, and symptoms resembling autism spectrum behaviors. Additionally, students reported experiencing depression

when unable to access social media and often engaged in social comparisons, which can contribute to decreased self-esteem and overall mental well-being. These results align with existing literature that associates high social media engagement with heightened stress levels and negative self-perception.⁽¹⁶⁾

Social Impact

Social media played a key role in shaping students' social interactions, as evidenced by the majority using these platforms to connect with others and stay informed about current events. While this fosters communication and networking, it also raises concerns about social isolation and dependency on virtual relationships. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies, where excessive social media usage was linked to reduced participation in extracurricular activities and strained familial relationships.⁽⁶⁾

Strategies for Mitigation

The study identified several strategies students adopted to mitigate the negative effects of social media usage. The most frequently mentioned approach was engaging in alternative activities, such as spending quality time with family and friends or pursuing new hobbies. This strategy aligns with prior recommendations emphasizing the importance of offline engagement to counteract excessive digital exposure.⁽⁸⁾ Additionally, reducing online shopping, setting time limits for social media use, and increasing library visits for academic purposes were identified as effective measures. These findings suggest that self-regulation and structured offline activities play crucial roles in maintaining a healthy balance between digital and real-world interactions.

Implication and recommendation for further study

Based on these findings, universities should implement educational programs that promote responsible social media use among students. These programs should focus on digital literacy, time management, and awareness of the psychological effects associated with excessive social media engagement. Collaboration between academic institutions, parents, and students is essential to developing intervention strategies that encourage a balanced approach to social media consumption. Furthermore, universities should provide alternative recreational and academic resources, such as study groups, mental health counseling, and organized extracurricular activities, to reduce students' dependence on digital platforms.

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ผลกระทบต่อการใช้อีเลิร์นนิ่งออนไลน์ของนักศึกษาพยาบาลศาสตร์ชั้นปีที่ 1 ของมหาวิทยาลัยเอกชน

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บทคัดย่อ: อีเลิร์นนิ่งออนไลน์กลายเป็นส่วนสำคัญในชีวิตประจำวันของนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัย โดยส่งผลกระทบต่อการเรียน การเข้าถึง และสุขภาพโดยรวม การศึกษานี้เป็นการวิจัยเชิงพรรณนา มุ่งเน้นศึกษาผลกระทบของการใช้อีเลิร์นนิ่งออนไลน์ของนักศึกษาพยาบาลชั้นปีที่ 1 มหาวิทยาลัยเอกชนในประเทศไทย โดยศึกษาด้านผลกระทบทางร่างกาย จิตใจ และสังคม ผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยจำนวน 121 คน ส่วนใหญ่เป็นเพศหญิง อายุระหว่าง 18-20 ปี การเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลใช้แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับข้อมูลประชากร ผลกระทบของอีเลิร์นนิ่งออนไลน์ และกลยุทธ์เพื่อลดผลกระทบ ทดสอบคุณภาพของแบบสอบถามโดยการคำนวณค่า Cronbach's alpha coefficient จากนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยเอกชนแห่งหนึ่งจำนวน 30 คน ได้ 0.80 ผลการศึกษาพบว่า การใช้อีเลิร์นนิ่งออนไลน์มีผลกระทบต่อทั้งทางร่างกาย จิตใจและสังคมและมีทั้งข้อดีและข้อเสีย ผลกระทบด้านดีได้แก่ ได้ข้อมูล และได้เรียนรู้เพิ่มขึ้นอีเลิร์นนิ่งออนไลน์ตอบสนองต่อความต้องการและมีการสร้างเครือข่าย และข้อเสียได้แก่ อาการปวดศีรษะ สมาธิลดลง และอาการเสพติดอีเลิร์นนิ่งออนไลน์ นักศึกษาแนะนำในการใช้กลยุทธ์ต่างๆ เพื่อลดผลกระทบจากอีเลิร์นนิ่งออนไลน์ได้แก่ การใช้เวลาคุณภาพร่วมกับครอบครัวและเพื่อน การลดการช้อปปิ้งออนไลน์ การจำกัดเวลาใช้น้ำจืดโทรศัพท์หรือหน้าจอคอมพิวเตอร์ และการใช้ห้องสมุดเพื่อศึกษามากขึ้น เพื่อบรรเทาผลกระทบที่เกิดขึ้น การศึกษานี้เน้นย้ำถึงความสำคัญของการใช้อีเลิร์นนิ่งออนไลน์อย่างสมดุล เพื่อเพิ่มประโยชน์สูงสุดและลดผลกระทบด้านลบ ข้อเสนอแนะควรจะมีการพัฒนาโปรแกรมการเรียนรู้เท่าทันสื่อดิจิทัลแก่นักศึกษา และควรสร้างความร่วมมือระหว่างมหาวิทยาลัยและผู้ปกครองเพื่อส่งเสริมการใช้อีเลิร์นนิ่งออนไลน์ของนักศึกษาอย่างมีความรับผิดชอบ

คำสำคัญ: อีเลิร์นนิ่งออนไลน์; นักศึกษาพยาบาล; ผลกระทบต่อสุขภาพ; การศึกษา; กลยุทธ์ลดผลกระทบ