

The Impact of Social Media On Students In Khanh Hoa Province, Vietnam: Current Situation And Solutions

Lam Thi Loan¹

{lamthiloan@ukh.edu.vn¹}

University of Khanh Hoa, Vietnam¹

Abstract. This paper addresses the dual impact of social media on students in Khanh Hoa, based on a survey of 453 students, 46 lecturers, and 04 student affairs staff. The results indicate that alongside positive benefits such as entertainment, social connection, and academic support, social media is causing serious adverse consequences, including loss of focus, academic procrastination, and negative effects on mental health. The study proposes a comprehensive system of solutions focusing on developing students' digital literacy skills, combined with the guiding role of educational institutions, the supportive companionship of families, and the management responsibilities of local authorities.

Keywords: Social media, Khanh Hoa students, consequences, solutions, digital skills

1 Introduction

The explosion of social media over the past decade has brought profound changes to social life, especially among the youth – the most active and responsive demographic to digital platforms [1], [2], [3]. In Khanh Hoa Province, Vietnam – a higher education hub in the South-Central region with institutions such as Nha Trang University, University of Khanh Hoa, Tourism College, and numerous other colleges and branch campuses – the student community is not only large but also highly diverse, hailing from various regions. Consequently, social media has become an essential tool for their connection, learning, and entertainment. However, alongside its undeniable benefits, uncontrolled use of social media also harbors unpredictable adverse consequences for students' mental health, academic performance, and social life [4], [5], [6]. Given this reality, this study was conducted to comprehensively analyze the current state of social media usage, delineate both positive and negative consequences, and thereby build a feasible system of solutions to help students in Khanh Hoa become smart digital citizens capable of effectively and safely harnessing the benefits of social media.

1.1 Social Media

In their foundational work on social media, scholars [3] describe social network sites as online platforms that enable users to create public or semi-public profiles within a defined system, connect with other users, and explore both their own networks and those of others. Furthermore,

[4] conceptualize social media as a group of Internet-based applications built upon the principles of Web 2.0, which support the creation and dissemination of user-generated content. In this study, social media is understood as an online service platform, supported by Web 2.0 technologies and mobile applications, that allows individuals and organizations to establish a digital identity through personal profiles, develop and maintain social networks, and actively participate in the creation, sharing, and exchange of various forms of user-generated content (such as text, images, videos, and audio) within either open or restricted environments.

Within the context of this research on Khanh Hoa students' use of social media, digital skills are defined as a broad set of competencies that extend beyond basic technical abilities. These include self-regulation, social awareness, and critical thinking in digital environments [8], [9], and encompass technical, cognitive, managerial, as well as communication and social skills. Nevertheless, the use of social media may also lead to various consequences. In this study, the term “consequences” refers to the full range of outcomes—both intended and unintended, as well as positive and negative—that result from students’ social media usage and influence different aspects of their academic and personal lives. These consequences are categorized into positive and negative dimensions. Importantly, this research does not merely identify these effects but seeks to examine the causal relationships between patterns of social media use and their outcomes, thereby providing a foundation for the development of appropriate and effective solutions.

2 Research Method

The primary method employed in this study was quantitative research using a designed questionnaire [7]. The survey instrument included closed-ended questions and Likert scales to collect quantitative data. The research sample was selected using probability sampling to ensure representativeness of students in Khanh Hoa. The survey was conducted simultaneously through both online and offline channels to maximize reach. The data obtained from the questionnaire was highly quantitative, allowing for measurement and comparison of indicators. This quantitative data provided a solid basis for drawing scientific conclusions and making appropriate recommendations. Qualitative information collected from the open questions was also quantified for statistical analysis. The data were processed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Differences in perceptions among surveyed groups were compared. Results from various data sources were synthesized to provide a comprehensive overview. The consistency and contradictions within research findings were assessed. Multifaceted opinions from students, lecturers, and student affairs staff were aggregated. Major trends from the analyzed data were generalized.

3 Results

A total of 453 students from Khanh Hoa province participated in the survey, from various colleges and universities within the province. 440 students answered the question "Which university are you from?": 47.7% (210 students) were from University of Khanh Hoa, 33.2% (146 students) from Nha Trang Tourism College, 9.8% (43 students) from Nha Trang University, 2.5% (11 students) from Pacific University, 2.3% (10 students) from Nha Trang College of Engineering and Technology, with the remaining students from the Naval Academy, Central Preschool College No. 2, and Khanh Hoa Medical College (see Figure 1). Students used a variety of social media platforms. A large majority, 86.3%, used Facebook, 74.6% used TikTok, 68.7% used Zalo, and 42.6% used Instagram (see Figure 1).

Which university are you from?

440 responses

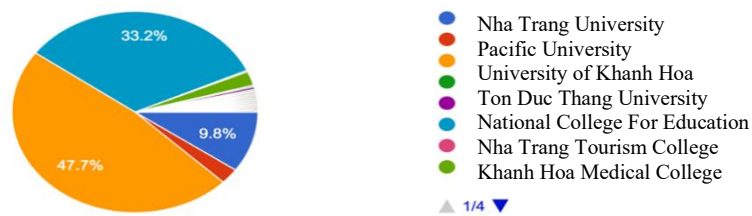


Figure 1. Students Studying in Khanh Hoa Province

Which social media do you frequently use (multiple choices allowed)

453 responses

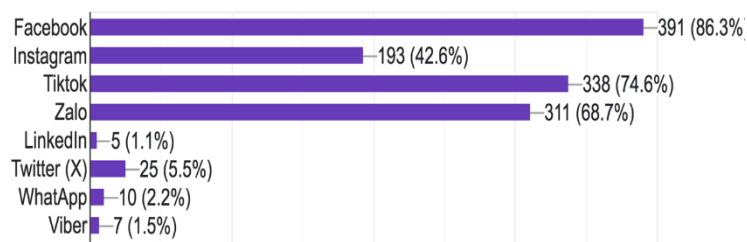


Figure 2. The Use of Social Media

Table 1. Students' responses of the positive impact of social media

No	Statement on the positive impacts of social media	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
		Numbers of responses	Percentage %	Numbers of responses	Percentage %	Numbers of responses	Percentage %	Numbers of responses	Percentage %	Numbers of responses	Percentage %
1	Social media helps me easily connect with friends and family.	5	1.1%	9	2.0%	25	5.5%	218	48.1%	196	43.3%
2	Social media helps me easily exchange coursework and form online study groups.	10	2.2%	25	5.5%	85	18.8%	210	46.4%	123	27.2%
3	Social media supports my studies (through study groups, forums).	8	1.8%	22	4.9%	80	17.7%	215	47.5%	128	28.3%
4	I learn many new skills through tutorial videos.	7	1.5%	20	4.4%	75	16.6%	220	48.6%	131	28.9%

5	Social media helps me expand my network and connect professionally.	15	3.3%	30	6.6%	100	22.1%	195	43.0%	113	24.9%
6	Social media provides me with inspiration and ideas for projects.	12	2.6%	28	6.2%	95	21.0%	200	44.2%	118	26.0%
7	Social media is a channel for fast information and news updates.	4	0.9%	10	2.2%	35	7.7%	230	50.8%	174	38.4%
8	I can follow experts to update my professional knowledge.	9	2.0%	21	4.6%	89	19.6%	205	45.3%	129	28.5%
9	Social media helps me relax and entertain effectively after studying.	3	0.7%	5	1.1%	20	4.4%	190	41.9%	235	51.9%

10	Social media helps me discover new cultures and trends.	6	1.3%	15	3.3%	50	11.0%	225	49.7%	157	34.7%
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Across all aspects, the percentage of students responding "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" was very low (below 7%). This confirms a broad consensus on the positive aspects brought by social media. Students clearly recognize and highly value the diverse contributions of social media, from basic needs like entertainment and connection to higher goals such as learning, skill development, and knowledge expansion. This positive perspective underscores the position of social media as an integral part of the life and studies of the younger generation.

Table 2. Students' responses of the negative impact of social media

No	Statement on the negative impacts of social media	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
		Numbers of responses	Percentage %	Numbers of responses	Percentage %	Numbers of responses	Percentage %	Numbers of responses	Percentage %	Numbers of responses	Percentage %
1	Social media makes me easily lose focus while studying/working.	18	4.0%	40	8.8%	92	20.3%	188	41.5%	115	25.4%
2	I often procrastinate on studying/completing assignments to use social media.	15	3.3%	42	9.3%	85	18.8%	195	43.0%	116	25.6%
3	I feel anxious and restless when unable to	25	5.5%	61	13.5%	145	32.0%	155	34.2%	67	14.8%

	use social media.										
4	Heavy social media use negatively affects my sleep quality.	22	4.9%	55	12.1%	120	26.5%	175	38.6%	81	17.9%
5	I often compare myself to the "perfect" lives of others on social media.	28	6.2%	50	11.0%	110	24.3%	165	36.4%	100	22.1%
6	I feel pressured to create a beautiful image on social media.	30	6.6%	65	14.3%	125	27.6%	150	33.1%	83	18.3%
7	I have encountered negative information, fake news, or been bullied on social media.	20	4.4%	45	9.9%	98	21.6%	185	40.8%	105	23.2%
8	I find it difficult to verify the reliability of information on social media.	35	7.7%	70	15.5%	140	30.9%	135	29.8%	73	16.1%
9	Using social media reduces time for outdoor	28	6.2%	52	11.5%	105	23.2%	170	37.5%	98	21.6%

	activities and face-to-face communication.										
10	I notice a decline in my/my friends' face-to-face communication skills.	32	7.1%	60	13.2 %	130	28.7 %	160	35.3 %	71	15.7 %
11	I am easily influenced by trends and fads on social media without much selectivity.	38	8.4%	75	16.6 %	145	32.0 %	130	28.7 %	65	14.3 %
12	I find it hard to express differing personal opinions on social media.	40	8.8%	80	17.7 %	150	33.1 %	120	26.5 %	63	13.9 %
13	Social media use makes me sit for too long, with little physical activity.	25	5.5%	50	11.0 %	100	22.1 %	180	39.7 %	98	21.6 %
14	I experience eye problems (eyestrain, eye pain, dry eyes) from prolonged screen time.	20	4.4%	45	9.9%	90	19.9 %	190	41.9 %	108	23.8 %

15	I tend to spend more on products advertised on social media.	45	9.9%	85	18.8%	155	34.2%	110	24.3%	58	12.8%
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From Table 2, several important observations can be drawn regarding students' perspectives on the negative impacts of social media. The most evident impact is on academic performance and time management, followed by profound effects on mental health and self-image, then on declining physical health and real-world activities, and finally, challenges in information and behavior control. Data from the Table 2 shows that students demonstrate very clear and comprehensive awareness of most downsides of social media, from its effects on studies, mental and physical health, to social skills and information literacy. However, this awareness does not seem sufficient to change behavior, as issues of distraction and procrastination remain at very high levels. Forty six (46) lecturers from colleges and universities in Khanh Hoa province participated in the survey: 37% (17 lecturers) from Khanh Hoa University, 28.3% (13) from Nha Trang Tourism College, 15.2% (7) from Nha Trang University, 8.7% (4) from Pacific University, 6.5% (3) from Nha Trang College of Engineering and Technology, with the remainder from Central Preschool College No. 2. Regarding teaching experience: 58.7% (27 lecturers) had over 10 years, 19.6% (9) had 5-10 years, and 21.7% (10) had less than 5 years. Educational levels: 13% (6) held a Bachelor's degree, 69.6% (32) a Master's degree, 8.7% (4) a Ph.D., 2.2% (1) an Assoc. Prof., and 6.5% (3) a Professor.

Table 3. Lecturers' responses of issues related to social media

No.	Statement on negative social media impacts	Very rarely		Rarely		Occasionally		Frequently		Very frequently	
		Numbers of responses	Percentage %	Numbers of responses	Percentage %	Numbers of responses	Percentage %	Numbers of responses	Percentage %	Numbers of responses	Percentage %
1	Students lose focus in class due to using social media	2	4.3%	5	10.9%	15	32.6%	18	39.1%	6	13.0%
2	Conflicts and misunderstandings among students originate from social media.	12	26.1%	16	34.8%	14	30.4%	3	6.5%	1	2.2%

3	Students share or believe in misleading/false information.	3	6.5%	8	17.4%	20	43.5%	13	28.3%	2	4.3%
4	Students use social media to cheat in exams/assignments.	4	8.7%	10	21.7%	19	41.3%	11	23.9%	2	4.3%
5	Students criticize/complain about lecturers on social media.	15	32.6%	17	37.0%	11	23.9%	2	4.3%	1	2.2%

From Table 3, several key observations can be made about lecturers' perspectives on issues arising from social media. The most prominent issue noted by lecturers, at 52.1% (combined "Frequently" and "Very Frequently"), is loss of concentration during class. Issues related to ethics and information literacy were noted at an alarming level: "Students share or believe in misinformation/fake news" (71.8% combined "Occasionally" to "Very Frequently") and "Use social media to cheat in exams/assignments" (65.2% combined). Data from the Table 3 shows that lecturers focus their concerns on the direct consequences of social media on learning quality and academic integrity, as well as students' information literacy. Meanwhile, impacts on social aspects and relationships (conflicts, complaints) do not appear to be prominent concerns in their observations.

According to you, what is the biggest challenge in classroom management and teaching that has arisen from students' use of social media?

Theo Thầy/Cô, việc sinh viên sử dụng MXH đã tạo ra thách thức lớn nhất nào trong công tác quản lý lớp học và đào tạo?
46 responses

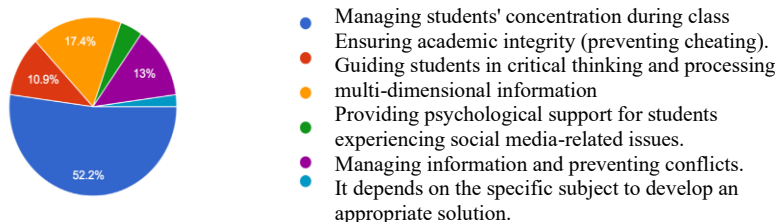


Figure 3. Challenges in using Social Media

The research (see Figure 3) also indicates significant challenges in classroom management and training resulting from students' social media use. The greatest challenge is managing student focus during class at 52.2% (24 lecturers); followed by guiding students in critical thinking and

processing multifaceted information at 17.4% (8 lecturers); managing information and preventing conflicts/communication crises originating from social media at 13% (6 lecturers); ensuring academic integrity (preventing cheating) at 10.9% (5 lecturers); and finally, supporting students with psychological issues related to social media at 4.3% (2 lecturers).

A questionnaire was also delivered to 04 direct student affairs staff; 25% (1 staff) had over 7 years of experience, 25% (1) had 3 to 7 years, and 50% (2) had under 3 years. According to their feedback, specific challenges faced in managing students under the influence of social media were prominent as follows: Challenges at an alarming level (High & Very High): Three issues were rated as relating to the most profound and difficult-to-control impacts of social media: Managing students' mental life and psychological health. Second, guiding students' ideology and lifestyle. Third, controlling information and preventing fake/harmful news. Challenges at a significant level relate directly to discipline and campus security: first, managing academic discipline and order (absences, lack of focus); second, managing students' online ethical behaviour; third, ensuring information security and safety. This can be seen that, social media not only impacts students but also poses severe and novel challenges for the management staff. The core difficulties lie in intangible and systemic issues such as mental health, ideological guidance, and information control.

4 Discussion

Survey results from the three target groups – students, lecturers, and student affairs staff – paint a comprehensive, nuanced picture of the consequences of social media use within the student community in Khanh Hoa. There is a high degree of consensus in recognizing both positive and negative aspects, while each perspective also offers distinct emphases. On the positive side, both students and lecturers acknowledge social media as a valuable supportive tool. Students most highly value its role in entertainment/relaxation (93.8% agree) and connecting with friends and family (91.4% agree), seen as the two most core and practical benefits. Furthermore, social media also affirms its value in learning and self-development, with a majority of students recognizing its ability to provide quick information (89.2%), support studies (75.8%), and develop new skills (77.5%). Lecturers, through observation, also acknowledge the usefulness of social media in exchanging coursework and forming study groups.

However, the negative consequences are of particular concern to all three groups, with consensus at an alarming level. Students, as direct users, are acutely aware of these downsides. They admit social media is a primary cause of distraction in studies (66.9% combined Agree/Strongly Agree) and procrastination habits (68.6%). This aligns perfectly with lecturers' observations, as 52.1% of them reported that students using social media causing distraction in class occurs frequently. The perspective from management staff reinforces this, with 75% rating the impact of social media on academic results as high to very high. Regarding mental health, although nearly half of the students admit to issues like self-comparison (58.5%), pressure to create an image (51.4%), and anxiety when not using social media (49.0%), the proportion choosing "Neutral" for psychological issues is quite high (32.0%). This suggests a segment of students may not fully recognize or are reluctant to acknowledge the link between social media and their mental health. In contrast, management staff have a very clear view, with 75% rating the impact on mental health as high to very high, indicating they observe negative manifestations from students that the students themselves may not deeply perceive.

Another point of consensus is concern over harmful and toxic information. 64% of students have encountered such information, and 71.8% of lecturers assessed this as occurring from "Occasionally" upwards. Management staff also ranked this as having a high to very high impact (75%). This reflects a common challenge in equipping students with defensive skills and information processing capabilities. Data from all three groups – students, lecturers, and student affairs staff – confirms that social media is seen as a double-edged sword. While leveraging its immense benefits for connection and learning, students in Khanh Hoa are facing profound consequences on academic performance, mental health, and awareness. The gap between students' self-awareness and the observations from lecturers and management (particularly regarding mental health) underscores the necessity for intervention programs that go beyond raising awareness, to providing concrete tools and skills enabling students to use social media proactively, healthily, and safely, thereby transforming challenges into development opportunities.

To mitigate the negative consequences of social media, each student needs to proactively enhance their awareness and digital skills [10], [11], [12], [13] – this is considered the foundational and most important solution. Specifically, students should cultivate purposeful social media habits by establishing personal rules, such as not using social media during study hours, turning off notifications when focus is needed, and using timer tools to control usage time – this directly addresses the prevalent issues of procrastination and distraction. Simultaneously, actively "cleaning" the online environment by filtering out negative accounts and actively following educational channels will help minimize exposure to harmful information. Equally important, students need to practice information critical thinking skills and proactively seek psychological support when needed, thereby equipping themselves to cope with difficulties in verifying information and mental health issues.

For educational institutions, guidance and support through education and counseling play a pivotal role in mitigating the negative impacts of social media. The key solution is to integrate "Digital Skills Education" as a formal or compulsory extracurricular module, with practical topics such as identifying fake news, information safety, and protecting mental health [2], [14], [15] – addressing the urgent need highlighted by 71.8% of lecturers noting students believe misinformation and management staff rating the impact on mental health as high. Concurrently, it is essential to enhance the capacity and widely promote campus psychological counseling services, helping to address the deep concerns about the increasingly prevalent mental health issues among students.

The role of families in accompanying and caring for students is crucial to help them balance virtual and real-life. Firstly, parents should establish open and understanding communication by listening and talking about their children's online experiences without judgment, while guiding them to use social media intelligently rather than imposing bans [8], [12]. This approach helps students relieve psychological pressure and reduce dependence on the virtual world. Additionally, families should encourage and facilitate student participation in extracurricular activities, sports, and volunteering, helping to improve physical health and enhance face-to-face communication skills.

For society and local authorities, the key responsibility is management and communication to establish a safe and healthy online environment for youth. Solutions should be implemented synchronously [9]. First, intensify communication campaigns to enhance online culture through

close coordination between press agencies, the Youth Union, and the Student Association. These campaigns should be deployed directly on social media platforms with specific hashtags, focusing on content combating fake news, preventing cyberbullying, and guiding effective usage skills, aiming to create a wave spreading positive values to counter harmful information. Simultaneously, regularly organize creative and practical activities such as entrepreneurship competitions, hackathons, job fairs, and skills festivals through collaboration between the province and universities. These activities not only attract young people but also help transform negative energy from social media into positive self-development motivation, while reducing unproductive online time and creating a healthy outlet for students.

5 Conclusion

The research "The impact of social media on students in Khanh Hoa Province, Vietnam: Current situation and solutions" has provided a comprehensive and multifaceted view of the state of social media use by analyzing data from students, lecturers, and student affairs staff themselves. It can be confirmed that social media has become an inseparable part of students' lives, offering great opportunities but also posing significant challenges.

From the above analyses, it is evident that addressing negative issues does not lie in prohibition or restricting access, but rather in transforming awareness into concrete action through a synchronized system of solutions. The key solution must start with equipping students with skills – including time management, information evaluation, mental health protection, and using social media for academic purposes. The proactive role of educational institutions in integrating digital skills education into training programs, the understanding companionship of families, and a healthy online environment from the community will be the solid pillars to realize this goal. Social media in itself is neither inherently good nor bad; its value is determined by how each individual uses it. For students in Khanh Hoa, shifting from a passive to an active stance, transforming social media into a tool serving academic and personal development, is the key to harnessing its opportunities and overcoming its challenges in the digital era.

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