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Social Media Use, Student Personality, Social Adjustment and Academic Performance Among Secondary School Students: A Comparative Study of Government and Private Schools in Jaipur District

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Abstract

This study investigates the complex relationships among social media use, student personality traits, social adjustment, and academic performance among secondary school students in Jaipur District, comparing government and private school sectors. Adopting an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, a quantitative survey was conducted with 400 secondary school students (equally stratified across government and private schools, and across gender), complemented by qualitative semi-structured interviews with 20 purposively selected students. Social media engagement was operationalised through daily duration and primary purpose of use. Student personality was assessed using the standardised High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ), measuring 14 primary personality factors; social adjustment was measured via the Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS), and academic performance was evaluated through standardised institutional records. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple regression analysis.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Digital technology and social media platforms have fundamentally reorganised the adolescent developmental landscape, transforming how secondary school students communicate, learn, socialise, and construct personal identities. Today's youth navigate an omnipresent digital ecosystem characterised by instant messaging, video sharing, social networking, and collaborative online platforms. While these digital tools provide unprecedented access to learning materials, peer support, and educational content, they simultaneously introduce pervasive distractions, notifications, algorithmic engagement loops, and pressures of digital social comparison. Consequently, the critical inquiry in contemporary educational research is not whether adolescents use social media, but how their engagement patterns—shaped by individual personality predispositions and institutional environments—relate to their social adjustment and academic achievement.

Adolescence represents a critical period of biopsychosocial maturation, identity formation, and personality consolidation. In psychological theory, personality traits represent enduring patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that guide an individual's interaction with the environment. In the context of digital technology, a student's personality functions as an internal psychological filter: traits such as emotional stability, conscientiousness, and self-control can foster disciplined, purposeful, and educational media use, whereas traits such as impulsivity, excitability, and chronic tension may predispose students to problematic use, procrastination, and vulnerability to digital distractions. The conceptual framework of this study conceptualizes social media use as a multidimensional independent construct (encompassing duration, intensity, and purpose), student personality (assessed across the 14 standardized dimensions of Cattell's High School Personality Questionnaire) and social adjustment (interpersonal and relational adaptation) as crucial mediating and contextual factors, and academic performance as the primary scholastic outcome.

Jaipur District provides a particularly compelling empirical setting for this comparative investigation. As a rapidly growing educational hub experiencing accelerated digital penetration, Jaipur contains diverse student populations distributed across government and private secondary schools. These two institutional sectors present distinct socio-economic realities, varying access to digital infrastructure, different parental guidance patterns, and divergent institutional counselling frameworks. A rigorous comparative investigation across both school sectors allows researchers and educators to discern the degree to which personality dimensions and institutional environments interact with digital media habits to shape adolescent outcomes.

1.1 Research Problem and Objectives

The study is guided by the following specific objectives:

- To assess the patterns, duration, and primary purposes of social media use among secondary school students in Jaipur District.
- To examine the differences in social media exposure between students attending government and private secondary schools.
- To evaluate the relationship between levels of social media exposure and students' academic performance.
- To assess the personality profiles of secondary school students using Cattell's High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ) across different levels of social media use.
- To compare the personality dimensions of secondary school students across government and private school sectors.
- To investigate the relationship between social media exposure and students' social adjustment.
- To determine the extent to which student personality traits, self-regulation, social media duration, and distraction predict academic performance.
- To formulate evidence-based educational and counselling recommendations for schools, teachers, and parents.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Social Media and Adolescent Academic Achievement

Contemporary research on adolescent media engagement has largely abandoned simplistic dichotomy models in favor of conditional, non-linear frameworks. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) emphasized that Web 2.0 applications thrive on interactive participation and user-generated content, which can facilitate collaborative peer learning and cognitive expansion when utilized purposefully. However, educational researchers have identified substantial risks associated with high-intensity, unregulated media engagement, including divided attention, fragmented cognitive processing, task-switching penalties, and chronic academic procrastination. Studies in Indian metropolitan and semi-urban settings demonstrate that secondary students frequently engage in late-night screen activity, leading to sleep deprivation, compromised daytime alertness, and subsequent drops in scholastic attainment.

2.2 Student Personality and Digital Media Engagement

Personality theory posits that individual differences in cognitive, affective, and behavioural tendencies significantly dictate media selection, consumption intensity, and coping mechanisms. In adolescent research, Raymond B. Cattell's 14-factor personality model, operationalised via the High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ), provides an extensive diagnostic taxonomy of adolescent personality dimensions. Key factors identified in prior literature include:

- Emotional Stability vs. Reactivity (Factor C): Emotionally mature and stable students tend to manage academic stressors effectively and resist emotional escapism via social media, whereas emotionally reactive students often resort to digital platforms as maladaptive coping mechanisms.
- Conscientiousness and Superego Strength (Factor G): Highly conscientious and rule-bound students prioritize academic duties, set firm boundaries around screen time,

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and utilize digital resources primarily for goal-oriented learning.

- Social Boldness and Extraversion (Factors A and H): Outgoing and socially bold adolescents frequently utilize social media to expand peer networks, but may also experience elevated peer-conformity pressures and fear of missing out (FOMO).
- Self-Control and Self-Sentiment Integration (Factor Q3): High self-concept control empowers students to maintain focus, resist notification-driven interruptions, and implement disciplined study schedules.
- Ergic Tension and Anxiety (Factor Q4): High levels of internal tension and drive-restlessness are strongly associated with habitual checking, compulsive scrolling, and heightened vulnerability to digital addiction.

2.3 Social Adjustment and Psychological Well-Being

Adolescent social adjustment—defined as the capacity to establish harmonious peer relationships, maintain healthy family communication, and adapt to school social norms—is profoundly influenced by digital interactions. As measured by standardized instruments such as the Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS; Sinha & Singh, 2005/2007), social adjustment requires direct, empathetic interpersonal contact. When virtual interactions supplant face-to-face engagements, adolescents may experience diminished interpersonal empathy, increased social alienation, and heightened susceptibility to cyber-victimization or peer exclusion. Clinical literature from specialized technology-addiction centers in India, such as the SHUT (Service for Healthy Use of Technology) Clinic at NIMHANS (Travasso, 2014), underscores that excessive digital consumption often co-occurs with social withdrawal, mood volatility, and personality maladjustment.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a pragmatic explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. In the primary quantitative phase, a structured cross-sectional survey mapped social media usage patterns, personality profiles, social adjustment levels, and academic records across 400 secondary school students. In the subsequent qualitative phase, 20 students (10 from government schools and 10 from private schools) were purposively selected for in-depth semi-structured interviews to provide experiential context and validate the quantitative patterns.

3.2 Population and Sampling Framework

The target population comprised secondary school students (Grades IX and X) enrolled in recognized schools within the urban and peri-urban limits of Jaipur District. A multi-stage stratified random sampling technique was utilized to ensure balanced representation across school sector and gender. As presented in Table 1, the quantitative sample consisted of 400 students: 200 from government secondary schools and 200 from private secondary schools, with equal representation of 100 male and 100 female students within each institutional sector.

Table 1: Stratified Sample Distribution by School Type and Gender

School Type	Male (n)	Female (n)	Total (N)	Percentage (%)
Government Schools	100	100	200	50.0%
Private Schools	100	100	200	50.0%
Total	200	200	400	100.0%

3.3 Measures and Instrumentation

Four standardized and researcher-developed instruments were utilized:

1. Researcher-Developed Social Media Usage Scale: A comprehensive questionnaire evaluating daily usage duration (categorized as Low: <1 hour/day; Moderate: 1–3 hours/day; High: >3 hours/day), platform preferences, access modalities, and primary purpose of use (Educational, Entertainment, Social Networking, Gaming/Other). Content validity was established via expert review, and test-retest reliability was r = .86.
2. High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ): Developed by R. B. Cattell and M. D. L. Cattell (adapted for Indian conditions by S. D. Kapoor, National Psychological Corporation). The HSPQ evaluates 14 discrete, functionally independent, bipolar personality factors in adolescents aged 12–18 years:

- Factor A (Reserved vs. Warmhearted)
- Factor B (Concrete Thinking vs. Abstract Intelligence)
- Factor C (Affected by Feelings vs. Emotionally Stable)
- Factor D (Phlegmatic vs. Excitable)
- Factor E (Submissive vs. Dominant)
- Factor F (Sober vs. Enthusiastic / Surgent)
- Factor G (Expedient vs. Conscientious / Rule-bound)
- Factor H (Shy vs. Socially Bold)
- Factor I (Tough-minded vs. Tender-minded)
- Factor J (Zestful vs. Individualistic)
- Factor O (Self-Assured vs. Apprehensive / Guilt-prone)
- Factor Q2 (Group-dependent vs. Self-Sufficient)
- Factor Q3 (Undisciplined Self-Conflict vs. High Self-Control)
- Factor Q4 (Relaxed vs. Tense / Driven) Raw scores are converted into standardized sten scores (ranging from 1 to 10, mean = 5.5, SD = 1.5).

3. Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS): Developed by A. K. P. Sinha and R. P. Singh (2005/2007), measuring Social, Emotional, and Educational adjustment through 60 standardized items, with higher scores indicating superior adjustment.
4. Academic Performance Records: Aggregated percentage marks obtained by students in cumulative terminal examinations across core scholastic subjects, obtained from official school records.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were processed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) were calculated. Inferential analyses included independent-

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samples t-tests to evaluate differences between school sectors and genders, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with Tukey's post-hoc tests to assess variance across social media usage tiers, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients to determine bivariate associations, and stepwise multiple regression analysis to identify the primary predictors of academic achievement.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Social Media Usage Patterns and Purposes

Analysis of usage purpose revealed a dual orientation among secondary school students. Across the total sample, educational use was the single largest primary purpose (36.25%, n = 145), closely followed by entertainment (35.00%, n = 140), social networking (21.25%, n = 85), and gaming/miscellaneous activities (7.50%, n = 30).

Table 2: Primary Purpose of Social Media Use by School Sector

Primary Purpose	Government School (%)	Private School (%)	Total N	Total (%)
Educational Use	42.5%	30.0%	145	36.25%
Entertainment	27.5%	42.5%	140	35.00%
Social Networking	20.0%	22.5%	85	21.25%
Gaming / Other	10.0%	5.0%	30	7.50%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	400	100.0%

Distinct sectoral differences emerged: government school students reported significantly higher educational orientation (42.5% vs. 30.0%), whereas private school students exhibited a strong entertainment orientation (42.5% vs. 27.5%). In terms of duration, 25.0% (n = 100) were classified as low users (<1 hr/day), 45.0% (n = 180) as moderate users (1–3 hrs/day), and 30.0% (n = 120) as high users (>3 hrs/day).

4.2 Academic Achievement Across Usage Levels

Academic performance exhibited a distinct curvilinear, non-monotonic profile across usage groups.

Table 3: Academic Achievement Across Social Media Usage Levels

Usage Level	N	Mean Academic Score (%)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Low (<1 hour)	100	68.20	8.45
Moderate (1–3 hours)	180	72.85	7.90
High (>3 hours)	120	61.40	9.85
Total Sample	400	68.25	9.78

Moderate users achieved the highest academic performance (M = 72.85%), significantly outperforming both low users (M = 68.20%) and high users (M = 61.40%). The difference of 11.45 percentage points between moderate and high users was statistically significant, $F(2, 397) = 52.64$, $p < .001$. Across the complete sample, daily exposure was negatively correlated with academic performance ($r = -.46$, $p < .001$), indicating that beyond a moderate threshold, excessive duration severely impedes scholastic achievement.

4.3 Student Personality Profiles (HSPQ) Across Social Media Usage Levels

Evaluation of the HSPQ personality dimensions revealed profound, statistically significant variations across low, moderate, and high social media usage tiers.

Table 4: Key HSPQ Personality Dimensions (Sten Scores) Across Social Media Usage Levels

HSPQ Personality Dimension	Low Users (M ± SD)	Moderate Users (M ± SD)	High Users (M ± SD)	F-value	p-value
Factor C (Emotional Stability)	5.85 ± 1.30	6.42 ± 1.25	4.35 ± 1.45	48.72	< .001
Factor D (Excitability)	4.90 ± 1.22	5.15 ± 1.28	6.85 ± 1.40	54.18	< .001
Factor G (Conscientiousness)	6.20 ± 1.35	6.35 ± 1.30	4.60 ± 1.42	42.60	< .001
Factor H (Social Boldness)	5.10 ± 1.40	6.15 ± 1.35	6.40 ± 1.50	28.34	< .001
Factor O (Apprehension)	5.15 ± 1.25	4.80 ± 1.30	6.80 ± 1.45	56.40	< .001
Factor Q3 (Self-Control)	6.10 ± 1.30	6.55 ± 1.22	4.45 ± 1.38	61.25	< .001
Factor Q4 (Ergic Tension)	4.85 ± 1.28	5.20 ± 1.32	7.18 ± 1.42	68.90	< .001

The results show that moderate users possessed the most adaptive psychological profile, characterized by elevated emotional stability (Factor C = 6.42), superior conscientiousness (Factor G = 6.35), balanced social boldness (Factor H = 6.15), and high self-control (Factor Q3 = 6.55). In stark contrast, high social media users exhibited significantly compromised personality adjustment: marked emotional instability (Factor C = 4.35), acute excitability (Factor D = 6.85), low conscientiousness (Factor G = 4.60), pronounced apprehension and guilt-proneness (Factor O = 6.80), poor self-discipline (Factor Q3 = 4.45), and severe ergic tension (Factor Q4 = 7.18).

4.4 Sectoral Differences: Government vs. Private Schools

A comparative analysis between government and private secondary schools demonstrated notable behavioral and personality divergences.

Table 5: Sectoral Comparison of Usage, Adjustment, and Personality Factors

Variable	Government Schools (M ± SD)	Private Schools (M ± SD)	t-value	p-value
Daily Social Media Use (Hours)	2.18 ± 0.95	2.76 ± 1.10	5.76	< .001
Overall Distraction Score	64.25 ± 10.80	71.60 ± 11.25	6.67	< .001
Social Adjustment (AISS)	67.80 ± 9.45	63.95 ± 10.15	3.92	< .001
Factor G (Conscientiousness)	6.12 ± 1.35	5.48 ± 1.42	4.62	< .001
Factor D (Excitability)	5.25 ± 1.30	6.05 ± 1.45	5.80	< .001
Factor Q3 (Self-Control)	6.05 ± 1.32	5.52 ± 1.40	3.89	< .001
Factor Q4 (Ergic Tension)	5.35 ± 1.38	6.20 ± 1.50	5.90	< .001

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Private school students engaged in significantly more daily social media use (2.76 vs. 2.18 hours, $t = 5.76$, $p < .001$) and exhibited higher distraction (71.60 vs. 64.25, $t = 6.67$, $p < .001$). Concurrently, private school students exhibited significantly higher excitability (Factor D) and ergic tension (Factor Q4), whereas government school students displayed superior conscientiousness (Factor G), higher self-control (Factor Q3), and better overall social adjustment.

4.5 Social Adjustment and Interpersonal Dynamics

Social adjustment scores mirrored the non-linear pattern: moderate users scored highest ($M = 70.60$), low users scored moderately ($M = 65.10$), and high users scored lowest ($M = 61.20$), $F(2, 397) = 39.18$, $p < .001$. Correlation analysis showed an overall negative association between social media exposure duration and social adjustment ($r = -.34$, $p < .001$). While 58.75% of students reported enhanced digital contact with peers, 58.75% acknowledged reduced face-to-face interaction and 55.00% noted diminished family communication, highlighting an interpersonal displacement effect.

4.6 Correlation Matrix: Media Exposure, Personality, Adjustment, and Achievement

Bivariate correlations confirmed significant interrelationships among all core investigation variables.

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of Key Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Daily Media Duration	1.00						
2. Academic Achievement	-.46*	1.00					
3. Social Adjustment	-.34*	.48*	1.00				
4. Factor C (Emotional Stability)	-.38*	.42*	.45*	1.00			
5. Factor G (Conscientiousness)	-.31*	.38*	.36*	.34*	1.00		
6. Factor Q3 (Self-Control)	-.42*	.44*	.41*	.39*	.48*	1.00	
7. Factor Q4 (Ergic Tension)	.52*	-.36*	-.39*	-.54*	-.32*	-.45*	1.00

$p < .001$ (two-tailed)

Academic achievement was positively correlated with emotional stability ($r = .42$), conscientiousness ($r = .38$), self-control ($r = .44$), and social adjustment ($r = .48$), while displaying significant negative associations with daily duration ($r = -.46$) and ergic tension ($r = -.36$). Ergic tension was strongly positively associated with daily duration ($r = .52$).

4.7 Multiple Regression Analysis: Predictors of Academic Performance

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was executed with academic achievement as the criterion variable. Predictor variables included self-regulation, reduced concentration, academic distraction, daily duration, educational use, and the primary HSPQ personality dimensions.

Table 7: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Academic Performance

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized B	Standard Error (SE)	Standardized β	t-value	p-value
(Constant)	48.62	3.12	—	15.58	< .001
Self-Regulation	0.38	0.06	+.29	6.33	< .001
Reduced Concentration	-0.34	0.05	-.26	-6.80	< .001
Factor Q3: Self-Control	1.25	0.24	+.22	5.21	< .001
Academic Distraction	-0.28	0.06	-.22	-4.67	< .001
Factor Q4: Ergic Tension	-1.18	0.26	-.20	-4.54	< .001
Factor G: Conscientiousness	0.94	0.22	+.16	4.27	< .001
Educational Media Use	0.22	0.06	+.15	3.67	< .001
Daily Media Duration	-0.20	0.06	-.14	-3.33	< .001

The full regression model accounted for 64.2% of the total variance in secondary school academic performance ($R^2 = .642$, Adjusted $R^2 = .635$, $F(8, 391) = 46.12$, $p < .001$). The integration of HSPQ personality dimensions significantly elevated the explanatory power of the model (increasing R^2 from .578 to .642). High self-control (Factor Q3: $\beta = +.22$) and conscientiousness (Factor G: $\beta = +.16$) were potent positive determinants of academic success, while elevated internal tension (Factor Q4: $\beta = -.20$) exerted a substantial debilitating effect.

5. DISCUSSION

The empirical findings of this study offer an integrated psychosocial framework demonstrating that the impact of social media on secondary school adolescents is heavily moderated by individual personality dynamics, behavioral self-regulation, and institutional culture. First, the data clearly repudiate simplistic, alarmist assertions that digital connectivity is inherently destructive, as well as uncritical techno-optimistic views. The superior performance of moderate users (M = 72.85%) in both academic achievement and social adjustment underscores that

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moderate, structured digital engagement serves constructive informational and communicative functions without encroaching upon academic disciplines.

The inclusion of the High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ) provides a powerful explanatory mechanism for these divergent trajectories. Adolescents who possess high self-control (Factor Q3), conscientiousness (Factor G), and emotional stability (Factor C) possess the internal psychological scaffolding necessary to regulate digital impulses, filter intrusive notifications, and channel social platforms toward educational collaboration. Conversely, adolescents characterized by elevated ergic tension (Factor Q4), emotional reactivity (Factor C low), and high apprehension (Factor O) appear highly vulnerable to compulsive digital habits. For these students, social media operates as a digital anxiolytic or avoidance mechanism, providing immediate dopamine-driven gratification while exacerbating underlying cognitive restlessness, attentional fragmentation, and academic decline.

The comparative institutional findings between government and private schools in Jaipur District highlight the critical role of the school micro-environment. While private school students enjoy ubiquitous smartphone ownership and high-speed broadband access, this technological saturation co-occurs with higher entertainment-driven consumption, greater academic distraction, elevated ergic tension, and lower overall social adjustment. In contrast, government school students, operating under greater structural constraints, exhibit a more purposeful, education-centric utilization of digital media and maintain higher conscientiousness and self-control. This reinforces the principle that digital access without corresponding socio-emotional self-regulation and value grounding creates substantial psychological vulnerability.

6. Educational, Institutional, and Counselling Implications

1. Personality-Informed Guidance and Counselling: School counsellors should administer standardized personality assessments such as the HSPQ to identify students displaying high ergic tension (Q4), low self-control (Q3), or high excitability (D). Early identification allows for targeted interventions focusing on emotional regulation, impulse management, and cognitive behavioral strategies to mitigate digital addiction risks.
2. Pedagogical Integration of Digital Self-Regulation: Educational authorities in Jaipur should move beyond blanket device bans toward integrating digital literacy and self-management modules into the secondary school curriculum. Explicit training on attention preservation, notification audits, task-focused study blocks, and the cognitive costs of multitasking should be formalized.
3. Structured Institutional Support Systems: Private schools must implement structured pastoral counselling to address high academic distraction and emotional tension, while government schools should be supported with enhanced digital infrastructure to build upon their students' existing educational motivation and strong conscientiousness.
4. Parental Mediation and Family Communication: Parents should be guided to cultivate authoritative rather than purely authoritarian or permissive digital rules. Creating device-free family zones, establishing tech-free sleep routines, and fostering open dialogue about online peer pressure will help safeguard adolescent mental health and direct interpersonal adjustment.

7. Limitations of the Study

While providing robust empirical insights, this study possesses methodological boundaries:

1. The research design is cross-sectional, precluding definitive conclusions regarding longitudinal causality. It remains plausible that underlying personality traits and academic difficulties drive excessive social media use, rather than media use solely causing psychological changes.
2. The data rely partly on self-reported questionnaires for social media duration and adjustment, which may be susceptible to retrospective recall bias or social desirability.
3. The sample was delimited to secondary school students within Jaipur District; caution should be exercised when generalising findings to rural populations or distinct socio-cultural regions of India.

8. CONCLUSION

This study establishes that the educational and psychosocial ramifications of social media engagement among secondary school students in Jaipur District are fundamentally governed by an interaction between digital usage patterns, institutional environments, and individual student personality profiles. While moderate, goal-oriented engagement fosters optimal academic achievement and healthy social adjustment, unconstrained, excessive usage precipitates cognitive distraction, social estrangement, and academic deterioration.

By incorporating Cattell's HSPQ personality dimensions, this inquiry demonstrates that self-control, conscientiousness, and emotional stability act as vital psychological protective buffers against digital hazards, whereas elevated ergic tension and emotional instability amplify academic vulnerability. Secondary education must therefore transcend simple technological containment, committing instead to holistic educational frameworks that nurture adolescent self-regulation, fortify emotional resilience, and align digital tools with disciplined intellectual growth.

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