

The Effects of Social Media on the Mental Health of Bingham University Students

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ABSTRACT

Background: Social media is now a major part of student life, providing platforms for communication, entertainment, and academic support. However, concerns have emerged over its excessive use and potential psychological effects. This study assesses the impact of social media use on the mental health of undergraduate students at Bingham University.

Objectives: The study aims to examine the main purposes of social media use, the average time spent on it, related mental health outcomes, and key factors influencing engagement. **Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among undergraduate students in the Faculties of Allied Health Sciences and Law at Bingham University, Karu Campus. A total of 412 students were selected through multistage sampling. Data were collected using structured, self-administered questionnaires. Sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula and adjusted for non-response. Data analysis was performed using SPSS, and chi-square tests were used to determine associations (significance at $p \leq 0.05$). **Results:** 43.8% of students reported spending 4–6 hours on social media daily, while 33.3% spent over 6 hours. WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook were the most used platforms. Most students (69.8%) used social media mainly for entertainment; only 11.0% used it for academics. Mental health assessment showed 63.0% were highly affected, experiencing anxiety, low self-esteem, sleep issues, and academic distraction. 80.6% reported interference with study time. Age and academic level were significantly associated with mental health effects ($p < 0.05$); gender and department were not. 86.2% acknowledged that social media affects mental health.

Conclusion: While social media supports connection and engagement, excessive use negatively impacts mental health. Digital literacy, healthier usage habits, and university mental health support are recommended, especially for younger and lower-level students.

