

Social Media Usage and Students' Quality of Sleep



Green River College

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Social media has transformed societies, governments, norms, habits, and addictions. We see this specifically with mental health. So many people are addicted to social media that these sites and apps are of higher importance than one's health. Furthermore, companies strategically utilize methods like the attention economy. The attention economy is where influencers and ads on social media try to get as many interactions and views on their products as possible to profit off their consumers (Humphreys, 2016). All in all, our attention and health are being sold, which is the main construction of social media devices.

This need for profit by companies and addiction from the public is so drastic that 34% of 11,872 adolescents in the United Kingdom take more than 30 minutes to fall asleep (Scott et al., 2019). The same can be said for students at the Health Sciences University and Marmara University in Istanbul. Whereas the higher the participant's usage of social media sites and apps, the greater risk they are of poorer quality sleep (Gündoğmuş et al., 2020). My study will further investigate the connectivity of social media and sleep habits within a broader population of high school and college students across different countries and states. Overall, I hope to answer the question of how social media affects students' quality and quantity of sleep by the end of my study.

#### **Method**

For this study, I distributed a Microsoft Forms survey via Canvas and text messages to my fellow classmates in the Communications in Social Media course and my friends and family members who fit the survey's guidelines. The study's results presented that 73% of participants are between the ages of 16 and 18, 18% are 19-21 years old, 9% are 22-25 years old, 73% of

participants identify as female, and the other percent identify as male. In total, there were 11 responses to the survey.

The main objective of this survey was to measure participants' time spent on social media and sleeping while identifying unhealthy patterns in participants' sleep, such as not being able to fall asleep, waking up in the middle of the night, and prioritization. Ultimately, the construction of this survey was to observe any similarities and differences in sleep patterns and social media usage.

**Results**

Habits and addictions relating to social media became very apparent when analyzing the survey's results. For instance, Table 1 displays the habits participants have as a part of their nightly routine. In the results, 91% of the participants rated themselves 4-5 on the scale when evaluating themselves against the statement. Furthermore, in Table 2, we see that 8 out of the 11 participants spend more than 4 hours each day on social media. Thus there is a trend in the survey of participants overusing social media apps and sites, and male participants tend to spend more time on social media than women.

Table 1

Rate yourself on the following statement (5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree). I use social media every night right before I go to bed.					
People (11)	Ratings				
	1	2	3	4	5
Male					3
Female	1			1	6

Table 2

How many hours a day do you spend on social media?					
People (11)	Less than one hour	1-3 hours	4-5 hours	6-7 hours	8-9 hours
Male			2	1	
Female		3	2	3	

Lastly, with such high usage of these apps and sites, participants were also shown to wake up multiple times throughout the night. As seen in Table 3, around 55% of participants wake up one or more times a night, while only around 45% never wake up in the middle of the night.

Table 3

How often do you wake up during the night?			
	Never	1 time	2-3 times
People (11)	5	2	4

### Discussion

In conclusion, social media usage does relate to unhealthy sleep patterns. Throughout the study's results, there are constant trends of high daily social media intake and disturbances in sleep. One of the most intriguing outcomes of this survey was men spend more time on social media than women. So many aspects of social media are constructed to keep a women's attention, such as social media being a place for inspiration, self-comparisons, and a place to keep up with friends. While the same can be said for men, it is more likely to see social media

marketing strategies toward women. Furthermore, since men use social media devices more than women, they also more likely to have social media time involved in their nightly routines.

Throughout this study, it came to my attention how strong connections are between sleep and social media. Social media not only feeds into our social lives, but also our mental and physical health by participants taking longer to fall asleep and waking up in the middle of the night. Leading me to ask, is there a connection between social media usage and the time we wake up? Or how many alarms do we have to go through before we wake up? All in all, social media affects many young adults' lives, priorities, and sleep patterns.

## References

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