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An Analytical Exploration of Mobile Virtual Social Networks and Their Impact on Teenagers' Academic Quality of Life

Amrollah Amani Kalarijani¹ , Mahsa Talebi² , Bita Erfani³ 

1. Department of Social Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Tehran East Branch, Tehran, Iran, Amani.sina1358@gmail.com

2. MA in Educational Psychology, Islamic Azad University, Khoy Branch, West Azarbaijan, Iran

3. MA in Psychology, Islamic Azad University, Bojnord Branch, North Khorasan, Iran

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ABSTRACT

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Objective: Due to the fact that students spend a very high proportion of their life time in school, therefore, evaluating the quality of their life in school and the role of effective factors in it is of great importance; Therefore, the present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the effect of the use of mobile virtual social networks on the quality of academic life of teenagers.

Methods: The methodological approach utilized was descriptive in nature and of a correlational type. The target demographic encompassed all tenth-grade male and female students from two districts in Baharestan during the academic year of 2023, with a total of 100 eligible individuals who willingly opted to participate in the study; the instruments employed for data collection included questionnaires pertaining to the utilization of mobile virtual social networks as developed by Javadinia et al. (2011) and the assessment of quality of life in educational settings as conceptualized by Ainley and Bourke (1992). For the purpose of data analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were applied utilizing SPSS-22 software.

Results: The findings revealed that there exists a significant and negative correlation between the usage of mobile virtual social networks and the quality of academic life, indicating that mobile virtual social networks serve as a negative predictor of students' academic quality of life.

Conclusions: In conclusion, the study emphasizes the need for greater awareness of the effects of mobile virtual social networks on students' academic well-being.

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Introduction

Due to the significance attributed to the quality of life of children and adolescents within the educational environment, the World Health Organization has recently emphasized the necessity for nations to enhance behavioral standards within schools and elevate the overall health of students, thereby improving their quality of life in the academic setting ([Saneie & Raeisoon, 2020](#); [Shikako-Thomas et al., 2012](#); [Shokouei, 2023](#)). [Tangen \(2009\)](#) established the foundational concept of quality of life within schools, which is predicated upon the experiences and perspectives of students regarding their educational environment. From Tangen's perspective, the quality of life in school is contingent upon the experiences and perceptions of students; due to the diverse understandings and experiences unique to each individual student, it is implausible to adopt a singular definition for this concept. The experiences, both positive and negative, that students acquire during their time at school are delineated; these experiences collectively shape the student's overall perception of their well-being, satisfaction with school life, and express their level of contentment with daily activities within the academic sphere.

The notion of quality of life in school encompasses both formal and informal elements of the educational experience and is influenced by the collective experiences and relationships among peers ([Mo Ching Mok, 2002](#)). The quality of life experienced by students within their educational institutions correlates significantly with their persistence in academic pursuits, their attitudes towards attending school, their academic achievements, levels of academic advancement, acceptance of responsibilities, commitment to school assignments, occurrences of abnormalities in the school environment, feelings of belonging to the school community, increased participation in school-related activities, enhanced motivation to engage with course material, a positive disposition towards the educational environment, and improved relationships with teachers and fellow students, alongside considerations of physical and mental health ([Zahed Babolan et al., 2017](#)).

Conversely, in contemporary society, with the proliferation of information and communication technology applications in daily life, we are observing the emergence of a new generation of Internet tools that have facilitated enhanced opportunities for mutual relations, negotiations, dialogues, and bidirectional communication in general; Internet social networks serve as paramount examples of this technology, having evolved into platforms for various segments of

society, particularly the youth, enabling them to exchange opinions, thoughts, and fulfill their social needs ([Shamsizadeh et al., 2021](#)). The advent of social networks has rendered their utilization an intrinsic component of the lives of numerous students, exerting a direct influence on all facets of their existence, including their academic performance; while engagement on these networks promotes communication with peers, it concurrently diminishes the time allocated to studying, thereby disrupting the educational process. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to note that social networks are not solely detrimental; rather, they can be utilized effectively within educational or therapeutic frameworks ([Ranjbar et al., 2011](#)).

In today's digital age, mobile virtual social networks have become an integral part of teenagers' lives, shaping their social interactions, behaviors, and daily routines ([O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011](#); [Pradeep & Sriram, 2016](#)). However, the increasing time spent on these platforms raises concerns about their potential impact on students' academic performance and overall quality of life in school. Despite their benefits for communication and information sharing, excessive use of social networks may serve as a distraction, leading to reduced focus on academic responsibilities and affecting students' well-being within educational environments.

Currently, there is limited research that directly explores the correlation between the use of mobile virtual social networks and the quality of academic life among students. This gap in knowledge is particularly concerning, given the critical importance of academic success and personal development during adolescence. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the extent to which mobile virtual social network usage affects students' academic quality of life and identify strategies to mitigate potential negative effects.

Given that students dedicate a substantial portion of their lifetime to their educational institutions, it is, therefore, of paramount significance to assess the quality of their experiences within these environments and the influential factors therein; Consequently, the present study has been undertaken with the objective of examining the impact of mobile virtual social networks on the quality of academic life among adolescents and aims to address the inquiry of whether the utilization of virtual mobile social networks affects the quality of academic life in this demographic.

Material and Methods

The research methodology employed was of a correlational nature. The statistical population encompassed all male and female students enrolled in the 10th grade across two districts of Baharestan during the academic year 2023. A total of 100 qualified individuals who voluntarily consented to participate in the study were selected utilizing a convenience sampling method. The inclusion criteria comprised male and female students from the 10th grade who provided informed consent and demonstrated sound mental health as per their health records. Conversely, the exclusion criteria included any reluctance to participate in the study as well as incomplete questionnaire submissions. The instruments employed for data collection consisted of the following questionnaires:

The Questionnaire on the Use of Virtual Mobile Social Networks: In this investigation, a questionnaire addressing personal and educational attributes alongside the utilization of mobile social networks was employed for data acquisition. This instrument was structured into three sections: personal and academic characteristics, attributes related to mobile phone and Internet usage, and characteristics pertaining to social network engagement. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire were assessed in the research conducted by [Javadinia et al. \(2012\)](#). In the study by [Shamsizadeh et al. \(2021\)](#), the face validity of the questionnaire was evaluated with the assistance of ten esteemed faculty members from Hamedan University of Medical Sciences. Its reliability was determined through the application of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.94.

The School Quality of Life Questionnaire: This instrument was developed by [Ainley and Bourke \(1992\)](#) and comprises 39 items across seven dimensions: general satisfaction (items 1, 8, 11, 17, 21, 33); negative emotions (items 5, 14, 18, 28, 37); teacher-student relationships (items 9, 12, 15, 25, 31, 39); opportunities (items 9, 12, 15, 25, 31, 39); development (items 4, 7, 16, 26); adventure (items 10, 13, 23, 27, 32); and social cohesion (items 3, 6, 20, 24, 29, 30, 35, 36), employing a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). In the research conducted by [Soltani Shal et al. \(2011\)](#), the convergent validity of the school quality of life questionnaire was assessed and validated through its correlation with general self-efficacy questionnaires and the adolescent adjustment scale, while its content validity was affirmed by

expert professors. Additionally, the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated via the Cronbach's alpha method, resulting in a value of 0.85.

Initially, data were collected concerning the primary variables of the study. Subsequently, following the acquisition of permission from the education and training authorities and the identification of the sample, individuals who met the entry criteria for the research were provided with comprehensive explanations regarding the methodology and procedures of the study, assurances of confidentiality, their right to withdraw from participation, and the importance of providing full consent. For the purpose of data analysis, Pearson's correlation test and multiple regression analyses were conducted utilizing SPSS version 22 software.

Results

According to the results, among 100 participants, 55 were girls and 45 were boys. In the table 1 Descriptive findings and correlation coefficient of research variables are reported.

Table 1. Descriptive findings and correlation coefficient of research variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2
1. Mobile virtual social networks	45.86	5.94	1	
2. Academic quality of life	78.85	6.87	-0.378	1

According to the results of Table 1, the correlation between the use of mobile virtual social networks and the academic quality of life is negative and significant ($p<0.01$).

Table 2. Multiple correlation coefficient for quality of academic life

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Estimate error
0.64	0.36	0.39	2.89

Table 3. Regression analysis to predict the academic quality of life through the amount of use of mobile virtual social networks

Indices	Unstandardized		Standardized	T value	P
	B	Std. error	Beta		
Constant	4.37	1.037	-	2.86	0.002
Mobile virtual social networks	-0.285	0.03	-0.327	7.49	0.001

In Table 2, the value of the multiple correlation (R) is equal to 0.64 and the coefficient of determination shows that 36% of the changes in the academic quality of life can be explained by

the amount of use of mobile virtual social networks. Considering the significance of the obtained coefficient, we conclude that the amount of use of mobile virtual social networks negatively predicts the quality of students' academic life.

Discussion

Considering that students spend a very high proportion of their life time in school, therefore, evaluating the quality of their life in school and the role of effective factors in it is of great importance; Therefore, the present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the effect of the use of mobile virtual social networks on the quality of academic life of adolescents. The results showed that the correlation between the use of mobile virtual social networks with the quality of academic life is negative and significant, and mobile virtual social networks negatively predict the quality of academic life of students. The finding is consistent with the results of the study by [Shamsizadeh et al. \(2021\)](#), [Saini et al. \(2020\)](#), [Antheunis et al. \(2016\)](#) and [Ahn \(2011\)](#). [Shamsizadeh et al. \(2021\)](#) showed that more use of mobile virtual social networks decreases the academic performance and GPA of students. In the explanation above, it can be said that today virtual network spaces have established interactions between people that are different from the traditional form, which has left an undeniable impact on people's social relationships, so people can communicate with each other regardless of requirements such as gender, class, ethnicity, and location. and based on this, they show new identities, therefore, in this space, the cohesion of social adaptation and acceptance of users has decreased, and after a while, people feel alienated from themselves and the society they are a member of. Also, in the virtual space, people follow other members more often. and they are trying to somehow adapt themselves to the patterns and standards of people in the virtual society, so the social prosperity and quality of life in the school decreases.

The findings of this study revealed a significant negative correlation between the use of mobile virtual social networks and the quality of academic life among tenth-grade students. This result aligns with previous research indicating that excessive use of social media and digital platforms can have detrimental effects on students' academic performance and well-being ([Vidales-Bolaños & Sádaba-Chalezquer, 2017](#)). The current study's findings are particularly relevant in the context

of teenagers, who are not only highly active on these platforms but are also at a critical developmental stage where academic success and well-being are crucial for future outcomes.

One of the most important aspects to consider is how the time spent on mobile virtual social networks detracts from the time available for studying, homework, and other academic activities. Research shows that social media addiction can lead to distractions and reduce focus on educational responsibilities, ultimately affecting academic performance (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010). For instance, [Al-Menayes \(2015\)](#) found that students who reported higher levels of social media usage had lower GPAs, which supports the finding that social networks can negatively influence academic life.

Another factor is the way these networks impact students' psychological well-being. The constant exposure to social media can increase anxiety, stress, and depression, which, in turn, affect academic motivation and the overall school experience ([O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011](#)). As students spend more time engaging with mobile social networks, they may experience cyberbullying, social comparison, or feelings of inadequacy, which contribute to poorer mental health and lower academic engagement ([Vannucci et al., 2017](#)).

The negative impact of mobile virtual social networks on academic life may also stem from cognitive and behavioral distractions. Multitasking, such as switching between academic tasks and social media interactions, can impair students' cognitive performance ([Ophir et al., 2009](#)). Social media platforms are designed to capture attention, offering constant notifications and updates that can pull students away from focusing on their studies. This divided attention makes it difficult to retain information or engage in deep, meaningful learning. Moreover, the habitual nature of social media use creates behavioral distractions. Students may develop a dependency on checking their social networks frequently, leading to procrastination and reduced time management skills ([Meier et al., 2016](#)). The urge to stay connected and up-to-date with peers and trends can significantly impact students' ability to concentrate on academic tasks, further diminishing the quality of their academic life.

The results of this study suggest the need for interventions aimed at managing students' use of mobile virtual social networks. Educators and policymakers should focus on promoting digital literacy, helping students understand the impact of excessive social media use on their academic and personal well-being. Initiatives such as setting screen time limits, encouraging device-free

study periods, and promoting positive online behavior could mitigate the negative effects of mobile social networks on students' academic lives. Schools could also incorporate digital well-being programs into their curricula, teaching students how to balance their social media use with academic responsibilities. For example, interventions like "digital detox" challenges, where students voluntarily reduce their social media usage for a period, have shown promise in improving focus and academic performance ([Hawi & Samaha, 2017](#)). Additionally, parents and educators should collaborate to foster environments that encourage meaningful offline interactions and prioritize academic tasks over online distractions.

While this study provides valuable insights, further research is necessary to explore the long-term effects of mobile virtual social networks on students' academic well-being. Longitudinal studies could examine how prolonged social media use impacts academic performance over time and whether certain intervention strategies prove effective in reversing negative outcomes. Research could also investigate differences across genders, age groups, and cultural contexts to identify unique patterns of social media use and their effects on academic life.

This study was carried out by the descriptive method of correlation, therefore it is not possible to achieve causality; Also, this study was conducted in the statistical population of high school students, which limits the possibility of generalization to other groups, it is suggested that in order to achieve causality, other research plans should be used in future studies and this study should be carried out in other cities and groups in the field Practically, it is suggested to use the present results to prepare and implement educational programs aimed at improving the quality of students' academic life.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the ethics committee of Islamic Azad University. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection, and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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