

Impact Of Social Media On University Education

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Abstract

The use of social media has become a global phenomenon that directly influences educational processes, especially in the university context. The general objective of this research was to analyse the impact of social media on university education in Peru. The methodology was basic, with a qualitative approach and descriptive design, developed through a documentary review of relevant academic sources. The results show that, when used in a planned manner, social media can strengthen collaborative learning, improve communication between teachers and students, and expand access to educational resources. However, risks such as distraction, procrastination, and technological dependence were also identified. The conclusion is that it is essential for Peruvian universities to establish responsible use policies and training strategies that promote the pedagogical use of these platforms, thus contributing to a more critical education adapted to the current environment.

Keywords: Higher education, Digitization, Universities, Collaboration

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media are defined as digital platforms based on the exchange of experiences, information, and other forms of expression with people who share common interests (Celaya, 2008). They have evolved from simple spaces for interaction between individuals to mass communication channels that directly impact different aspects of daily life, including education (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). These are part of a web-specific environment, which allows users to express opinions, share information and create content within virtual communities, through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter or YouTube (Lytras et al., 2018). The ease of access and immediacy of content dissemination have helped these social media networks become integral parts of the daily lives of millions of users worldwide (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2022).

University education, for its part, constitutes a higher education process oriented towards the development of professional and technical skills, in which the student will play an active role in terms of knowledge (Cejas, et al., 2019), and whose objective is to train professionals with skills capable of responding to the demands of society and the labor market, so the adequacy of the academic environment is decisive (Gutiérrez, 2014). In this context, information and communication technologies have been favored, with social networks being a fundamental element in the study habits of university students (Baelo and Cantón, 2010).

In Latin America, the advance of digitalization has driven the intensive use of social media among university students, transforming their learning dynamics, collaborative work, and access to information (Cabero et al., 2020). While some studies praise their potential as an informal teaching medium or resource, adverse effects and disadvantages have also been reported, citing their distraction, superficial content analysis, and even their interference with attention and academic performance (Ramírez et al., 2022).

This reality is no different in Peru, where the widespread use of social media among university students has sparked a range of responses within the higher education system (Tuesta, 2021). While some universities have tried to incorporate these platforms as teaching tools, others remain skeptical, pointing to the lack of regulation,

minimal instructional guidance, and the predominance of recreational use among students (Rodríguez et al., 2023).

Artículo I. At the heart of the issue lies a clear contradiction: social media offers valuable opportunities for learning, yet its excessive or misguided use can foster unproductive habits. Many students gravitate toward quick, surface-level information, which may compromise deeper understanding, lead to inefficient academic practices, and contribute to a growing reliance on technology (Miauri et al., 2024).

Artículo II. What's more, this challenge is compounded by the fact that many educational settings still struggle with low levels of digital literacy. This makes it harder to harness social media tools effectively for academic purposes. The situation is further worsened by the limited training most educators receive in using these platforms pedagogically, along with the absence of clear policies to guide their appropriate use in university classrooms (Camargo et al., 2004).

Artículo III. Despite these obstacles, social media holds significant potential for enhancing higher education when approached intentionally and critically. When used thoughtfully, these tools can support collaborative learning, provide access to up-to-date resources, and foster meaningful interaction between students and instructors within flexible, virtual learning environments (Ortegón & Delgado, 2021).

Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a documentary review analyzing the impact of social media on university education in Peru. This review aims to identify the positive and negative effects of their use and to describe the strategies and challenges educational institutions face in integrating them into the educational process.

The general question of this research is: What impact do social media have on university education in Peru? The objective is to analyze how these digital platforms influence students' academic performance.

The importance of this study lies in understanding the transformative role of social media in the university setting. These tools, initially recreational, are now part of learning environments, enabling resource sharing and the creation of academic communities. Analyzing this situation facilitates educational strategies that improve the quality of learning within the context of today's demands.

Regarding the social justification provided by this research, it relates to the development of a responsible digital academic culture, as this article contributes to the development of more critical educational practices and, in turn, addresses the risks of distraction and superficial learning through a balanced approach that adapts to the current demands of the context. (Naveenraj and Reeves, 2017)

Likewise, the theoretical justification is based on approaches such as connectivism and social learning, as they recognize the value of the digital environment in the pursuit of knowledge. It also incorporates key concepts such as digital literacy and personal learning environments, which are key to understanding how these platforms have built competencies in university students. (Gutiérrez, 2012)

Regarding the methodological justification, this research adopts a documentary review approach. Therefore, through the analysis of reliable academic sources, relevant information is gathered, allowing for the identification of key factors and, thus, generating concrete contributions on the use of these networks in higher education (Islas and Carranza, 2011).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Type of research

This research falls under the basic category, as its main objective is to create theoretical knowledge about the phenomenon of social media use in university teaching in Peru, without pursuing immediate practical application. It focuses on explaining, from a critical perspective, the effect of social media on educational processes. This approach allows for laying the conceptual foundations for future applied research or practical interventions (Ortega, 2017).

2.2. Research level

A descriptive level based on documentary review is used, involving the collection, analysis, and interpretation of information from reliable sources, in order to describe how social media has been used in the Peruvian university setting. This description seeks to identify trends and challenges but also seeks to reveal common patterns in the existing source material (Corona and Fonseca, 2023).

2.3. Research focus

The study was conducted using a qualitative approach, utilizing an interpretive analysis of textual information collected from academic documents and specialized sources (Piña, 2023). This approach seeks to understand the meaning that educational actors give to the use of social media, as well as the pedagogical and sociocultural implications of their incorporation into the university classroom, allowing for the construction of a contextualized view of the impact of these digital tools.

2.4. Population and sample

In this case, the population consists of all relevant research and documents published in previous years on social media and university education in Peru. The sample will consist of studies that directly address the pedagogical and academic effects of social media use in Peruvian universities, with the selection based on criteria of topical relevance, timeliness, and academic relevance. (Otzen and Manterola, 2017)

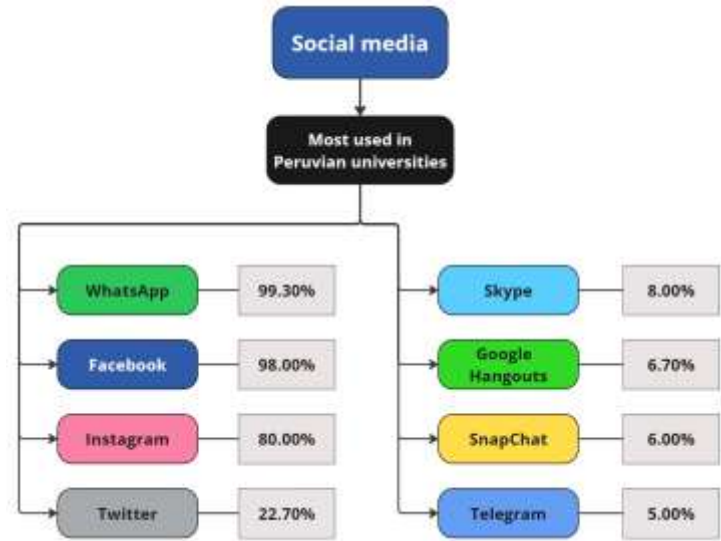
2.5. Technique to use:

Academic sources, institutional regulations, and previous studies related to the use of social media in the Peruvian university context will be reviewed, as well as educational policies and scientific publications, to identify cases linked to these digital platforms. This approach will contextualize the phenomenon within the national educational framework and present evidence-based results.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Social networks most used by Peruvian university students

Figure 1. Percentage of most used social networks in Peruvian universities



Source: Ochoa, 2019

In Peru, the use of social media in the university environment has been gaining increasing importance, becoming an integrating aspect of academic interaction (Tuesta, 2021). This transformation is part of a context of progressive digitalization of education and technological adaptation by higher education institutions, both public and private. (Paco, 2023)

According to the data, WhatsApp and Facebook are consolidating as the most used social platforms in the Peruvian university context, serving as key tools for real-time communication and the dissemination of academic content (Vegas, 2022). Third, Instagram has gained ground as a visual medium for the informal exchange of educational experiences and extracurricular activities, especially among younger students.

On the other hand, the remaining networks have a significantly lower presence, suggesting a preference for platforms that allow for dynamic group interactions that occur in the moment. The limited use of the latter could

be related to their reduced presence in academic routines or to some users' lack of awareness of their functions. (Ochoa, 2019)

This trend reflects not only an evolution in academic communication channels but also a change in teaching and learning dynamics, where the strategic use of social media can enhance participation, motivation, and collaboration among members of the university community (Cornejo and Parra, 2016). In this context, Peruvian universities face the challenge of effectively integrating these digital tools, ensuring a balance between their educational use and their academic focus.

3.2. Use of networks according to certain categories

Table 1. Percentage of individuals, according to gender, age and study cycle.

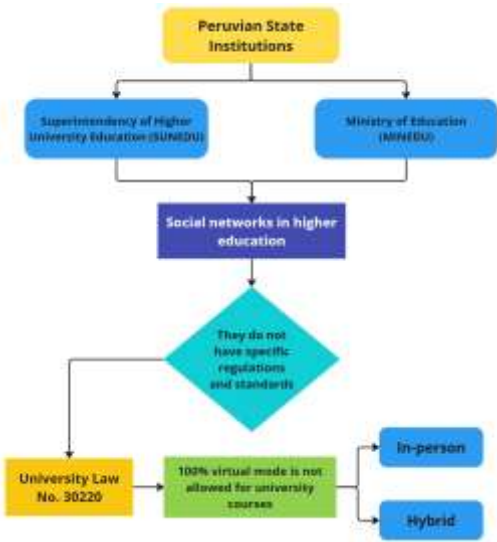
Sociodemographic variables	Level	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	54.17%
	Female	45.83%
Age range	20 to 24 years	30.36%
	25 to 30 years	52.98%
	31 to 34 years	16.67%
Most representative study cycles	Seventh Cycle	19.05%
	Eighth Cycle	20.83%
	Ninth Cycle	40.48%
	Tenth Cycle	19.64%

Source: Dávila, 2024

The table illustrates the sociodemographic variables of the Peruvian university student population who participated in the study on social media use. Regarding the gender variable, 54.17% of respondents were men and 45.83% were women, suggesting a balanced, albeit slightly male, distribution. Regarding the age range variable, the majority of participants were between 25 and 30 years old, followed by those between 20 and 24 years old, and to a lesser extent, those between 31 and 34 years old. Therefore, it can be inferred that social media use in university settings is represented by young adults, a population that consumes a lot of digital resources. Finally, regarding the academic cycle, a greater concentration of participants was observed in the advanced cycles: the ninth cycle represents the highest percentage, followed by the eighth (20.83%), tenth (19.64%), and seventh (19.05%). This could indicate that students with more academic experience use social media more consistently or thoughtfully, or that these cycles are more prevalent in the analysis sample.

3.3. State institutions on the use of social networks in higher education

Figure 1. Scheme of state institutions in the education sector



The National Superintendency of Higher University Education (SUNEDU) is a public agency of the Peruvian government responsible for regulating and supervising the quality of higher university education in the country and ensuring compliance with the Peruvian University Law (Tupayachi and López, 2018). This agency, like the Ministry of Education, does not have specific regulations that directly govern the use of social media by university students; however, University Law No. 30220 (CRP, 2020) and the provisions of SUNEDU have clearly specified criteria regarding the educational modality that universities can offer.

It is important to note that, according to the University Licensing Regulations issued by SUNEDU, universities in Peru cannot offer 100% virtual learning for university programs; instead, education must be predominantly in-person or blended learning (SUNEDU, 2020). This means that, although digital tools and social media can be used to support teaching, fully virtual teaching is restricted for undergraduate programs.

Universities themselves have the autonomy to establish rules regarding the responsible, ethical, and academic use of social media within their student communities in their internal regulations, but there is no national law specifically regulating this issue.

3.4. Good use of social networks in Peruvian universities

Some universities have begun to incorporate social media as complementary tools within the educational system. These institutions have promoted the academic use of platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn by creating official spaces for the dissemination of educational content and job opportunities, thus allowing learning to extend beyond the classroom.

For instance, many schools now use private Facebook groups to share course materials, organize group projects, and address academic questions in real time (Serna & Alvites, 2022). These kinds of strategies not only complement traditional teaching methods but also foster student independence and promote collaborative learning (Atarama & Vega, 2020). Similarly, positive outcomes have been reported from the use of academic WhatsApp groups, where students receive reminders and messages that help strengthen the educational connection with their instructors (Veytia & Bastidas, 2020).

Such practices are backed by research. A study by Dávila (2024), for example, found that social media use at a public university in Peru had a notable impact on encouraging student reading, revealing a meaningful connection between both variables. Likewise, research by Fretel et al. (2025) identified positive patterns in how students at an Andean higher education institution engage with social media, emphasizing its potential to enhance interaction and academic involvement.

Further evidence comes from a study involving sixth-year systems engineering students at a Peruvian university, which showed a positive correlation between social media use and the development of learning strategies—suggesting that these platforms, when used appropriately, can enhance students' academic skills (Muñoz & Silva, 2024). Similarly, Camacho et al. (2024) found that the use of audiovisual content and social media contributed to stronger student–teacher relationships, improving both communication and academic participation.

Moreover, research conducted by Guillén (2019) at a medical school in Lima revealed that 78.7% of students used Facebook for academic purposes, highlighting its potential to support the development of academic competencies. In the same vein, Gutiérrez and Paredes (2019) discovered that moderate social media use was positively associated with values like benevolence and tolerance among Health Sciences students—pointing to its potential to foster not only academic but also social growth.

3.5. Misuse of social media in university education

Despite notable progress, the inappropriate use of social media remains a significant concern in this context. Numerous case studies have shown that excessive and unregulated use of these platforms can negatively affect students' academic performance (Araujo, 2016). One of the most common issues is the constant distraction these applications create—often being used during class time—which reduces students' focus and weakens their engagement with the learning process (Ankuash et al., 2021). Similarly, situations have been documented in which students have used social media to disseminate offensive content or to impersonate others for the purposes of mockery or academic sabotage (Acevedo and Cabrera, 2024). This has led universities to seek to implement internal regulations on digital conduct, although in many cases students still need to be prepared for the critical use of these tools (Ramos, 2024).

Research such as that by Miauri (2024) has shown that 84.7% of university students display high levels of technological dependence, negatively affecting their academic performance and general well-being. Likewise, the study by Solano and Núñez (2025) revealed that digital native students face difficulties balancing virtual learning with their study habits, experiencing burnout due to multitasking on mobile devices.

Additionally, a study by Tuesta (2021) found that 91.7% of students exhibited some degree of dependence on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was associated with behavioral disorders and changes in self-esteem. This excessive use of platforms led students to neglect other aspects of their lives.

On the other hand, the research by Urrunaga et al (2022) showed that 40.5% of students were in the group of abusive use of social networks and 2.7% in the addiction group, suggesting the need to include attention programs in university tutoring. Likewise, Cruz and Tufiño (2023) found an inverse correlation between addiction to social networks and academic commitment in university students from Metropolitan Lima, showing that greater use of social networks is associated with lower academic commitment. The research by Fretel et al (2025) found medium levels in the student sample predisposed to obsessive behavior and lack of personal control in the use of these networks, similar to the research by Alfageme (2022) that found a significant relationship between the level of addiction to social networks with the levels of depression, anxiety and stress of university students.

Finally, the study carried out by Hanco (2024) showed that social media addiction and emotional dependence are significantly related to academic procrastination, negatively affecting students' academic performance. Díaz and Manrique (2023) highlight the need for a pedagogical approach that promotes the critical and responsible use of social media in the educational field, guiding students in identifying reliable information versus misinformation, and also propose fostering virtual learning communities that enrich the training process. All of these findings underscore the need to implement strategies that promote balanced use of social media among college students.

3.6. Perception of university students about the impact of social networks

Figure 2. Tag clouds of students' perceptions of social media



Peruvian university students' perceptions of the impact of social media are diverse and reveal both benefits and general challenges.

On the one hand, many students mention that social media is a relevant tool for writing university papers and communicating with others. A study conducted by Gamarra and Muñoz (2020) at a private university found that 98% of students use these social media platforms for academic purposes, such as writing scientific papers and also for activities related to their studies.

Similarly, De la Cruz (2025) identified that students at a university in Huancavelica perceive that the appropriate use of social media improves their learning, mentioning that they facilitate access to academic content. According to them, these platforms contribute to relevant learning through collaborative resources.

However, there is also concern among students about the negative effects of excessive social media use. Research such as that by Castro (2024) has found a significant correlation between problematic social media use and academic stress, especially among students at the beginning of their university careers.

Added to this is the impact that social media has on body image, as Aguilar's (2023) research in the province of Chiclayo has shown that increased social media use tends to be linked to an alteration—whether emotional, mental, or behavioral—in university students' perception of their body image.

Regarding psychological well-being, Mego and Suárez (2020) indicated that students perceived that intensive social media use can negatively affect their psychological well-being, underscoring the importance of balanced use. They also conclude that those who perceive their well-being inadequately tend to turn to these platforms to cope with everyday personal difficulties. He explained that, while Peruvian university students consider social media useful for their academic life, they are aware that excessive use can have adverse effects. These perceptions suggest that the use of social media in the university context must be responsible and balanced.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This document demonstrated that the use of social media in Peruvian university education generates both positive and negative impacts. On the one hand, the report's findings show that if implemented in a planned manner, these networks can benefit by developing collaborative learning, increasing student and faculty interaction, and accessing educational content. Specific cases of positive experiences indicate that, with proper guidance, the use of social media can improve the educational experience.

However, it was also shown that the indiscriminate and unregulated use of social media can negatively affect academic performance, fostering procrastination, and can also generate technological dependence and lead to cyberbullying. These negative effects are intensified in an environment lacking defined institutional policies and digital literacy, deteriorating the educational environment and limiting the pedagogical use of technology.

In this sense, the need for Peruvian universities to implement digital literacy policies is reiterated, including regulations for social media in education and plans to foster critical thinking and self-regulation. It is not only about training in technical digital skills, but also about training that is ethical and reflective.

Finally, it is necessary for Peruvian universities to adopt a critical perspective on the use of social media to promote their use in education, avoiding more restrictive approaches. Furthermore, the idea of curricular integration must not be disconnected from the cultural and technological reality of students, which requires proactively comparing these strategies with global trends in digital pedagogy, thus achieving educational quality.

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