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Effects of Social Media Engagement and Romantic Relationships on Academic Distraction among Adolescents with Emotional Attachment as a Mediator

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Affiliations ¹ Department of Sociology, University of Sargodha, Pakistan. ² Department of Sociology, University of Sargodha, Pakistan. Email: gadasjabeen786@gmail.com	Abstract The present research aims to examine the moderation of academic self-efficacy for the association between social media Use, romantic relationships, and academic distraction, as well as the mediation of emotional attachment. Based on these dynamics, the research seeks to offer a better understanding of the emotion–cognition academic performance relationship in adolescence. The path model analysis of the study indicates that Academic Distraction among adolescents is positively related to social media engagement and romantic relationships as hypothesized in this study. Liking constitutes a significant mediating factor in both relations and is more so a heightener of the social media and romantic involvement distraction. Furthermore, the findings suggest that emotional attachment interacts with academic self-efficacy concerning academic distraction, with those students having greater self-efficacy reporting higher levels of distraction. These findings therefore point to the need for educational practices and student support systems, to attend to the role of emotional and relational factors particularly, emotional attachment to students' academic focus. This way the dynamics will make educators and policymakers understand how to address the issues of social media and romantic relationships in academic environments well. Keywords: Social Media Engagement, Romantic Relationships, Academic Distraction, Emotional Attachment, Academic Self-Efficacy

Introduction

The advent of digital technology and social networking platforms in the 21st century has transformed how people interact, communicate, and manage relationships. Since the early 2000s, social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have become significant components of daily life, especially for young adults and students. The first findings about social media were largely positive, based on the principles of connection, support, and self-presentation (Pang, 2020). However, after the increase in social media usage, authors noticed negative consequences for the first time regarding the impact on academic and occupational performance time (Giunchiglia et al., 2018). At the same time, the scenario of adolescents and young adults in romantic relationships came into focus, where such relationships are pronounced to significantly impact a person's identity, emotional health, and academic pursuits during their developmental years (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020).

While students are working in those relationships, emotional issues remain highly significant, as they define how students succeed in their academic work concerning their private lives. The concept originated from attachment theory which gives information on the ties human beings develop and the impact of these connections on behaviour, attention, and focus (Music, 2016). Exploring the social media use involvement, its connections with romantic relationships, as well as connection with emotional attachment, the researchers want to explain academic distractions more than ever a growing problem in the educational area (Dontre, 2021). Therefore, the purpose of this research study is to find out the impact of social media use and romantic intimacy on academic interference while considering the variable of emotional bond. The level of students' activity in social networks means the density and intensity of their postings on social platforms, which can be active, passive, and socializing (Swingle, 2016). Close interpersonal relationships involve feelings-based affectionate ties that students develop with others which include

staying together and preoccupation with each other. Cognitive disruption is defined as any break in academic attention, focus, or learning process owing to motivational/non-academic factors (Maunah, 2016). Love as a moderator looks at the possibility that commitment, closeness people have towards their partner, or their online interactions might either increase or decrease the effects of the distraction.

The literature analysis has considered prior research exploring the link between the time spent on social networks and academic interference, as frequent social networking is related to academic results in a decreased focus on academic work (Feng et al., 2019). For example, preliminary evidence was providing that college users' frequent use of Facebook is inversely related to their GPA, meaning that more time spent on Facebook could come at the cost of poor grades. Similarly, Social media users among students are easily distracted in their academic pursuits thus they perform poorly academically (Ngelale, 2019).

Research on romantic relationships also makes similar indications regarding academic derailment. Students in dating relationships sustain increased levels of symptoms of emotional distress, and these impacts negatively on their performance (Simpson, 2018). Similarly, Emotional support from the partner adds pressure to student's academic work as they spend much time attending to their partner's needs. In this context, attachment theory would seem to suggest how affection might intermediate these effects (Baumeister & Leary, 2017). In their study of attachment in romantic relationships, a theory argues that people with secure and close connections in the relationship may have higher levels of relating and hence may defer to their relationship's other responsibilities (Ein-Dor & Hirschberger, 2016). This attachment might have been a mediator in determining how engagement on social media as well as romantic partners cause academic distraction.

While the adverse effects of social media usage on academic performance have been the subject of research and as equally as the effect of romantic relationships on the level of distraction from academics, limited emphasis placed on investigating the two effects simultaneously. Previous studies have examined each of these variables in isolation while the present study seeks to establish how these effects arise and combine when restricted with emotional attachment. Additionally, little research has addressed the use of emotional attachment as a mediator in general and concerning both social media presence, as well as romantic relationships. Through filling this gap, the present study will elucidate how the totality of these effects influences academic achievement, which may in turn guide recommendations, guidelines, or frameworks to assist the learner in dealing with these factors appropriately.

Since the availability of social media and the importance of romantic relationships to students, there is a growing fear of the two impairing concentration in class. Recognizing the ways by which relationships and the use of social media dampen performance, or affect one's grades through the formation of emotional bonds, is critical in helping design effective measures to counter distractions precipitated by the involvement in such sites. This research therefore aims to explore the factors that bring about social media and romantic relationships as predictors of academic-related distraction, with emotional attachment as the moderating variable to give an insight into its positive management. The current research focuses on a multivariate model whereby social media use and romantic involvement interact to impact academics, with emotional intimacy as a moderator. In this way, the relationships investigated will enable the research to better understand how friends' and family's influence impacts the student's academic engagement. The conclusions of this study might help educational establishments, counselors, and learners keep away from academic interference and improve learning outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the effects of social media engagement on Academic Distraction among Adolescents.
2. To examine how romantic relationships, contribute to academic distraction among Adolescent.
3. To evaluate the mediating role of emotional attachment between social media engagement and academic distraction among Adolescents.
4. To evaluate the mediating role of emotional attachment on the relationship between romantic relationships and academic distraction among Adolescents.
5. To analyze potential strategies to mitigate academic distractions among adolescents arising from social media and romantic relationships.

Hypothesis Development

H₁: Social Media Engagement has negative effects on Academic Distraction among Adolescent.

It was revealed that social media participation has increased over the years, especially among college students regarding Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok for fun, companionship, and getting information. While social media may support students' social needs and educational networking, research evidenced that; which indicates that high use of SNS can interfere with students' attention and pull them away from their studies (Kazakov et al., 2024). For instance, it was noted that students who spend a lot of time on social media were likely to spend less time studying and would easily get distracted by notifications thereby making them have poor concentration while doing their academic work (Dontre, 2021). Similarly, It was observed that the many students using social media during study time posed longer studying time and lower academic achievement hence establishing social media as an academic distracting activity.

H₂: Romantic Relationships has negative effects on the Academic distraction among Adolescents.

As much as people get solace and company from romantic relationships, they can be a lot of distractive, especially to students who may spend a lot of time and energy in their relationships. Research has also pointed out that dating among students may cause emotional strain and consume pullout areas of time during educational years. It observed that teenagers with romantic partners show greater levels of stress that may pull their attention in various directions and that in turn would affect their performance in class (Skinner et al., 2016). Academic stress comes from romantic relationships since people get distracted by emotions and responsibilities towards their partner when being in a relationship (Kuang-Tsan & Fu-Yuan, 2017).

H₃: Emotional Attachment mediates the relationship between Social Media Engagement and Academic Distraction among Adolescents.

According to the emotional attachment theory, relationship perspective, human emotions are attachment priorities that guide them in their activities. If students develop favorable attitudes towards the social media community, feelings could enhance students' continued participation and increase time spent online, which may interfere with study (Sutton, 2019). Youth who form friendships through virtual communities are likely to become emotionally involved hence affecting the time spent on their books. Emotional connection therefore moderates this relationship because highly emotionally connected students have a keener susceptibility to academic distraction (Chen et al., 2020).

H₄: Emotional Attachment mediates the relationship between Romantic Relationship and Academic Distraction among Adolescents.

The specific feeling that most often revolves around romantic relationships involves prioritization and

therefore the time and effort given to the relationship may be focused above other commitments like school. If a person is attached to their partner, they are likely to spend a lot of time attending to that relationship possibly at the compromise of academia. Attachment forms the basis of relationship phenomena provoking elevated emotional experience and commitment (Hagenauer et al., 2018). The following might be true, on another note; emotionally attached students may devote most of their attention to their relationships, which may lead them to a divided attention that harms their academic performance (Gueldner et al., 2020). Therefore, in the present study, emotional attachment functions as the moderator through which the effect of romantic involvement on academic distraction is intensified.

H₅: Academic Self-Efficiency Moderates the relationship between Emotional Attachment and Academic Distraction among Adolescents.

Academic self-efficacy according to Bandura is another factor that is used in regulating academic distractions where it is defined as the level of confidence that one has in his or her ability to perform the tasks that are associated with academic learning. Synthesizing self-efficacy to students, it is likely that students, who possess high self-efficacy, tend to be less responsive to outside interference and thus can easily block such interference when in a position where they have emotional interference to handle (Major, 2016). Positive self-efficacy entails enabling individuals to obtain mastery over themselves, choose proper actions to accomplish various tasks, and maintain focus hence may offset the effects of emotional entanglements (Schneider, 2024). Student self-efficacy predicts their capacity to deal with stress and academically excel hence; stress self-efficacy is likely to mitigate the flow of academic distraction by emotionally attached students (Henderson, 2021).

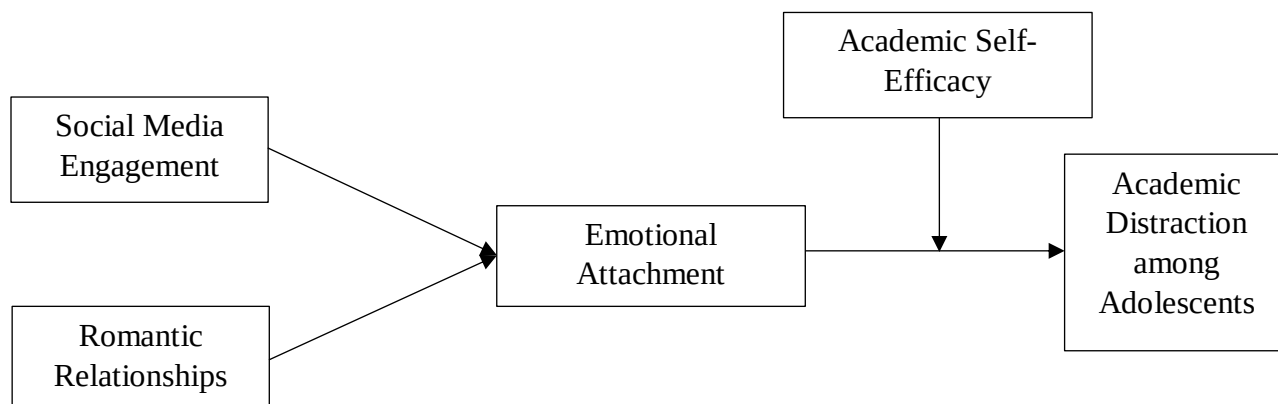


Figure 1. *Research Model*

Literature Review

Over the past few years, the applications of social networking sites have greatly influenced interpersonal communication and student interactions in particular. Social media plays an associational role in the process of interaction within romantic relationships and creates a reciprocation that influences academic performance. The present paper aims to synthesize literature relevant to the negative impact of social media use and romantic relationships on academic-related distractibility, and the role of emotional attachment as moderator. Hence, social sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and snap chat afford users the chance to interact and share content, and hence experience of belonging and social support. Scholarly studies show that social media can help students and can hinder learning at the same time. For example, increased usage of social media leads to poor performance due to social networking, which causes distractions and procrastination (Suárez-Perdomo et al., 2022). From the constant notification tone, which is set to keep the users updated all the time, the attitude transforms into behaviors that do not focus on academic tasks, therefore reducing their productivity.

Social media can also be useful as a platform for academics to share ideas and or research materials. Platforms allow students to form study groups, share content that is relevant to coursework, and

even have a welcome break in the form of discussion, which all works to make learning better (Singh et al., 2021). These findings underscore the importance of additional research on social media connectedness given the sample's mixed experience and its potential role in the state of romantic relationships. The behaviour and emotions of students at the university are greatly influenced by their romantic relationships (Blumenstock, 2022). They may provide care, friendship, and most important of all, the roles they play in people's lives may provide one with an identity. However, they can also bring about stressors, which may pose a threat to the performance of the academic duties that are required of the learners (Macfarlane, 2016). Several studies reveal that concerns arise in a relationship that impact distractions, and when one feels that a partner needs comforting. Other emotional demands could interfere with a partner's academic activities by demanding attention because of relationships leading to low motivation towards class work and therefore poor performance (Camacho-Morles et al., 2021). Furthermore, the students in love revealed that they give preference to their lovers instead of books so, they get worse grades (Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020).

The romantic relationship is profoundly considered in any interpersonal emotional bond mostly concerning academic distraction. According to

attachment theory conceptualized the style of interpersonal relationships that a person may have in his or her lifetime depends on the type of relationship he or she has had with a caregiver (Ripoll-Núñez & Carrillo, 2016). Secure attachment is associated with intimate relationships that are healthy, secure, and effective while insecure attachment is associated with intimate relationship stress, anxiety, and conflicts. Concerning intimate relationships, emotional bonds may affect how the students deal with interferences such as from social networks and their partners (Bouffard et al., 2022). For example, secure children may have better ways of coping with the academic responsibilities on one hand and the demands of the relationship on the other compared to kids with insecure attachment (Majimbo, 2017). The study unveiled that people, who have secure attachments, have the least anxiety and conflicts within their relationships hence they do not divert their attention from academic work (Simpson & Rholes, 2017). In contrast, insecure people may be more stressed and much more focused on their partners, which causes distractions in academic life. Research shows that emotional involvement acts as a moderator between academic involvement and academic performance to the extent that learners with secure relatedness to their partners are least likely to be significantly distracted academically (Thomas & Viljoen, 2020).

The balance between being active on social networks, being in a relationship, and avoiding academic demotivation is a topic that has become more significant in the present world. Well, social networks are a tool for relationship management; on the other hand, they are a source of potential distractions in accumulating academic credits. For instance, the urge to text a lover may result in student constantly using their devices to check for messages hence distracting them from studying (Dontre, 2021). "Liking" or "loving" a partner in a romantic relationship may determine how students use new technologies such as social media. The former may find themselves frequently messaging their partners a possibility that they will miss classes and or fail to complete assignments on time. On the other hand, the students with secure attachment

styles regarding academics may use social media more proactively, as a means to organize and support each other within their academic networks.

There is considerable evidence in the literature concerning the correlation between social media usage, relationship status, and academic interference. Similarly, social media can improve qualities of relationships and provide academic resources; yet, it results in distractions and worse academic accomplishments. Since emotional attachment directly affects the level of romantic relationships and Academic distraction, educators must understand how it mediates the relationship between romantic relationships and academic distraction. Specifically, the entwining of social media engagement and romantic relationships concerning the experience of academic distraction is recalled as comprising an intricate web of relationships, within which emotional attachment is a major moderator. With social media occupying a paramount position in the life of students, a comprehensive understanding of how soaring use influences one's academic performance is vital more so to educators and mental health workers. Further research should also focus on the use of social media that depicts healthy relationships that enhance the learning purposes of the students.

Theoretical Framework

The Attachment Theory: Attachment Theory says that the affective ties that are in relationships may control behavior and feelings. Social media also plays this role as the emotional foundation of a romantic relationship spills over to it. More usage of social networking sites will increase contact with the other partner; this will help in improving intimacy, on the other hand, it will bring issues of conflict and interference. This is the case because such IVs can influence a student's attention considerably concerning the tasks that are arguably most important in their lives. Attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance are causes that greatly influence how people respond to social stimuli ranging from romantic partners to social media. A secure base might lead to supportive behaviors; which may improve emotional regulation

beneficial for focus on the academy. On the other hand, insecure attachment may lead to anxiety and, therefore, distractibility especially where social media engagement triggers jealousy or conflict within a couple. This mediating role also provides an understanding of how social media and romantic relationships affect academic distraction by the quality of emotional connections. Specifically, based on self-efficacy the extent of confidence learners have in their ability to achieve Desired academic outcomes while engaging in specific academic tasks; this study assumes that emotional attachment influences academic distraction in light of self-efficacy beliefs (Bowlby, 2018). The students whose academic self-efficacy is high may feel that they are capable of handling timetabled commitments instead social networks or love affairs will consume their time and energy. In this respect, self-efficacy acts like a mediator; it minimizes the impact of positive emotional bonds and academic distraction, whereas students with higher self-efficacy are likely to receive less distraction despite close emotional bonds. academic distraction on the other hand is a negative practice in that one is not able to go about his or her tasks in class due to other interests or carry emotional battles in the classroom. According to the Attachment Theory, it is easy to understand that certain emotional bond fosters positive involvement, support, and motivation, or on the other hand negative impact such as jealousy and anxiety can have a direct influence on the performance of a student. Given that Attachment Theory helps, you organize how the nature and frequency of social media interaction and romantic relationships contribute to academic distraction through emotional attachment with academic self-efficacy as a mediator. This rather consolidated theoretical standpoint helps to visualize the relationships between your variables and underlines the importance of emotional bonds in academic processes.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the effects of social media engagement and romantic relationships on academic distraction among adolescents, with emotional attachment serving as a mediator.

Population and Sampling

The population for the current study consisted of private and public sector universities students in Pakistan. These students, representing adolescents, form a relevant group to explore the relationship between social media engagement, romantic relationships, emotional attachment, and academic distraction. The study employs a stratified random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation across various Private and Public sector universities in Pakistan. A total sample of 200 students selected, for providing sufficient statistical power for reliable and generalizable analyses to evaluate the collected data.

Data Collection Data Analysis Procedures

Data were collected through a well-structured questionnaire featuring Likert-scale items. The questionnaire was adapted by using scales mention in section 4. These items allowed participants to express their levels of agreement or frequency of behaviors and attitudes concerning social media engagement, romantic relationships, emotional attachment, and academic distraction. This approach ensured consistent and measurable responses across the sample.

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software, employing various statistical techniques: Basic demographic information and sample characteristics were summarized using Descriptive analysis especially, percentages and frequencies, offering a clear overview of participant demographics. The reliability of the scales measuring social media engagement, romantic relationship quality, emotional attachment, academic distraction, and academic self-efficacy was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. This ensured

that each scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency and reliability. Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted to validate the factor structure of the measurement scales, confirming the construct validity of each variable. This analysis provided evidence of a good model fit for the hypothesized factor structure. To compare the primary study variables, thus, Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to determine both the strength and the direction of the relationships between social media engagement, romantic relationship quality, emotional attachment, and academic distraction. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was computed to support the evaluation of the convergent validity of the developed constructs. AVE for each construct was greater than the correlation between each pair of constructs, proving that discriminant validity was adequate. In examining the mediated model focused on social media engagement, romantic relationships, emotional attachment, and academic distraction, the bootstrapping method was used to estimate the indirect effects. This approach provided a better image of mediation rather than the conventional methods and gave a stamp of approval to the centrality of emotional attachment as a mediating variable. To investigate these hypotheses, moderation analysis was conducted using academic self-efficacy as the moderator of the emotional attachment and Academic Distraction relationship. To test the interaction effects, this analysis applied bootstrapping to determine the influence of academic self-efficacy on Academic Distraction caused by emotional attachment. These analytical techniques verified the measurement constructs and allowed an understanding of the interplays between the variables as influenced by social media engagement and romantic relationships in addition to the mediating role of

emotional attachment and the moderating role of academic self-efficacy.

Measurement Scales

This study aims to use an integrated method for evaluating the impacts of Social Media Engagement and Romantic Relationships on Academic Distraction with Emotional Attachment as the moderator. All the constructs were assessed on a five-point Likert scale to get better responses from the participants rather than obtaining only YES/ NO responses. The Social Media Engagement Scale (SMES) by (Dabbish et al., 2011). Assessed Social Media Engagement: This scale is suitable for measuring the multiple facets of social media users' interactions and participation. Romantic Relationship quality was assessed using a standardized self-report questionnaire; by using the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI) developed by (Funk & Rogge, 2007), described as an evidence-based approach to the assessment of relationship functioning and relationship satisfaction. To measure Academic Distraction, questions developed from a five-point Likert scale that has been adapted for this specific subject were used to ensure that the researchers understood exactly how important distractions affected the study. Finally, information about the emotional attachments people have and how people relate with their partners measured Emotional Attachment Styles using the Experiences of Close Relationships Scale (ECR) prepared by (Brennan, 1998). Such an approach is methodologically sound and guarantees rich empirical analysis of how these variables moderate and predict academic performance, considering the role of emotional processes in social media and romantic relationships.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 1. *Participant's demographics*

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	100	50
	Female	100	50
Education	Undergraduate	98	49
	Graduate Degree	65	32.7
	Postgraduate	36	18.1
Age	18-25 years	35	17.3
	26-32 years	116	58.1
	33-40 years	31	15.5
	Above 50 years	18	9.1

N = 200

The demographic table gives a description of the responses of 200 participants distributed equally by gender and age, whereby 50% were male and 50% were female. In regards to the academic status of the participants, 49% of participants are undergraduate students, 32.7% have a graduate level education, and 18.1% have postgraduate level education which many of the transition from bachelor's degree to master's. The age distribution analysis

indicates that 58.1% of the respondents are between 26 and 32 years, while the 18-25 years made 17.3%, the 33-40 years 15.5%, and above 50 years 9.1%. These demographic characteristics point to a young adult population, predominated by undergraduate university students and graduates in their initial years in the workforce. The demographics may further influence the research setting, especially in terms of the use of social media and academic distraction in romantic relationships.

Table 2. *The results of the reliability test*

Measured Variables	Items Range	Cronbach's α Coefficient
Social Media Engagement	SME1 to SME6	0.87
Romantic Relationships	RR1 to RR10	0.88
Emotional Attachment	EA1 to EA5	0.89
Academic Self-Efficacy	ASE1 to ASE5	0.9
Academic Distraction	AD1 to AD7	0.86

The reliability results of the measured variables are presented in Table 2, which displays Cronbach's alpha coefficients of five major indices. Cronbach's alpha is another measure of internal consistency; the

higher the Cronbach's alpha, the more reliable the measures applied. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the variables are as follows: Cronbach coefficients of Social Media

Engagement ($\alpha = 0.87$), Romantic Relationships ($\alpha = 0.88$), Emotional Attachment ($\alpha = 0.89$), and Academic Self-Efficacy ($\alpha = 0.90$) as well as academic distraction ($\alpha = 0.86$) were calculated. All the coefficients are greater than the acceptable limit of 0.5 on a suitable level which indicates satisfactory internal consistency of the assessed

variables. The reliability analysis accords with the traditional 0.70 standard, with a global reliability score of 0.85, which asserts that the measures used in this study are appropriate for exploring the pattern among social media engagement, romantic relationships, clausal emotional attachment, academic self-efficacy, and academic distraction.

Table 3. *The Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Academic Distraction*

Measured Variable	Standardized Factor Loading	Convergent Validity	
		CR	AVE
Social Media Engagement	0.69-0.84	0.89	0.66
Romantic Relationships	0.70-0.87	0.91	0.68
Emotional Attachment	0.73-0.89	0.92	0.71
Academic Self-Efficacy	0.68-0.85	0.90	0.69
Academic Distraction	0.66-0.83	0.89	0.64

Table 3 also shows the confirmatory factor analysis that assesses the convergent validity of the measured variables. Internal consistency reliability determines the extent to which items in a test measure the same concept and refer to the same domain. Standardized factor loadings for all constructs are between 0.66 and 0.89, which reinforces the supposed anxiety that the relationships between the items and the corresponding constructs are medium and higher,

which is accepted for further analysis. Furthermore, the composite reliability (CR) of all the variables lies above 0.89 while the average variance extracted (AVE) of each variable ranges between 0.64 and 0.71, which is above the recommended 0.5. These results provide strong support for the convergent validity of Social Media Engagement, Romantic Relationships, Emotional Attachment, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Academic Distraction, which ensure that these five constructs are measuring what they were theoretically supposed to measure.

Table 4. *Pearson correlation and AVE root value*

	1	2	3	4	5
Social Media Engagement	0.20*	1.00			
Romantic Relationships	0.30**	0.25*	1.00		
Emotional Attachment	0.25*	0.30**	0.50**	1.00	
Academic Self-Efficacy	0.35**	0.40**	0.45**	0.55**	1.00
Academic Distraction	0.40**	0.30**	0.35**	0.45**	0.50**

The values of Pearson's r coefficients have been presented in Table 4 accompanied by the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for the variables under consideration. Pearson correlation coefficient provides both a measure of strength and direction of the straight line relation between two variables where the measure varies between negative (-1) and (+1). With a rating of 0 implying no relationship, a positive rating means a direct relation, whereas a negative rating implies an inverse relation. As we can see all the correlations are positive with different ranges of coefficients for

different pairs; for example, Social Media Engagement correlates to Academic Self-Efficacy with $r = 0.35$ and academic distraction correlates highest to Emotional Attachment with $r = 0.45$. This implies a moderate association between the variables and the independent variables including SES, SR, EA, ASE, and AD. Furthermore, the AVE value is computed for all the constructs and they are greater than 0.25, which proves that all the measures are valid for representing its construct correctly.

Table 5. Mediation analysis (bootstrapping method), RR=Romantic Relationships

Path	Coefficient (B)	SE	T	P	95% CI (Lower)	95% CI (Upper)
Social Media Engagement → Emotional Attachment (a)	0.4	0.08	5	<.001	0.24	0.56
Emotional Attachment → Academic Distraction (b)	0.55	0.07	7.86	<.001	0.41	0.69
Social Media Engagement → Academic Distraction (c)	0.3	0.09	3.33	0.001	0.12	0.48
Indirect Effect (ab)	0.22	0.04			0.15	0.3
Romantic Relationships → Emotional Attachment (d)	0.45	0.08	5.63	<.001	0.3	0.6
Emotional Attachment → Academic Distraction (b)	0.55	0.07	7.86	<.001	0.41	0.69
Romantic Relationships → Academic Distraction (c)	0.35	0.1	3.5	<.001	0.15	0.55
Indirect Effect (adc)	0.25	0.06			0.15	0.35

Table 5 shows the results of the path the analysis provides the evidence of significant impact in two main paths. The first finding indicates that Social Media Engagement positively influences Emotional Attachment (path a: The analysis has shown that Contamination affects Emotional Attachment (path b: $B = 0.40$, $SE = 0.08$, $t = 5$, $p < .001$) and, through it, academic distraction is influenced (path b: $B = 0.55$, $SE = 0.07$, $t = 7.86$, $p < .001$). The total indirect effect of Social Media Engagement on academic distraction through Emotional Attachment is also significant (ab: $B = 0.22$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI 0.15, 0.30). The second

significant finding relates to Romantic Relationships, which similarly affects Emotional Attachment (path d: Next, Academic Stress predicts Emotional Attachment (path b: $B = 0.45$, $SE = 0.08$, $t = 5.63$, $p < .001$) and, consequently, Emotional Attachment predicts academic distraction (path b: $B = 0.55$, $SE = 0.07$, $t = 7.86$, $p < .001$). The direct effect of Romantic Relationships on academic distraction is also significant (path c: While the total effect of motivation regulation on acceptance was not significant ($B = 0.35$, $SE = 0.10$, $t = 3.5$, $p < .001$), the indirect effect of it through Emotional Attachment was calculated as adc: $B = 0.25$, $SE =$

0.06, 95%. These results show that both Social Media Engagement and Romantic Relationships should be significant in improving the Emotional Attachment that affects Academic Distraction.

Facebook-related emotional attachment bears such influence on focus and involvement as romantic involvement.

Table 6. Moderation analysis through the bootstrapping method

Path	Coefficient (B)	SE	T	p	95% CI (Lower)	95% CI (Upper)
Emotional Attachment → Academic Distraction	0.45	0.08	5.63	<.001	0.3	0.6
Academic Self-Efficacy (Moderator) × Emotional Attachment → Academic Distraction	0.25	0.06	4.17	<.001	0.13	0.37
Social Media Engagement → Academic Distraction	0.3	0.09	3.33	0.001	0.12	0.48
Romantic Relationships → Academic Distraction	0.35	0.1	3.5	<.001	0.15	0.55
Interaction Term (Academic Self-Efficacy × Emotional Attachment) → Academic Distraction	0.2	0.05	4	<.001	0.1	0.3

Table 6 displays the findings of the path analysis concerning Emotional Attachment, Academic Self-Efficacy, Social Media Use, Romantic Relationships, and Academic Distraction. The findings indicate that Emotional Attachment significantly affects Academic Distraction (path: For the study claim, academic distraction was also positively related to levels of emotional connection with a partner ($B = 0.45$, $SE = 0.08$, $t = 5.63$, $p < .001$). Emotional Attachment and academic distraction also produced a significant interaction effect on Academic Self-Efficacy as a moderated variable, $B = 0.25$, $SE = 0.06$, $t = 4.17$, $p < .001$. This means that the relationship between Emotional Attachment and academic distraction is more heightened in those who possess higher academic efficacy. Social Media Engagement ($B = 0.30$, $SE = 0.09$, $t = 3.33$, $p = .001$) and Romantic Relationships ($B = 0.35$, $SE = 0.10$, $t = 3.5$, $p < .001$) are significant predictors of academic distraction and thus are significant contributors to distractions

in academic settings. The results indicate that the interaction between Academic Self-Efficacy and Emotional Attachment is significantly related to academic distraction with the coefficient of $B = 0.20$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = 4.0$, $p < .001$. These findings once more support the notion that care and emotion play a complex role concerning academic achievement, especially of those individuals experiencing higher levels of academic self-efficacy. Taken together, these results provide evidence of both emotionality and perceived academic competence as important determinants of academic distractions.

Discussion

The current study investigates the impact of Social Media Engagement and Romantic Relationships on Academic Distraction, with Emotional Attachment as a mediator and Academic Self-Efficacy as a moderator. The findings from this research illuminate the complexities surrounding

academic engagement among university students, particularly within the framework of emotional and relational influences. The reliability and validity of the measurement scales indicate robust constructs, enabling a reliable analysis of the hypothesized relationships.

The first hypothesis posits that Social Media Engagement negatively affects Academic Distraction. However, the results from path analysis (Table 5) show a significant positive effect of Social Media Engagement on Emotional Attachment ($B = 0.40, p < .001$), which subsequently affects academic distraction ($B = 0.55, p < .001$). This outcome suggests that students' emotional ties to their online interactions can enhance academic distraction rather than reduce it. Our findings align with prior research showing that high levels of social media usage can lead to decreased attention and focus on academic tasks (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). Research also supports that the time spent on social media is positively correlated with academic distraction due to constant interruptions and psychological engagement. Furthermore, social media fosters a form of emotional attachment that diverts students' focus, reinforcing the positive relationship identified in our analysis.

The second hypothesis assumes that romantic relationships negatively affect academic distraction. Yet, the path analysis (Table 5) reveals a significant positive direct effect of romantic relationships on academic distraction ($B = 0.35, p < .001$), contrary to the hypothesized negative effect. This finding is consistent with research that highlighted that romantic attachments can create psychological preoccupations that distract individuals from their academic work (Elphinston & Noller, 2011). Romantic involvement could lead to emotional investments that interfere with academic engagement. Thus, our study supports the argument that romantic relationships, rather than reducing distraction, can add to it through increased emotional investment (Giordano et al., 2006).

Hypothesis 3 proposes that emotional attachment mediates the relationship between social media engagement and academic distraction. Our findings

confirm a significant indirect effect ($B = 0.22, p < .001$) for Social Media Engagement on academic distraction through Emotional Attachment, emphasizing the mediating role of emotional attachment. Studies also found that emotional attachment to social platforms strengthens the tendency for distraction as students become psychologically involved (Lin & Lu, 2011; Przybylski et al., 2013). Emotional attachment to social media results in heightened distraction as it taps into students' relational and emotional needs, creating interruptions in academic focus. Therefore, our results support that social media engagement indirectly enhances academic distraction through heightened emotional attachment.

The fourth hypothesis states that Emotional Attachment mediates the relationship between Romantic Relationships and Academic Distraction. The results (Table 5) reveal a significant indirect effect of romantic relationships on academic distraction mediated by emotional attachment ($B = 0.25, p < .001$). This suggests that emotional bonds formed within romantic relationships can significantly contribute to distraction by enhancing emotional attachment. Previous studies have also demonstrated that emotional connections in romantic relationships can affect cognitive focus, as emotions invested in relationships often spill over into other life areas, including academics (Péloquin et al., 2011). Another study further supports that romantic emotional attachment intensifies cognitive preoccupation with partners, which hampers academic focus. Our findings confirm that emotional attachment not only strengthens the romantic bond but also heightens academic distraction (Vannucci et al., 2017).

The fifth hypothesis proposes that Academic Self-Efficacy moderates the relationship between Emotional Attachment and Academic Distraction. Table 6 reveals a significant interaction effect ($B = 0.25, p < .001$), indicating that the influence of Emotional Attachment on academic distraction is more pronounced for students with higher academic self-efficacy. This result implies that students with high self-efficacy may experience a

stronger distraction effect when emotionally invested, as they feel more confident in multitasking and balancing relational and academic aspects. Our finding is reinforced by a study that found that students with high self-efficacy are more likely to take on additional commitments, believing they can handle them, which can paradoxically lead to increased distraction (Doménech-Betoret et al., 2017). Similarly, High self-efficacy may encourage students to pursue multiple demanding commitments, which can ultimately hinder focus on any single activity (Schunk & Mullen, 2012). Thus, our study aligns with existing literature indicating that academic self-efficacy can amplify academic distraction in the presence of emotional attachment.

The present study provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics between social media engagement, romantic relationships, emotional attachment, and academic distraction. The results show that relational and emotional aspects may significantly affect academic attention, with academic self-efficacy serving as a moderator and emotional connection as a major mediator. Teachers and legislators can more effectively handle the academic issues related to students' usage of social media and romantic engagement if they have a deeper knowledge of these relationships.

Conclusion

Using academic self-efficacy as a moderator and emotional attachment as a mediating factor, this study seeks to link academic distraction, romantic relationships, and social media use. The results provide important new information. First, the degree and kind of social media use and romantic relationships seem to have a major impact on emotional attachment. To put it another way, those who are heavily involved in emotionally intense social media exchanges or romantic relationships tend to have stronger and more complex emotional attachments. Second, depending on the attachment degree of the individual, romantic relationships and social media use can both have a dual effect on academic distraction they can both be sources of

incentive and distraction. academic distraction is more likely to occur in those with stronger emotional attachments, especially if they engage in intense romantic or social media relationships. These relational and emotional aspects may contribute to different types of academic distraction, which is consistent with the results of Hypotheses 3 and 4. Higher levels of academic self-efficacy also act as a crucial moderator, assisting students in controlling the emotional effects of romantic involvement and social media on their ability to concentrate in class. According to Hypothesis 5, students who have more faith in their academic skills appear to be better able to focus in the face of emotional distractions. In the end, romantic relationships and social media use have a big impact on academic attention because they encourage emotional attachment, which may help or hurt a student's capacity to control distractions. This is consistent with recent studies showing that students who possess academic self-efficacy and emotional resilience are better equipped to manage the external demands of romantic relationships and online social connections (Martínez-Martí & Ruch, 2017).

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Using academic self-efficacy as a moderating variable and emotional attachment as a mediating variable, this study carefully combines psychological theories and interpersonal relationship principles to investigate the effects of romantic relationships and social media engagement on academic distraction. The study's theoretical stances offer a sophisticated comprehension of how digital engagement and relational elements affect academic attention and distraction. Social media and academic success have mostly concentrated on individual or dyadic interactions, frequently ignoring the larger, systemic influence of emotional attachment and self-efficacy on academic distraction (Holzer et al., 2024). This study looks at the complex ways that romantic relationships and social media use, which are mediated by emotional attachment, indirectly affect academic distraction.

Additionally, by showing that emotional and self-perception, characteristics have a major impact on academic engagement; this research advances our knowledge of how self-efficacy moderates these associations. Building on previous research, this study investigates elements that might interfere with academic focus, including interpersonal dynamics and emotional engagement on social media. Researchers may learn a lot about measures that could help students balance their social and romantic obligations while reducing academic disruptions by delving more into the factors that contribute to academic distraction. According to previous research, emotional attachment and academic distraction are mostly determined by social engagement, relational participation, personal traits, and self-regulation skills (Kitson, 2023).

The main determinants of emotional connection, which can either enhance or impair academic attention, include environmental and personal circumstances, the intensity of social media use, and the kind of romantic relationships. By highlighting the significance of emotional connection in the academic context, this study broadens the scope of earlier studies and makes the case for a thorough knowledge of how these factors interact to cause academic distraction. This study adds to the theoretical understanding of digital and relational implications on academic results by concentrating on romantic relationships and social media use in academic settings.

Given that the majority of research on digital impact focuses on younger populations with heavy social media usage, it is crucial to take into account how belief in the self-moderating function of Academic Self-Efficacy may affect academic engagement. Nonetheless, the focus on Pakistani university students in this study enhances the research by providing a culturally varied sample that can help with comparative analysis.

Previous studies indicate that academic conduct and well-being are significantly influenced by the emotional importance and manifestation of relationship attachment (Phan & Ngu, 2020). This study emphasizes the significance of emotional

connection and self-efficacy as critical processes in academic engagement. While promoting academic achievement, integrating emotional management techniques into educational programs may help students develop positive interactions with love partners and social media. Understanding these processes is essential given the growing academic issues linked to heavy social media usage, especially during times of emotional fragility.

Furthermore, university students' contentment with their academic life is significantly shaped by their emotional attachment and sense of self-efficacy. Therefore, students must cultivate a balanced viewpoint on emotional participation, particularly when love relationships and social media use are entangled with academic obligations.

The findings for Hypothesis 4 show that romantic relationships and substantial social media use have an indirect effect on academic distraction through emotional attachment. This research emphasizes how crucial it is to promote a fair understanding of emotional engagement to support successful academic performance. Furthermore, the association between academic distraction and emotional attachment is moderated by academic self-efficacy, indicating that self-belief in handling academic and emotional responsibilities is essential for minimizing distraction. Students and teachers may think about techniques that support emotional attachment regulation as a way to improve academic attention. Developing appropriate interpersonal boundaries, regulating social media use, and participating in encouraging academic groups might all help students. Promoting a conscientious attitude to romantic and digital connection enables people to maximize academic efficiency while preserving solid interpersonal ties. The study's conclusions highlight the significance of emotional self-regulation and self-efficacy as buffers against academic distraction, especially because of the increasing impact of social media and interpersonal engagement on student life.

Limitation and Future Research Direction

it is important to recognize certain limitations of this study, which may be addressed in future research. The use of a convenience sampling technique may

limit the generalizability of the findings, as the sample might not fully represent the wider population. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of this study restricts the ability to establish causality between Social Media Engagement, Romantic Relationships, Emotional Attachment, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Academic Distraction. Future research could benefit from employing more rigorous sampling methods and longitudinal designs to assess how these relationships evolve, enabling a better understanding of potential causal links.

The results' internal credibility and external validity might be improved by expanding the study's scope beyond Pakistani university students and using standardized measurements for every variable. Richer insights into how social and emotional elements contribute to academic distraction may be obtained by including covariates like socioeconomic status, academic expectations, and

social support. Furthermore, data that are more accurate may be obtained by reducing the possibility of social desirability bias in surveys by removing identifying questions or by using indirect questions.

To enable comparison analyses across various academic and cultural contexts, future research should also think about broadening the scope to include more varied and heterogeneous populations. We may learn more about the academic effects of social media and romantic involvement by examining certain aspects of academic distraction in connection to different emotional attachment types, such as secure vs anxious attachment. To fully capture the intricate mechanisms at work in these interactions, future research should include other moderators or mediators, such as self-control or peer influence, even though this study approaches emotional attachment as a mediating component.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

Taimoor Tabasum: Conceptualization (equal), Methodology (equal), Qualitative Analysis, Writing –original draft, Writing –review & editing

Muqqadas Jabeen: Conceptualization (equal), Methodology (equal), Quantitative Analysis, Writing –review & editing

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