BEHAVIORAL IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Social media has become a vital feature of human lives, providing people with easy access to information and entertainment. Due to its widespread use among undergraduate students, it is a must to identify the relationship between social media usage and the academic performance of undergraduates. In this study, 392 undergraduates were selected using a voluntary sampling method to analyze the impact of social media usage on the academic performance of state university students in Sri Lanka. The study used correlation, regression, and demographic analysis techniques to evaluate the collected data. The results showed that all respondents use at least one social media platform, with the majority using more than one and spending more than an hour daily on social media. WhatsApp was the most widely used social media platform among undergraduates. Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to measure the correlation between social media use and undergraduate academic performance, and regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between variables. The findings revealed a substantial negative correlation between social media use and academic performance among undergraduates at state universities in Sri Lanka. The study suggests that students should control their social media usage and prioritize their academic tasks to mitigate this negative impact. In conclusion, social media has become integral to humans' day-to-day lives, particularly among undergraduate students. However, excessive social media usage can negatively affect academic performance. Therefore, students should be mindful of their social media usage and prioritize their academic work to avoid compromising performance.

Keywords: Academic performances, social media, state universities, undergraduates.

1. Introduction

The rapid evolution of Internet applications has fueled the growth of social media. Social media is used for various reasons, such as promoting and disseminating news worldwide. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Tick Tock, Snapchat, and LinkedIn have become increasingly significant elements of young adult life (Osharive, 2015). The Internet revolution altered the information world regarding information sharing, speed, storage, and retrieval in any form, regardless of a person's location. The growth of social media has had an influence on many aspects of society, both positively and negatively (Adzharuddin, 2014).

Communication, learning, research, and education have all been revolutionized and influenced by social media. Social media usage has grown with the development of the smartphone, allowing users to access different social networking sites with a few clicks (Alalwan et al., 2019). This has led to the widespread use of social media among many people, particularly among the younger generation globally.

Table 14: Social media usage by Age

Age	Percentage
18 – 29 yrs.	88%
30 – 49 yrs.	78%
50 – 65 yrs.	64%
65+ yrs.	37%

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 25-Feb.8, 2021

According to the US Digital Year report, online time spent on social media accounted for 14.4% of time spent. Additionally, many instructors are beginning to utilize SNSs to better communicate with and among students in their classrooms, have class debates, and project cooperation to improve learning outcomes (Maqableh et al., 2015).

However, recent studies have found that students' addiction to social media usage might have a detrimental impact on their academic performance. Nuskiya (2017) showed that frequent texting, particularly on social networking sites, has been linked to harmful habits in the younger generation, including greater stress levels, poor academic performance, bad sleep patterns, and parental

permissiveness. The technology acceptance model shows that social media usage and the academic performance of university students have a direct correlation. Saha & and Guha (2019) observed that today's students are so involved in social media that they are online about 24 hours a day. According to Hashim & Kutbi (2015), students' motives to use social media are for various reasons.

Correlation analysis from the study by Larson (2015) indicates that social media usage was strongly and significantly negatively correlated with overall students' academic performance. This study has several important practical implications for lecturers, instructors, parents, and students. There is not much research in Sri Lanka to identify the influence of these factors on using social media (Liyanage, 2019). Therefore, this research mainly investigated a study on the behavioral impact of social media usage on the academic performance of state university students in Sri Lanka.

2. Literature Review

The popularity of social media networking services has grown rapidly in the past few years due to everyone exploiting it extensively to get global access. This has led to students spending a lot of time on social media, which can lead to a lack of balance between academic and non-academic activities (Malak et al., 2022). Additionally, students use social media to establish collaboration with their peers and to enable knowledge transfer from individuals to other group members, as well as to discuss academics. This allows students to participate in knowledge-sharing and conversation, obtain easier access to material, and generate a desire to study (Mushtaq, 2018).

2.1. Academic performance

Academic performance is a multidimensional concept comprised of three dimensions: the qualities of the student, the abilities of the teacher/lecturer, and the educational environment (Asadullah et al., 2020). Accurately evaluating academic performance is a critical component in educational planning for students, and measuring performance indicates how successfully pupils have met their educational objectives (Saha & Guha, 2021) .

2.2. Social media

Social media is a computer-based technology that enables students to produce, share, and exchange data, ideas, photographs, and videos for virtual communities and learners (Sivakumar, 2020). People are increasingly using

social media platforms such as Facebook, Messenger, YouTube, Skype, Snapchat, Tick Tock, WhatsApp, Viber, Instagram, and Twitter to connect with friends, relatives, and outsiders. Social networking sites also allow for community participation in locating expertise, sharing material, collaborating to create content, collaborating to create content, and allowing knowledge workers to broaden their professional ties (Nwazor & Godwin-Maduike, 2015).

Students use social media to access and share learning resources, collaborate and post content online, manage and coordinate schedules, gain motivation for serious academic studies, participate in peer education through interaction with other students, socialize and enjoy a sense of community belonging, communicate with their lecturers, gratify themselves self, and get amusement (Jegrace et al., 2017). However, students are devoting more time to activities involving social media rather than studying, which has a negative impact on their academic performance. The negative consequences of these social media platforms outweigh the positive ones, and these sites have unintentionally harmed society.

2.2.1 Positive impacts

ICTs (information and communication technologies) are rapidly becoming key educational assistance tools (Shahriar, 2014). Social media is about sharing and creating information, but all of these characteristics are extremely valuable in the context of higher education (Sivakumar, 2020). Social media makes it easier to obtain information, contribute information, and interact. Teachers and students are connected to one another and can utilize social media platforms to further their education (Profile, 2018). According to Asadullah et al. (2020), positive internet use for students and instructors is critical and must be used for academic goals.

The internet and other social media sites have a good impact on students and are used as educational tools. Positive internet use for students and instructors is critical and must be used for academic goals.

2.2.2. Negative impacts

It is important to recognize that time spent on social activities (such as Facebook or other forms of social media) can have a negative impact on academic achievement. A study of students at a Nigerian institution found a negative association between time spent on online social networks and academic achievement. Abdalla and Qashou (2020) emphasized that spending more time on social media has a negative impact on academic achievement. Asadullah et al.

(2020) and Kelzang and Lhendup (2021) also found that social media usage has a detrimental impact on students' academic performance at Bhutan Royal University. This research looked at the impact of social networking sites on students' study habits. The author determined that spending time on social networking sites substantially impacted study habits.

2.3. Social media usage

Studies have identified that undergraduates use social media for various goals, such as developing new and retaining existing relationships, learning about social activities at the university, and making social university adjustments (Ravichandran, 2019). Time spent on social media activities necessitates faster data transmission, and according to the News poll, 99% of teens aged 16 to 17 use social networks (Bhandarkar et al., 2021). Additionally, 78% of youngsters aged 8 to 9 visit sites like Facebook, where young people spend up to 7 hours daily (Adzharuddin, 2014). Additionally, the emergence of smartphones in recent years has increased the use of digital and social media platforms, motivating students to obtain more helpful material, interact with learning groups, and access other educational systems (Verbeij et al., 2021). Finally, using social media in education motivates students to obtain more helpful material, interact with learning groups, and access other educational systems.

Sivakumar (2020) and Al-Menayes (2015) both found that social media can combine knowledge into learning and research, save time, provide clear communication, and produce access to essential information. However, excessive use of modern technology (particularly online social networking) may be highly addictive to young people (Al-Menayes, 2015b). Mobile phones are portable, providing trouble-free Internet access regardless of time or location, and can be used while walking, taking public transportation, or driving a car. Social media addiction is caused by the fear of missing out, which can lead to a decrease in study time, a significant decline in grades, a loss of interest in extracurricular activities, and a lack of interest in classes Przybylski et al. (2013). It can also lead to a decrease in study time, a significant decline in grades, a loss of interest in extracurricular activities, and a lack of interest in classes.

The Parents and Teens 2006 Survey found that 55% of teens utilized social media frequently that year (Perifanou et al., 2021). Sago (2015) discovered a favorable association between the frequency of usage and various uses of social media in both males and females. A survey of 131 psychology students in the United States found that 57% of individuals surveyed utilized social media frequently. Frequency of usage depends on reading/responding to comments on

one's social media page and posts to one's wall, sending/responding to messages/invites (14%), and browsing friends' profiles/walls/pages (13%) (Tezer & Yildiz, 2017). The frequency with which people use the internet has also been linked to physical and mental health problems, and it may have a negative influence on both academic and family lives.

2.4. Behavioral impacts of social media Usage on academic performance

Researchers and scholars have conflicting reactions to the influence of social media on students' academic performance. Mingle and Adams's (2015) studies portray the role of social media in academic performance in a positive light, claiming that students form group discussions on social media to exchange ideas and communicate with their teachers. However, Kelzang and Lhendup (2021) discovered that neither social media usage intensity nor social activities done on these sites are systematically associated with students' academic performance, contradicting some earlier assertions. Arslan (2018) and Saha and Guha (2019) concluded that social media users socialize more than study. Adimora et al. (2016) found that most students use social media while studying, which may hurt their academic performance due to the distraction provided by social networks.

Higher rates of internet use in the classroom are linked to poorer academic performance. Leyrer-Jackson and Wilson (2017) found a considerable detrimental link between social media use and academic performance. A study of university students discovered that checking Posts on social media is often negatively related to their participation in educationally essential activities. In the Sri Lankan educational context, there is evidence that students' use of social media may affect their performance. This suggests that while some students use social networking sites for socializing, others may utilize them for learning activities (Athukorala, 2021). As a result, it appears likely that social media impact student performance.

2.5. Theories of social media usage on academic performance

This research was based on the theories of social learning theory, social information processing theory, media equation theory, operant condition theory, psychological theory, and technology acceptance model. Social learning theories recognize the role of media in influencing the social behavior of adolescents and children (Obxlie & Science, 2019). Operant condition theory states that learning is a function of change in overt behavior (Vicera & Ed, 2016). Psychological theory states that humans require a sense of belonging and acceptance, whether it comes from a large social group, such as clubs, office culture, religious groups, professional associations, sports teams, gang members, small personal connections, or even social networking sites (Vicera &

Ed, 2016). These theories have been used to understand the effects of media on social behavior.

The most critical details in this text are the social information processing theory, media equation theory, and technology acceptance model. The social information processing theory suggests that online interpersonal connections can be more effective than face-to-face communication (Gallardo et al, 2013). The media equation theory suggests that people respond to communications media as if alive (Profile, 2018). The technology acceptance model (TAM) investigates why users' attitudes and beliefs impact their approval or rejection of IT. Alalwan et al. (2019) proposed two distinct attitudes that affect one's behavioral intention to utilize a technology: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). These theories explain how people become vulnerable to loneliness, social anxiety, and clinical depression when these aspects are missing.

2.6. Empirical review

This study focuses on the dimensions such as time spent, unique motives, addiction, frequency of usage, and the impacts of social media usage on university students' academic performance. Time spent on social media is used to entertain themselves or pass the time, while unique motives are used to express themselves and enjoy pleasure. Saha and Guha (2019) observed a significant relationship between university students' time spent on social media and academic performance. Arslan (2018) revealed a significant relationship between unique motives and academic performance, and the researcher proposed the unique motives of social media as a dimension for this study. Previous research has revealed that there are two forms of social media usage: addiction and habitual use.

Addiction develops when a person participates in a specific action without awareness or purpose, while habitual behaviors are linked to long-term participation in a habit. According to Haq and Chand (2012), social media users frequently log into their accounts daily several times to see if they have received new notifications. Kelzang and Lhendup (2021) show a significant relationship between the frequency of social media usage and academic performance.

3. Methodology

3.1. Conceptual framework
A conceptual framework is a structure that a researcher feels best explains the natural course of the topic under investigation (Adom et al., 2001). It is

connected to the concepts, empirical research, and critical theories employed in advancing and systemizing the researcher's knowledge (Nizam, 2018). According to the literature, the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable effects on the social media usage of university students is as follows: the usage of social media depends upon time spent, unique motives, addiction, and frequency of usage of social media. Academic performance was a dependent variable, measured by dimensions of Quality of academic life, CFU, ongoing evaluations, and undergraduates' achievements.
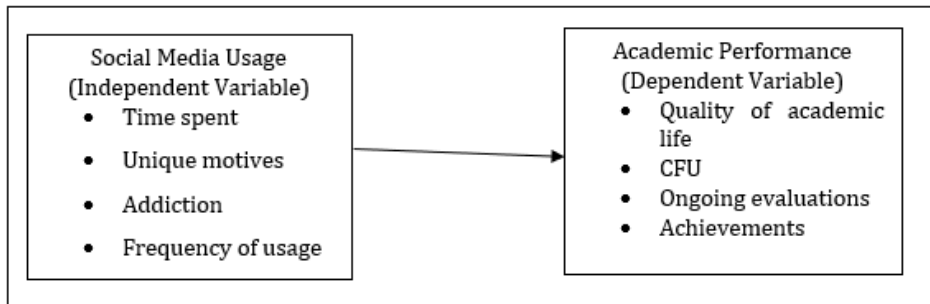

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.2. Operationalization of variables

Operationalization is the process of converting abstract notions into measurable observations. It involves specifying how to measure, monitor, or modify a topic (Maqableh et al., 2015). Demographic factors are used to characterize a person's or population's characteristics, such as gender, university, academic year, social media sites used, time spent on social media, hours spent on social media, the purpose of using social media, period of using social media, and hours spent on academics. The terms operational definition and working definition describe operationalization, which involves creating a measuring tool that will allow precise data to be collected regarding particular occurrences. In order to operationalize a concept, indicators or variables must be chosen. The following table shows the operationalization summary of this study.

Table 15: Operationalization summary

	Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Q: No	Citation
Independent Variable	Social Media Usage	Time spent	- Relaxation and free periods.	TS_09	(Olufadi, 2016)
			- Academic-related periods.	TS_10	
			- Stress-related periods.	TS_11	
		Unique motives	- Socialize and make new friends.	UM_12	(Jamil et al., 2020)
			- Remain updated about trends.	UM_13	
			- Collaborate with fellow students and study on social media.	UM_14	
			- As a source of recreation and relaxation.	UM_15	
			- As an education tool.	UM_16	
		Addiction	- Cannot control the usage of social media.	AD_17	(Al-Menayes, 2015b)
			- I am interested in finding more friends on social media.	AD_18	

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				Unknowingly waste time on social media.	AD_19	
		Frequency of Usage	-	Reading/responding to comments.	FU_20	(Tezer & Yildiz, 2017).
			-	Sending/responding to messages/invites.	FU_21	
			-	Browsing friends' profiles/walls/ pages	FU_22	
Dependent variable	Academic performance	Quality of academic life	-	Stress level.	QA_23	(Giunchiglia et al., 2018), (Marker et al., 2017), (Al-menayes, 2015)
			-	Sleeping quality.	QA_24	
			-	Grade Point Average (GPA)	QA_25	
		Credito Formativo Universitario (CFU)	-	Attendance Rates.	CFU_26	(Giunchiglia et al., 2018)
		Ongoing Evaluation	-	Lecturer satisfaction.	OE_27	(Giunchiglia et al., 2018)
		Undergraduates Achievements	-	Engage in extracurricular activities. (Intended learning)	UA_28	(Umar & Idris, 2018)

Source: Author Created

3.3. Type of the study

This study is focused on explanatory work to find out the Behavioral Impact of Social Media Usage on the Academic Performance of State University Students in Sri Lanka. Explanatory research is a study approach that investigates why something happens when there is minimal information available. It aids in the comprehension of a certain issue, determines how or why a specific phenomenon occurs, and anticipates future occurrences.

3.4. Nature of the study

The researcher used a deductive approach for this research, which also belongs to the explanatory area of study. This study shows how hypotheses were created from previous researchers' current theories and then used to lead the data collection process so that they may be evaluated. As well as this research involved the collection of numerical data by using questionnaires, so this research was quantitative.

3.5. Research Strategy

A research strategy is a comprehensive plan for carrying out a research investigation (Thomas, 2001). A research strategy directs the design, execution, and monitoring of an inquiry. While the research strategy provides vital, high-level assistance, it must be supplemented with research techniques that help direct the study effort on a more technical level. Approaches of research instruct the researcher on how to acquire and interpret data, such as through interviews, questionnaires, or statistical methods.

As a result, a research strategy provides high-level advice, but a research method may be considered a methodology or instrument for carrying out a given activity because there are several research techniques available, a researcher embarking on a study must decide which one to use. The study's objectives and features determine the decision. As a result, the researcher chose a structured questionnaire as the research strategy.

3.6. Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is the primary entity being studied in a study. The 'what' or 'who' is being investigated. Individuals (the most frequent unit of analysis in social science research), groups, and social organizations are the most prevalent units of analysis. The unit of analysis of this research is individuals.

3.7. Population

The population of this study consists of 354,697 state university students who study in the 16 state universities in Sri Lanka, according to the Sri Lankan University Statistics 2021.

3.8. Sampling

Based on volunteer sampling, a sample size of 392 male and female state university undergraduates were selected for data collection. The following formula was used to determine the sample size.

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{\dfrac{z^2 \times p\,(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + \left(\dfrac{z^2 \times p\,(1-p)}{e^2 N}\right)}$$

Equation1: Sample Size Calculation Equation

N = population size

e = Margin of error (percentage in decimal form)

z = z-score

3.9. Data collection and method of analysis and evaluation

All the responses were collected from 392 volunteer undergraduates from Sri Lankan state universities through a structured cross-sectional online questionnaire and were accessed using a 5-point Likert-type scale with anchors 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree.

Descriptive, correlational, and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. Descriptive Statistics measured variability and measures of central tendency, while measures of central tendency included the mean, median, and mode. Correlation coefficients were used to determine the link between the items for the dependent and independent variables. A regression analysis was used to test hypotheses, which can be used to estimate how closely variables will be related in the future and gauge how strong the relationships between them now are.

4. Result and Discussion

Research results demonstrate that undergraduate students at state universities have access to social media and that their frequency of usage during lectures is high. According to the pilot survey done before the research study, 82% of respondents agreed with that statement, confirming this fact. And also, the majority of them were logged in for entertainment purposes. The effect of this is that students at state universities have access to social media and use it for various reasons during lectures. According to the gratification's theory, viewers utilize the media to achieve various purposes; this is in line with what was stated.

Table 16: Test of reliability and validity

Variable	Alpha	No of Questions
Social Media Usage	0.920	14
Academic Performance	0.820	06

Source: Survey Data

Table 3 shows the reliability of the independent dependent variable value. The typical range for values is 0.7 to 1.0. The alpha value indicates highly reliable variables if they fall within that range. As per the table, Cronbach's alpha value of the independent and dependent variables ranged from 0.920 and 0.820, which fulfills the relevant accepted level of reliability. The table shows that all the evaluation tools utilized to assess the independent and dependent variables were internally consistent.

Table 4: Results of descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness (Std. Error)
Social Media Usage	4.2633	.50223	.123
Academic Performance	2.2568	.39815	.123

Source: Survey Data

Table 4 shows the value of the descriptive statistic between social media usage and academic performance. So, the standard deviation and the mean value of social media usage and academic performance help to understand the descriptive behavior of undergraduates.

Table 5: Result of correlation analysis

		Social Media Usage	Academic Performance
Social Media Usage	Person Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed) N	392	
Academic Performance	Person Correlation	-.663**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed) N	.000 392	392

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Data

Table 5 shows the correlation value between social media usage and academic performance. According to the table, the Pearson correlation value was -0.663**. The nature of the strength of the relationship between social media usage and academic performance correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. So, a significant strong negative (-0.663) relationship existed between social media usage and academic performance because the significant value is less than 0.01 or 0.05 as well.

Table 6: Result of regression analysis

Model	R	R. Square	Adjusted R. Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.663a	0.439	0.438	0.29854

Source: Survey Data

Table 6 shows a model summary of the independent and dependent variables. According to the table, the R square value is 0.439. It described that 43% of academic performance can be explained by social media using this model. So, 57% of other factors can affect academic performance.

Findings further show that WhatsApp was the social media platform that undergraduates at state universities use most, besides Facebook, Instagram, Imo, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, Tick Tock, Telegram, Messenger, Linked, and Skype. This is proven by the 72.2% of respondents who agreed that WhatsApp was the social network most used. Similar findings can be found in Table 5

(correlation analysis table), which demonstrates that social media significantly and negatively impacts the academic performance of the undergraduates of state universities in Sri Lanka. It can demonstrate what is shown in Figure 2.
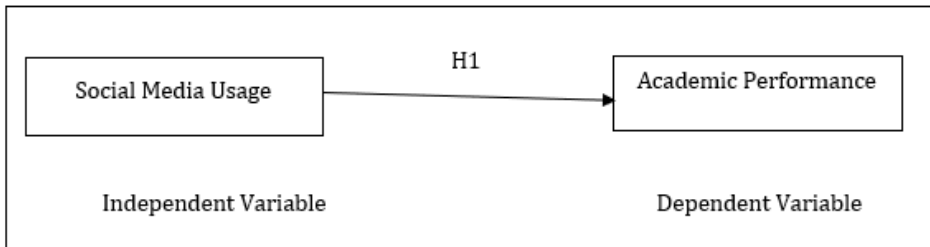

Figure 2: Relationship between the independent and dependent variable

And also regression results concluded that the independent variable negatively affected the dependent variable. So, it accepted the significant impact of social media usage on the academic performance of state university students in Sri Lanka.

The academic performance of students who use social media more frequently was at risk, which this study proved. That was because they spend time on social media during lecture time instead of doing learning activities. This negatively impacts their academic performance.

5. Conclusion

This research aims to identify the behavioral impact of social media usage on the academic performance of state university students in Sri Lanka. First, researchers conducted a pilot study to determine what tasks students perform on social media and how much time they spend on these platforms over their academic lives.
After that, a review of the literature from earlier studies that were connected to the topic was undertaken.

Frequency distribution was used to test the demographic profile. The reliability of the independent variable was 0.920, and the reliability of the dependent variable was 0.820, which is satisfactory. Disruptive statistical procedures are used for data analysis once the reliability has been checked and then identified the strong negative relationship between the independent and the dependent variable by using correlation analysis. Finally, regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis.

The majority of the respondents agreed that using these social media does not help to sufficiently prepare them for their ongoing evaluations and exams, and

also they believed that the habit of using those sites discouraged them from concentrating on their studies and extracurricular activities.

And also, respondents acknowledged that it was their routine habit to use social media sites during lecture time, and sometimes it was a kind of addiction. They also agreed that their usage of social media sites negatively affects their academic performance and decreases their quality of academic life.

The most critical details in this study are that undergraduates in state universities in Sri Lanka should be aware of the underlying issues that can cause their use of social media and should improve their real-world friendships. They should also spend less time on social media and focus more on academics. They should establish and follow realistic internet usage objectives, and the procedure for breaking social media habits should be changed. Additionally, those who want to achieve excellent academic performance should keep away from inappropriate social media use. Finally, the internet and social media should be used beneficially so that social media can be used as a vital tool in learning rather than just for personal entertainment.

The current study was not exempt from this potential scope, as is customary with any studies. Firstly, due to a time shortage, the researcher collected data through Google Forms. So, the results depend only on respondents' opinions and their mindsets. Moreover, the researcher considered only state university students. However, the features of state university students are often comparable in most circumstances. But in future research, it can be used for private universities and higher education institutions in Sri Lanka as well.

The researcher used only four dimensions for this study: time spent, unique motives, addiction, and frequency of usage. There was also only one independent variable, which was social media usage. A few more variables that impact academic success can be considered in addition to the four main dimensions that were the focus of this study.

The modified R square value in this study indicates a restriction and the necessity for additional in-depth research in this area. In order to boost the significance of the research, the researcher highly suggests that future researchers can include additional factors in their studies.

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