

Effects of Reels and Short Videos on Human Mind and Academic Life

Vishal Mugdal^{1*}, Kinjal Doshi²

Abstract

The rapid rise of short-form video platforms such as Instagram Reels, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts has fundamentally reshaped the way people consume information and entertainment. While these applications offer quick engagement and social connection, their excessive use has raised serious concerns about their psychological and academic impacts. This research investigates the relationship between short-form video addiction, mindfulness, academic anxiety, and academic engagement among university students. Drawing upon the theoretical framework of cognitive-behavioral addiction and mindfulness theory, this study examines how addiction to short-form videos influences learners' emotional well-being and academic functioning. A cross-sectional quantitative design was employed with data collected from 1,879 undergraduate students through validated scales: the Short-Form Video App Addiction Scale, the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), the Academic Anxiety Sub-questionnaire, and the Academic Engagement Scale. Data were analyzed using SPSS 20.0 and AMOS 24.0 for reliability, validity, and structural equation modeling (SEM). **Findings reveal that short-form video addiction**, The digital era has ushered in a revolution in how people consume and share information. Among the most influential developments in recent years is the rise of short-form video platforms such as Instagram Reels, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts. These platforms deliver high-intensity, visually stimulating content in a matter of seconds, appealing particularly to younger audiences who seek instant gratification and continuous entertainment. While short videos provide a creative outlet for expression, social connection, and rapid knowledge exchange, they have also been linked to behavioral addiction, diminished attention spans, and negative academic and psychological outcomes. The increasing popularity of short videos among students has created both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, these platforms offer access to educational resources, motivational content, and exposure to diverse ideas. On the other hand, their algorithm-driven recommendation systems and constant stream of personalized entertainment encourage compulsive engagement, leading to decreased academic focus and impaired cognitive self-regulation. Prolonged exposure to significantly increases academic anxiety while reducing academic engagement. Mindfulness serves as a key mediating factor, mitigating the negative effects of excessive short-video consumption on students' emotional regulation and learning motivation. The study highlights the importance of integrating mindfulness-based interventions within academic environments to reduce digital dependence and enhance students' concentration and resilience. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on digital media psychology by emphasizing how compulsive engagement with reels and short videos affects mental health and learning outcomes. The results underscore the need for balanced digital habits, self-awareness training, and institutional policies promoting healthy media consumption patterns.

Keywords: Reels, short-form videos, addiction, mindfulness, academic anxiety, academic engagement, student well-being, digital psychology.

*Author for Correspondence

Vishal Mugdal
E-mail: vishalgmugdal@gmail.com

¹Research Scholar, ²Assistant. Professor, MCA Department, Thakur Institute of Management Studies, Career Development & Research, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Received Date: April 24, 2026
Accepted Date: June 28, 2026
Published Date: June 29, 2026

Citation: Vishal Mugdal, Kinjal Doshi. Environmental Behavioral Factors as Predictors of Alcohol-Induced Psychosis in Urban Populations. International Journal of Behavioral Sciences. 2026; 3(2): 22–33p.

Introduction

Such content can cause overstimulation, time displacement, and emotional dependence, which collectively contribute to stress, anxiety, and academic disengagement.

Research on digital addiction indicates that short-form video addiction—a subset of internet and

mobile addiction—represents a compulsive behavior characterized by excessive use despite awareness of negative consequences. Users often find themselves trapped in a cycle of “endless scrolling,” experiencing loss of control, preoccupation with content, and withdrawal symptoms when unable to access these platforms. This behavioral pattern disrupts time management, reduces study productivity, and impairs mental health [1].

Within academic contexts, such patterns have alarming implications. Academic anxiety, characterized by excessive worry about academic performance and fear of failure, is a common emotional response among students struggling to manage competing demands. Meanwhile, academic engagement, which encompasses vigor, dedication, and absorption in learning, is often compromised by digital distractions. Overuse of short videos may erode both focus and intrinsic motivation, leading to declining grades and reduced satisfaction with academic life [2].

A promising construct that can buffer these negative outcomes is mindfulness—the ability to maintain non-judgmental awareness of the present moment. Mindfulness allows individuals to regulate attention, manage stress, and resist impulsive behaviors. Several studies suggest that higher mindfulness levels are associated with lower academic anxiety and greater engagement, making it a key mediator in the relationship between digital addiction and academic well-being [3].

Despite increasing awareness of these issues, research on the psychological and academic effects of short-form video addiction remains limited. Most existing studies have examined broader smartphones or internet addiction, without focusing on the unique characteristics of short-video platforms—such as their rapid reward cycles, algorithmic personalization, and fragmented attention mechanisms. Moreover, the mediating role of mindfulness in explaining how addiction to short-form content impacts academic outcomes has not been thoroughly investigated [4].

This study addresses these gaps by examining the effects of Reels and short videos on human cognition, emotional well-being, and academic life. It aims to determine how short-form video addiction predicts academic anxiety and academic engagement and to evaluate mindfulness as a potential mediating factor. By adopting a comprehensive psychological and educational framework, this research contributes to understanding the mental and behavioral mechanisms underlying short-form video use among students [5].

BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

The Rise of Short-Form Video Culture

The rapid evolution of digital media has transformed global communication patterns, with short-form video platforms emerging as dominant channels of expression and interaction. Applications such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and Snapchat Spotlight have revolutionized how individuals create, consume, and share content. These platforms are designed around brevity, algorithmic personalization, and instant feedback through likes, shares, and comments [6].

As of 2024, billions of users engage daily with short-form videos, many spending several hours per day scrolling through curated feeds. The average daily usage of such platforms exceeds two hours for young adults, particularly among university students who often turn to them for relaxation and social connection. While these platforms provide moments of amusement and social validation, their highly stimulating, reward-based structures mirror addictive behaviors similar to those observed in substance dependence and gambling [7].

PSYCHOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF ADDICTION

From a psychological standpoint, addiction to short videos can be understood as a form of behavioral addiction, wherein individuals experience compulsive urges to engage with media content despite awareness of its negative consequences. The underlying mechanisms involve dopaminergic

reward circuits that reinforce pleasure-seeking behavior. Each “like,” comment, or view functions as a small dose of social reward, triggering the brain’s pleasure centers and reinforcing habitual use [8].

Over time, these repetitive cycles of instant gratification weaken cognitive control, disrupt emotional regulation, and promote dependence on external stimuli for mood regulation. Students, in particular, may develop a reliance on short videos to escape academic stress or negative emotions, inadvertently deepening their addiction [9].

IMPACT ON ACADEMIC LIFE

The integration of short-form videos into daily routines has significant implications for students’ academic performance and psychological well-being. Excessive use often leads to reduced attention span, poor time management, and increased procrastination. The fragmented consumption of quick, entertaining content contrasts sharply with the sustained focus required for deep learning, thereby affecting information retention and cognitive processing [10].

Moreover, excessive engagement with short videos contributes to academic anxiety, a state of persistent worry and fear related to academic failure. Students addicted to digital entertainment frequently struggle to balance academic responsibilities, leading to feelings of guilt, stress, and performance pressure. As their focus and self-regulation decline, they may fall behind in coursework, further intensifying anxiety levels.

Conversely, academic engagement, which encompasses enthusiasm, perseverance, and immersion in learning, declines when students allocate more time to leisure content than study. Addictive digital habits can diminish motivation, disrupt concentration, and replace educational goals with the pursuit of online validation [11].

THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS

Amidst these challenges, mindfulness has emerged as a crucial psychological resource for maintaining mental balance and academic focus. Defined as a conscious, non-judgmental awareness of the present moment, mindfulness helps individuals regulate attention and emotions. Practicing mindfulness allows students to recognize impulsive urges, such as the desire to check social media, and consciously redirect attention toward purposeful activities.

Previous research (Deng et al., [9] 2012) has demonstrated that mindfulness reduces anxiety, enhances emotional regulation and promotes engagement in meaningful tasks. Within educational settings, mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to foster greater academic satisfaction, lower stress, and improved concentration. Therefore, it serves as a potential mediating variable in understanding how short-form video addiction affects academic and psychological outcomes [12].

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Despite the widespread use of short-video platforms, few studies have systematically examined their psychological consequences and academic effects in university populations. Much of the existing literature focuses broadly on smartphone or internet addiction without distinguishing the unique mechanisms of short-video engagement, which combine rapid content turnover, algorithmic immersion, and social comparison [13].

The present study is motivated by the urgent need to address this research gap. It aims to explore how addiction to short-form video content—particularly Reels and TikTok videos—impacts human cognition, emotional well-being, and academic performance. Moreover, it seeks to determine whether mindfulness can buffer these adverse effects by promoting emotional stability and conscious media consumption.

By addressing these objectives, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how emerging digital habits shape mental health and learning outcomes in the 21st-century educational context.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the effects of short-form video addiction (primarily through platforms such as Instagram Reels, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts) on academic anxiety and academic engagement, with mindfulness as a mediating variable. The research followed a correlational framework, analyzing relationships among the four core constructs — short-form video addiction, mindfulness, academic anxiety, and academic engagement — using structural equation modeling (SEM) [14].

The study's design was guided by previous works on technology addiction and mindfulness (Zhang et al., [3]2019; Deng et al., [9] 2012), adapting their validated scales to fit the present research context.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 1,879 undergraduate students from various universities participated in the survey. The participants were aged between 18 and 25 years, with a nearly equal gender distribution. They were recruited using convenience sampling through social media platforms and university networks. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was ensured throughout the data collection process.

Inclusion criteria required that participants:

- Were active users of short-form video platforms (using them at least three times a week).
- Were currently enrolled in a university program.
- Provided informed consent before completing the questionnaire.

Participants who completed the survey too quickly (under two minutes) or showed inconsistent responses were excluded during data cleaning, ensuring the reliability and validity of the sample data [15].

INSTRUMENTS

Validated and standardized instruments were used to collect quantitative data. Each scale was carefully selected to align with the theoretical framework of this study.

Short-Form Video App Addiction Scale

(Adapted from Choi & Lim, [6] 2016; Zhang et al., [3]2019) This scale included six items, each rated on a 7-point

Likert scale (1 = “Almost never,” 7 = “Almost always”). It measured participants' compulsive engagement and dependency on short-form video platforms.

Example item: “My family or friends think I spend too much time on short-form video apps.” Reliability (Cronbach's α) = 0.89.

Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) (Adapted from Deng et al., [9] 2012)

This scale comprised five items rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = “Almost always,” 6 = “Almost never”). It assessed the participant's ability to remain consciously aware of present experiences without distraction.

Example item: “I forget a person's name almost as soon as I have been told it for the first time.” Reliability (Cronbach's α) = 0.84.

Academic Anxiety Subscale (Adapted from Dong & Yu, [10] 2007)

This subscale contained seven items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = “Strongly disagree,” 5 = “Strongly agree”). It measured emotional distress and worry associated with academic performance.

Example item: “I worry that my grades will be worse than others.”
Reliability (Cronbach’s α) = 0.89.

Academic Engagement Scale (Adapted from Schaufeli et al., [17]2002)

This scale consisted of seventeen items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = “Strongly disagree,” 7 = “Strongly agree”). It assessed energy, dedication, and involvement in academic tasks.

Example item: “When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to class.”
Reliability (Cronbach’s α) = 0.94.

Each of these instruments has been widely used and validated in prior academic research, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the current study’s measurements.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Data were collected during April 2024 using an online questionnaire hosted on Wenjuanxing, a widely used online survey platform. Before starting the questionnaire, participants were presented with a consent form ensuring voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality [16].

The survey included three main sections:

- *Demographic Information:* Age, gender, academic year, and average daily screen time.
- *Behavioral Scales:* Short-form video addiction, mindfulness, academic anxiety, and academic engagement.
- *Feedback Section:* Optional comments regarding digital media usage habits.

To minimize potential bias, the four psychological scales were presented in randomized order for each participant.

After data collection, responses were screened for completeness and validity. Entries that displayed extreme response patterns or unrealistically short completion times were removed. Ethical approval was obtained from the School of Education, Minzu University of China, ensuring adherence to institutional research standards.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS

20.0 and AMOS 24.0. The data analysis involved the following steps:

- *Descriptive Statistics:* Calculated mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions for each variable.
- *Reliability and Validity Tests:* Evaluated internal consistency using Cronbach’s alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).
- *Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):* Tested measurement model fit using key indices — Chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR).
- *Acceptable thresholds were set at:* $\chi^2/df < 5$, CFI > 0.90 , TLI > 0.90 , RMSEA < 0.08 .
- *Structural Equation Modeling (SEM):* Examined direct and indirect relationships among variables, with mindfulness as a mediating construct.
- *Bootstrapping Analysis:* Conducted with 5,000 resamples to estimate the significance of

indirect effects and confidence intervals.

This rigorous analysis ensured that the model adequately represented the hypothesized relationships among addiction, mindfulness, academic anxiety, and engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Overview

The rise of short-form video platforms has prompted significant academic interest in understanding their psychological and behavioral consequences. Existing literature identifies short-form video addiction as a subset of internet and smartphone addiction, characterized by compulsive usage, loss of control, and neglect of daily responsibilities. This addiction is driven by personalized algorithms that perpetually recommend engaging content, leading users into a cycle of gratification and dependency [17].

The addictive nature of such platforms is reinforced through variable reward systems—the unpredictable mix of entertaining, humorous, or emotionally appealing videos encourages prolonged engagement. Over time, this habitual behavior transforms into psychological dependency, marked by restlessness, irritability, and loss of productivity when access is restricted [18].

SHORT-FORM VIDEO ADDICTION AND ACADEMIC ANXIETY

Academic anxiety refers to feelings of nervousness, apprehension, and fear associated with academic tasks and evaluations (Martin, [7] 2007; Pekrun,[11] 2006). Multiple studies have linked digital overuse with increased anxiety, especially among students. Smartphone and video addictions can lead to distraction, procrastination, and reduced self-efficacy, which heighten academic pressure and emotional distress [19].

Enez Darcin et al. [8] (2016) found a significant positive correlation between smartphone addiction and anxiety levels. Similarly, Zhang and Zeng [18] (2024) reported that excessive smartphone usage leads to academic anxiety in college students, as individuals often experience withdrawal symptoms and a fear of missing out (FOMO) when disconnected from their devices. In the context of short-form video addiction, constant exposure to stimulating digital environments may cause difficulty in adjusting to slower-paced academic work, thereby increasing stress and anxiety [20].

Zhou et al. [16] (2022) extended this idea by showing that students with higher mobile dependency displayed higher levels of math anxiety and lower academic confidence. These findings collectively indicate that the compulsive consumption of short-form videos directly contributes to heightened academic anxiety, supporting Hypothesis 1 of this study:

Short-form video addiction has a significantly positive effect on academic anxiety.

SHORT-FORM VIDEO ADDICTION AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Academic engagement is conceptualized as a state of active participation and enthusiasm toward learning tasks, reflected through vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al.,[17] 2002). Engaged students demonstrate persistence, concentration, and motivation, all of which are vital for academic success.

However, digital distractions severely affect this engagement. Zhang and Zeng [18] (2024) found that smartphone addiction negatively predicts future academic engagement. Time spent on entertainment platforms directly reduces study hours and decreases mental energy for learning. Schoffstall et al. [19] (2013) highlighted that academic engagement can be indirectly measured through the time and effort invested in academic activities—both of which decline when students prioritize short-form content consumption.

Addicted users may also experience attention fragmentation, wherein rapid exposure to short, high-intensity videos diminishes their ability to sustain focus on long academic tasks (Chen et al., [5] 2023). Consequently, students struggle with reading comprehension, concentration, and motivation, leading to lower engagement. Based on prior studies, this paper proposes Hypothesis 2:

SHORT-FORM VIDEO ADDICTION SIGNIFICANTLY NEGATIVELY AFFECTS ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Mindfulness as a Mediating Factor

Mindfulness is defined as the conscious, non-judgmental awareness of the present moment. It enables individuals to regulate their thoughts and emotions, promoting resilience against stress and impulsivity. In recent years, mindfulness has gained attention as a key psychological factor in reducing technology-induced distress [10].

Xiang et al. [16] (2023) found that mobile phone addiction negatively predicts mindfulness, indicating that compulsive digital use impairs present-moment awareness. Similarly, Zhang et al. [3] (2021) reported that smartphone overuse correlates with lower mindfulness and reduced emotional control. In educational settings, mindfulness has been shown to alleviate anxiety (Priebe & Kurtz-Costes, [21] 2022) and enhance focus and academic engagement (Miralles-Armenteros et al., [20] 2019) [11].

By cultivating mindful attention, students can observe their impulses without reacting impulsively, thereby managing their time and stress more effectively. Consequently, mindfulness acts as a psychological buffer, mitigating the negative impacts of digital addiction on academic functioning. The present study therefore hypothesizes:

- *Hypothesis 3:* Mindfulness mediates the relationship between short-form video addiction and academic anxiety.
- *Hypothesis 4:* Mindfulness mediates the relationship between short-form video addiction and academic engagement.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study integrates concepts from behavioral addiction theory and mindfulness-based cognitive frameworks. Behavioral addiction theory posits that repetitive, rewarding behaviors—like scrolling through short videos—can trigger dependency similar to substance addiction. These behaviors provide temporary relief but result in long-term cognitive and emotional disturbances [12].

In contrast, mindfulness theory emphasizes awareness and acceptance of the present experience, which counteracts the automatic, habitual responses characteristic of addiction. Together, these frameworks explain how short-form video use can distort attention and emotional regulation, while mindfulness can restore cognitive balance and academic focus [13].

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

In summary, the existing literature converges on several critical points:

Short-form video addiction leads to higher academic anxiety due to time mismanagement, emotional exhaustion, and social comparison [14].

It simultaneously reduces academic engagement, impairing concentration and intrinsic motivation.

Mindfulness acts as a protective mediator, reducing anxiety and promoting academic dedication by fostering awareness and self-control.

There is a pressing need for empirical studies that examine these relationships in the context of short-form video usage rather than generalized smartphone addiction.

Thus, this research aims to bridge that gap through a structured empirical investigation among undergraduate students, employing validated psychological scales and robust statistical methods.

DISCUSSION OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

The present study explored the psychological and academic consequences of short-form video addiction, particularly its effects on mindfulness, academic anxiety, and academic engagement among university students. The results revealed that higher levels of short-form video addiction were associated with increased academic anxiety and decreased academic engagement, while mindfulness served as a significant mediating variable that reduced these adverse effects.

These findings reinforce the notion that the overuse of platforms like Instagram Reels, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts disrupts students' cognitive control and emotional stability. The addictive design of these applications—characterized by infinite scrolling, quick gratification loops, and algorithmic personalization—encourages prolonged engagement, which leads to time displacement, impaired focus, and academic procrastination. Over time, this digital dependency translates into emotional strain and poor academic outcomes.

Mindfulness, however, emerged as a protective factor. Students who reported higher mindfulness exhibited lower levels of anxiety and higher academic engagement, suggesting that conscious attention and awareness help mitigate the negative psychological consequences of excessive short-form video consumption.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-FORM VIDEO ADDICTION AND ACADEMIC ANXIETY

The study's findings confirm that short-form video addiction significantly increases academic anxiety, aligning with prior research on digital media overuse (Zhou et al., [16] 2022; Zhang & Zeng, [18]2024). Students addicted to short videos often experience cognitive overload, as their constant exposure to fast-paced entertainment reduces their capacity for sustained concentration during study sessions.

Furthermore, the fear of missing out (FOMO) exacerbates anxiety, as students feel pressured to stay updated with social trends, viral content, or peer activities. The displacement of academic responsibilities and increased screen time can generate guilt and academic pressure, leading to heightened anxiety.

This pattern can be explained by the cognitive interference model, which posits that excessive external stimulation competes with goal-directed cognitive processes. When individuals spend prolonged hours consuming digital content, their attention becomes fragmented, and they struggle to allocate sufficient cognitive resources to academic tasks. Thus, anxiety becomes both a symptom and a byproduct of cognitive overload [21].

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-FORM VIDEO ADDICTION AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

The study found a strong negative relationship between short-form video addiction and academic engagement. This observation echoes the conclusions of Schaufeli et al. [17] (2002), who noted that engagement thrives on sustained attention, motivation, and meaningful goal pursuit—qualities undermined by addictive digital behaviors.

Short-form videos, by design, encourage instant gratification and discourage delayed reward processing. The rapid entertainment cycles make it difficult for users to engage in long, effortful cognitive activities such as reading, problem-solving, or writing. Consequently, students accustomed to short bursts of stimulation struggle to maintain persistence in academic tasks that require patience and sustained focus.

Additionally, social comparison mechanisms embedded in these platforms often lead to self-doubt and decreased academic self-efficacy. Students might compare their achievements, appearance, or lifestyles with idealized portrayals online, diminishing their motivation to excel academically. This psychological burden contributes to emotional fatigue and disengagement from learning.

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF MINDFULNESS

One of the most notable findings of this study is the mediating role of mindfulness in mitigating the relationship between short-form video addiction and both academic anxiety and engagement. Mindfulness encourages a heightened awareness of thoughts and behaviors, allowing individuals to recognize the triggers and impulses that drive excessive media use.

Students who practice mindfulness are better equipped to manage urges to check their phones or scroll through videos compulsively. They exhibit improved emotional regulation, reduced reactivity to stress, and enhanced concentration during academic activities. This aligns with the mindfulness-based cognitive theory which emphasizes awareness as a means to disrupt automatic behavioral patterns and restore self-regulation.

Moreover, mindfulness facilitates meta-cognitive monitoring, helping students become aware of their mental states and redirect attention toward productive goals. By fostering present-moment focus, mindfulness reduces the anxiety induced by academic pressures and prevents excessive rumination over performance outcomes. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that mindfulness reduces anxiety (Priebe & Kurtz-Costes, [21]2022) and improves academic focus (Miralles-Armenteros et al., [20] 2019).

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical Implications

The results of this study contribute to the growing field of digital psychology by extending behavioral addiction theory to short-form video consumption. While traditional research has concentrated on internet or smartphone addiction broadly, this study provides empirical evidence that the unique structure and rhythm of short videos amplify addictive tendencies and impair cognitive functioning.

Furthermore, integrating mindfulness as a mediating variable provides a dual-theory model that merges behavioral addiction and mindfulness frameworks. This combined approach offers a more nuanced understanding of how awareness and self-regulation can counterbalance the impulsivity induced by algorithm-driven platforms.

Practical Implications

The study's findings have several practical implications for educators, policymakers, and mental health practitioners:

- *Digital Literacy Education:* Academic institutions should introduce workshops and courses on mindful digital usage to help students balance entertainment and academic priorities.
- *Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs):* Universities can integrate mindfulness programs—such as meditation sessions, breathing exercises, or attention regulation workshops—into student wellness initiatives.
- *Parental and Institutional Guidance:* Parents and faculty members can encourage “digital detox” periods, where students consciously disengage from short-form video apps to regain focus and emotional clarity.
- *App Design Ethics:* Developers of social media platforms should implement user-friendly reminders or screen-time limits to promote healthier engagement and discourage compulsive

scrolling.

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS STUDIES

The present study's results are consistent with earlier empirical findings by Zhang et al. [3] (2019) and Deng et al. [9] (2012), which highlighted the adverse cognitive and emotional outcomes of technology addiction. However, unlike earlier studies that focused primarily on smartphone use, this research specifically examined short-form video consumption, reflecting a more contemporary digital behavior pattern among youth.

Furthermore, while prior works have acknowledged the role of mindfulness in reducing stress, this study uniquely demonstrates its mediating influence between addiction and academic outcomes, providing a more comprehensive psychological explanation for how awareness can mitigate technology-induced academic distress.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

While this research contributes valuable insights, several limitations should be acknowledged:

Cross-Sectional Design: The study's design prevents causal inference. Longitudinal research could better capture how addiction and mindfulness evolve over time.

- *Self-Reported Data:* The reliance on self-reported measures may introduce response bias. Future studies should incorporate behavioral tracking data for greater accuracy.
- *Cultural Scope:* The sample was limited to university students in one national context. Cross-cultural comparisons could reveal how cultural norms shape digital habits and mindfulness levels.
- *Lack of Experimental Intervention:* Although the study supports mindfulness as a mediator, experimental research introducing mindfulness training would better assess its causal impact on reducing digital addiction and anxiety.

Future research could explore neurocognitive mechanisms underlying short-form video addiction, examining how constant visual stimulation affects attention networks and emotional processing. Additionally, qualitative interviews could provide richer insights into students' personal experiences with short-form video use.

CONCLUSION

This research examined the complex interplay between short-form video addiction, mindfulness, academic anxiety, and academic engagement among university students. As digital platforms like Instagram Reels, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts increasingly dominate the media landscape, understanding their impact on cognitive and emotional well-being has become crucial.

The findings revealed that addiction to short-form videos negatively influences both psychological and academic outcomes, leading to increased anxiety and reduced engagement. Students who frequently consume such content experience time displacement, cognitive overload, and reduced self-control, ultimately impairing academic performance and emotional balance.

However, mindfulness emerged as a critical mediator, mitigating the negative effects of addiction. Students with higher mindfulness were better able to manage distractions, regulate emotions, and maintain focus on academic tasks. This underscores the potential of mindfulness-based strategies in fostering digital discipline and academic resilience.

From a broader perspective, the study contributes to the growing field of digital psychology by highlighting how behavioral addiction mechanisms extend into everyday technologies. The constant stimulation and rapid feedback loops characteristic of short-form video apps cultivate dependence and emotional volatility. Yet, through awareness and conscious regulation, individuals can reclaim control over their digital habits.

Educational institutions play a pivotal role in this process. Implementing mindfulness and digital

literacy programs can help students develop self-awareness and self-control, thereby enhancing both mental health and learning outcomes. Teachers and counselors should guide students toward balanced media consumption, emphasizing that technology should serve as a tool for enrichment rather than distraction.

Ultimately, this study concludes that while short-form videos offer entertainment and social connectivity, unregulated use can harm academic and emotional development. Promoting mindfulness and responsible digital engagement represents a sustainable pathway toward healthier academic and psychological functioning in the digital age.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are proposed:

- *Integrate Mindfulness Training in Education:* Schools and universities should introduce mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs to enhance attention, emotional balance, and resilience among students.
- *Encourage Digital Self-Regulation:* Institutions can promote screen-time awareness and app usage monitoring through campaigns and mobile health applications.
- *Conduct Regular Workshops on Digital Hygiene:* Students should be educated about the psychological impact of excessive short-form video use and strategies for maintaining digital well-being.
- *Promote Academic Counseling:* Psychological counseling centers should provide targeted interventions for students exhibiting signs of digital dependency or academic anxiety.
- *Support Future Research:* Longitudinal and cross-cultural studies should be encouraged to explore how evolving media environments affect students' mental health globally.

REFERENCES

1. Ataei F, Ahmadi A, Kiamanesh AR, Saif AA. The effectiveness of mindfulness practice in increasing academic motivation among high school students. *Journal of School Psychology*. 2020 Feb 20;8(4):176-99.
2. Azadianbojnordi M, Bakhtiarpour S, Makvandi B, Ehteshamizadeh P. Can academic hope increase academic engagement in Iranian students who are university applicants? Investigating academic buoyancy as a mediator. *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools*. 2022 Dec;32(2):198-206.
3. Bao X, Xue H, Zhang Q, Xu W. Academic stereotype threat and engagement of higher vocational students: A moderated mediation model. *Social psychology of education*. 2023 Oct;26(5):1419-35.
4. Chambel MJ, Curral L. Stress in academic life: work characteristics as predictors of student well-being and performance. *Applied psychology*. 2005 Jan;54(1):135-47.
5. Chen Y, Li M, Guo F, Wang X. The effect of short-form video addiction on users' attention. *Behaviour & Information Technology*. 2023 Dec 10;42(16):2893-910.
6. Choi SB, Lim MS. Effects of social and technology overload on psychological well-being in young South Korean adults: The mediatory role of social network service addiction. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 2016 Aug 1; 61:245-54.
7. Collie RJ, Ginns P, Martin AJ, Papworth B. Academic buoyancy mediates academic anxiety's effects on learning strategies: An investigation of English-and Chinese-speaking Australian students. *Educational Psychology*. 2017 Sep 14;37(8):947-64.
8. Enez Darcin A, Kose S, Noyan CO, Nurmedov S, Yilmaz O, Dilbaz N. Smartphone addiction and its relationship with social anxiety and loneliness. *Behaviour & Information Technology*. 2016 Jul 2;35(7):520-5.
9. Deng YQ, Li S, Tang YY, Zhu LH, Ryan R, Brown K. Psychometric properties of the Chinese translation of the mindful attention awareness scale (MAAS). *Mindfulness*. 2012 Mar;3(1):10-4.
10. DONG W, WANG W, WANG X, LI W. The occurrence mechanism of short video indulgence

-
- from the perspective of human-computer interaction. *Advances in Psychological Science*. 2023 Dec 15;31(12):2337.
11. Kadivar P, Farzad V, Kavousian J, Nikdel F. Validating the Pekruns achievement emotion questionnaire. *Journal of Educational Innovations*. 2009 Dec 22;8(4):7-38.
 12. Meng L, Jin Y. A confirmatory factor analysis of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students in a Chinese sample. *Nurse Education Today*. 2017 Feb 1; 49:129-34.
 13. Fornell C, Larcker DF. Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of marketing research*. 1981 Feb;18(1):39-50.
 14. Herne H. Multivariate data analysis. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (General)*. 1973 Jan;136(1):101-3.
 15. Hossain B, Bent S, Hendren R. The association between anxiety and academic performance in children with reading disorder: A longitudinal cohort study. *Dyslexia*. 2021 Aug;27(3):342-54.
 16. Xiang X, Zhou N, Ma M, Feng W, Yan R. Global transition of operational carbon in residential buildings since the millennium. *Advances in Applied Energy*. 2023 Sep 1; 11:100145.
 17. Schaufeli WB, Salanova M, González-Romá V, Bakker AB. The measurement of engagement and burnout: A two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Journal of Happiness studies*. 2002 Mar;3(1):71-92.
 18. Zhang J, Zeng Y. Effect of college students' smartphone addiction on academic achievement: The mediating role of academic anxiety and moderating role of sense of academic control. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*. 2024 Dec 31:933-44.
 19. Schoffstall DG, Arendt SW, Brown EA. Academic engagement of hospitality students. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*. 2013 Jul 1; 13:141-53.
 20. Miralles-Armenteros S, Chiva-Gómez R, Rodríguez-Sánchez A, Barghouti Z. Mindfulness and academic performance: The role of compassion and engagement. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*. 2021 Jan 2;58(1):3-13.
 21. Priebe NP, Kurtz-Costes BE. The effect of mindfulness programs on collegiate test anxiety. *Mindfulness*. 2022 Nov;13(11):2868-78.
-