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# The Influence of Social Media on the Physical Training of Tra Vinh University Students, Vietnam

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**ABSTRACT:** In the context of strong globalization and digital transformation, social media has become a popular communication tool, profoundly influencing almost all areas of social life. The current usage is not only a trend but also an inseparable part of the daily lives of young people, especially Vietnamese students. The study aims to analyze the impact of social media usage on the time spent exercising by students at Tra Vinh University, Vietnam. The research method used includes document analysis and synthesis, a survey with questionnaires among 200 students, combined with statistical processing and analysis methods. The research subjects include 200 students from Tra Vinh University, Vietnam. The results show that the average time students spend on social media is 4 to under 6 hours per day, while the time spent on physical exercise tends to decrease. Correlation analysis indicates an inverse relationship between the time spent on social media and the time spent on physical exercise (PE) by students at Tra Vinh University.

**KEYWORDS:** Social media, physical education, students, Tra Vinh University, Vietnam

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and moving toward society 5.0, digital transformation has become an inevitable trend in all fields, especially in education and sports. The convergence of digital technology, big data, artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and virtual reality (VR/AR) has fundamentally changed the methods of learning and practicing sports globally [1], [2]. In addition, the explosion of information technology and the internet has driven the boom of social media platforms, profoundly changing human behavior, lifestyles, and habits, especially among the youth. Social media has gradually become an essential part of the lives of students, opening up opportunities for learning, collaboration, and digital skill development, while also posing many challenges for managing moral education and lifestyle.

Research on social media usage among students shows that the development of social media has significantly changed the behavior and lifestyle of students worldwide. According to the Pew Research Center (2021) [3], more than 90% of young people use at least one social media platform, with the average daily usage time tending to increase. In Vietnam, the rate of students using social media is also very high, mainly concentrated on platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube. The studies by Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., and Lampe, C. (2007) [4] show that social networks play an important role in maintaining and developing social relationships, contributing to the formation of users' social capital. However, excessive use can lead to negative consequences such as reduced academic performance and changes in lifestyle behavior. The relationship between social media and physical activity is approached in two main directions: positive impact and negative impact.

According to recent reports, Vietnam has tens of millions of social media users with a high average daily usage time, indicating the widespread popularity and significant influence of these platforms in social life [5]. Among them, students are the group that uses social media most frequently and is most strongly affected [6], [7]. Research has also shown that social media helps students expand their knowledge, develop self-learning abilities, enhance communication skills, collaborate in online groups, and cultivate digital skills in a modern learning environment (Astatke, Weng & Chen, 2023; Yang et al., 2021; Liu, Shadiev & Cao, 2025; Vemula, Lalbiakfeli & Riba, 2022; Vanderhoven, Schellens & Valcke, 2014) [8], [9], [10], [11]. At the same time, this is also an environment for educating digital citizens, forming a sense of responsibility, online ethics, and nurturing character in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Oanh, 2025; Yinka, Olumide & Olatunde, 2024; Fitriani, Imam & Supriadi, 2024) [12], [13], [14]. According to UNESCO (2024), the general trend of learning and physical activities among students is

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also affected, with more than 60% of physical training institutions in the Asia-Pacific region having implemented at least one learning module integrated with digital technology in their training programs. The application of technology not only helps increase learning efficiency but also promotes personalization and lifelong learning in the field of physical education and sports [15].

Vietnam currently ranks 22nd globally in terms of the number of social media users and 6th among the 10 Asian countries with high internet usage rates [16]. Data from Datareportal (2021) [17] shows that 77.4% of the Vietnamese population uses the Internet, higher than the average in Southeast Asia (69%). Among them, there are over 72 million social media accounts, equivalent to 73.7% of Internet users. The age group from 13-24, which includes a majority of students, accounts for up to 71% of users on popular platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. These numbers indicate that students are one of the most frequent and active groups using social media today. According to Hoàng Thị Minh (2024) [18], social media has become an indispensable part of daily life, providing students with many opportunities to connect and access information.

The impact of social media on the student age group occurs in two directions: positive and negative. Students use social media for various purposes such as searching for information, exchanging useful study materials, and connecting with friends. Regarding physical activity, some studies indicate that social media can promote physical activity via social interaction mechanisms and motivation. Zhang, J. et al. (2016) [19] found that sharing exercise routine achievements on social media enhances motivation and physical activity levels. Similarly, Maher, C. et al. (2014) [20] affirmed that social media-based intervention programs can significantly improve physical activity levels. However, alongside the benefits, the unstructured use of social media can negatively affect mental health, well-being, and academic performance [21]. In sports, many studies show that prolonged use of social media increases sedentary behavior, thereby reducing physical activity levels. According to the World Health Organization (2020) [22], a sedentary lifestyle is one of the leading risk factors for global health. Kross, E. et al.'s (2013) study [23] also indicates that excessive use of social media can negatively affect physical and mental health. One of the concerning realities is that the current demand for social media use among students has not been specifically focused on and guided. If there is a lack of clear study goals and awareness of social media usage, students may fall into the situation of using social media excessively, uncontrollably, and without practical value [24].

In the context of students increasingly tending to "digitize" their personal lives, understanding the impact of social media on sports and exercise habits is an important basis for proposing appropriate solutions to enhance the physical fitness and health of learners. Social media is not only a tool for entertainment but also a means to support learning, share information, and connect communities. However, if not properly controlled, the use of social media can lead to reduced physical activity, increased sedentary lifestyles, and negatively impact students' health. Therefore, researching the positive use of social media to enhance the effectiveness of physical education in schools is essential.

In Vietnam, research on social media mainly focuses on its impact on students' learning, psychology, and lifestyle. Some studies have indicated that social media use can reduce the time spent on physical activities and increase unhealthy lifestyle habits. However, in-depth studies on the relationship between social media and sports training are still limited, especially in the context of universities in the Mekong Delta region. This indicates that the research gap needs to be further clarified.

Especially, the selection of the research subjects as students of Tra Vinh University holds significant practical value, contributing to the reflection of student characteristics in the context of the Mekong Delta region – an area undergoing rapid transformations in technology and education. The research results are not only valuable to the school but can also serve as a reference for other higher education institutions in Vietnam. With the above significance and importance, I choose to research:

*"The influence of social media on the physical training of tra vinh university students, vietnam"*

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### *2.1. Research subject*

200 second-year students at Tra Vinh University in the 2025 - 2026 academic year

### *2.2. Research method:*

The study uses the following method:

The method of analyzing and synthesizing documents aims to

Document reference method: aimed at collecting, synthesizing, and analyzing relevant information from various sources; the results help researchers build the theoretical foundation for the study, select research methods, and discuss research outcomes.

Interview method: aimed at collecting information through students' opinions on the frequency, purpose, and needs of social media usage among Tra Vinh University students.

Statistical method: aimed at processing and analyzing the data collected during the research process with the support of SPSS 22.0 software.

## 3. RESEARCH RESULTS

### 3.1. The current state of social media usage among students at Tra Vinh University (n=200)

Through a survey of 200 students, the following results were obtained:

**Table 1. The current state of social media usage among students at Tra Vinh University (n=200)**

| **Average daily social media usage time** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Usage time** | **Quantity of students** | **Percentage** |
| < 2 hours | 18 | 9,0 |
| 2 to under 4 hours | 62 | 31,0 |
| 4 to under 6 hours | 74 | 37,0 |
| ≥ 6 hours | 46 | 23,0 |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Frequency of social media use** | | |
| Daily | 178 | 89,0 |
| 4 to 6 days a week | 16 | 8,0 |
| 1 to 3 days a week | 6 | 3,0 |
| **Purpose of using social media (multiple options can be selected)** | | |
| Entertaining | 158 | 79,0 |
| Communicating | 132 | 66,0 |
| Studying | 74 | 37,0 |
| Following the news | 96 | 48,0 |

The results in Table 1, it shows that students use social media with very high frequency and on a regular basis. Specifically, 89% of students use social media daily, with 60% spending 4 hours or more per day, reflecting a significant level of dependence on the online environment.

In terms of purpose, social media is primarily used for entertainment (79%) and communication (66%), while its use for educational purposes is still limited (37%). This shows that social media has not been effectively utilized for learning and personal development activities.

In general, the above situation shows that students are spending a lot of time on social media for entertainment purposes, which poses a risk of reducing the time available for beneficial activities such as studying and exercising.

### 3.2. The current state of sports training among students (n = 200)

Through interviewing 200 students, the following results were obtained:

**Table 2. The current state of sports and physical training among students (n = 200)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Frequency of sports exercise per week** | | |
| **Training frequency** | **Quantity of students** | **Percentage** |
| ≥ 5 sessions a week | 22 | 11,0 |
| 3 to 4 sessions a week | 58 | 29,0 |
| 1 to 2 sessions a week | 74 | 37,0 |
| Not training | 46 | 23,0 |
| **Forms of physical exercise and sports training** | | |
| **Form of training** | **Quantity of students** | **Percentage** |
| Self-training | 82 | 41,0 |
| Join a sports club | 38 | 19,0 |
| Workout at the gym | 30 | 13,0 |
| Learning physical education in class | 50 | 27,0 |
| **The level of maintaining a workout habit** | | |
| **Level of maintenance** | **Quantity of students** | **Percentage** |
| Regularly | 48 | 24,0 |
| Unstable | 46 | 23,0 |
| Not maintained | 106 | 53,0 |

From Table 2. The results show that the state of physical exercise among students is still limited and unstable. Only 29% of students exercise regularly (≥ 3 sessions/week), while 60% exercise infrequently or not at all, with 23% completely inactive. This reflects the low level of physical activity among students.

In terms of form, students mainly practice on their own (41%), while participation in clubs or organized training is still low, indicating a high degree of spontaneity and a lack of professional guidance.

Especially, only 24% of students maintain regular exercise, while the majority are unstable or do not continue (76%). This shows that the exercise habit is not sustainable and easily interrupted.

Overall, students have not yet developed the habit of regular exercise; solutions are needed to raise awareness and maintain long-term training.

*In summary, the results show that the state of physical exercise among students at Tra Vinh University is still limited, as evidenced by low training frequency, insufficient stability, and a high non-participation rate. Although a portion of students are aware of the importance of exercising, the majority still do not maintain a regular exercise habit. This is an important basis for analyzing the causes, including the factor of social media use, which affects the allocation of time and motivation for students' exercise.*

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**3.3. The relationship between social media use and sports training time (n = 200)**

Through interviewing 200 students, the following results were obtained:

**Table 3. The relationship between social media usage time and exercise time Physical Education for students at Tra Vinh University**

| Time spent on social media | ≥ 3 sessions/week (regular training) | | 1–2 session/week (infrequent training) | | Not training | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | |
| Below 2 hours | 12 | 66.7 | 6 | 33.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 18 |
| 2 to 4 hours | 32 | 51.6 | 22 | 35.5 | 8 | 12.9 | 62 |
| 4 to 6 hours | 24 | 32.4 | 30 | 40.5 | 20 | 27.0 | 74 |
| Above 6 hours | 12 | 26.1 | 16 | 34.8 | 18 | 39.1 | 46 |

The results in Table 3 show a clear difference between the groups:

The group of students who use social media for less than 2 hours/day has the highest rate of regular exercise (12/18 ≈ 66.7%), and no students do not exercise.

The group using 4 to 6 hours/day tends to shift significantly from regular exercise to less or no exercise.

The group using above 6 hours/day tends to be less active, with a high rate of non-exercise (18/46 ≈ 39.1%) and a low rate of regular exercise (26.1%).

This shows that as the time spent on social media increases, the level of participation in physical exercise tends to decrease.

However, at a reasonable usage level (2–4 hours/day), social media does not yet have a significant negative impact on exercise, and it can even be supportive if used for the right purposes.

**2.4. Phân tích mức độ ảnh hưởng của mạng xã hội đến thời gian tập luyện TDTT**

The research results show that social media has a significant negative impact on the time students spend exercising. Specifically, the Pearson correlation coefficient r = -0.45 ($p < 0.05$) reflects a moderate negative relationship: as social media usage increases, the time and frequency of physical exercise decrease.

Analysis of Table 2. The cross-tabulation shows a clear difference between the groups. The group of students who use social media for less than 2 hours per day has the highest rate of regular exercise (66.7%), while the group using social media for 6 hours per day or more has a high rate of not exercising (39.1%). This proves that social media is significantly occupying the time allocated for physical activities.

Regarding the level of influence, it can be divided into three levels:

- Low impact: used for less than 2–4 hours/day, no significant effect on training yet
- Average impact: using 4–6 hours/day, starts to reduce workout frequency
- High impact: use ≥ 6 hours/day, increases sedentary behavior, and significantly reduces exercise motivation.

The main reasons include: (1) social media taking up free time; (2) creating a sedentary habit; (3) reducing the priority given to physical activities.

However, alongside the negative impacts, social media can also support training if used appropriately, via instructional content, online sports communities, or health tracking applications.

In summary, the inverse relationship between the time spent on social media and the time spent on physical exercise by Tra Vinh University students. This is an important scientific basis for proposing intervention solutions to balance social media and physical activity among students.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The study indicates that students at Tra Vinh University have a high level of social media usage, while their time spent on physical exercise is limited and unstable. The analysis results confirm the existence of an inverse correlation between the time spent on social media and the time spent on physical exercise. Therefore, it is necessary to guide the reasonable use of social media, while also enhancing solutions to promote physical activities to improve students' health.

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