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# The Gen Z Enigma: Social Media, Mental Well-Being and Academic Performance of University Students in Kenya. An SEM Based Analysis

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## Abstract

Gen Z (Born between the years 1997-2012 according to Shorey *et al.,* 2021) is the first generation to grow up entirely in the digital age and navigate the digital jungle from the cradle. Gen Zs, with gadgets practically in their hands as toddlers, has evolved into tech wizards. From coding their own apps to effortlessly mastering new platforms, they're the pioneers of the digital age. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of social media (SM) usage on academic performance (AP) and mental well-being (MWB) of generation Z (Gen Z) university students in Kenya. The study used purposive sampling technique, data was collected from 400 respondents using a well-structured, close-ended, self-administered questionnaire. The analysis was carried out via partial least squares-structural equation model (PLS-SEM). The results revealed that there are positive and significant direct effects of social media (SM) on academic performance ($\beta = 0.212$, $t = 3.858$, $p < 0.000$) and mental well-being ($\beta = 0.468$, $t = 7.995$, $p < 0.000$). Simultaneously, mental well-being also had a positive and significant influence on academic performance ($\beta = 0.468$, $t = 7.995$, $p < 0.000$) among Gen Z university students. The study findings demonstrates that social media plays crucial role in academic performance and student well-being. Therefore, the study highlights the need to promote responsible use of social media among Gen Z university students since it enhances their academic performance and bolster their mental well-being. The study recommends implementing effective policy measures, augmented investment on social media technology platforms to foster an intellectually equipped students' body and contribute to the development of knowledgeable and successful Gen Z students.

**Keywords**: *Social media, mental well-being, academic performance, university students.*

## 1. Introduction

Social media consists of two keywords- "social" and "media-," the combination of which reflects the innate desire for humanity to connect with others in diverse ways or through various media (Safko, 2010). Social media are sometimes interchangeably used

with social networking sites because it is via these networking sites individuals can connect, relate and communicate with each other (Tess, 2013). In recent years, social media has become an integral part of the lives of many young adults, significantly transforming how they communicate, interact and access information (Chowdhury, 2024). This transformation holds particular salience for the young adults, for whom the integration of social media has become nothing of indispensable in both their educational and daily experiences (Shahzad, *et al*., 2024). According to the prioridata (2025), there are now 5.20 billion active users of social media around the world, which is around 64% of the global population. Furthermore, more than 9 out of 10 persons with internet access now use social media (Datareportal, 2021). Facebook remains the largest social media platform, with over 3.15 billion monthly active users. YouTube is the second-largest social media platform, with over 2.5 billion active users. Instagram has over 2 billion active users, making it the fourth largest social media platform. TikTok has surpassed 1 billion active users, becoming one of the fastest-growing social media platforms.

In the field of higher education, researchers have discovered various ways to utilize social media to enhance the learning experience (Chowdhury, 2024). For instance, it can be used to share information with students, collect data while conducting research, engage students, form study groups and connect students with social tools for collaborative purposes (O'Brien, 2012). In recent times, universities have witnessed an immense surge in the usage of social media tools such as YouTube, Meta (formerly Facebook), Instagram, WhatsApp, X (formerly) Twitter, TikTok, etc., by both students and faculty members (Chowdhury, 2024). This usage trend has been adopted to promote teaching and learning both inside and outside the classroom and empirical studies have shown that the use of social media technologies has several educational benefits Alwagait *et al*., (2015). These benefits include; enhanced communication between students and instructors, increased opportunities for networking or collaborations among students both near and far, rapid sharing of study materials, access to course materials, provision of alternative platform to the official learning management systems and exposure of students to technologies and skills that may

Despite extant literature and previous studies predominantly addresses the technical and pedagogical dimensions and benefits of social media on education (Chowdhury, 2024; Haleem, *et al.,* 2022; Cheng, *et al.*, 2022; Bhandarkar, *et al.,* 2021), their synergistic impact on academic performance and mental well-being among Gen Z students remains under-explored and thus necessitates research attention (Hosen *et al.*, 2021). Hence, this research aims to bridge this critical gap by exploring the impact of social media on both academic performance and mental well-being among Gen Z university students in the Kenyan educational context.

## 2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

### *2.1 Social Learning Theory*

Gen Z university students belong largely to the cohort born between the years 1997 and 2012 and they are heavily connected to the internet (Shorey *et al.,* 2021). They are digitally immersed generation, living with constant access to information and entertainment at their fingertips (Cickovska 2020). This has led Gen Z university students to become adept at processing extensive amounts of information in a short time (Dodson & Hairston*,* 2025). This affinity for technology lead to changes in the reading habits, struggle with linear texts and identifying the main points within a reading assignment (Kohtz *et al.,* 2019) and coupled with shortened attention spans (Szymkowiak *et al.,* 2021). These learning characteristics have posed challenges to established pedagogical practices that will continue to evolve as future generation of learners meet higher academia in this new digital landscape (Dodson & Hairston, 2025). For this reason, the preferred method of learning is via internet sources as opposed to printed materials (Szymkowiak *et al.,* 2021).

This study adopts the social learning theory (SLT) as an overarching theory to investigate how Gen Zers university students are coping with this hefty social media and its impact on their academic performance and mental well-being. Bandura's seminal theory in 1969 laid the groundwork for understanding how diverse engagements with social networks and collaborative technologies such as social media platforms significantly influence learning experiences and outcomes (Jia *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, the SLT theory postulates that observation of others' behaviour can help an individual identify and learn in a given situation; in other words, appropriate behaviour is learned from both other members of the group (Liao *et al.,* 2017) and seeking advice of others-role modelling (Zhang *et al.,* 2022). The engagement with social media technologies and applications integrates seamlessly with social learning theory' scope (Kamau, 2025). These tools serve as an extension of social networks and as customized pedagogical agents that can deeply impact academic performance and mental well-being (Shahzad, *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, the interplay of social media technologies and social learning theory offers a robust analytical lens through which researchers can assess the impact of social media usage on students' academic performance and mental welfare.

### *2.2 Social Media and Academic Performance*

The Gen Z are generally tertiary students forming an enthusiastic group that adopt new technology including the internet for communication, entertainment and education (Vaterlaus & Tulane,2015). The youth as leaders of tomorrow are considered to be more internet compliant and more engaging in social media than adults (Xu *et al.,* 2018). However, practical literature is not clear on whether social media improves or inhibits learning (Boahene *et al*., 2019; Jacobsen & Forste, 2011). While some studies have reported that the use of social media has negative effects on academic performance (Al-Adwan *et al.*, 2020; Almri, 2019; Bellur *et al.,* 2015; Zahid *et al.*, 2016; Lahiry *et al.,*

2019; Maya, 2016), other studies suggest the opposite. Still more intriguing, some studies suggest no impact of social media on academic performance (Boahene *et al.*, 2019; El-Badawy & Hashem, 2015; Onyeka *et al.,* 2013; Jacobsen & Forste, 2011).

Hovorka and Rees (2009) observe that the use of social media in education allows students to acquire essential workplace skills such as effective communication, teamwork, community-orientation, meeting and, ultimately, becoming creative in life. Furthermore, research by Longobardi *et al*. (2020) demonstrates that social media has a significant positive impact on students' academic achievement and happiness. In some cases, a positive correlation has been found between Twitter and Facebook usage, indicating that integrating these platforms could improve education (Malik *et al.,* 2019). Recent research by Shahzad *et al.* (2024) illuminates that social media has positive and significant impact on academic performance among university students. Despite incorporating social media into the learning process is underscored by previous works (Stathopoulou *et al.*, 2019; McLaughlin & Sillence, 2018), limitation of existing literature is that it fails to differentiate between the use of social media for education purposes and other purposes. Thus, despite various positive effects associated with the use of social media, if not used properly, social media can divert the attention of students from their academic work and adversely affect their academic performance. Taken collectively, these conflicting views and outcomes call for a nuanced evaluation of the intricate relationship between social media and academic performance culminating in the formulation of the ensuing hypothesis.

> *H1*. Social media usage among Gen Z has a positive impact on academic performance.

*2.3 Social Media and Mental Well-Being*

The arrival of social media platforms has engendered a momentous revolution in the way in which individuals interact and communicate within the modern digital sphere, hence attracting a substantial user base (Azizan, 2024). University students particularly utilize the Internet for various reasons, including leisure activities like participating in online communities or playing games, educational tasks such as completing assignments or applying for scholarships, and practical activities such as researching companies for job interviews (Zhang *et al.,* 2023). As of February 2025, 5.24 billion active social media users identified around the world indicating a total increase of 4.1 percent over the past 12 months (Datareportal, 2025).

Recent researches underscore the public concerns about the effects of social media use on mental well-being have been raised broadly (Whelan, *et al.,* 2022; Granik, *et al.,* 2020; Damour, 2020; van Velthoven *et al.,* 2018). However, there is no consensus on whether or not that impact is positive or negative (Kim & Kim, 2017). Some studies have highlighted the negative effects of the social media on subjective psychological well-being (Nadelson, 2017), low self-esteem (Zhao, 2021; Hawi & Samaha, 2017), lower happiness levels (Twenge, 2019), experience of envy and depression (Tandoc et al., 2015), addiction and satisfaction with life (Hawi & Samaha, 2017) and one

ecological experiment showing that the introduction of Meta (Formerly Facebook) across US college students lead to poorer mental health (Braghieri *et al.,* 2022).

In contrast, other researchers have argued that social media usage have positive effects on university students' well-being (Shahzad, *et al.*, 2024; Hollis *et al.,* 2020; Burke *et al.,* 2020; Yang *et al.,* 2018; Feinstein *et al.,* 2013). Feeling of loneliness may decrease with the use of social media platforms (such as Instagram and snap-chat), potentially due to increased sense of intimacy associated with images and text (Pittman & Reich, 2015). Taken collectively, these conflicting views and outcomes call for an investigation on the intricate relationship between social media and mental well-being particularly among Universities Gen Z students. Thus, in light of these multiple dimensions, this study advances the following hypothesis.

> *H2.* Social media usage among Gen Z university students has a positive impact on mental well-being.

*2.4 Mental Well-Being and Academic Performance*

According to the report of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), in 2019, 1 in every 8 people, or 970 million people around the world were living with a compromised mental well-being, underscoring the relevance of this issue. In this context, mental well-being is defined not only by the absence of pathologies but also by an individual's capacity to realize their potential, adapt to stressors, function effectively, and contribute to societal processes (Grant *et al.*, 2019). In today's rapidly changing social environment, the relationship between the mental well-being and academic achievements of university students is receiving increasing attention (Leung *et al.,* 2021). This is because the period is characterized by intense academic demands, societal expectations and general life-balancing challenges, thereby increasing the likelihood of mental difficulties (Zhang *et al.,* 2024).

Successful adaptation to these conditions becomes a pivotal factor not only for academic success but also for the overall well-being of students (Gueldner *et al.,* 2020). Furthermore, with differing academic programs, varying academic loads and requirements, diverse stress levels among the students exists. For instance, high-tech universities emphasizing research may impose higher expectations regarding project execution and research tasks, potentially heightening stress levels among students (Prowse, *et al.,* 2021). The nexus among Gen Z digital native orientation, social media usage, mental well-being and academic performance requires a nuanced approach to bolster academic excellency but also nurture mental well-being. To encapsulate the insights in a testable proposition, this study articulates the following hypothesis.

> *H3*. Gen Z students believe that mental well-being has a positive impact on their academic performance.

*2.6 Conceptual Framework*

A conceptual framework is typically a visual representation of the expected relationships and connections between various constructs or variables. This study variables mapping is illustrated in Figure 1.

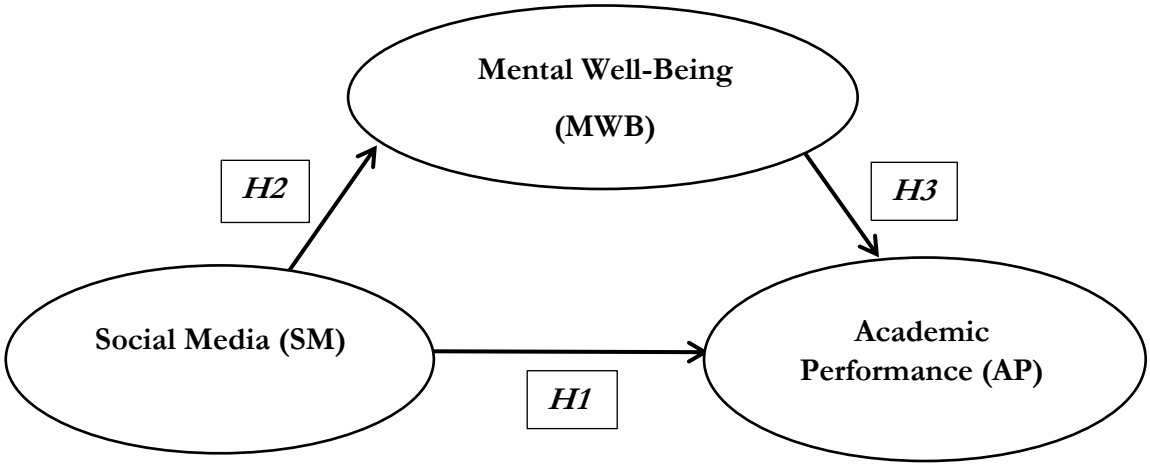



**Figure 1.** *Conceptual Model*

## 3. Methodology

*3.1 Measurement*

A cross-sectional research design was selected for this study since it permits information collection from an expansive test at a single point in time while distinguishing connections between factors (Baoshan, Wang, & Dong, 2009). A well-structured, close-ended self-administered questionnaires were formulated to achieve the intended study's objectives. There were three main constructs for the study. The questionnaire was dissected into two sections, i.e. sections A and B. Section A contained information regarding demographic characteristics. Similarly, section B consisted of items related to the three main constructs of this study-social media, mental well-being and academic performance, which have been taken from different previous studies. All the constructs were tested using five-point Likert scale where the students were instructed to indicate their level of agreement with each statement ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

*3.2 Sample and Data Collection*

The study's total sample size was 346 respondents. The purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data. The benefits of this technique include the ability to

precisely target respondents and therefore reduce the difficulty of locating them, which in turn significantly reduces the cost of undertaking the survey (Sekaran & Bourgie, 2016). The respondents were selected from several different classes within the university which was done randomly. After classes were identified, the questionnaires were distributed during class time after approval from the instructors in-charge of the classes. The students were informed about the purpose of the study, its significance, and assured of preservation of their anonymity, confidentiality of the information supplied and total adherence to all ethical guidelines. They were also informed that the participation in the survey was voluntary. Once agreed to participate, they were given 10 minutes to fill the questionnaire. Thus, 400 questionnaires were distributed, 370 were obtained and 346 were valid for analysis after screening. As a result, the survey received 86.5% of the responses. The internal reliability was validated using Cronbach's alpha. For the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics were performed using SSPS, and structural equation modelling (SEM) was done using AMOS.

In addition, structural models' fit was assessed using the overall model fit indices, which consist of chi-square ($\chi 2$)/degree of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness of fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI) and Tucker–Lewis index (TLI).

## 4. Results

### *4.1 Respondent Profile*

The data was gathered through a survey from the students of different schools. The sample consisted of 400 respondents, of who, 145 (41.92%) were male and 201 (68.08%) were female. Concerning the education levels, 231 (66.81%) were in bachelor's degrees, 115 (33.23%) in master's degrees. The respondents' data is summarized by calculating the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of social media (SM), academic performance (AP) and mental well-being (MWB). Table 1 demonstrate the descriptive statistics of the study variables. Academic performance has the highest mean value of 3.446 and social media has a low mean value of 3.181. On the other hand, academic performance has less variation which indicates a standard deviation of 0.604, and mental well-being has more variations which is indicated by a standard deviation of 0.735. The construct normality test was confirmed via Skewness and Kurtosis. The values stayed within the permissible range of -2 to +2 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) and -7 to +7 (Byrne, 2010), respectively. Furthermore, multicollinearity was evaluated using correlation coefficients and variance inflation factor (VIF). The VIF between social media and mental well-being was 1.264, which was below the acceptable limit of 3.3 (Kock, 2015), denoting no multicollinearity.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics*

| Construct | Mean | SD | VIF | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Media | 3.181 | 0.646 | 1.264 | -0.581 | 0.795 |
| Mental Well-Being | 3.446 | 0.735 | 1.264 | -0.475 | 0.439 |
| Academic Performance | 3.457 | 0.604 | | -1.199 | 2.189 |

*4.2 Sample Adequacy Test*

According to Pallant (2020), two major issues must be considered when deciding acceptability of data set for principal component analysis-sample size and the degree of the link between the components. As a general rule, there must be at least 5 times as many as items to be examined (Hair, 2006). Pallant (2020) recommends 150 as the minimal number for factor analysis. This current study contained 17 items, and data was obtained from 346 respondents, which was greater then 150. To determine the relevance, KMO and Bartlett's tests are used (Fox & Skitmore, 2007). In this study, the KMO sampling appropriateness metric was used to retrieve individual factors and its rating was 0.891, which indicates a high level of shared variation. To check the non-zero correlation among the study variables items, Barlett's test of sphericity is considered appropriate and a small significance level is a good indication of a non-zero correlation among the items, and the collected data is sufficient to proceed with EFA (Tobias & Carlson, 1969). The Bartlett's sphericity value is high (Approx. Chi-Square value = 3466.760), and the corresponding (p-value = 0.000) is significant, proving the population correlation matrix is not identical and that data is suitable to conduct EFA as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*KMO and Bartlett's Test*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | 0.891 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 3466.760 |
| | df | 136 |
| | Sig. | 0.000 |

*4.3 Measurement Model*

The measurement model serves as a rigorous framework to substantiate the dependability of the constructs and to authenticate their validity (Bagozzi & Edwards, 1998). Utilizing PLS-SEM, this present study focused on key parameters such as factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha(α), composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) as shown in Table 3, alongside Fornell-Larcker criteria, the variance inflation factor (VIF) and model fit indices. The internal consistency of the designed instrument was assessed through Cronbach's alpha value and composite reliability to confirm the reliability of the items. As shown by the data (Table 4), the Cronbach's value was 0.810 for social media, 0.856 for mental well-being and 0. 892 for academic performance and composite reliability scores of 0.812, 0.858 and 0.892 respectively. Each construct had a satisfactory level of internal consistency, with values exceeding the threshold of 0.60 as recommended by Hair *et al.,* (2014). This exemplifies a robust internal consistency.

The convergent validity of the measurement model was demonstrated by standardized loading of each construct as well as the average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE values for social media, mental well-being and academic performance were 0.502, 0.504 and 0.624 respectively. All three constructs exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.5 and therefore confirming convergent validity (Hair *et al.,* 2019; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) as shown on Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Descriptive Statistics*

| Constructs | Factor Loading | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Social media** | | **0.810** | **0.812** | **0.502** |
| SM1 | 0.633 | | | |
| SM2 | 0.668 | | | |
| SM3 | 0.762 | | | |
| SM4 | 0.777 | | | |
| SM5 | 0.693 | | | |
| SM6 | 0.764 | | | |
| **Mental Well-Being** | | **0.856** | **0.858** | **0.504** |
| MWB1 | 0.627 | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MWB2 | 0.853 | | | |
| MWB3 | 0.808 | | | |
| MWB4 | 0.796 | | | |
| MWB5 | 0.746 | | | |
| MWB6 | 0.680 | | | |
| **Academic Performance** | | **0.892** | **0.892** | **0.624** |
| AP1 | 0.792 | | | |
| AP2 | 0.805 | | | |
| AP3 | 0.855 | | | |
| AP4 | 0.897 | | | |
| AP5 | 0.850 | | | |

The assessment of discriminant validity was undertaken using Fornell-Larcker criterion, which ensures that each variable is distinctly separate from all others within the same constructs (Fornell & Larcher, 1981). The square roots of the AVE of the constructs were, social media (0.649), academic performance (0.790) and mental well-being (0.710). The inter-construct correlations among the three constructs were smaller than the square root of the regular variance extracted values for every factor (Fornell & Lacker, 1981) as presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Discriminant Validity-Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

| **Construct** | **AP** | **MWB** | **SM** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Academic Performance | **0.790** | | |
| Mental Well-Being | 0.552*** | **0.710** | |
| Social media | 0.397*** | 0.396*** | **0.649** |

To verify the proposed measurement model, extracted factors from EFA were tested using CFA (maximum likelihood method) with SPSS-AMOS software. The result of CFA indicates three factors along with the 16 items in the proposed model which is represented in Figure 2.

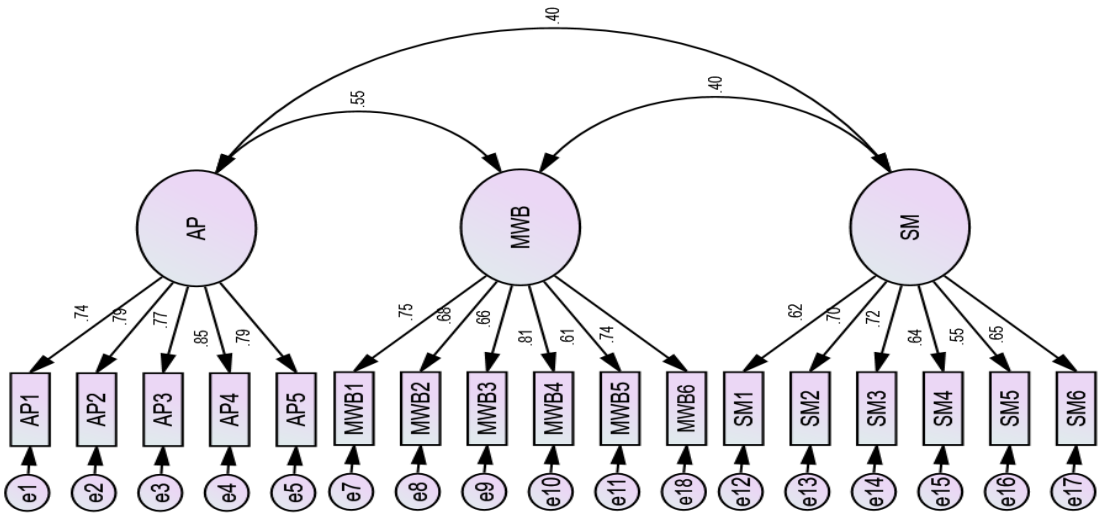



**Figure 2.** *Measurement Model*

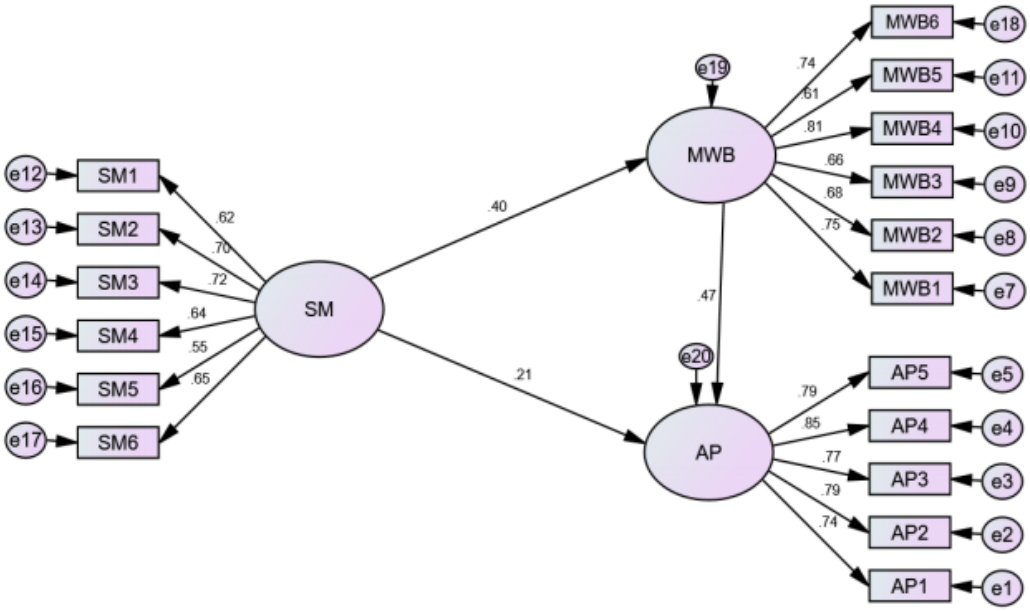
The test statistics were as follows; CMIN/DF=2.427, GFI= 0.917, CFI=0.934, NFI= 0.903 and TLI=0.923 as shown in Table 6. All these measured indices fulfilled the recommended thresholds for fitness indices (CMIN/DF < 5, GFI, CFI, NFI, TLI >0.9). RMSEA = 0.065, which is less than 0.08 indicating the proposed three factor model is capable of measuring the intended objective as recommended by Hair *et al.,* (2017).

**Table 6**. *Summary Statistics for Measurement Model Fitness Indices*

| Model Measures | CMIN/DF | RMSEA | GFI | CFI | NFI | TLI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model score | 2.427 | 0.065 | 0.917 | 0.934 | 0.903 | 0.923 |

*4.4 Structural Equation Modeling and Hypotheses Testing*

An SEM is a statistical modeling approach that combines multiple regression and component analysis to investigate the relationship between observe and latent variables (Hair *et al.,* 2021; Hu & Bentler, 1999) and verify the proposed model (Tabri & Elliott, 2012). Fit indices used in SEM are the Chi-square degree of freedom [minimum discrepancy of confirmatory factor analysis/degrees of freedom (CMIN)/ degrees of freedom (DF)], comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), Tucker-Lewis's index (TLI), Normed fit index (NFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) to identify the statistically significant SEM model (Kline & Kenny, 2005). Lastly, as per Hair *et al.,* (2010) structural model was a respectable fit according to the RMSEA=0.039, with values of 0.08 indicating good fit, one of the indices ideally suited to our model with a large sample size as shown in figure 3.




**Model Fitness Indexes:** RMSEA=0.039; GFI=0.900; CFI=0.928; NFI=0.918; TLI=0.910

**Figure 3.** *Structural model*

The hypothesized overall structural relationships are given in Figure 3. The results revealed that there is significant direct effect of social media (SM) on academic performance (AP) and mental well-being (MWB) ($\beta = 0.212$, $t = 3.858$, $p < 0.000$; $\beta = 0.396$, $t = 6.513$, $p < 0.000$) respectively, supporting hypotheses *H1, H2.* Simultaneously, there was also positive and significant influence of mental well-being on academic performance ($\beta = 0.468$, $t = 7.995$, $p < 0.000$), supporting *H3* as shown in Table **7.**

**Table 7**

*Direct Path Analysis*

| Hypothesis | | *β*- value | *T*- value | *P*- value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | SM > AP | 0.212 | 3.858 | 0.000 | Support |
| H2 | SM > MWB | 0.396 | 6.513 | 0.000 | Support |
| H3 | MWB > AP | 0.468 | 7.995 | 0.000 | Support |

## 5. Discussions

The primary aim of this current study was to rigorously explore students' perceptions on the nexus among social media, mental well-being and academic performance among

university Gen Z students. The findings of the research reveal that social media positively and significantly affects the academic performance of Gen Z students in the university, hence supporting *H1*. This conforms with the prior results such as Shahzad *et al.* (2024) and Kamau (2025), which revealed that social media positively impact the academic performance. Longobardi *et al.* (2020), which demonstrates that social media has a significant positive impact on students' academic achievement and happiness. In some cases, a positive correlation has been found between Twitter and Facebook usage, indicating that integrating these platforms could improve education (Malik *et al.*, 2019).

Moreover, the study also demonstrates that social media has a positive and significant influence on mental well-being (H2). This is consistent with previous studies which demonstrate a positive and significant impact between social media and mental well-being among university students (Kamau, 2025; Shahzad *et al.*, 2024; Marcino *et al.,* 2024, Zhang *et al.,* 2023). Finally, this research confirms that Gen Z students believe mental well-being exerts a positive influence on academic performance (H3). This is consistent with previous study by Sond and Hu (2024), which demonstrates positive relationship between the mental health and academic achievement of college students.

## 6. Conclusions

The study explored student perceptions of the impact of social media on academic performance and mental well-being in Kenyan university Gen Z students. The results revealed three significant findings. First, Gen Z students believe social media has a significant effect on the academic performance. Second, Gen Z students believe social media positively impact their mental well-being. Third, Gen Z students believe their mental well-being positively impact their academic performance. In conclusion, this study offers a compelling empirical insight on the nexus among social media, academic performance and mental well-being. University policymakers and stakeholders are provided with comprehensive, evidence-based framework to navigate the complex education ecosystems and objective adoption of human-centric educational technologies and its societal implications.

## 7. Recommendations

The study not only provides a theoretical framework for understanding social media behaviour among university Gen Z students, but it also develops a conceptual model for investigating the influence of social media on academic performance and mental-well-being among students. Additionally, this study reveals that social media has a positive and significant impact on academic performance (Shahzad *et al.,* 2024; Kamau, 2025; Longobardi *et al.,* 2020; Malik *et al.,* 2019) as well as on mental-well-being (Lee, 2021; Young *et al.*, 2020; Shahzad *et al.,* 2024). These findings extremely imperative for high education stakeholders to consider investing on social and integrate the same to the education ecosystems for synergistic learning outcomes and wellness of the students and particularly Gen Z.

## 8. Limitations and Future Research

Although this study has numerous recommendations, the study also has some limitations that needs to be acknowledged in future studies. First, this study used a quantitative method for data analysis, but qualitative as well as mixed method can also be a very effective tool to understand a more in-depth individual experience of social media, academic performance and mental well-being. Second, this study used social media in general. In the future, one can specify a particular type of social media. Third, the limited sample size may not be representative of the entire population of university students in Kenya. Fourth, the five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect data, but for more accurate and reliable results, a seven-point Likert scale might be used.

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