Original Article

A Study on the Interplay Between Social Media Attitudes and Spirituality in Higher Education

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Abstract

Social media has become a significant part of modern life, prompting concerns about its effects on young people's psychological and spiritual well-being. This study examined the relationship between college students' attitudes toward social media and their level of spirituality within the framework of theology and student formation. Using a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 372 students across various departments of a Catholic university in Pampanga, selected through stratified random sampling. Two standardized instruments were utilized: the Social Media Attitude Scale (Otrar & Argin, 2013) and the Spirituality Questionnaire (Hardt et al., 2011). Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank-order correlation due to non-normal distribution. Results revealed a statistically significant but modest relationship between social media attitudes and spirituality, indicating that while social media may influence aspects such as mindfulness or the search for meaning, it is not a primary determinant of spiritual life. The findings highlight the complex, multifaceted nature of spirituality, shaped more by personal, cultural, and relational factors than digital behavior.

Keywords: *Catholic University, social media, spirituality, student's attitudes, spiritual activities*

Introduction

Social media refers to a group of online tools designed for communication, information sharing, and collaboration (Wigmore, n.d.). It has become a defining feature of the digital age, transforming how people interact, think, and live. With constant technological innovation and the widespread use of smartphones, users can instantly share thoughts, images, and daily experiences through platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. People increasingly rely on social media for news, social interaction, and decision-making ("Reliance on Social Media in Today's Society," 2012). As of January 2022, about 58.4% of the global population uses social media, spending an average of 2 hours and 27 minutes online daily (Chaffey, 2022). Apps like WhatsApp, Messenger, and WeChat remain popular, while TikTok's user base continues to grow, especially among the youth.

In the United States, usage has risen from 5% in 2005 to around 70% (Allen, 2019), raising concerns about its effects on mental health and well-being. In the Philippines, over 80% of internet users consider social media their main online activity (Brutas, n.d.), and 83% were part of a social network as early as 2008 (De, 2008). Despite its benefits, social media's growing influence is linked to issues like academic decline, behavioral changes, and teenage pregnancy (ABS-CBN TV Patrol, 2016).

This study explores how college students' attitudes toward social media relate to their spiritual life, especially in a time when much of their daily experience is shaped online. It was driven by the need to understand how digital habits might support or hinder spiritual growth. In the Philippines—where social media use is widespread and religious identity remains strong—this topic is both timely and relevant. The findings can help faith-based institutions like Catholic universities improve how they support students' holistic development in today's digital age.

Understanding Attitudes

Attitude refers to a learned psychological tendency involving an individual's feelings, beliefs, and evaluations toward a person, object, or event (Hodges & Logan, 2012; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, as cited in John, 2017). It influences behavior—people are more likely to engage positively with those they favor and distance themselves from those they do not. While attitudes guide interactions, they are also subject to change (John, 2017).

Researchers who adopt the psychological view of attitudes emphasize their role in maintaining social order, asserting that behavioral change often requires a prior change in attitude (Chaiklin, 2011). As early as 1928, Thurstone (1970) proposed that attitudes can be measured, focusing on measurement rather than behavior prediction. Verbal behavior is often seen as a reflection of underlying attitudes. Campbell (1988, as cited in Chaiklin, 2011) described attitudes as "residues of experience" or learned behavioral tendencies.

Social Media and Its Influence

The rise of social media began in 1997 with SixDegrees.com, the first platform to allow users to create profiles, post comments, and send messages (Mohamed, 2019). MySpace followed in 2003, gaining rapid popularity (Hayaty, 2018). The major breakthrough came with Facebook, which revolutionized social interaction online and

marked the start of widespread, daily social media use (Al-Shareef, 2014; Mashaal, 2018, as cited in Elyased, 2021). Social media has since evolved from a communication tool into a central aspect of everyday life, used for entertainment, self-expression, information, and public discourse; thus, social media became a utility and a powerful force shaping human experience (Berger, 2019).

Defined as computer-mediated technology that facilitates creating and sharing content across virtual communities (Kapoor et al., 2018), social media is used widely across age groups. Pew Research Center data show that 88% of adults aged 18–29, 78% aged 30–49, and 64% aged 50–64 use social media (Anderson & Smith, 2018; The Psychology of Social Media, 2019). Web 2.0 technology has enabled the rise of interactive platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, which users use for personal connections, business, and staying informed (Otrar & Argin, 2014; Asha et al., 2017).

Among youth, engagement is particularly high. O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) found that 75% of teenagers own phones, with many using them daily for social media, texting, and messaging. About 22% log on more than ten times a day. Globally, platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp each serve over a billion users (Ospina, 2019), drastically altering how people access information and navigate social life.

However, this rapid growth brings challenges. While social media offers convenience and connection, excessive use can have negative consequences, echoing Hippocrates' idea that "everything in excess is opposed to nature." As such, researchers are increasingly examining both its positive and harmful effects. This review underscores the dual impact of social media on behavior, particularly among youth, and highlights the need for mindful, balanced use in an ever-connected world.

Positive Effects of Social Media

Social media and technology have significantly influenced modern lifestyles, particularly strengthening relationships. Social media facilitates family bonding by enabling members to stay connected, share hobbies, and relive memories through features like photo sharing and memory posts (Harman, 2019). It allows for simplified communication through video calls and instant messaging, even across great distances.

Beyond popular platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, people also engage with other internet-based networks that connect users through shared interests or hobbies (Foreman, 2017). Social media has become a vital tool for youth to express their opinions and become active citizens, enhancing their social awareness and civic engagement (Herrera, 2016).

In education, social media platforms foster motivation and learning. Students benefit from educational YouTube videos, e-books, video conferencing, and online collaboration (Singh, 2021). Social media enables students to discuss homework, share notes, and seek academic help from peers (Schmidt & Vandewater, 2008; Salas & Alexander, 2008 as cited in Gok, 2016). Multiple studies also affirm students' positive attitudes toward social media use in education (Ari et al., 2016; Aydin, 2016; Sahin et al., 2016; Calisir, 2015; Otrar & Arigin, 2014; Vural & Bat, 2010; Buyuksener, 2009, as cited in Karakaya et al., 2018).

Among adolescents, social media enhances friendships and contributes to emotional well-being. It fosters autonomy, critical thinking, and stronger peer

connections, making friends' interests more accessible (Manago & Vaughn, 2015). Social media also supports mental health through body-positive content, support groups, and exposure to diverse ideas (Naruse, 2017).

In the Philippine context, social media played a critical role in mobilizing grassroots efforts such as the community pantries during the COVID-19 pandemic, embodying the "Alay Kapwa" spirit of solidarity and service (Galang & Galang, 2021). Used ethically, it becomes a tool for evangelization and community building.

The pandemic also transformed religious practices. The Church embraced digital platforms for online Masses, spiritual recollections, and faith-based community events (Zandroto, 2021; Makhutla, 2021; Thinane, 2022; Przywara et al., 2021; Ballan, 2021). Catholic institutions like Centro Escolar University and the University of Santo Tomas adapted by holding virtual celebrations and interreligious dialogues (CEU, 2021; UST, 2022). These digital spiritual interventions helped sustain faith and community during the public health crisis (del Castillo et al., 2020).

Ultimately, the widespread use of social media contributes to the growth of spirituality by helping individuals incorporate faith into daily life and by building online communities centered on shared spiritual values (Rautela & Sharma, 2019).

Negative Effects of Social Media

While social media offers connectivity, it also presents risks, especially for adolescents. Excessive use is linked to anxiety, emotional strain, behavioral changes, and reduced productivity, or highlights psychological effects such as stress, guilt, and emotional crises (Schill, 2011, as cited in Gok, 2016). Further, prolonged use of platforms like Facebook may contribute to depressive symptoms (Pantic, 2014), while frequent comparisons online can lower self-esteem and increase dissatisfaction (Cifelli, 2021).

Social media fosters a culture of comparison that promotes unrealistic beauty standards and material aspirations, often leading to dissatisfaction with one's appearance and lifestyle (Balanza & Tindowen, 2019). Idealized portrayals online can distort perceptions of beauty and undermine authenticity and contentment. Studies have linked heavy social media use to increased risks of depression, anxiety, loneliness, self-harm, and suicidal ideation (Social Media and Mental Health, n.d.).

In education, excessive time on social platforms negatively affects academic performance (Duncan et al., 2012; Kalpidou et al., 2011; Ophir et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2011, as cited in Gok, 2016). In the Philippine context, digital dependence for school tasks reduces time for studying and family interaction (Ragata et al., 2021). Social media also enables the creation of false identities and superficial connections. Alarmingly, it serves as a platform for criminal activities, including extremist recruitment and, in some cases, has even been linked to violent crimes like murder (Amedie, 2015; Jones, 2020).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant rise in online exploitation was reported. UNICEF emphasized the need for stronger child protection measures online. In the Philippines, cyber tip reports rose from 400,000 in 2019 to 2.8 million in 2021. From January to August 2021 alone, authorities rescued 131 children and arrested 16 perpetrators (UNICEF, February 2022).

Given these contrasting realities, it is essential to reflect on how social media use affects mental health and one's spirituality, a core element of human life that defines meaning, connection, and purpose.

Understanding Spirituality

Spirituality encompasses a range of human experiences and interpretations. This element of humanity involves the search for meaning, connection with the self, others, nature, and the sacred (Pulchaski, 2009), and as belief in something greater than oneself (Scott, 2020). Spirituality is unique and inherent in every person, influencing one's orientation toward love, peace, transcendence, hope, and moral development (Bryson, 2014). Spirituality addresses existential concerns and fosters a sense of purpose and worth regardless of religious affiliation.

Biblical and historical perspectives also provide insights into spirituality. St. Paul refers to spiritual life in 1 Corinthians 2:14–15 (Schneiders, 1989 as cited in Oman, 2013), and early Christian writers distinguished between those led by the spirit and those attached to materialism (Fuller & Parsons, 2018; Oman, 2013). The Hebrew word ruach—meaning breath, spirit, or wind—illustrates the animating force of life, making spirituality both tangible and communal (Woods, 1989).

Spirituality is not confined to personal or private experiences. It is embedded in history, culture, and communal traditions (Woods, 1989). It includes diverse expressions and systems that guide both individual and collective spiritual development. Modern interpretations often distinguish spirituality from religiosity. While religion refers to organized doctrines and practices, spirituality is broader and can exist both within and outside institutional religion (Newberg & Newberg, 2008, as cited in Brandenberger & Bowman, 2013). The rise of the "spiritual but not religious" population, especially in Western societies, where personal spirituality is pursued outside traditional frameworks (Oman, 2013).

Despite distinctions, spirituality and religion are deeply interconnected. This integration operates at both institutional and personal levels (Good and Willoughby, 2014). While religious institutions promote morality and community engagement, personal spirituality offers emotional benefits such as hope and gratitude (Good, 2011, cited in Baring et al., 2016). This duality is encapsulated in the construct of Spirituality/Religiosity (S/R), defined as "feelings and behaviors involving the search for the sacred, occurring both within and outside of institutionalized religion" (Good, 2011, p. 5).

Baring (2018) proposes a shift toward "ethical spirituality," which focuses on moral consciousness shaped by evolving religious experiences and communal expressions. This framework helps individuals navigate modern spiritual needs while remaining grounded in ethical and communal values.

Belief in God

Belief in God is often seen as faith in a being who is personal, transcendent, omnipotent, and perfectly good (Mawson, 2005) and is deeply rooted in personal experience (Resurreccion and Mansukhani, 2009) and may emphasize religious upbringing, faith practices, and community traditions (e.g., church involvement). Reflective doubt may shape this belief, strengthening or weakening it (Yilmaz et al., 2019). Believers interpret statements about God as essential truths (Samraj, 2019). Magin et al. (2021) found no direct link between belief in God and depression, but noted associations with meaning, comfort, and coping. A curvilinear relationship with anxiety was observed, but none with stress. Spiritual transcendent experiences also

deepen faith, helping individuals feel connected to something greater (Critcher & Lee, 2018).

John Polkinghorne (1998) posited that scientific and theological inquiries are complementary in understanding belief in God. He argued that a "mind and purpose" underlie the universe's history and that seeking understanding, even without a definitive conclusion, is a form of seeking God. For Polkinghorne, theism provides the best explanation for making sense of the world and all human experience, not just religious experience.

Search for Meaning

The search for meaning in life is a fundamental human endeavor. It focuses on inner exploration and cultural/spiritual identity (Dy & Dy, 2024). Some cultural models explain vivid experiences of gods and spirits as a basis for meaning (Luhrmann, 2021). Philosophers suggest that meaning is creatively constructed through individual efforts, leading to the creation of values (Singer, 2010). These values serve as guiding principles for behavior, decision-making, and prioritizing aspects of life (Thomas, 2013; Sagiv et al., 2017). When personal values align with actions, individuals experience satisfaction; misalignment can lead to difficulties (Alleyne et al., 2013).

Stewart Goetz (2012), influenced by Augustine, argued that happiness is the meaning of life, a sentiment widely shared and pursued (Moussa & Ali, 2022). Studies, such as one on university students during COVID-19, have linked happiness to academic success, underscoring its significance as a personal pursuit (Moussa and Ali, 2022).

Özdoğan's (2021) research explored the link between subjective well-being, social and emotional loneliness, and the meaning and purpose of life among university students. Loneliness, which can manifest even in social settings, is associated with feelings of emptiness and meaninglessness (Geçtan, 2004; Weiten et al., 2015). Given that humans are social beings, integration into a community can imbue life with meaning, while loneliness can diminish this sense (Mwilambwe-Tshilobo et al., 2019).

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present and aware of one's thoughts, emotions, and surroundings with a non-judgmental attitude (The Greater Good Magazine, n.d.). Unlike meditation, mindfulness can be practiced during everyday activities (Thich Nhat Hanh, 1978, as cited in Ditrich et al., 2017). Its therapeutic applications are widely recognized, particularly through Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), which has proven effective in managing stress, anxiety, depression, and chronic pain (Mulligan, 2018). Murata's (2014) multidisciplinary work highlights mindfulness as a powerful tool for addressing emotional and psychological challenges.

However, mindfulness interacts in complex ways with modern behaviors. Individuals with high mindfulness experienced more anxiety and stress when engaging in problematic smartphone use, whereas those with low mindfulness showed no significant relationship. Increased screen time was linked to depression, regardless of mindfulness levels (Stratton et al., 2020).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, mindfulness gained renewed attention. Lower mindfulness levels correlated with greater fear and hopelessness (Saricali et al., 2022), while brief mindfulness training improved emotional well-being and reduced the negative effects of distressing news (Kam et al., 2022). Online mindfulness programs became a practical stress-relief alternative (Pal et al., 2022).

In education, mindfulness is increasingly used to address stress among students and educators. Armstrong (2019) and Norton & Griffith (2020) noted its potential to enhance brain function, improve classroom focus, and increase sensitivity among both students and staff. Though collective understanding among teachers may be limited, most express a willingness to implement Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) to support well-being and learning outcomes (Wigelsworth & Quinn, 2020). Mindfulness offers a holistic, accessible tool for improving mental health and fostering healthier academic and personal environments.

Feeling of Security

As former Connecticut Governor Jodi Rell said, "at the end of the day, the goals are simple: safety and security." Security is widely regarded as essential to a good life, forming the foundation for well-being and protection from harm (Wonderly, 2019; Mill, 2003/1861). Research shows that feelings of safety promote prosocial behavior. For instance, exposure to secure attachment cues increases empathy and willingness to help others (Mikulincer et al., 2001a, 2003, as cited in Gillath & Fraley, 2016). Inner safety also fosters calm, mental clarity, resilience, and optimism (Ron, 2020; Hanson, 2016). It encourages empathy, reduces stress, and improves relationships (Floody, 2014).

While these studies underscore the importance of security for personal and social well-being, this research uniquely investigates the link between college students' social media attitudes and spirituality. Given social media's growing role in students' daily lives, understanding its influence on spiritual development is both timely and necessary.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design. This approach allowed for the description of variables and the examination of relationships between them.

The study's participants were 372 college students from Holy Angel University, Angeles City, selected using stratified random sampling. Most respondents came from the School of Engineering and Architecture (38.71%), followed by the School of Business and Accountancy (25%). The remaining participants were from various schools, including Computing, Arts and Sciences, and Hospitality, with the fewest from Education (2.42%).

The inclusion criteria for participants were: 18 years of age or older, currently enrolled as a college student, spending more than two hours daily on social media sites, and having decent internet access. Participants who did not meet these criteria or spent less than two hours on social media were excluded. The sample size was determined using the Raosoft sample size calculator, which considers factors such as margin of error, confidence level, population size, and expected response distribution.

Data was collected via an asynchronous online survey using Google Forms and distributed through MS Teams. This method allowed participants to complete the survey at their convenience. The survey included a consent form and took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Data was subsequently downloaded into Microsoft Excel Office 365. The researchers prioritized creating a safe and unbiased environment for all participants. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS version 16 and Microsoft Excel Office 365, employing weighted mean, standard deviation, and frequency to describe the data.

Two publicly accessible standardized questionnaires were utilized to gather information: (1) Social Media Attitude Scale (SMAS): Developed by Otrar and Argin (2013), this 23-item self-report scale measures social media attitudes across four factors: sharing necessity, social competence, social isolation, and relation with teachers. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from "completely agree" (5) to "completely disagree" (1). The SMAS has demonstrated strong psychometric properties, with a Cronbach's Alpha of .85 for internal consistency and a significant test-retest correlation (r=.83; p<.001), indicating its validity and reliability (Karaya et al., 2018), (2) Spirituality Questionnaire: Developed by Jochen Hardt et al. (2011), this 19-item questionnaire assesses spirituality across four dimensions: belief in God, search for meaning, mindfulness, and feeling of security. Items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "absolutely true" (5) to "not true at all" (1). The subscales exhibit good reliabilities (Cronbach's α ranging from .78 to .97) and medium positive intercorrelations (r ranging from .26 to .52).

These standardized measures were used due to their proven reliability, validity, and relevance to the constructs studied. Originally developed for university students and diverse adult populations, these tools ensure theoretical soundness and comparability with global research, supporting accurate, meaningful results even within the Philippine academic and cultural context.

This study strictly adhered to research ethics, operating under study protocol code 2022-101-JCDELEON-SOCMEDATTITUDE&SPIRITUALITY. Prior to data collection, IRB approval was secured. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any time. Data was handled following the Data Privacy Act of 2012, securely stored, and will be deleted within two years. No compensation was given; participants may request a summary of findings or decline future data use.

Results and Discussions

This section presents the findings of the study on the relationship between social media attitudes and the spirituality of college students. A normality test revealed non-normal distribution, prompting the use of Spearman's rank-order correlation to examine the relationship between variables.

Table 1. Descriptions of the attitudes of the respondents towards social media

Item	N	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1. I want my friends to notice me through social media sites.	372	3.07	Undecided
2. I feel that I have gained a new personality through social media sites.	372	3.31	Undecided

3.	I don't think social media sites are driving me away from my friends.	372	3.92	Agree
4.	I like to share the posts I see on social media sites with my friends.	372	3.64	Agree
5.	I like to comment on content on social media sites.	372	2.73	Undecided
6.	I like to share articles, videos, music, etc. on social media sites	372	3.39	Agree
7.	I think social media sites have taken me away from my family.	372	2.03	Disagree
8.	I think that I have survived my loneliness through social media sites.	372	3.78	Agree
9.	I like to follow my teachers on social media sites.	372	2.58	Disagree
10.	I like it when my teachers follow what I write.	372	2.75	Undecided
11.	I can't spend enough time with my family because of social media sites.	372	2.12	Disagree
12.	I like my shares being liked by my friends.	372	3.48	Agree
13.	I think that I can reach people with common interests and goals through social media sites.	372	4.06	Agree
14.	I can't spend enough time on other social activities because of social media sites.	372	2.53	Disagree
15.	I am happy to spend time on social media sites.	372	3.91	Agree
16.	I can express my feelings more easily through social media sites to my special interest friend.	372	3.50	Undecided
17.	I like to be aware of the events organized through social media sites.	372	3.92	Agree
18.	I think I will have more friends thanks to social media sites.	372	3.38	Agree
19.	The fact that my teachers follow me on social media sites makes me feel valuable.	372	2.71	Undecided
20.	I think that I need to be respected thanks to social media sites.	372	3.01	Undecided
21.	I am happy that my friends comment on my posts.	372	3.74	Agree
22.	I cannot pay enough attention to my classes because of social media sites.	372	2.42	Disagree
23.	I can't spend enough time with my friends because of social media sites.	372	2.02	Disagree
Weighted Mean		**372**	**3.13**	**Undecided**

Using the 23-item Social Media Attitude Scale (SMAS) by Otrar and Argin (2013), it was found that college students, with a weighted mean of 3.13, were "undecided" about their social media attitudes.

Students most agreed with the statement "I think that I can reach people with common interests and goals through social media sites" (mean = 4.06). Conversely, they least agreed, "I can't spend enough time with my friends because of social media sites" (mean = 2.02). This suggests students value social media for connections but generally don't feel it significantly hinders their in-person friendships.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of overall Spirituality

Item	N	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1. I trust in God	372	4.65	Absolutely True
2. My faith helps me to cope with problems	372	4.48	Absolutely True
3. I feel the love of God	372	4.59	Absolutely True
4. I feel that God is my friend	372	4.57	Absolutely True
5. My life means searching and asking	372	4.42	Absolutely True
6. I look for insight and coherence	372	4.48	Absolutely True
7. I try to open my mind	372	4.67	Absolutely True
8. I try to expand my soul	372	4.52	Absolutely True
9. I search for the spirit	372	4.28	Absolutely True
10. I try to deal consciously with others	372	4.46	Absolutely True
11. I deal consciously with environment	372	4.42	Absolutely True
12. I try to help others	372	4.63	Absolutely True
13. I try to be patient and tolerant	372	4.64	Absolutely True
14. I try to be empathetic with others	372	4.61	Absolutely True
15. I feel peace deep inside me	372	4.09	Rather True
16. My life is peace and joy	372	4.08	Rather True
17. I feel one with the world	372	3.97	Rather True
18. I see a friendly world around me	372	3.92	Rather True
19. I feel there is a lot of love in the world	372	4.15	Rather True
Weighted Mean	**372**	**4.40**	**Absolutely True**

Based on the results for Belief in God, the majority of participants responded "absolutely true" to items reflecting a strong spiritual orientation centered on their faith (M = 4.57). The highest mean was for "I trust in God" (M = 4.65), while the lowest was "My faith helps me to cope with problems" (M = 4.48). In the Search for Meaning dimension, responses also leaned toward "absolutely true" (M = 4.47), with "I try to open my mind" having the highest mean (M = 4.67) and "I search for the spirit" the lowest (M = 4.28). For Mindfulness, participants again showed high agreement (M = 4.55), particularly with "I try to be patient and tolerant" (M = 4.64), while the lowest mean was for "I deal consciously with the environment" (M = 4.46). Lastly, in the Feeling of Security dimension, participants generally agreed that spirituality gives them a sense of safety and peace (M = 4.04), with "I feel there is a lot of love in the

world" receiving the highest score (M = 4.15) and "I see a friendly world around me" the lowest (M = 3.92).

Meanwhile, across various subscales, participants generally rated their spirituality as "absolutely true" (M=4.40). Belief in God was highest (M=4.57), followed by mindfulness (M=4.54), search for meaning (M=4.47), and feeling of security (M=4.03). This indicates a high overall level of spirituality among the college students surveyed.

Table 3. Correlation of social media attitudes to the four subscales of spirituality

		Correlations			
		Belief in God	**Search for Meaning**	**Mindfulness**	**Feeling of Security**
SocMed Attitude	Spearman's rho	.148**	.190**	.168**	.182**
	p-value	.004	.000	.001	.000
	N	372	372	372	372

A statistically significant positive correlation was found between students' attitudes toward social media and all four subscales of spirituality: belief in God (r = 0.148, p < 0.01), search for meaning (r = 0.190, p < 0.001), mindfulness (r = 0.168, p < 0.01), and feeling of security (r = 0.182, p < 0.001). These findings indicate that more positive or reflective attitudes toward social media use are modestly associated with higher levels of spiritual well-being among college students.

Table 4. Correlation of Social Media Attitudes and Spirituality

	Correlations	
		Spirituality
SocMed Attitude	Spearman's rho	.212**
	p-value	.000
	N	372

Table 4 presents the correlation between college students' attitudes toward social media and their level of spirituality. The results indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between these two variables (r = 0.212, p < 0.001).

Discussions

The results indicate a significant but modest relationship between social media attitudes and college students' spirituality. This suggests that while students' perceptions and behaviors related to social media are statistically associated with their spiritual orientation, the connection is not particularly strong. In practical

terms, variations in attitudes toward social media correspond to only slight differences in spiritual expression or belief.

This finding suggests that while social media might touch on certain aspects of spirituality, like mindfulness, meaning-making, or feeling connected, it does not appear to be a major influence. Spirituality, particularly belief in God, tends to grow out of personal experiences and relationships, shaped by family life, peer interactions, and the cultural environment, as Resurreccion and Mansukhani (2009) point out. In the same way, Ocampo et al. (2013) found that for many Filipino adolescents, spiritual development is more grounded in how they're raised and the values their communities uphold, rather than what they see online. This study's relatively weak link between social media attitudes and spirituality may simply reflect how deeply rooted and multifaceted spiritual growth is, often shaped by a mix of mental well-being, life experiences, and cultural background rather than digital habits (Dy & Dy, 2024).

Nonetheless, the findings support Harman's (2019) view that social media is a neutral tool—its impact on spiritual life depends on how it is used. Asha et al. (2017) emphasize its potential to foster reflection and connection. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, platforms facilitated community pantries (Galang & Galang, 2021) and spiritual outreach (Makhutla, 2021), serving as mediums for solidarity and faith expression (Rautela & Sharma, 2019).

While a measurable link exists, its modest strength points to the need for broader, more holistic frameworks when examining spirituality in a digital era.

Conclusions

This study used reliable, standardized tools to examine the relationship between social media attitudes and spirituality among college students. Findings showed students were generally ambivalent toward social media but displayed strong spiritual orientation, especially in belief in God, mindfulness, and search for meaning. A significant yet weak correlation suggests social media has some, but limited, influence on spirituality. Spirituality appears to be rooted more in personal, cultural, and existential dimensions than digital behavior. However, social media can support spiritual connection when used mindfully. These insights highlight the need for balanced digital engagement alongside spiritual development, especially in educational and youth-centered contexts.

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