



Enhancing Academic Success in Strawberry Generation: The Influence of Character Education and Social Media on Mental Health

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ABSTRACT: This research examines the direct and indirect effects of Character Education and Social Media Experience on Academic Achievement, mediated by Mental Health. The method used in this study is a quantitative approach, with data collected through questionnaires and analyzed using SEM with the Smart PLS application. The sample size for this study is 200 respondents. The results of this study indicate a significant direct effect of character education and social media experience on academic achievement and an indirect impact of character education on academic achievement through mental health. However, the indirect impact of social media on academic achievement through mental health was not accepted. This research contributes to the improvement of academic achievement among strawberry generation students.

Keywords: Character Education, Social Media Experience, Mental Health.



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INTRODUCTION

The youth represent individuals characterized by dynamic, turbulent, and optimistic traits; however, they often lack stable emotional regulation (Murtasidin & Alfajri, 2019). The quality of character among the younger generation is a crucial determinant of national development. (Daryanes et al., 2022) Implementing character-based education from an early age is essential for fostering the growth of character values and moral principles that will serve as the foundation of a child's future personality (Dacholfany et al., 2024). Today's students are growing up in an era marked by rapidly advancing digital technology and social media (Intan et al., 2021), which presents them with unique challenges that can impact their academic performance. Character education encompasses strategies and activities designed to cultivate moral, ethical, and social values within each individual (Nurasiah et al., 2022). Ultimately, the goal of character education is to shape the character of the youth growing up in the digital age, which significantly influences their values and moral principles (Rukhmana et al., 2024).

In their educational journey, students strive not only for high academic achievements but also to develop into individuals characterized by integrity, courage, and readiness to navigate the rapidly

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evolving world ([Choirunnisa & Santoso, 2023](#)). The significance of character education at the university level lies in its aim to cultivate students' personalities holistically; it goes beyond merely instilling values to fostering a profound understanding of the interconnectedness of various life aspects, honing social skills within professional environments, and preparing inclusive leadership qualities ([Rukiyanto et al., 2023](#)). Consequently, developing a strong and resilient character among students can be a fundamental asset in addressing the challenges and problems they will encounter in the future ([Pardede, 2022](#)).

In the 21st century, students are expected to collaborate effectively within the context of learning, leveraging the advancements in digital technology, mainly social media ([Zuriah, 2021](#)). As a result, students have become accustomed to utilizing technology, including social media, which facilitates their access to course-related materials. It is common for students to maintain accounts on various social media platforms, with a significant portion of their time spent engaging with these platforms ([Rahman et al., 2023](#)). The prevalence of social media among students has become a phenomenon that cannot be overlooked. While it offers easy access to information, opportunities for collaboration with peers, and serves as a learning medium, excessive use of social media can lead to negative consequences, such as decreased focus, insufficient study time, and potential disruptions in the learning process ([Rezkiana et al., 2023](#)). However, when used wisely, social media can be an effective tool for enhancing academic performance. For instance, social media platforms can be utilized for educational discussions, sharing learning materials, and promoting positive values acquired through university education, thus representing a significant opportunity for improving educational outcomes ([Intan et al., 2021](#)).

One of the critical issues garnering attention among students is mental health ([Kesyha et al., 2024](#)). Good mental health is essential for supporting academic performance and social life. Common mental health disorders that often affect students include anxiety, depression, and stress. Students are particularly vulnerable to mental health issues due to various factors, including academic pressure, social demands, lifestyle choices, and the challenges of adapting to new environments ([Zahrani et al., 2024](#)). Social support from family and friends can significantly influence students' mental health; adequate support can alleviate symptoms of depression and enhance overall quality of life ([Eva et al., 2020](#)). Furthermore, maintaining a healthy lifestyle contributes positively to mental health by promoting balanced nutrition, increasing physical activity, and ensuring adequate sleep ([Martia & Salman, 2022](#)).

Success in the academic realm is often associated with the academic achievements attained by students ([Kusumastuti, 2020](#)). Academic achievement refers to the results of a student's development and progress in their educational pursuits ([Syaff'i et al., 2018](#)). It reflects an individual's accomplishments in the field of education, measured through various parameters such as exam scores, research projects, and participation in academic activities. This achievement encompasses the ability to understand subject matter, critical thinking skills, and the capacity to apply knowledge in practical situations. The level of academic achievement is often assessed through a grading system based on numerical or letter grades, which reflects the extent to which students have met or exceeded the standards set by educational institutions ([Nurmayuli et al., 2023](#)).

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Cognitive abilities do not solely determine academic achievement but are also influenced by other factors such as motivation, family support, and the learning environment (Shaleh, 2016). Internal motivation, such as the desire to achieve personal goals or pursue academic interests, can drive students to study harder and attain better results. Additionally, support from family and teachers plays a crucial role in providing the emotional encouragement and resources necessary for learning. A conducive learning environment, including access to adequate learning materials and a positive classroom atmosphere, also significantly contributes to academic achievement (Mukitasari et al., 2023). Academic achievement reflects the capacity of educational institutions to provide quality education. Institutions that successfully create comprehensive learning programs, adapt innovative teaching methods, and offer adequate facilities tend to produce students with high academic performance (Lembong et al., 2023). Therefore, efforts to enhance academic achievement should be a priority for students, educators, and education policymakers.

Academic achievement is a key measure of success, particularly for Generation Z, who navigate unique challenges as the "Strawberry Generation" in an era dominated by digital technology and social media. While social media enhances learning through resource sharing and collaboration, excessive use can negatively impact mental health, leading to stress and reduced focus, which hinders academic performance. Character education, instilling values such as integrity and responsibility, is vital in fostering resilience and ethical decision-making, preparing students to face challenges. Mental health is a critical mediator, influencing how social media and character education impact academic outcomes. A balanced approach combining character-building, digital literacy, and mental health support is essential to cultivate well-rounded, high-achieving students.

The research aims to analyze the influence of character education and social media experience on academic achievement among Generation Z students, both directly and mediated by mental health. Although numerous studies have addressed these variables, the novelty of this research includes focusing on Generation Z, exploring social media's dual roles, and examining mental health as a mediating factor. Thus, this research has established that character education and social media experience have an influence on academic achievement mediated by mental health. The significant positive and negative relationships among these variables are illustrated in the following Conceptual Framework diagram:

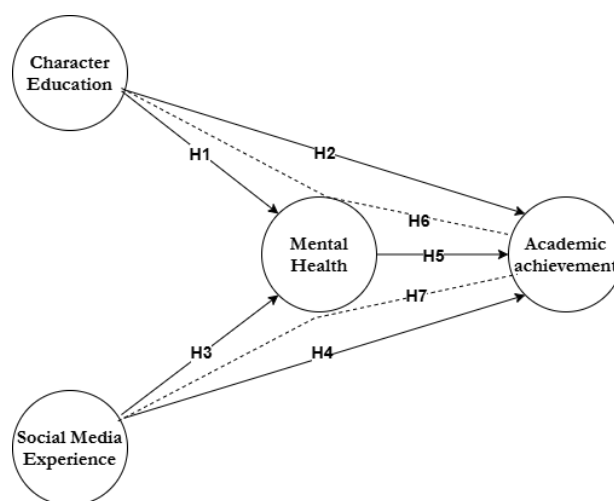


Figure 1. Conceptual Frame Work

METHOD

In this study, the author adopts a quantitative approach to investigate the research problem by testing theoretical frameworks related to the variables of interest. Measurement will be conducted numerically, and data analysis will be performed using statistical procedures to assess the validity of the theoretical generalizations ([Dalimunthe, 2021](#)). The data collection method employed in this research involves the administration of a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. This questionnaire is a data collection instrument consisting of structured questions pertinent to the examined variables, with respondents selected based on predefined criteria ([Hana et al., 2019](#)). The research utilizes a Likert scale, a widely recognized psychometric scale in survey research, which assigns scores to responses on a range from 1 to 5. Specifically, a score of 1 corresponds to strong disagreement, while a score of 5 reflects strong agreement ([Hertanto, 2017](#)). The population for this study comprises students currently enrolled in educational programs across various higher education institutions throughout Indonesia. The sampling technique employed is non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling, as the researcher is aware of the characteristics of the population from which the sample will be drawn ([Firmansyah et al., 2022](#)). The sample size will be determined using the Lemeshow, given that the total population is unknown ([Rosyida & Priantilianingtiasari, 2023](#)). Consequently, this study requires 200 respondents. The criteria for inclusion are as follows: 1) the respondent must be an active university student, 2) the age range should be between 18 and 27 years, and 3) the individual must possess an account and actively use social media.

The collected data were subsequently analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Partial Least Squares (PLS) methodologies, employing the statistical software SMARTPLS 3 for data measurement analysis. The data testing process involved two primary methods: the measurement model (Outer Model) and the structural model (Inner Model) ([Yuhana et al., 2024](#)). The criteria for Convergent Validity were established to assess the relationships among the latent variable indicators in the Outer Model, requiring a threshold of >0.7 , while a value of 0.6 remains acceptable. Additionally, Discriminant Validity was evaluated through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with a benchmark of >0.5 , and Composite Reliability was set at >0.7 (Ketchen, 2013). Following this, the Structural Model (Inner Model) was measured, and reliability testing was ([Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021](#)) Conducted to evaluate the consistency of the research instruments, such as questionnaires or tests, in measuring specific variables. Reliability testing ensures that the measurement tools yield consistent results when administered repeatedly under similar conditions.

After confirming the validity and reliability of the measurement model, the structural model is evaluated by examining the relationships between latent variables. Path coefficients assess the strength and direction of relationships, with significance indicated by p-values < 0.05 and t-statistics > 1.96 ([Hair et al., 2021](#)). The R^2 value reflects the extent to which independent variables explain dependent variables, categorized as ≥ 0.25 (weak), ≥ 0.50 (moderate), and ≥ 0.75 (strong) ([Hair et al., 2021](#)).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The questionnaire was distributed online using social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. From the 229 questionnaires distributed, 200 were deemed suitable for further analysis, while the remaining responses were classified as outliers. The data collected revealed that most respondents were female, comprising 138 individuals (69%), while male respondents accounted for 62 (31%). In terms of age distribution, 74 respondents (37%) were aged 18-20 years, 144 (57%) were between 21-24 years, and 12 (6%) were aged 25-27 years. All respondents were active students who possessed and actively used social media accounts, totaling 200 individuals (100%). The detailed profile characteristics of the respondents can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

| Category | Item | Frequency (N=200) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Gender | Male | 62 | 31 % |
| | Female | 138 | 69 % |
| Age | 18-20 Years | 74 | 37 % |
| | 21-24 Years | 114 | 57 % |
| | 25-27 Year | 12 | 6 % |
| Student status | Active | 200 | 100 % |
| Social Media | Have accounts and are active users | 200 | 100% |

Outer Model Analysis

The Outer Model Analysis is a component of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) that aims to examine the relationships between indicators and latent constructs or instruments that cannot be measured directly (Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021). This outer model evaluation involves several assessments, including Convergent Validity, which determines whether the measured indicators exhibit a high correlation, assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with a threshold of >0.5 and Outer Loading values exceeding >0.7 . Additionally, Discriminant Validity is evaluated to ensure that the constructs or instruments are distinct from one another, measured using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion or the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Furthermore, Reliability Testing is conducted to assess the consistency of the measurement tools when used repeatedly under similar conditions, employing metrics such as Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA), with a criterion value of >0.7 (Ketchen, 2013).

Validity and Reliability Analysis

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Analysis

| Variable | Item | Statement | Validity Test | | Reliability Test | | | |
|--|--|--|---------------|----------|------------------|-------|-------|----------|
| | | | LF | Decision | CA | CR | AVE | Decision |
| Character Education (Rosidatun, 2018) | PK1 | By being honest, I respect myself and others and help reduce misunderstandings. | 0.707 | Valid | | | | |
| | PK2 | I believe that being honest can enhance mutual trust | 0.752 | Valid | | | | |
| | PK3 | I provide the real reason when I cannot attend class | 0.656 | Valid | | | | |
| | PK4 | Applying discipline to my daily routine helps me become more productive and organized. | 0.746 | Valid | | | | |
| | PK5 | I manage my time well to ensure my responsibilities are fulfilled effectively. | 0.704 | Valid | 0.917 | 0.920 | 0.523 | Reliable |
| | PK6 | I always arrive on time to class and participate well in lectures | 0.663 | Valid | | | | |
| | PK7 | I always accept the consequences of my actions and decisions. | 0.726 | Valid | | | | |
| | PK8 | Being responsible for my commitments is crucial for achieving good results. | 0.736 | Valid | | | | |
| | PK9 | I acknowledge and learn from the mistakes I make during the learning process without blaming others | 0.756 | Valid | | | | |
| | PK10 | I value differing opinions and believe that tolerance is essential for creating a harmonious environment | 0.700 | Valid | | | | |
| | PK11 | I feel comfortable interacting with people from different backgrounds and respect their views | 0.741 | Valid | | | | |
| PK12 | I am open to my peers' cultural, religious, and social diversity on campus. | 0.777 | Valid | | | | | |
| SM E1 | I use social media to interact with friends | 0.671 | Valid | | | | | |
| SM E10 | I carefully choose my photos and statuses on social media to create a good impression. | 0.719 | Valid | | | | | |
| SM E11 | I often play games or quizzes on social media for entertainment. | 0.716 | Valid | | | | | |

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| | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| Social Media Experience (Yang & Brown, 2013) | SM E4 | I often observe other people's profiles or content on social media without leaving comments or messages. | 0.653 | Valid | | |
| | SM E5 | I tend to engage more in observing (lurking or stalking) rather than direct interaction on social media | 0.767 | Valid | 0.879 | 0.900.543 |
| | SM E6 | I am interested in seeing the personal lives of content creators through the stories or photos they share on social media | 0.782 | Valid | 4 | Reliable |
| | SM E7 | I often present myself through images or status posts on social media without directly explaining myself | 0.787 | Valid | | |
| | SM E8 | I prefer to express my attitudes and personal interests through posts on social media rather than providing explicit self-descriptions | 0.786 | Valid | | |
| Mental Health (Zahrani et al., 2024) | MH 1 | I often feel worried about my academic activities | 0.840 | Valid | | |
| | MH 2 | I feel anxious about my academic assignments | 0.823 | Valid | | |
| | MH 3 | I feel nervous or worried when thinking about academic tasks | 0.747 | Valid | | |
| | MH 4 | I feel unmotivated to attend classes. | 0.809 | Valid | | |
| | MH 5 | I feel hopeless about my assignments and academic activities. | 0.807 | Valid | 0.937 | 0.940.658 |
| | MH 6 | I often feel hopeless or pessimistic about my academic future. | 0.820 | Valid | 5 | Reliable |
| | MH 7 | I find my assignments and academic activities to be very burdensome | 0.801 | Valid | | |
| | MH 8 | I often feel pressure to achieve better results in my studies | 0.828 | Valid | | |
| | MH 9 | I feel overwhelmed by the academic demands that I have to meet. | 0.825 | Valid | | |
| | PA1 | I can analyze complex information and apply it to academic tasks | 0.725 | Valid | | |
| | PA0 | I can clearly and accurately explain the information learned in lectures. | 0.752 | Valid | | |
| | PA1 | I feel that the information presented by the lecturer verbally (such as explanations during lectures or class discussions) is helpful to me. | 0.709 | Valid | | |
| | PA3 | Good motor skills (such as hand-eye coordination, agility, and dexterity) assist me in participating in practical activities and laboratory tasks on campus. | 0.724 | Valid | | |

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|---|--|-------|-------|------|------|-------|-------------|
| academic achievement" (Risparyanto & Fitriyanto, 2023) | PA2 My critical thinking skills help me understand course material and improve my academic achievement. | 0.737 | Valid | 0.86 | 0.89 | 0.519 | Reliability |
| | PA4 I use various study techniques, such as summarizing or creating concept maps, to understand the course material. | 0.685 | Valid | | | | |
| | PA6 I often create summaries or re-summarize the material I have studied before exams. | 0.729 | Valid | | | | |
| | PA9 I often review the material I have learned to better understand difficult concepts. | 0.700 | Valid | | | | |

Note: LF (Loading Factor) ≥ 0.06 ; CA (Cronbach's alpha) ≥ 0.7 ; CR (Composite Reliability); AVE (Average Variance Extracted) ≥ 0.5

In Table 2, the item questionnaires of character education, social media experience, mental health, and academic achievement show outer loading values above 0.7, with several indicators having values of 0.6, which means all the items are valid (Hair et al., 2021). Furthermore, the evaluation of Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA) indicates values greater than 0.7, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results are greater than 0.5, which indicates that the instrument used was reliable.

Discriminant Validity

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

| | MH | AA | CE | SME |
|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| MH | 0,811 | | | |
| AA | 0,091 | 0,720 | | |
| CE | 0,105 | 0,351 | 0,723 | |
| SME | -0,184 | 0,493 | 0,238 | 0,737 |

Note: MH (mental health); AA (academic achievement); CE (character education); SME (social media experience).

Referring to the results in Table 3, the analysis measured using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion to assess how well a construct differs from other constructs shows that the construct truly measures different concepts. As seen in the research results table, the values of each variable differ, indicating that the discriminant validity of this study is good. HTMT values were below the recommended threshold of 0.85 for all constructs, confirming discriminant validity. This indicates that the constructs are distinct and measure different theoretical dimensions. For

instance, while related, character education and mental health were shown to be separate constructs through this test.

Inner Model Analysis

After obtaining the results for validity and reliability, the next step is to conduct an inner model analysis, which focuses on how constructs or latent instruments influence or relate to one another within a research model (Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021). In this inner model analysis, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is utilized to assess how well the hypothesized model fits the data. This stage calculates the average difference between the observed correlation matrix and the correlation matrix predicted by the model, with a value of <0.08 indicating a good fit for the model (Rihaanah et al., 2024).

Model Fit Analysis and R-Square

Table 4. Model Fit Analysis and R-Square

| Criteria | Value |
|----------|-------|
| SRMR | 0.068 |
| NFI | 0.768 |

| Variables | R ² Value |
|-----------|----------------------|
| MH | 0.057 |
| AA | 0.323 |

Based on the results presented in Table 1.4, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value is 0.068, indicating that the model has a good level of fit. However, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.768 suggests that the model still requires improvement to achieve optimal results. The R² value for the Mental Health (MH) variable is 0.057, which indicates that the model can only explain 5.7% of the variability in the Mental Health variable. This implies that the model is not particularly effective in explaining this variable. In contrast, the R² value for the Academic Achievement (AA) variable is 0.323, suggesting that the model can explain 32.3% of the variability in Academic Achievement. Thus, these results indicate that the model is more effective in explaining the variability in the Academic Achievement variable (AA R² = 0.323) compared to the Mental Health variable (MH R² = 0.057), highlighting the need for further model development.

Hypothesis Testing

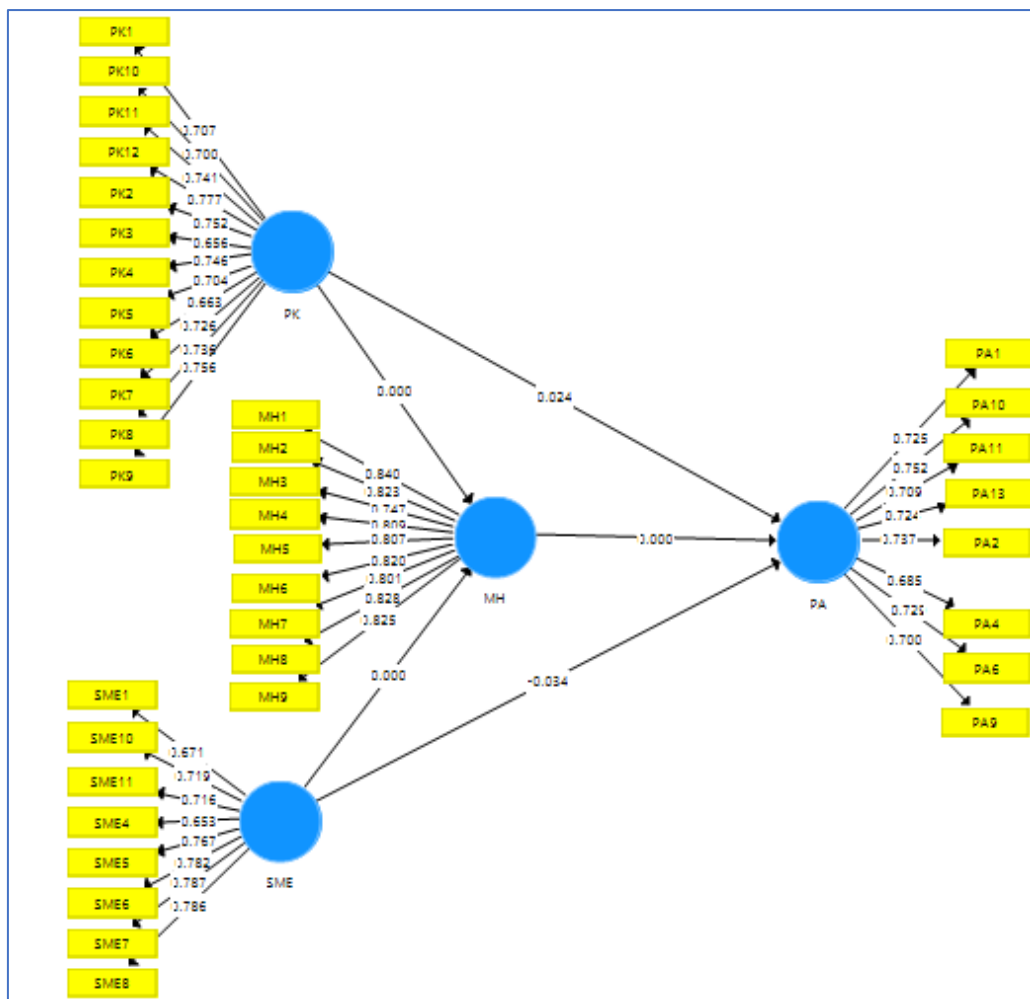


Figure 2. The Result of Hypothesis Testing (Source: SmartPLS output, 2024)

Hypothesis testing used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the relationships between indicators and constructs or latent instruments that cannot be measured directly. Probability values and t-statistics are two important determinants in hypothesis testing. The results indicate that five hypotheses were accepted, while two others were not. The results of the hypothesis testing can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. Hypothesis Result

| Hypothesis | Sample Mean | T-Value | P-Value | Result |
|--|-------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Direct Effects | | | | |
| H1: Character Education has a positive and significant effect on Mental Health (CE– MH) | 0.174 | 1.978 | 0.024 | Accepted |
| H2: Character Education has a positive and significant effect on Academic Achievement (CE- AA) | 0.234 | 4.133 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H3: Social Media Experience has a negative and significant effect on Mental Health (SEM - MH) | -0.227 | 3.655 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H4: Social Media Experience has a positive and significant effect on Academic Achievement (SEM - AA) | 0.481 | 8.042 | 0.000 | Accepted |

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| Indirect Effects | | | | |
|---|--------|-------|-------|----------|
| significant effect on Academic Achievement (SME - AA) | | | | |
| H5: Mental Health positively and significantly affects Academic Achievement (MH – AA). | 0.149 | 2.337 | 0.010 | Accepted |
| H6: Character Education influences Academic Achievement mediated by Mental Health (CE-MH-PA) | 0.025 | 1.613 | 0.054 | Rejected |
| H7: Social Media Experience influences Academic Achievement mediated by Mental Health (SME-MH-AA) | -0.033 | 2.057 | 0.020 | Accepted |

The results of the hypothesis testing are divided into two sections: the first examines direct effects, while the second explores indirect effects. In this study, the direct effect of Character Education on Mental Health is positive and significant, as evidenced by a t-value greater than the t-table (>1.96) and a p-value less than 0.05. Similarly, hypotheses H2, H3, H4, and H5 also demonstrate significant effects that can be accepted, given that their t-values exceed the t-table threshold (>1.96) and their p-values are below 0.05.

In terms of indirect effects, the relationship between Character Education, mediated by Mental Health, and Academic Achievement (H6) yields a t-value of 1.613, which is greater than the t-table (>1.96), and a p-value of 0.054, which exceeds 0.05. This indicates that while the mediation effect is present, it is not statistically significant. Conversely, for the indirect effect in H7, the sample mean is -0.033, with a t-value of 2.057, surpassing the t-table (1.96) and a p-value of 0.020, less than 0.05. This suggests that the hypothesis concerning the indirect relationship is rejected.

The first hypothesis proposes that Character Education positively and significantly affects Mental Health. The results indicate a Sample Mean of 0.174, a T-value of 1.978 (> 1.96), and a P-value of 0.024 (< 0.05), thus supporting the acceptance of the hypothesis. The Sample Mean and P-Value results identify that Character Education positively and significantly influences mental health. This implies that the better the implementation of character education, the better the mental health of individuals. This finding is consistent with the research by Chen et al., (2024), which suggests that positive character education positively impacts emotional well-being. Similarly, a study by Sudirman et al., (2024) indicates that instilling positive values, managing stress, and employing positive coping strategies can help develop mental and emotional resilience.

The second hypothesis examines whether Character Education positively and significantly affects Academic Achievement. The results of the testing indicate a Sample Mean of 0.234, a T-value of 4.133 (> 1.96), and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), thereby supporting the acceptance of the hypothesis. The Sample Mean and P-Value findings suggest that Character Education has a positive and significant impact on academic performance. This means that better character education is associated with improved academic achievement. These results align with the research conducted by Nugroho & Budiarsih, (2023), which asserts that character education

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influences students' motivation to enhance their academic performance. Similarly, Irjanti & Setiawati, (2018) highlight that one of the character values, namely discipline, significantly and positively affects learning outcomes. Furthermore, research by Emy and Mitrohardjono (2021) indicates that strong character traits in students, such as discipline, self-confidence, and independence, are closely linked to academic success.

The third hypothesis investigates whether Social Media Experience negatively and significantly affects Mental Health. The results of the testing show a Sample Mean of -0.227, a T-value of 3.655 (> 1.96), and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), thus supporting the acceptance of the hypothesis. These findings identify that experiences associated with social media have a negative and significant impact on mental health. Specifically, as the intensity of negative experiences with social media increases, the mental health of individuals tends to decline. This discovery aligns with research conducted by Hurley et al., (2024) on 3,298 students at a major university in Australia, which found that students feel overwhelmed by the constant demands of social media, engage in negative self-reflection, are exposed to negativity, and exhibit addictive behaviors. Similarly, the study by Azagba et al., (2024) indicates that frequent use of social media can adversely affect the mental health of young individuals.

The fourth hypothesis proposes that Social Media Experience positively and significantly affects Academic Achievement. The analysis results indicate a Sample Mean of 0.481, a T-value of 8.042 (> 1.96), and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), thereby supporting the acceptance of the hypothesis. These findings identify that social media experiences positively and significantly influence academic performance. Despite their negative impact on mental health, these experiences correlate with improved academic achievement. This result is consistent with the research conducted by Berdida & Grande, (2023), which suggests that social media can assist students in maintaining their academic performance during the learning process. Similarly, Shafiq & Parveen, (2023) indicate that leveraging social media to share knowledge can enhance the academic performance of college students.

The fifth hypothesis posits that Mental Health has a positive and significant effect on Academic Achievement. The results indicate a Sample Mean of 0.149, a T-value of 2.337 (> 1.96), and a P-value of 0.010 (< 0.05), thereby supporting the acceptance of the hypothesis. This finding identifies that good mental health positively and significantly influences academic performance. Individuals with better mental health are more likely to achieve higher academic outcomes. Zhang et al., (2024) found that students with good mental health are less susceptible to mental health issues, which enables them to enhance their academic performance, as evidenced by higher Grade Point Averages (GPAs). Similarly, Bortes & Giota, (2024) report that students with strong academic performance are correlated with a lower frequency of mental health complaints.

The sixth hypothesis proposes that Character Education positively influences Academic Achievement, mediated by Mental Health. The results indicate a Sample Mean of 0.025, a T-value of 1.613 (> 1.96), and a P-value of 0.054 (> 0.05), identifying that the indirect effect of character education on academic achievement through mental health is not significant. Although there is a correlation, the effect is not statistically strong enough to be accepted. This finding aligns with the insights presented by Nasir et al., (2024), suggesting that fostering positive

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character values between teachers and students and among peers can create a supportive and healthy school environment, thereby enhancing students' motivation to achieve academic success. Various internal and external factors must also be considered to boost academic performance further ([Winei et al., 2023](#)).

The seventh hypothesis posits that Social Media Experience positively influences Academic Achievement, mediated by Mental Health. The results indicate a Sample Mean of -0.033, a T-Value of 2.057 (> 1.96), and a P-Value of 0.020 (< 0.05), which identifies that the indirect effect of social media experience on academic achievement through mental health is also rejected. Although there is a significant correlation, this effect is not consistent. This finding is supported by Ulvi et al., (2022), who notes that social media usage can lead to negative consequences, including body image issues, self-harm behaviors, psychological stress, anxiety, and depression. Such factors undoubtedly disrupt mental well-being and academic performance.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that character education significantly impacts students' mental health and academic achievement. While the experience of using social media is found to harm mental health, it also plays a positive role in enhancing academic performance. Furthermore, good mental health is shown to support better academic outcomes. However, the findings indicate a lack of significant impact when assessing the mediating role of mental health between character education and social media on academic performance. Conversely, the mediating role of mental health between social media experience and academic performance reveals a significant negative effect.

This study has limitations, primarily variable measurements, particularly for mental health and social media experience, which rely heavily on respondents' subjective perceptions, potentially introducing bias. Future research could address this by employing mixed methods, combining quantitative analysis with in-depth interviews to better understand social media's impact on mental health and academic performance. Additionally, a longitudinal approach would allow for tracking changes in the effects of Social Media Experience and Mental Health on Academic Achievement, enabling an exploration of causal factors. Further studies should also consider differentiating between various social media platforms, such as text-based, image-based, or video-based, as each may uniquely impact mental health and academic outcomes.

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