IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON INTERNS' MENTAL HEALTH: A STUDY ON DIGITAL DEPENDENCE AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

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Objetivo do estudo
Analisar a influência do uso das redes sociais nos níveis de dependência digital entre estagiários de organizações do ecossistema de inovação de Foz do Iguaçu e propor uma intervenção organizacional voltada à promoção da saúde mental e do uso consciente das plataformas

Relevância/originalidade
O estudo aborda um público pouco explorado na literatura nacional — estagiários inseridos em ambientes de inovação —, integrando diagnóstico estatístico e intervenção organizacional baseada em evidências para subsidiar estratégias preventivas relacionadas à dependência digital e ao bem-estar ocupacional.

Metodologia/abordagem
Foi realizado um relato técnico de abordagem quantitativa, utilizando a Social Media Disorder Scale (SMD) aplicada a 122 estagiários. Os dados foram analisados por estatística descritiva, testes de associação e regressão, subsidiando a elaboração de um plano de intervenção organizacional.

Principais resultados
Os resultados identificaram sintomas relacionados à dependência digital, especialmente escapismo, perda de controle e deslocamento de atividades. Tempo de uso e número de postagens apresentaram associação significativa com a dependência, enquanto TikTok e Twitter/X mostraram maior relação com comportamentos problemáticos.

Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas
O estudo amplia a aplicação da escala SMD no contexto organizacional brasileiro, demonstrando sua utilidade para identificar padrões comportamentais associados à dependência digital e integrar análises estatísticas ao desenvolvimento de intervenções voltadas à promoção da saúde mental.

Contribuições sociais/para a gestão
O relato apresenta uma proposta de intervenção de baixo custo, baseada em educação digital e conscientização, oferecendo subsídios para organizações desenvolverem ações preventivas que promovam saúde mental, equilíbrio no uso das redes sociais e melhoria do desempenho profissional.

Palavras-chave: social media, digital dependence, intervention, social media disorder, mental health

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Study purpose
To analyze the influence of social media use on digital dependence among interns working in organizations within the innovation ecosystem of Foz do Iguaçu and to propose an organizational intervention promoting mental health and balanced social media use.

Relevance / originality
The study focuses on a population rarely explored in Brazilian research—interns in innovation environments—combining statistical diagnosis with an evidence-based organizational intervention to support preventive strategies addressing digital dependence and occupational well-being.

Methodology / approach
A quantitative technical report was conducted using the Social Media Disorder Scale (SMD) with 122 interns. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, association tests, and regression analysis, supporting the development of an organizational intervention plan.

Main results
The findings identified symptoms associated with digital dependence, particularly escapism, loss of control, and activity displacement. Time spent on social media and posting frequency significantly influenced dependence, while TikTok and Twitter/X showed stronger associations with problematic use.

Theoretical / methodological contributions
The study expands the application of the SMD scale within Brazilian organizational settings, demonstrating its usefulness for identifying behavioral indicators of digital dependence and integrating statistical analyses into the design of evidence-based interventions promoting mental health.

Social / management contributions
The report proposes a low-cost intervention based on digital education and awareness, providing organizations with practical guidance to implement preventive actions that foster mental health, balanced social media use, and improved professional performance among interns.

Keywords: social media, digital dependence, intervention, social media disorder, mental health

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1 Introduction

The use of social media has become a central part of the routine of young adults, influencing how they study, work, organize their daily lives, and interact socially. These platforms are recognized for expanding communication and access to information, potentially bringing benefits to professional and academic life (Alves, 2024).

On the other hand, recent studies have highlighted that excessive use can affect anxiety levels, cause mood changes, create difficulties in maintaining attention, and foster dependency-related behaviors (Gomes et al., 2024). Research also indicates that prolonged time spent online may compromise socio-emotional skills, intensify emotional avoidance behaviors, and negatively impact quality of life (Teles & Barbieri, 2024).

In this scenario, understanding how these effects manifest in specific groups, such as interns working within innovation environments, represents a valuable research opportunity. The work environment for interns requires constant adaptation, focus, and self-regulation - factors that may be affected by intensive social media use. Studies suggest that university students and early-career workers are particularly vulnerable to developing problematic usage patterns, including symptoms of anxiety, difficulty with self-control, and displacement of important activities (Godoy et al., 2024). According to Borges and Maia (2022), constant access to apps and notifications contributes to fragmented attention and increased stress, reinforcing the need for applied studies that examine these effects in professional practice. During working hours, it is common to observe professionals using social media for personal purposes in an excessive manner (Cappellozza et al., 2017).

In this context, this technical report presents the intervention project developed with higher education interns from companies within the innovation ecosystem of the city of Foz do Iguaçu, whose main objective was to understand how the use of social media influences levels of digital dependence. To achieve this, a descriptive study was conducted based on a digital questionnaire, grounded in the Social Media Disorder (SMD) scale, internationally recognized for its ability to identify symptoms of digital dependence, such as loss of control, compulsive use, and functional impairments (Van Den Eijnden et al., 2016). The results revealed the presence of behaviors approaching digital dependence in part of the sample, with symptoms related to emotional avoidance, difficulty in control, and displacement of activities—core factors of the SMD scale and widely discussed in the literature as risk indicators (Besschetnova et al., 2024). Additionally, the regression model developed highlights the impact of factors such as time of use, number of accesses, and number of posts on digital dependence.

The identification of these signs among some interns reinforces that, even in environments with high cognitive and professional demands, problematic use of social media can emerge silently and directly impact performance and well-being. Given this scenario, the need for structured actions focused on awareness, digital education, and the promotion of healthy social media usage habits becomes evident. Thus, the findings of this study not only reinforce discussions already present in recent literature (Jain et al., 2025; Viana & Pedro, 2025), but also provide support for proposing intervention strategies aimed at reducing risk behaviors and promoting mental health.

The present study is further justified by addressing a population that remains underrepresented in scientific research, despite its significant presence within organizational settings. Garcia (2013) argues that access to social media during working hours is commonplace; however, its excessive use may have adverse effects, at times even leading to employee dismissal due to diminished attention and concentration. Viana (2025), in turn, highlights that research on digital dependence is still evolving, recommending the development

of studies encompassing different age groups. Additionally, some Brazilian companies have adopted controlled use and monitoring of employees' social media in order to prevent misuse, productivity loss, lack of focus, among other issues (Vasconcelos Carvalho et al., 2012).

The paper begins with the presentation of the theoretical framework concerning social media dependence. This is followed by the methodology and research context, and finally, the results and analysis are presented, along with the concluding remarks.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1. Social Media Dependence

Interns and young workers are among the groups most likely to use social media frequently, both for professional and personal purposes (Cappellozza et al., 2017), making them more susceptible to digital dependence disorders. According to Silva et al. (n.d.), this condition manifests through symptoms such as distraction during working or study hours, leading to impairments in social interactions. The constant urge to check social media, lack of self-control, and anxiety related to monitoring virtual life at the expense of real-life experiences are considered key indicators of digital dependence.

Scientific evidence shows that social media dependence has been widely studied across different contexts, all sharing similar objectives and foundations. Among these, studies such as Geovânio et al. (2023), Godinho (2024), Santana et al. (2024), and Siqueira et al. (2024) highlight patterns of use that exceed what is considered acceptable, extending exposure time and being associated with symptoms that negatively impact mental health.

Regarding the workplace, some studies indicate that pressure from management may reinforce the use of social media as a form of escapism, functioning as a coping mechanism for mental relief (Cappellozza et al., 2017). Research suggests that dependence on social media has reached such a level that many users experience significant difficulty disconnecting, regardless of their environment (Lacerda da Silva et al., 2024; Borges & Maia, 2022). However, it is understood that entering into an internship agreement entails duties and responsibilities. In this context, it is assumed that the use of social media in the workplace should be linked to the execution of professional activities and subject to behavioral guidelines, provided that it does not impair employee performance in their roles (Garcia et al., 2013).

Studies that have employed the Social Media Disorder (SMD) scale (Van Den Eijnden et al., 2016) have identified that problematic social media use has been investigated through this instrument, specifically developed to detect behavioral symptoms associated with digital dependence. The scale is based on criteria similar to those used in behavioral addictions, including excessive preoccupation with social media, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, displacement of other activities, use for emotional escape, problems resulting from use, deception regarding time spent, and interpersonal conflicts (Sai-Fu, 2019a). These studies can be applied across various contexts and demonstrate that individuals with higher scores on the scale are more likely to develop compulsive patterns of social media use, as well as negative impacts on psychological and social dimensions.

Research also indicates that social media dependence may be associated with depression, anxiety, feelings of loneliness, changes in self-esteem, and impairments in academic performance, particularly among adolescents and young adults (Ergün & Alkan, 2020). Other studies suggest that the issue is not solely related to time spent online—as also evidenced in this technical report—but rather to excessive usage patterns, such as the constant need to check social media and difficulties in self-control (Moromizato et al., 2017). Systematic review studies further support these findings by linking theory with the data obtained in this research, indicating that intense or problematic social media use is significantly associated with anxiety and reduced well-being, reinforcing the complexity of the phenomenon and its relationship with mental health aspects (Ahmed et al., 2024).

These findings contribute to the solution proposed in this report, as the literature suggests strategies such as promoting digital education, awareness programs on healthy social media use, monitoring usage time, and interventions aimed at developing self-control and balance among activities, with the goal of reducing the negative impacts associated with excessive use.

3 Method

Following the recommendations of Biancolino et al. (2012), this intervention-based technical report—of a descriptive-analytical nature—adopted a quantitative approach and was conducted with interns linked to organizations that make up the innovation ecosystem of Foz do Iguaçu. Initially, authorization was requested from the organizations and their managers to administer the questionnaires to the interns. It was also emphasized that participation was voluntary and that the data would be handled under conditions of anonymity.

The study was carried out with interns engaged in technological and administrative projects. Out of a total of 260 interns, 145 voluntary responses were obtained, of which 122 questionnaires were deemed valid. Questionnaires with incomplete or blank responses were excluded. The instrument used was the Social Media Disorder (SMD) scale, a binary-response scale already validated in Portuguese. The scale, used as a reference in the studies by Van Den Eijnden et al. (2016) and Borges & Maia (2022), originally consisted of 27 questions and 9 dimensions. The reduced version, composed of nine objective questions, was used, as it is capable of capturing the main symptoms similarly to the full version (Van Den Eijnden et al., 2016).

Some open-ended questions were included in the form to anonymously understand the respondents' profiles. Data collection took place between October 10 and October 25, 2025. An online questionnaire was created using Qualtrics, which was initially presented to the interns' managers for evaluation and authorization prior to its application within their respective organizations.

Before conducting the main study, a pre-test was carried out with individuals sharing a similar profile to the target respondents in order to verify the clarity of the questionnaire. No feedback indicated any difficulty in interpretation or issues related to wording or spelling. Quantitative data were analyzed with the aim of identifying the main symptoms associated with dependence, using descriptive statistics and regression analysis.

After completing the analysis, a feedback session was scheduled with one of the participating companies, and an action plan was proposed to mitigate the digital dependence issues identified in the study. This intervention enabled alignment between the proposal and the actual needs of the target audience, ensuring feasibility and coherence with the context of the participating organizations.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Characterization of the Organization and the Project

The Innovation Ecosystem of Foz do Iguaçu is composed of educational and research institutions, a technology park, and companies that support and sponsor initiatives aimed at the technical and innovative resolution of local and regional problems. Within the technology park, several centers and projects are concentrated in areas such as renewable energy, cybersecurity,

automation, IoT, and scientific education, in addition to initiatives focused on Research, Development, and Innovation (R&D+I).

Despite the dynamism suggested by the nature of the activities carried out in these environments, prior contact with six managers indicated that interns' access to social media was compromising the quality of expected deliverables, diverting attention from work-related activities, and delaying tasks. These effects, at times, ended up jeopardizing important deadlines and required additional supervision from managers—something that, in their view, would be unnecessary if social media use during working hours were not excessive. Furthermore, some managers highlighted the difficulty in understanding the reasons behind excessive social media use, as well as identifying the most effective way to propose control measures or, at least, promote a more balanced use of digital devices, especially smartphones.

This project can be considered a low-cost intervention, requiring neither external nor internal funding. The proposed improvement actions rely on already available institutional resources, such as the production of posters, the availability of psychologists, the offering of lectures and workshops, offline time initiatives, and educational informational materials. Therefore, the investment is primarily in human capital, scientific knowledge, and organizational efforts, reinforcing the project's feasibility and its potential for replication in other contexts.

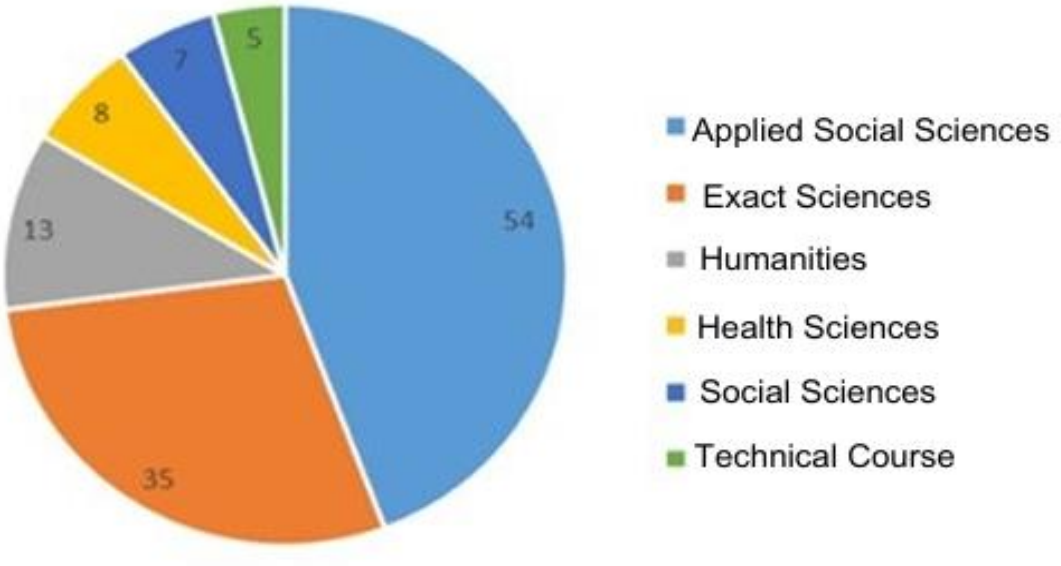
4.2 Type of Intervention and Adopted Mechanisms

The project aimed to analyze and intervene in the impacts of social media use on the mental health of interns, considering the symptoms identified in the research. Initially, authorization was requested from managers to apply an anonymous online questionnaire to the participants. After approval, the form was sent to the interns, with most responses being recorded on the same day it was distributed. Subsequently, a follow-up was conducted with participants who had not yet responded. The results highlight the importance of adopting institutional actions aimed at promoting mental health in the workplace, with a focus on preventing excessive social media use and its potential impacts on individuals' lives.

4.3 Results Obtained

The results obtained indicate that interns remain connected to social media during working hours, whether for personal, professional, or academic purposes. Patterns of digital habits were identified, as well as awareness of the impacts of excessive social media use on attention, sleep, and emotional well-being. The higher education interns had an average age of 22 years, and their fields of activity were diverse, encompassing various undergraduate programs and different stages of study.

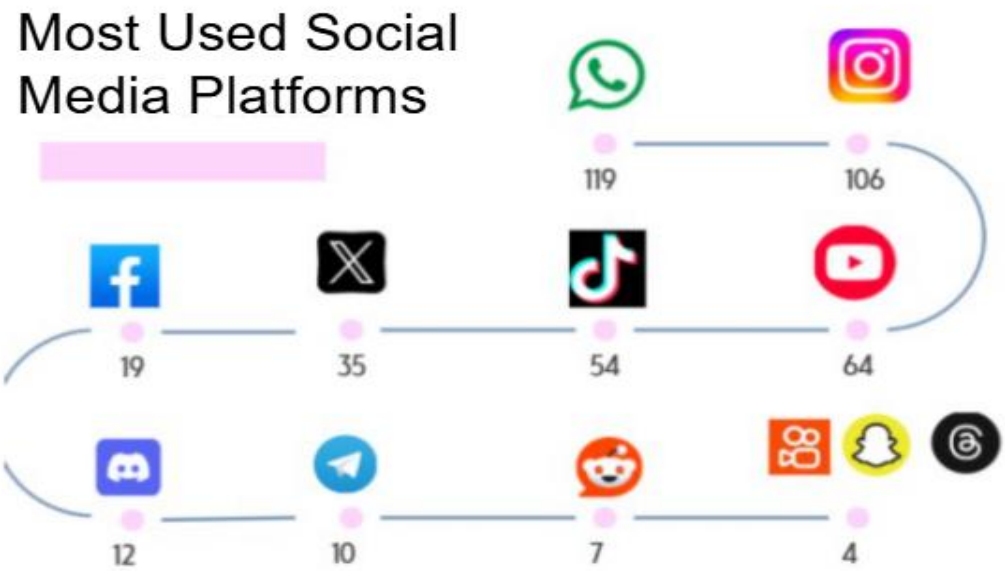
Chart 1. Fields of Study



Source: Prepared by the author

Chart 1 shows that most respondents are in the fields of Applied Social Sciences and Exact Sciences, reflecting the predominant profile of the associated academic programs. These areas are often linked to activities that require intensive use of social media, which may enhance both the benefits and the risks associated with the use of these tools. Ienaga et al. (2022) highlight that intensive social media use may be associated with various risks, especially when it occurs excessively and without self-regulation.

Figure 1. Social Media Platforms Used According to the Survey

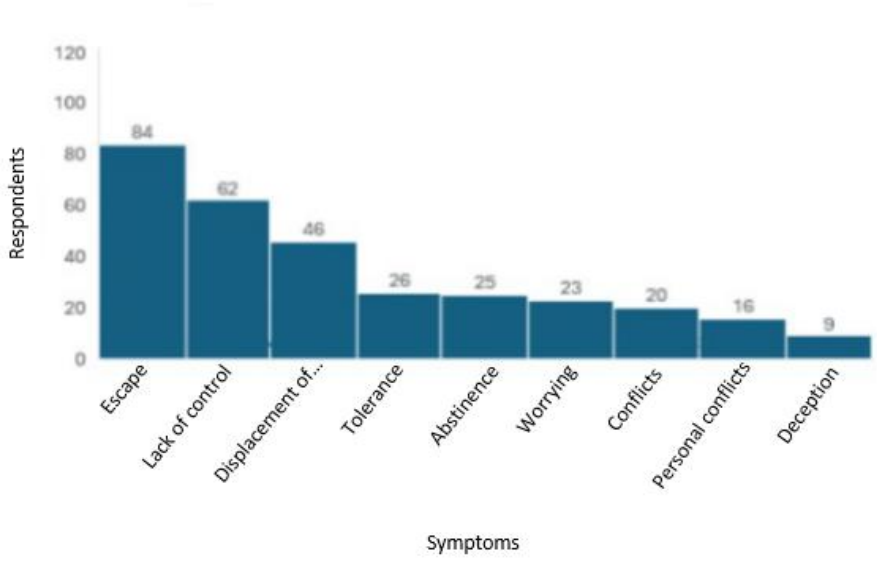


Source: Research data

Figure 1 presents the survey results indicating the social media platforms most frequently used by the participants. These findings show a higher prevalence of instant messaging platforms and the consumption of fast and interactive content, reinforcing the

relevance of investigating usage behavior in the context of digital dependence analyzed in this study.

Chart 2. Symptoms of Dependence

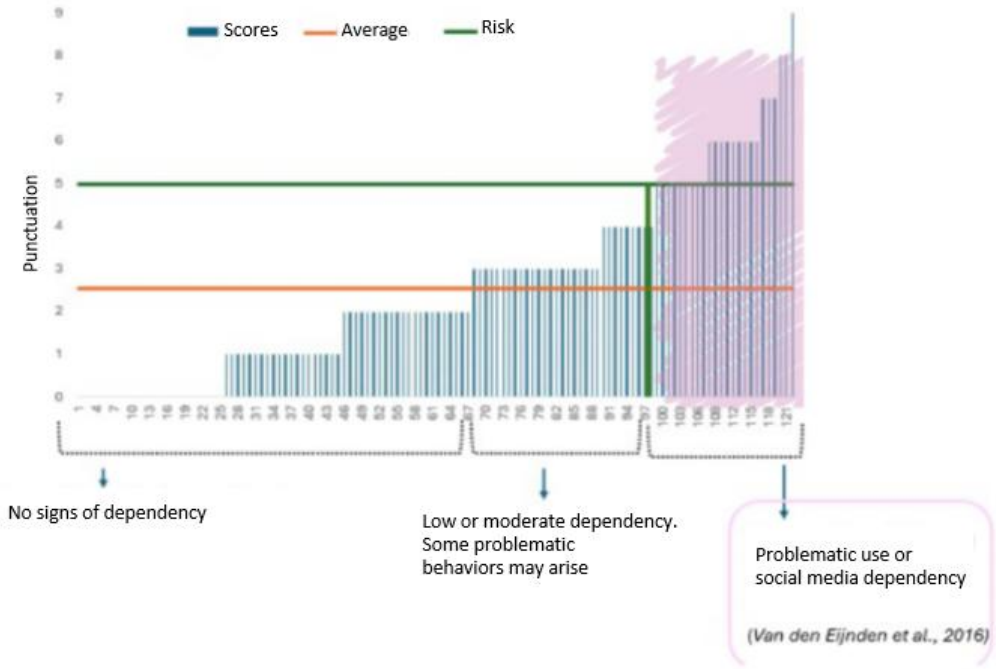


Source: Prepared by the author

Chart 2 presents the symptoms covered by the data collection instrument. Among the most prevalent are: (i) escapism; (ii) lack of control, associated with difficulties in regulating access; and (iii) displacement of activities. It is observed that the highest index is related to the feeling of escapism, which can be understood as an emotional escape from professional or academic demands. In this regard, although not recent, Cappellozza et al. (2017) remains a relevant reference, as this finding indicates that, beyond their basic function, social media platforms are also used as a temporary relief from stress and tension.

Following this, the next most significant results are lack of control and displacement of activities, which are symptoms that indicate difficulties in time management and concentration on tasks (Cappellozza et al., 2017). These symptoms are particularly relevant in the context of interns, as they compromise and interfere with their routine activities.

Chart 3. Dependence levels



Source: Prepared by the author

Chart 3 represents the respondents' scores. According to Van Den Eijnden et al. (2016), a score above 5 indicates that an individual can be considered dependent; thus, Graph 3 highlights a small portion of the general group showing signs of dependence. For the purposes of analysis and subsequent intervention proposals, this group was designated as the Group of Interest (G.I.).

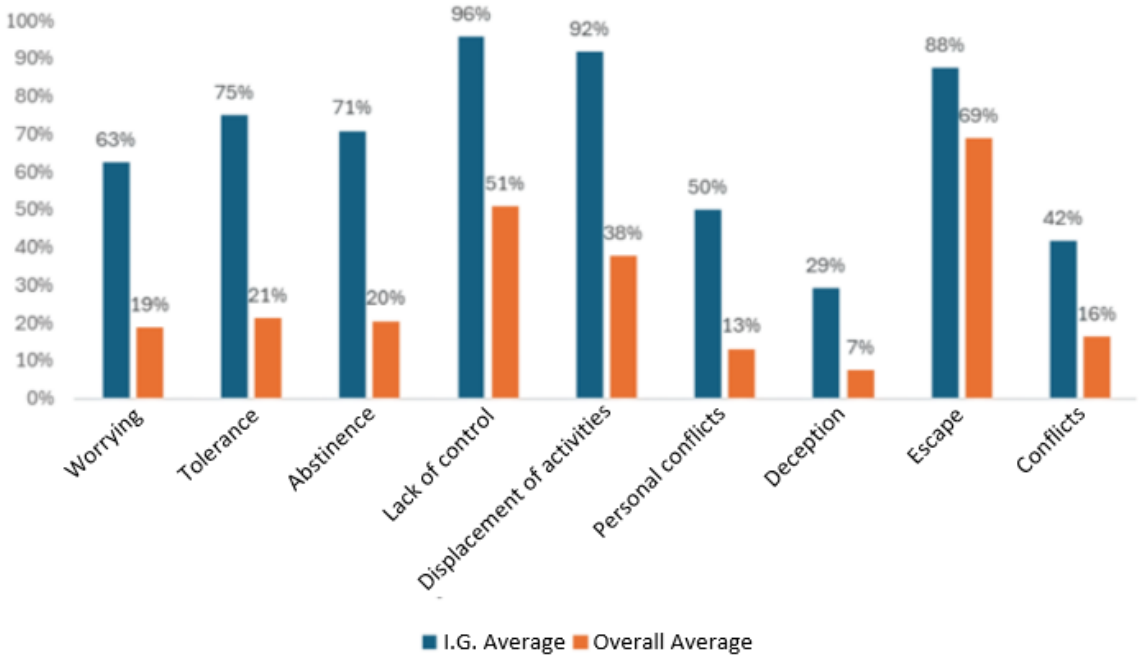
Chart 4. Hours online

	Interest Group	Overall	Week	Month	Year
Hours/day	3,29	2,78	3h34m	15h18m	186h18m
Accesses/day	3,25	2,61	4,48	19,2	233,60
Posts/day	1,96	1,46	3,5	15	182,5

Source: Prepared by the author

Chart 4 illustrates the frequency of hours, accesses, and posts reported by respondents in their social media self-assessments. Weekly, monthly, and annual data were extrapolated from the characterization survey items, revealing that the Group of Interest (G.I.) spends significantly more time online than the other groups. The green columns highlight the magnitude of these differences regarding the number of daily posts and accesses.

Chart 5. Symptoms of Dependence



Source: Prepared by the author

Chart 5 presents a comparison of symptoms between the general group and the G.I.: the most prominent symptoms remained the same, indicating that even individuals not classified as dependent already exhibit symptoms that may lead to dependency in the future. Recent studies (Zócoli et al., 2023; Sai-Fu, 2019) that used this scale for testing also achieved similar results in separating the dependent public from the general one; therefore, this scale can be used to differentiate and diagnose those with dependency. These findings corroborate the relevance of this project by demonstrating that the G.I. concentrates the respondents most vulnerable to the impacts of excessive social media use, which justifies the actions proposed in this report.

A recent study that also used this scale was Jain et al. (2025), which employed the scale with the aim of identifying dependency symptoms and analyzing the most frequent symptoms to propose prevention, education, and mental health promotion actions.

Table 1 presents the results of the Chi-square test, which statistically indicate a significant association between Twitter/X use and the presence of dependency among respondents. The Pearson Chi-square value was 6.33 with p=0.010, a value below the 5% significance level. Other complementary tests presented in the table, such as the continuity correction (p=0.020), the likelihood ratio (p=0.013), and Fisher's exact test (p=0.021), reinforce this statistical evidence. The table also shows no cells with an expected count less than 5 among the 122 evaluated subjects; in practical terms, this suggests that individuals who use Twitter/X are more likely to show signs of dependency compared to non-users. One likely reason for this network's prominence in the results is that it may favor repetitive and frequent patterns. Unlike other platforms, Twitter/X features rapid and continuous content updates, which encourage the user to check the platform constantly for news, posts, expressing opinions, trends, and interactions. Given these platform characteristics, this behavior of the algorithm and the users who utilize it may contribute to the more intense usage pattern found in this study.

Table 1. Chi-square tests with 122 respondents to verify the association of dependency with Twitter/X use.

	Valor	f	Sig. Assint. (2 lados)	Sig exata (2 lados)	Sig exata (1 lado)

Pearson's Chi-square	6,633[a]		,010		
Continuity correction (or Yates' continuity correction	5,399		,020		
Likelihood ratio	6,170		,013		
Fisher's Exact Test				,021	,012
Linear-by-linear association	6,579		,010		
Number of valid cases	122				

Source: research data

The results from Table 2 of the Chi-square test regarding TikTok indicate a significant association between the use of the platform and the presence of dependency symptoms. The Pearson Chi-square value was 6.079 with $p=0.014$, which is below the 5% significance level. Other complementary tests presented in the table, such as the continuity correction ($p=0.025$), the likelihood ratio ($p=0.014$), and Fisher's exact test ($p=0.021$), reinforce this statistical evidence. Thus, it is possible to statistically state that TikTok is associated with dependency. This result may be related to the platform's format, featuring short videos and personalized content scrolling driven by algorithms that stimulate rapid and repetitive consumption, increasing engagement and causing users to spend more time on the platform.

Table 2. Chi-square tests with 122 respondents to verify the association of dependency

	Valor	f	Sig. Assint. (2 lados)	Sig exata (2 lados)	Sig exata (1 lado)
Pearson's Chi-square	6,079[a]		,014		
Continuity correction (or Yates' continuity correction	5,001		,025		
Likelihood ratio	6,089		,014		
Fisher's Exact Test				,021	,013
Linear-by-linear association	6,029		,014		
Number of valid cases	122				

Source: Research data. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.62. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

Based on the tests performed (Appendix A), it was confirmed that the model is significant (Sig = 0.000) for explaining digital dependency, accounting for 19.1% of digital dependency ($R^2 = 0.191$). The results indicate that the set of these behavioral variables contributes significantly to explaining part of the digital dependency identified among the participants of this study. The coefficients presented (Appendix A) from the regression used to analyze the influence of usage time (QM1_time), number of accesses (QM2_accesses), and number of posts (QM3_posts) on the dependent variable "unclassified dependency" were

examined. It was found that usage time ($B = 0.708$; $p = 0.009$) and the number of posts ($B = 0.621$; $p = 0.023$) present statistical effects, confirming that an increase in these variables is associated with an increase in dependency levels. The number of accesses ($B = 0.078$; $p = 0.718$) did not yield affirmative results, making it possible to state that, in isolation, it does not show signs of dependency. The regression model can be represented by the following equation:$$Dependency = -0.526 + 0.708(QM1_time) + 0.078(QM2_accesses) + 0.621(QM3_posts)$$This indicates that usage time and the number of posts together increase the signs of dependency. Based on the coefficients, the proposed model for analyzing digital dependency is described as follows: Where:

x1=time spent on social media
x2 =frequency of social media accesses
x3=number of social media posts

Results obtained in the study by (Geovânio et al., 2023) report on the excessive use of social media during the pandemic period, which led to the highest levels of dependency. This study reports that certain mental health conditions are associated with the amount of social media exposure and the number of hours spent. Other studies that can be highlighted use these behavioral variables to relate to social media usage patterns, such as usage time, frequency of access, and intensity of interaction on the platforms. According to several studies and this report, although total usage time is frequently analyzed, the behavior of constantly checking social media and the frequency of access may be even more important indicators of maladaptive use, as they reflect a lack of control and a continuous need for connection (Ienaga et al., 2022). Systematic review studies indicate that intensive social media use is related to factors impacting mental health (Scott et al., 2019). With these studies, we can reinforce the relevance of investigating not only the presence or absence of social media use but also variables representing intensity and form of utilization, such as usage time, number of accesses, and frequency of posts. This information is important for the inclusion of these variables in the statistical model of the present research, contributing to a statistical understanding of the behavioral factors associated with social media dependency and comparing the results obtained with findings in the scientific literature.

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), presented in Table 6 (Appendix A), evaluates whether the regression model—composed of the variables usage time (QM1_time), frequency of accesses (QM2_accesses), and number of posts (QM3_posts)—is capable of explaining the variation in dependency. The model presented an F-value of 9.294, with a statistical significance of $p = 0.000$, a value below the 5% level, confirming that the model is statistically significant. The results indicate that the regression model proves that usage time, frequency of accesses, and the number of posts, when analyzed together, contribute to explaining the dependency found in the sample.

Based on the results presented by this project, it was possible to propose improvement actions within the participating organizations for re-education, prevention, and guidance on how to proceed in cases of excessive social media use and lack of self-control, while respecting autonomy and recognizing the importance of social media as a tool for communication and news.

The action plan reinforces the importance of integrating mental health and digital balance themes within companies; the plan covers low-cost options that can be implemented

using the company's own resources. It also highlights the importance of the topic for human, professional, and sustainable development within the organizational environment.

The highest incidence observed in the results relates to difficulty in controlling use, escape, and displacement of activities, leading to frequent distraction due to notifications and checking—aspects also evidenced in previous studies by Cappellozza et al. (2017) and Bruno Da Silva et al. (n.d.). These findings are all linked to the research through the use of the SMD scale, indicating the impacts caused by social media on dependency, resulting in emotional, cognitive, and behavioral harm, especially among young adults in a professional context.

Another study points out that social media platforms with highly addictive algorithms, such as short videos, intensify symptoms of escape, activity displacement, and even self-regulation issues, particularly among young adults (Jain et al., 2025). Although this evidence reinforces the results obtained, it is noted that most studies found are from international contexts, which hindered direct comparisons with the Brazilian reality—especially regarding interns in the workplace—using the SMD scale as a measurement tool, highlighting a gap to be explored by future studies.

As a proposed solution for this intervention, the 5W2H framework was used as a guideline, which will be described in detail here in Table 8. This proposal was presented and validated by managers on the day of this project's feedback session.

Table 8. 5W2H

What	Why	Where	When	Who	How	How Much
Carry out internal awareness campaigns on the healthy use of social media	The study identified a group at higher risk of dependency and symptoms of uncontrolled social media use	In the participants' work environment and the company's internal communication channels	Start after HR approval, with an initial duration of 90 days	HR and internship supervisors	Distribution of educational materials, institutional emails, informational posters, and internal notices.	Low cost, using the company's internal channels
Promote workshops on emotional self-regulation and conscious use of social media	Encourage the development of emotional control skills and the reduction of compulsive social media use	Training room or corporate spaces designated for meetings and events	Monthly workshops during the intervention period	HR, organizational psychologists, or invited professionals	Mini workshops, reflective activities, and guided discussions on digital behavior.	Use of internal resources or invited speakers, with reduced cost.
Implement individual follow-up checklists for social media use.	Monitor behavioral changes and encourage self-regulation of social media use	Work environment and individual monitoring by supervisors	Biweekly evaluations during the 90-day intervention period	Internship supervisors and HR	Use of simple follow-up and self-assessment forms for participants.	No additional cost, using digital or printed forms with company resources.
Encourage the adoption of healthy digital micro-habits.	Reduce automatic social media access behavior during work.	Work environment and daily routine of employees.	Throughout the entire intervention period.	Participants from the interest group, under the guidance of supervisors.	Strategies such as digital breaks, setting access times, and controlling notifications.	No financial cost, only behavior change and guidance.
Create moments of collective reflection on social media use and productivity.	Encourage collective awareness of the impacts of excessive social media use on professional performance.	Team meetings and follow-up sessions.	Monthly meetings during the intervention.	HR and team leaders	Discussion circles, presentation of partial results, and exchange of experiences among participants.	Low cost, using the company's existing infrastructure.
Evaluate the intervention results at the end of the implementation period.	Check for a reduction in dependency levels and improvement in digital habits.	Organizational environment and analysis of the collected data.	At the end of the 90-day intervention.	Research team and HR.	Administration of evaluation questionnaires and comparative analysis of results before and after the intervention.	No significant additional cost.

Source: Prepared by the author

5. Conclusion

This technical report aimed to analyze the impacts of social media on the mental health of interns within the organizational context, as well as to develop an educational intervention focused on raising awareness about social media usage patterns. The project contributed to understanding how different forms of interaction with social media can influence psychological well-being and academic-professional performance, especially among young individuals in training across various undergraduate fields.

The statistical analyses yielded important results for this technical report, confirming that dependency is more closely associated with the intensity and pattern of social media use than with the simple fact of using them, and that a single variable does not represent dependency. Association tests demonstrated that, among the platforms analyzed, Twitter/X and TikTok showed a relationship with dependency, with logistic regression models indicating that users of these networks are approximately three times more likely to exhibit dependency compared to non-users. Furthermore, correlation and multiple linear regression analyses evidenced that greater usage time, a higher number of accesses, and a higher frequency of posts are related to dependency levels, explaining 19.1% of the variation in dependency observed in the sample. During the statistical analyses, it was confirmed through the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) that the set of analyzed variables contributes to explaining the investigated phenomenon. The use of statistical regression models allowed for the confirmation of the patterns identified in the research, reinforcing findings discussed in the theoretical literature regarding intensive social media use and addictive behavior.

Regarding theoretical contributions, the study expands the discussion on social media use within organizational and educational contexts, specifically among interns integrated into innovation ecosystem environments. By examining indicators such as navigation time, frequency of access, and number of posts as markers of dependency, this work contributes to the advancement of research on behavior and mental health in the professional sphere.

In terms of practical and managerial contributions, the study demonstrates that low-cost educational interventions can be effective. Based on the obtained analyses and data feedback, these interventions are capable of shifting interns' daily routines and behavior, in most cases without the need for external intervention. The feedback of the results enabled interns to reflect on their own digital habits and the potential impacts on their mental health, behavior, and productivity. The proposed intervention model possesses high potential for replicability across different contexts. Furthermore, the project broadens the debate on mental health specifically regarding interns, integrating the dimension of professional training. Thus, this experience can serve as a reference for other organizations seeking to evaluate and promote the mental well-being of their employees without compromising the productive use of social networks. Among the primary lessons derived from this research, we highlight the importance of addressing social media use as a mental health issue, the efficiency of educational actions based on diagnostics and collective reflection, and the necessity of promoting digital balance rather than general prohibition. These lessons reinforce professional practices grounded in prevention, education, and employee care.

Among the study's limitations, the sample size stands out, consisting of 122 validated respondents from a specific group of interns within companies linked to an innovation ecosystem. Additionally, a scarcity of national research addressing social media dependency in the professional context was observed—particularly involving innovation ecosystems—as well as a lack of studies utilizing the SMD scale as a measurement instrument. Although there is extensive international literature on social media addiction, the absence of national studies hindered direct comparisons with contexts similar to this technical report. The specific sample profile (the G.I.) and the instrument used may also delimit the findings. In the context of this research, the scale was not used for clinical diagnosis but functioned as a screening tool,

allowing for the identification of more vulnerable groups and fostering discussions on prevention, digital education, and interventions focused on conscious social media use.

Finally, the study outlines pathways for future research and technical reports, recommending the expanded application of the SMD scale across different organizational contexts and its popularization among national professionals and researchers. Future studies with larger, more diverse samples are recommended, as well as longitudinal investigations to analyze the evolution of the identified patterns and their long-term impacts on mental health and professional performance. Such initiatives can contribute to the advancement of future knowledge and consolidate organizational practices aimed at promoting mental health within companies.

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APPENDIX A – Statistical Tables

Table 5. Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,437[a]	,191	,171	1,963

Predictors: (Constant), QM3_posts, QM2_accesses, QM1_time b. Dependent Variable: Unclassified dependency

Tabela 6 (ANOVA)[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	107,453	3	35,818	9,294	**,000[b]**
	Residual	454,751	118	3,854		
	Total	562,205	121			

a. Dependent Variable: Unclassified Dependency
b. Predictors: (Constant), QM3_posts, QM2_accesses, QM1_time

Table 7. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Standard Model	Beta		
1	**(Constant)**	**-,526**	,625		-,841	,402
	QM1_time	**,708**	,265	,285	2,673	,009
	QM2_accesses	**,078**	,214	,038	,362	,718
	QM3_posts	**,621**	,269	,210	2,311	,023

Dependent Variable: Unclassified Dependency