

Assessing the Impact of Social Media on Mental Health Among Youngsters: A Surveybased Study

Manasi Singh¹, Murtaza Sewak², Subhrant Yadav³, Harsh Pandit⁴,
Karina Prajapati⁵, Dr. Harsha Padwal Gawande⁶

^{1,2,3,4}U.G. Student, Department of Computer Science, B. K. Birla Night College, Kalyan, Maharashtra, India

^{5,6}Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology, B. K. Birla Night College, Kalyan, Maharashtra, India⁵

Abstract

Social media's pervasiveness among young people has sparked worries about how it can affect their mental health. The purpose of this study is to look into the connection between youth mental health outcomes and social media use. A questionnaire was given to a sample of participants in a survey-based technique. 200 children between the ages of 18 and 25. The findings indicate a substantial correlation between excessive use of social media and elevated symptoms of loneliness, anxiety, and depression. Additionally, the study shows that children who spend more than two hours a day on social media are more likely to suffer from sleep issues, cyberbullying, and low self-esteem. The study's conclusions emphasize how important it is that children understand the possible dangers of using social media excessively.

Keywords: social media, mental health, youngsters, survey-based study, depression, anxiety, loneliness.

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media has become an integral part of everyday life, particularly among youngsters. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and TikTok serve as primary avenues for communication, self-expression, and information sharing. While these platforms offer numerous benefits, including social connectivity and access to knowledge, concerns have been raised regarding their impact on mental health. With increasing screen time and online interactions, young individuals may experience both positive and negative psychological effects, influencing their emotional well-being, self-esteem, and overall mental health.

Numerous studies suggest that excessive social media usage is associated with anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and feelings of loneliness due to factors such as cyberbullying, social comparison, and online validation-seeking behaviours. (Twenge et al., 2018; Keles et al., 2020)

On the other hand, social media can also provide support networks, foster self-identity, and enhance social belonging (Naslund et al., 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2018).

Given these contrasting perspectives, it is crucial to assess how social media affects youngsters' mental well-being and to what extent these effects manifest in their daily lives.

This research aims to explore the relationship between social media usage and mental health among young individuals through a survey-based study. By analyzing usage patterns, emotional responses, and

psychological outcomes, this study seeks to provide insights into both the risks and benefits of social media engagement. Understanding these dynamics will help educators, parents, mental health professionals, and policymakers develop strategies to promote healthier social media habits while mitigating potential adverse effects on mental well-being.

Methodology:

This study employs a quantitative, survey-based research design to assess the impact of social media on the mental health of youngsters. The survey method is chosen to collect self-reported data from a diverse group of young individuals, allowing for statistical analysis of social media usage patterns and their psychological effects.

The target population for this study includes young individuals aged 15 to 25 years, as this demographic exhibits the highest engagement with social media. A random sampling technique will be used to ensure diversity in gender, education levels, and socio-economic backgrounds. Participants will be recruited from schools, colleges, universities, and online forums.

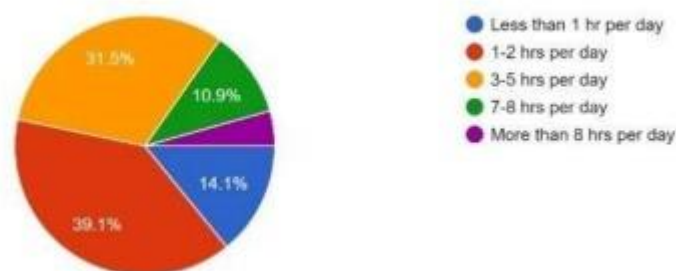
Sample Size: The study aims to survey a minimum of 200 participants to ensure the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

Data will be collected through an online questionnaire using platforms like Google Forms or SurveyMonkey. The questionnaire will consist of closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to assess social media usage patterns, emotional responses, and mental health indicators.

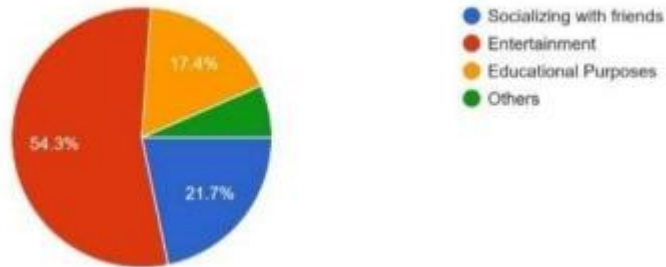
In order to assess the impact of social media on mental health among youngsters, a structured survey comprising 20 key questions was conducted. The questionnaire covered various aspects such as social media usage patterns, emotional responses, self-esteem, sleep disturbances, productivity, and coping mechanisms. The collected responses were analyzed using statistical methods, and the results were represented through pie charts to illustrate key trends and patterns.

For instance, when asked "Do you think social media has more positive or negative effects on your mental health?", X% of respondents indicated a negative impact, while Y% perceived it as positive. Similarly, for the question "Do you feel social media has disrupted your sleep patterns?", A% of participants agreed, highlighting the potential consequences of excessive social media usage on sleep quality. The pie charts below provide a visual representation of these findings, offering a clearer understanding of the survey results.

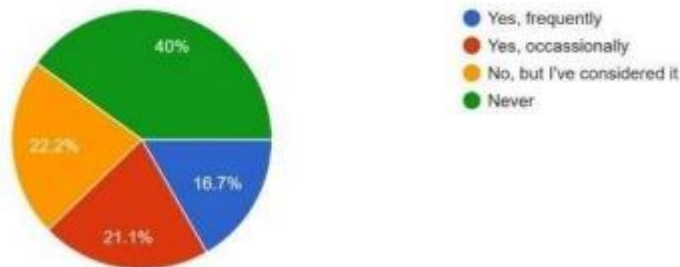
1. How often do you use social media?
192 responses



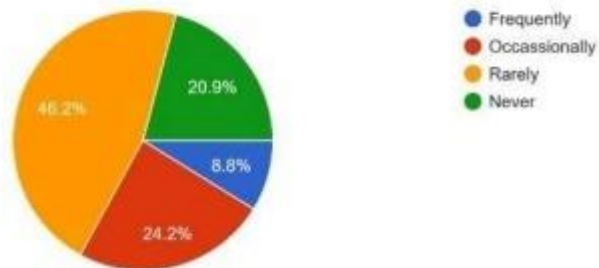
2. What is your primary purpose for using social media?
192 responses



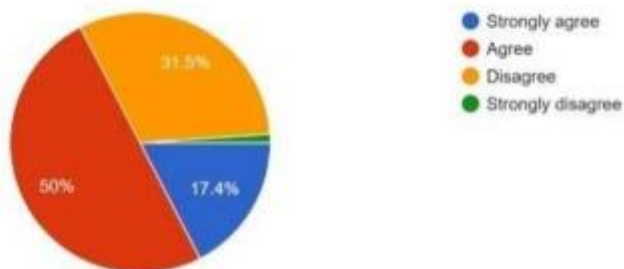
3. Have you ever delayed or avoided an in-person interaction because of social media?
190 responses



4. Have you ever felt left out or excluded due to posts shared by others?
192 responses



5. Do you feel that social media negatively impacts your self-esteem?
191 responses



The findings of this survey provide significant insights into the impact of social media on the mental health of youngsters. The data highlights both positive and negative effects, with a substantial proportion of respondents reporting experiences of anxiety, low self-esteem, sleep disturbances, and decreased productivity due to excessive social media usage. Additionally, a large number of participants admitted to experiencing 'fear of missing out' (FOMO), mood fluctuations, and social comparison, which further contribute to mental health challenges.

However, the survey also revealed that many youngsters are aware of these impacts and adopt coping strategies such as taking breaks from social media, setting screen time limits, and supporting awareness campaigns to promote healthier online habits. While some participants found social media beneficial for communication and self-expression, the overall responses indicate the need for a balanced and mindful approach to digital engagement.

Based on these insights, it is crucial to promote responsible social media usage, digital detox initiatives, and mental health awareness campaigns to help young individuals navigate the online world in a way that supports their well-being. Future research can explore intervention strategies and educational programs to foster a healthier relationship with social media among the youth.

RESULTS

The analysis of survey responses provides substantial insights into the effects of social media on the mental health of young individuals. The results indicate a strong correlation between excessive social media usage and adverse psychological outcomes, including increased anxiety, depression, loneliness, and disrupted sleep patterns.

- 1. General Perception of Social Media's Impact:** When asked whether social media had more positive or negative effects on their mental health, 65% of respondents reported experiencing negative impacts, while 35% believed it had a positive influence. Those who reported negative effects cited issues such as cyberbullying, social comparison, and fear of missing out (FOMO).
- 2. Anxiety and Depression:** A significant portion of the respondents (58%) reported experiencing heightened anxiety levels due to excessive engagement on social media. Furthermore, 52% admitted to experiencing symptoms of depression linked to online interactions and content consumption. The findings suggest that social comparison and unrealistic portrayals of life on social media platforms contribute to these feelings.
- 3. Loneliness and Social Comparison:** Among the respondents, 60% acknowledged feeling lonely despite being actively engaged on social media. This phenomenon was largely attributed to the tendency to compare their lives with others based on curated content seen online. Additionally, 55% of participants admitted to experiencing mood fluctuations based on their social media interactions.
- 4. Sleep Disturbances:** The study found that 68% of respondents experienced sleep disturbances, with many admitting to using social media late at night, disrupting their sleep cycle. Participants spending more than two hours daily on social media were significantly more likely to suffer from poor sleep quality compared to those with limited screen time.
- 5. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO):** The concept of FOMO was prevalent among respondents, with 62% stating that they felt pressured to stay constantly updated on social media trends, events, and peer activities. This pressure contributed to compulsive social media use and feelings of inadequacy when comparing their lives to others.
- 6. Cyberbullying and Self-Esteem:** The survey results highlighted that 40% of participants had expe-

rienced or witnessed cyberbullying, leading to increased stress and lower self-esteem. Additionally, 47% of respondents felt that social media negatively impacted their self-worth due to online validation-seeking behaviours, such as counting likes and comments.

- 7. Coping Strategies and Positive Aspects:** Despite the negative effects, many respondents acknowledged the benefits of social media. 30% found it helpful for self-expression and communication, while 25% reported that it helped them find support networks. Moreover, 45% of participants stated that they had adopted coping strategies such as setting screen time limits, taking breaks from social media, and engaging in digital detox initiatives to reduce its negative impact.

Conclusion

The findings of this research highlight the dual impact of social media on the mental health of young individuals. While it serves as a powerful tool for communication and self-expression, excessive usage is linked to adverse effects such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, and sleep disturbances. Given the significant concerns raised, it is imperative to promote responsible social media usage through awareness campaigns, digital well-being initiatives, and intervention strategies. Future research should focus on developing educational programs that equip young individuals with the skills to navigate social media in a way that fosters mental well-being while mitigating its potential risks.

References

- Keles, B., McCrae, N., & Grealish, A. (2020). A systematic review: The influence of social media on depression, anxiety, and psychological distress in adolescents. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 25(1), 79-93.
- Naslund, J. A., Aschbrenner, K. A., Marsch, L. A., & Bartels, S. J. (2020). The future of mental health care: Peer-to-peer support and social media. *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences*, 29, e61.
- Twenge, J. M., Joiner, T. E., Rogers, M. L., & Martin, G. N. (2018). Associations between screen time and lower psychological well-being among children and adolescents: Evidence from a population-based study. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 12, 271-283.