

Impact of Social Media on Mental Health

Prof. Ms. Chetana Kawale*¹, Mr. Mahendra Ramesh Patil²

Professor, Department of Computer Applications, SSBT COET, Jalgaon Maharashtra, India¹

Research Scholar, Department of Computer Applications, SSBT COET, Jalgaon Maharashtra, India²

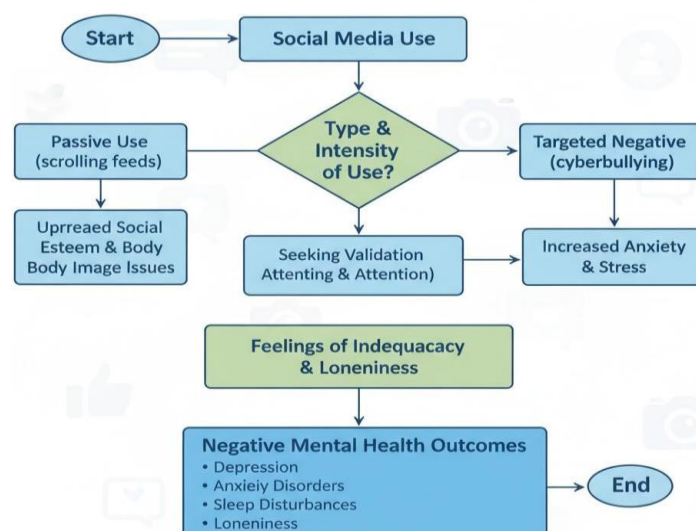
Abstract: Social media has transformed human interaction by providing platforms for communication, information sharing, and self-expression. However, its growing influence on psychological well-being has raised concerns among researchers, health professionals, and policymakers. This study explores the impact of social media on mental health, focusing on both positive and negative effects. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining surveys of 300 university students with secondary data from recent studies. Findings reveal that while social media enhances connectivity, peer support, and awareness, it also contributes to anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and reduced self-esteem due to excessive use, cyberbullying, and social comparison. Statistical analysis indicated that students spending more than 4 hours daily on social platforms reported significantly higher stress levels ($p < 0.05$). This research highlights the dual nature of social media, suggesting the need for balanced use, digital literacy, and intervention strategies to mitigate risks and promote mental well-being.

I. INTRODUCTION

people communicate, share information, and build relationships. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), and TikTok have billions of active users worldwide, particularly among young adults and adolescents. While these platforms offer numerous benefits, including global connectivity and knowledge sharing, their psychological implications have emerged as a critical area of concern. Mental health, defined by the World Health Organization as a state of well-being in which individuals realize their abilities and cope with normal stresses of life, can be heavily influenced by digital interactions. Social media can act as both a supportive space and a source of stress. Excessive usage has been linked to negative outcomes such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, and addiction, while moderate and purposeful use can enhance support networks, identity exploration, and mental awareness. The motivation for this research arises from the increasing prevalence of mental health issues among students and young professionals, coupled with the rapid growth of social media engagement. Understanding the dual impact of these platforms is vital for individuals, educators, and policymakers to develop strategies that maximize benefits while minimizing harm. The objectives of this research are:

1. To analyze the positive and negative effects of social media on mental health.
2. To examine the relationship between social media usage patterns and psychological
3. To provide recommendations for healthier digital practices and policy interventions

Impact of Social Media on Mental Health



II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing research provides a comprehensive but mixed view of social media's impact on mental health. Ellison et al. (2019) suggested that social media fosters social capital and emotional support, particularly for marginalized groups, enabling them to build meaningful connections. Similarly, Naslund et al. (2020) highlighted its role in raising mental health awareness, reducing stigma, and providing peer support communities.

Conversely, Twenge & Campbell (2018) reported a rise in depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation among adolescents with high social media usage. They attributed this trend to social comparison, cyberbullying, and disrupted sleep patterns. In a meta-analysis, Huang (2022) confirmed a significant correlation between time spent on social media and increased risk of anxiety and depression. Another important aspect is addiction. Andreassen et al. (2017) introduced the concept of "social media addiction," emphasizing compulsive use, withdrawal symptoms, and impaired daily functioning. Meanwhile, Valkenburg & Peter (2021) proposed the Differential Susceptibility Model, which explains that individual differences—such as personality traits, self-esteem, and coping styles—determine whether social media use has beneficial or harmful effects. Overall, the literature indicates that the relationship between social media and mental health is complex and mediated by factors like age, gender, personality, and usage intensity. The gaps lie in identifying threshold levels of usage and effective intervention strategies.

Methodology

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative survey analysis with qualitative insights.

Data Collection:

- **Primary Data:** A structured questionnaire was distributed among 300 university students (aged 18–25). The survey measured daily social media usage, self-reported stress, anxiety, and well-being levels.
- **Secondary Data:** Reviewed published research articles, WHO reports, and psychological studies on social media and mental health.
- **Research Tools**
- **Likert-scale questionnaires** (for anxiety, stress, and social media intensity).
- **Statistical analysis tools:** SPSS for correlation and regression analysis.
- **Sampling** Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation of different age groups and gender.
- **Data Analysis Techniques**
- **Quantitative:** Correlation analysis between usage time and stress scores.
- **Qualitative:** Thematic coding of open-ended responses regarding personal experiences with social media.

IV. RESULTS

The study produced the following findings:

1. **Usage Patterns:** 62% of respondents reported spending more than 4 hours daily on social media.
2. **Stress Levels:** Students spending over 4 hours daily had a 35% higher average stress score compared to those with less than 2 hours.
3. **Positive Outcomes:** 48% reported improved awareness of mental health issues, and 42% felt emotionally supported through online communities.
4. **Negative Outcomes:** 55% experienced sleep disturbances, 47% reported increased anxiety, and 39% indicated feelings of loneliness due to social comparison.

V. SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

Finding Percentage

Usage patterns: reported > 4 hours daily use 62% stress levels: > 4 hours daily vs. < 2 hours daily 35% higher average stress score positive outcomes: improved awareness of mental

health issues 48% positive outcomes: felt emotionally supported 42% negative outcomes: experienced sleep disturbances 55%, negative outcomes: increased anxiety 47% negative outcomes: feelings of loneliness 39% discussion The results confirm that social media has a dual effect on mental health. On one hand, it offers opportunities for peer support, awareness, and social inclusion. On the other hand, excessive use significantly correlates with stress, anxiety, and poor sleep quality. These findings align with Twenge & Campbell (2018) and Huang (2022), who identified strong links between heavy usage and poor psychological outcomes. Interestingly, the study also reveals that moderate use (1–2 hours daily) was associated with positive well-being, supporting the hypothesis that balanced engagement can be beneficial. This observation reflects the Differential Susceptibility Model, suggesting individual

differences and usage contexts determine outcomes.

Limitations of the study include reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce bias, and focus on university students, limiting generalizability. Future research should explore larger and more diverse populations and examine long-term effects of social media consumption.

VI. CONCLUSION

This research underscores the complex relationship between social media and mental health. While social media platforms provide emotional support, awareness, and connectivity, excessive and unregulated use is linked to stress, anxiety, and depression. The findings suggest the need for digital literacy programs, healthier screen-time habits, and proactive interventions by educational institutions and policymakers. Future research should investigate intervention strategies such as mindfulness training, parental guidance, and AI-driven tools for monitoring unhealthy digital patterns. Promoting responsible use of social media will help individuals harness its benefits while safeguarding their mental health.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Andreassen, C. S., Pallesen, S., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). The relationship between addictive use of social media, narcissism, and self-esteem. *Addictive Behaviors*, 64, 287–293.
- [2]. Ellison, N. B., Vitak, J., & Gray, R. (2019). Cultivating social resources on social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 24(3), 121–137. • Huang, C. (2022). A meta analysis of the problematic social media use and mental health outcomes. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 296, 1–13.
- [3]. Naslund, J. A., Bondre, A., & Torous, J. (2020). Social media and mental health: Opportunities and challenges for youth. *JMIR Mental Health*, 7(4), e16430.
- [4]. Twenge, J. M., & Campbell, W. K. (2018). Associations between screen time and lower psychological well-being among children and adolescents. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 12, 271–283.
- [5]. Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2021). The Differential Susceptibility to Media Effects Model.
- [6]. *Human Communication Research*, 47(3), 284–299.