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## The Relationship Between Social Media And Anxiety

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### ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this study is to examine how well college students' social anxiety, happiness and loneliness levels explain their levels of social media usage. The study also aims to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between Ages, Time spent using social media daily, and Number of social media platforms used daily and effects of the same on their mental well-being and anxiety levels. The research group consisted of 31 University going students and the data was collected using short form of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, and the short form of the UCLA Loneliness Questionnaire. The findings showed that there was a positive relationship between student's social media addiction levels and their anxiety and loneliness

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### Introduction:

#### *The usage and addiction of social media In Today's Scenario*

Social media in today's modern world has become one of the most important parts of human life. Social media is everywhere, it is one of the first and last activities of the day. It is where time is passed, statuses are posted and new friends are made. Social media serves as a platform for everyone to make friends, keep in touch with your distant friends/ relatives or find love. But not everything we see on social media is truth. Social media has a positive side but it has negative and darker side to it as well.

Having a social media presence comes with many negative aspects as well. Many of the youths pretend to be something else on social media which they are not in their real life only to get the validation from others in terms of likes, comments and shares on their videos or posts. Reality and social media are way more different than they may seem. Social media is a place where constant social comparison is made, a place where happiness is dependent on the amount of likes or shares one gets on a daily basis.

Over the last two decades, social media has expanded exponentially, now comprising a variety of websites and applications used by people of all ages around the world. Social media is used frequently by individuals of all ages, most of which lie between the age group of 15-40 years old. Most frequently used social media applications include Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter.

Due to excessive use of social media people are hesitant to talk in front of the society or huge crowd. Social anxiety is a condition in which an individual is hesitated to talk in front of a society. Individuals who have difficulty in expressing themselves in social environments express themselves more easily on internet. It is seen that youths tend to avoid from social gatherings and are more inclined to spend their time virtually or on social media.

Although the negative use of social media use causes problems at every age, youths are the significant group at risk. Moreover, university students are likely to be one of the important groups under influence of technology. In this period of their lives, university students face many problems due to blending into a new social environment, academic studies, financial problems, and lacking family support due to the separation or any other personal reason. These are some of the reasons why individuals and youths tend to spend more time on social media creating their own world. Social media use has become highly prevalent in modern society, especially in young adults. Usage of Instagram, snapchat, twitter has built unrealistic expectations amongst today's youth.

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### Research Methodology:

With the help of data collected following question was examined:

- (1) Is there a significant relationship between university students' social media addiction and their social anxiety, happiness and loneliness levels?

The research was conducted to identify studies analyzing the role of social media on mental health. Google Scholar was used as our main database to find the relevant articles. Keywords that were used for the search were:

- (1) "social media",
- (2) "mental health",
- (3) "social media" AND "mental health", and
- (4) "social networking" OR "social media" AND "mental health",
- (5) "Social media and anxiety"

The target population for the current study was both males and females of wide age range that use social media. Collection of data was conducted through a questioner and the participants voluntarily gave the responses. The questionnaire helped to develop an understanding of the relationship between mental health/anxiety and social media usage.

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## Conceptual Framework:

### *Social media, social anxiety:*

A number of studies have illustrated that socially anxious individuals prefer online to face-to-face social interactions and have a tendency to use social media more problematically. More socially anxious individuals appear to use social media with greater frequency because they tend to avoid people and interaction with the society. Research has also pointed to the association between social anxiety and the addictive qualities of Social Media Usage. Socially anxious individuals appear to seek out social support online to compensate for a lack of in-person support. Social media, especially for youths, provides easy and fast access to real-time activities such as various events, visual sharing, and chatting. Youths spend most of their time on social media, updating their contacts and status.

### *Review of Existing Literature:*

Previous literature Graham DL (2016) noted that social media can increase stress levels as users 'want to value quick access to relationships and social activities in which people do not participate, these conditions can lead to long-term stresses. . This significant finding is consistent with previous literature because it supports the following proposition:

Use of multiple social media sites is associated with stress scores. Many studies have shown that heavy use of social media is associated with social anxiety among college students. This study was carried out by Schänning et al. (2019) found that social media use predicted social anxiety symptoms among Chinese college students. Similarly, Wang et al. (2020) found a positive relationship between social media use and loneliness, which increased anxiety in this group.

The impact of social media on happiness appears complex. Although some studies have not established a clear relationship, excessive use appears to be associated with poor health. A study by Wang et al. (2020) touched on this issue, social media use has a negative impact on students' happiness.

### *Research Gap:*

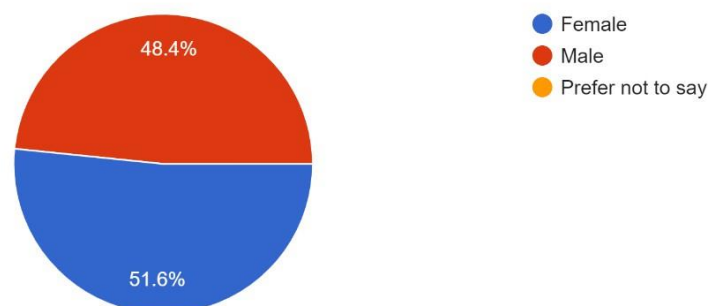
Although existing research suggests a link between social media and stress/health, more research is needed. This study will investigate the relationship between social media use and academic performance among university students. The potential for social media to contribute to anxiety and loneliness will also be examined.

### *Data Analysis and Interpretation:*

To get more accurate information about relationship between social media and anxiety I have conducted a primary survey of university students which included sample size of 31 students.

#### Gender

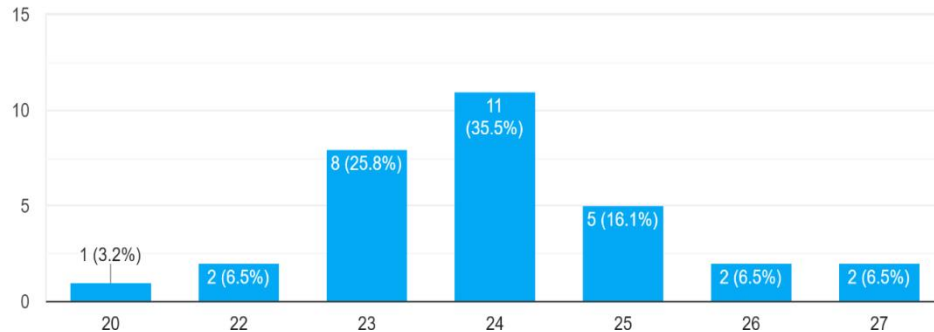
31 responses



My survey had 48.4% male and 51.6% females. I have conducted this survey on relatively smaller scale to get better understanding of the subject matter.

### Age

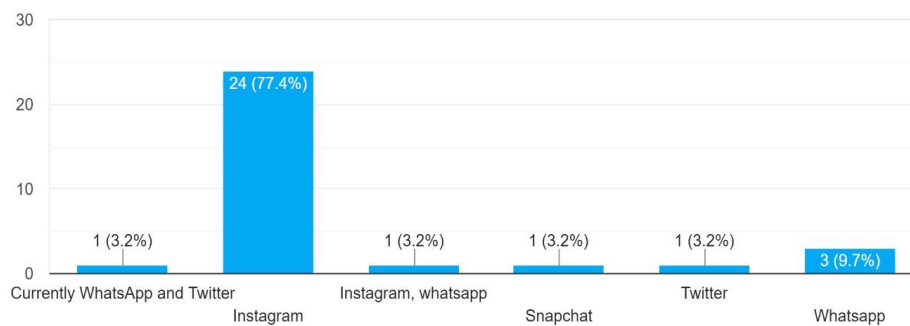
31 responses



My survey included students from age group of 15-45. I have received majority responses from students between the age group of 20-27. According to the survey majority of students having age of 23/24/25 spend their majority time on social media due to various factors mainly to pass their time or enjoyment etc.

### If Yes, which is your most used application?

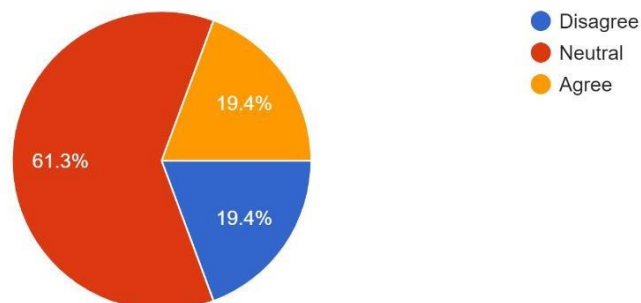
31 responses



According to the results obtained from my test group Instagram is the most popular social media app used by them and other apps like twitter, WhatsApp, snapchat are used moderately.

### My social relationships are superficial

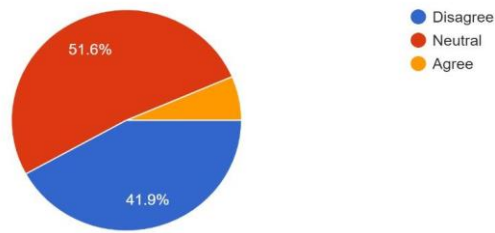
31 responses



According to this 61.3% of the respondents feel that their social relationships may or may not be superficial. While 19.4% completely disagree and on the other hand 19.4% completely feel their social relationships are superficial.

## I feel shut out and excluded by others

31 responses



As per my test group 51.6% of respondents sometimes feel excluded by others. indicates they might have anxiety. Main reason for this is less personal interaction and confidence while speaking in public

### Findings:

This study may find a relationship between social media, social anxiety, and decreased health among college students. Possible findings include:

- **Increased anxiety:** College students who use social media heavily are more likely to show symptoms of anxiety than college students who use social media less or less. Social Media
- **Addiction:** Social media addiction may be one of the most common causes of stress among college students. Overuse will not only cause stress but also make the situation worse.
- **Happiness:** Heavy social media use may be associated with lower happiness among college students. Factors such as FOMO (fear of missing out) and cross-platform comparison can negatively affect happiness.
- **Fear of missing out (FOMO):** Seeing other people's seemingly ideal lives online can lead to feelings of insecurity and social rejection, which can lead to a lot of anxiety.  
Social comparison: Social media often presents idealized models of people's lives, which can cause users to doubt their lives, which can lead to stress.  
Phone bullying and negative emotions: Exposure to online bullying or negative emotions can lead to symptoms of anxiety.

### Conclusion:

University life can be a time of increased stress and pressure to socialize. Although social media offers the opportunity to connect, it also creates problems for students' health.

Research shows the relationship between social media use and the health of university students. Excessive use of social media appears to be associated with social anxiety and decreased health. Addiction in society can worsen these problems.

It is important to understand these connections. By developing healthy habits and promoting awareness in society, we can encourage students to navigate the online world in ways that support their health and encourage clean, genuine relationships.

Further research is important to investigate long- term effects and develop effective interventions. By creating a supportive environment that addresses the pros and cons of social media, we can help students thrive in this connected world.

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