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Social Media Addiction: A study of prevalence, causes, and consequences of Excessive Social Media Use.

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ABSTRACT :

This study investigates the prevalence, causes, and consequences of social media addiction, with a focus on its psychological, behavioral, and social impacts. With the rising popularity of social media platforms, individuals—especially youth—are increasingly exhibiting patterns of excessive usage that mirror addiction-like symptoms. The research employs a quantitative methodology, using a structured Google Form questionnaire distributed among respondents aged 18 and above. The data collected from 100 participants was analyzed to identify patterns related to usage frequency, primary motivations, and the resulting effects on productivity, emotional well-being, sleep patterns, self-esteem, and interpersonal relationships. Findings reveal that a majority of participants spend 3–5 hours daily on social media, primarily for entertainment and socialization. Many users reported feeling anxious or restless when unable to access social media and admitted to checking their accounts frequently due to FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) and the need for validation through likes and comments. The study also highlights how social media addiction contributes to reduced productivity, disturbed sleep schedules, emotional distress, and weakened real-life social connections. Despite these negative outcomes, a significant portion of respondents find it difficult to reduce their screen time, indicating potential signs of behavioral addiction. The study concludes by emphasizing the importance of digital balance and self-regulation. It suggests that raising awareness and promoting healthier online habits are essential in mitigating the adverse effects of social media overuse. The findings can serve as a basis for future studies and interventions aimed at addressing digital addiction and promoting psychological well-being.

Keywords: Social Media Addiction, Psychological Impact, FOMO, Digital Behavior, Mental Health, Productivity, Self-Esteem, Sleep Disruption, Validation, Online Habits.

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, social media has become essential to everyday life, linking individuals worldwide, enabling conversation, and offering immediate access to information. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and Snapchat have revolutionised interpersonal interactions, experience sharing, and content consumption. Although social media has several advantages, such as social connectedness, commercial prospects, and entertainment, its overuse has generated much apprehension. The escalation of social media addiction is an increasing phenomena, impacting people's mental health, productivity, and general well-being. Social media addiction is characterised by an obsessive need to interact with social networking platforms, resulting in adverse effects such as anxiety, sadness, diminished productivity, and strained social connections. Research indicates that excessive social media engagement stimulates the brain's reward system akin to drug addiction, hence encouraging the need to want validation via likes, comments, and shares. This loop of immediate satisfaction often results in people dedicating excessive time online, so disregarding real-world obligations and interpersonal relationships.

The incidence of social media addiction has markedly risen over the years, especially among younger demographics. Research indicates that teens and young adults are the most susceptible demographics, since they are more prone to repetitive scrolling behaviours and the fear of missing out (FOMO). The widespread availability of cellphones and perpetual connection have intensified this problem, complicating consumers' ability to manage their screen time. Multiple variables contribute to the development of social media addiction. Psychological issues, including diminished self-esteem, isolation, and the need for social affirmation, compel people to find solace in online contacts. The compelling design of social media platforms, characterised by algorithm-driven content suggestions, alerts, and engagement metrics, promotes extended use. Peer pressure and social standards significantly contribute to the development of reliance on these platforms.

The ramifications of social media addiction are extensive. Mental health disorders, including anxiety, sadness, and sleep difficulties, have been associated with excessive social media use. Furthermore, it adversely affects academic and professional performance, since people find it challenging to focus and fulfil their responsibilities. Social ties deteriorate when face-to-face contacts decline in preference for virtual participation. Combating

social media addiction requires a comprehensive strategy, including digital detox methods, awareness initiatives, and self-regulation practices. This research seeks to investigate the prevalence, origins, and ramifications of social media addiction, offering insights into the impact of excessive social media use on people and society. By comprehending these facets, we may create effective tactics to encourage better digital practices and alleviate the adverse repercussions of social media overindulgence.

CHAPTER-2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Because of their useful features and increasing popularity, social networking services (SNS) have become indispensable to many college students. Users are at risk for developing behavioural problems, the most significant of which is addiction, due to their excessive usage of social networks. The purpose of this research was to examine the extent to which college students throughout the world are addicted to social media. To find studies that reported upon the worldwide prevalence for social media addiction between university students, this meta-analysis and systemic review systematically searched PubMed, Web for Science, Jisc the library Hub Explore, Library of Congress, while Google Scholar. There was no specified minimum time restriction for the searches, and the most recent update was in April 2022. A model of random effects was utilised for analysis, and the I² index was utilised to measure the heterogeneity of research. Complete Meta-Analysis (CMA) software (version 2) was used to conduct the data analysis. (Hosseinian, 2023)

There has been a rise in studies examining obsessive, over-the-top social media usage in recent years, with researchers using phrases like "Facebook addiction" and "social network site addiction" interchangeably. By providing a narrative overview in the research field to regards to definition, evaluation, antecedents, consequences, while treatment, as well as recommendations to future research efforts, this review aims to educate researchers and clinicians about social network site addiction (SNS-addiction). There are seven separate assessments of social media addiction, and only a little amount of validation has taken place amongst them. There has been little research on the link between SNS addiction and health problems, scholastic difficulties, and interpersonal problems, but what little there is reveals that this is really the case. Nevertheless, the majority of these research have used a basic cross-sectional design. Therefore, beyond conjecture, it is difficult to make any conclusions on possible causation and long-term consequences at this time. While significant explanatory socio-cultural and behavioural reinforcement elements have not yet been investigated experimentally, it is suggested that SNS-addiction is induced by dispositional characteristics such as personality, needs, and self-esteem. Although there is now no proven method for treating social media addiction, what is known about treating addiction to the Internet may be applicable to this particular kind of online behaviour. Further conceptual & empirical investigation into the SNS-addiction notion is necessary because, generally speaking, this area of study is still in its early stages. Research using thorough longitudinal designs and including objective measurements of behaviour and health derived from large representative samples is highly sought after. (Pallesen, 2014)

Online communities known as social networking sites (SNSs) allow users to build public profiles, communicate with friends in real life, and find others who have similar interests. Some Internet users may develop a mental health issue known as "addiction" to social networks, according to anecdotal case study data. On the other hand, there is a dearth of recent scholarly work that discusses the addictive nature of online social networks. By delving into the causes of social media use, the drawbacks of using them, and the possibility of developing an addiction to them, this chapter sheds light on the new issue of addiction to social media. Also included in this chapter are evaluation and screening instruments, as well as some therapy ideas derived from the management of other types of internet addictions. (Demetrovics, 2014)

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Aim: The primary aim of this study is to examine the prevalence, causes, and consequences of social media addiction among individuals, with a specific focus on how excessive use impacts their mental health, daily life, productivity, and interpersonal relationships.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the extent of social media usage across different age groups and demographics.
- To identify the primary reasons behind excessive use of social media platforms.
- To analyze the psychological and behavioral effects of social media addiction, such as anxiety, FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), and reduced self-esteem.
- To examine the impact of social media overuse on sleep, productivity, and real-life social interactions.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research follows a quantitative research design, as it seeks to collect numerical data and analyze patterns statistically. A descriptive survey method was used to gather information about users' social media habits and their psychological and behavioral impacts. This approach helped in identifying the frequency of social media usage, the reasons behind excessive use, and its effects on users' daily lives, productivity, sleep, and emotional well-being.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The target population for this study includes individuals aged 18 and above, who actively use social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. A non-probability convenience sampling method was adopted, allowing the researcher to collect data from easily accessible participants. A total of 100 respondents participated in the study.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Primary data was collected using a Google Form questionnaire, which was distributed online via social media platforms, emails, and messaging apps. The questionnaire was structured and included both demographic questions and Likert-scale-based statements designed to measure social media usage habits, emotional triggers, and consequences of excessive usage.

TOOLS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data was compiled using Microsoft Excel, where frequencies and percentages were calculated. The findings were represented using tables, pie charts, and bar graphs to provide clear and visual insights into the data. Interpretation of each response category helped identify trends and draw meaningful conclusions.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

The results of the survey that was used to determine how social media use affects individuals' mental and behavioural health are detailed in the chapter devoted to data analysis. The data used for the study came from a structured questionnaire that was filled out by a wide range of participants (ranging in age from 18 to 50). In this section, we examine the data thoroughly, looking for trends and patterns using statistical tools like percentage analysis and frequency distributions. The results shed light on the complicated web of effects that social media addiction has on one's sense of self-worth, circadian rhythms, interpersonal connections, psychological wellness, and general health. In addition to providing suggestions for better digital habit management, the results hope to add to the larger conversation on the mental health effects of social media usage.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency
18–25 years	58
26–35 years	33
36 years and above	9

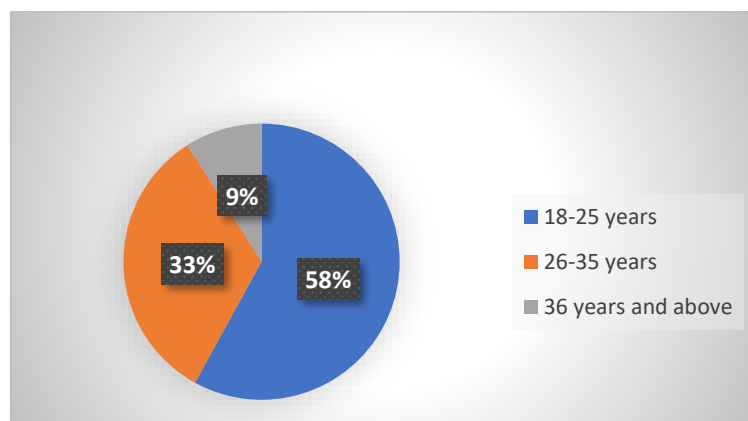


Figure 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Interpretation:

The majority of respondents (58%) in this study fall within the 18–25 years age group, followed by 26–35 years (33%) and a smaller representation from individuals aged 36 and above (9%). This distribution highlights that younger age groups are more actively involved in social media usage, making them more susceptible to patterns of excessive use or addiction. Since this demographic is generally more tech-savvy and socially engaged

online, it also provides relevant insights into how social media affects their day-to-day lives, productivity, and mental health. This skew towards younger participants ensures that the study captures data from the most affected age group, aligning with global trends that show younger people are more likely to experience social media dependency.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency
Male	47
Female	50
Other	3

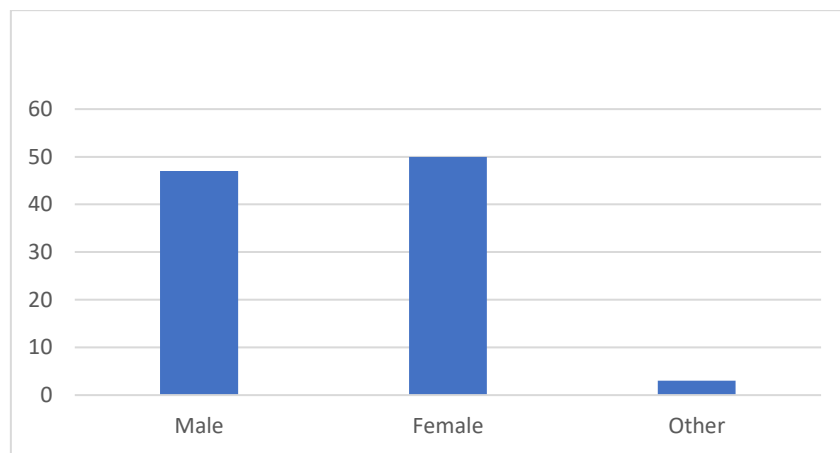


Figure 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Interpretation:

The gender distribution of the participants is fairly balanced, with 50 female respondents and 47 male respondents, along with 3 individuals identifying as other. This relatively even spread enhances the credibility and inclusiveness of the study by ensuring that the perspectives of both genders are adequately represented. It allows for a more nuanced understanding of how social media addiction may manifest differently across genders. For instance, some research suggests that while women might use social media more for emotional connectivity and validation, men may use it for entertainment or professional networking. The inclusion of respondents from non-binary identities also reflects a more contemporary and holistic approach to social media research.

Table 3: Educational Qualifications of Respondents

Education Level	Frequency
High School	48
Undergraduate	34
Postgraduate	11
Other	7

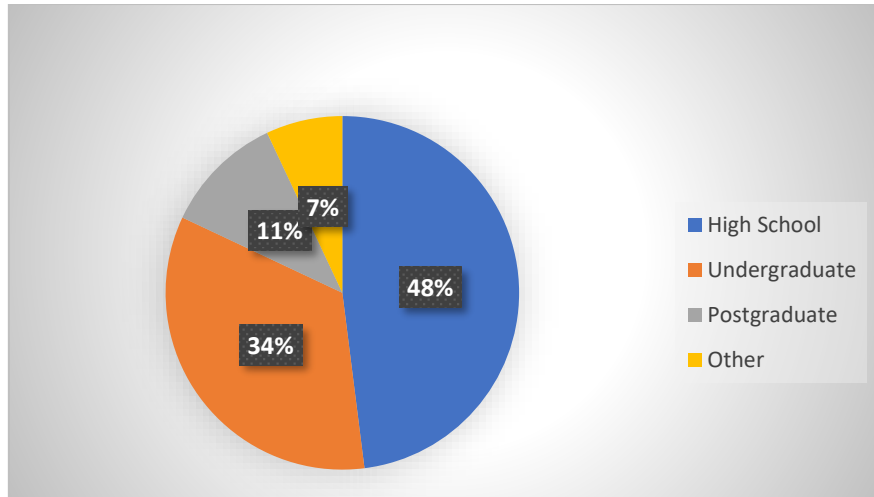


Figure 3: Educational Qualifications of Respondents

Interpretation:

The data reveals that the majority of respondents have completed either high school (48%) or undergraduate education (34%), with fewer respondents being postgraduates (11%) or listing other educational backgrounds (7%). This distribution indicates that most participants are likely to be students or early-career professionals—populations that are generally considered more susceptible to excessive social media use. These groups often rely on social platforms for socialization, entertainment, and self-expression. Moreover, the presence of educated individuals ensures that the responses are reliable and thoughtfully considered, which adds to the validity of the findings related to the psychological and social effects of social media.

Table 4: Daily Time Spent on Social Media

Time Spent	Frequency
Less than 1 hour	8
1–3 hours	27
3–5 hours	42
More than 5 hours	23

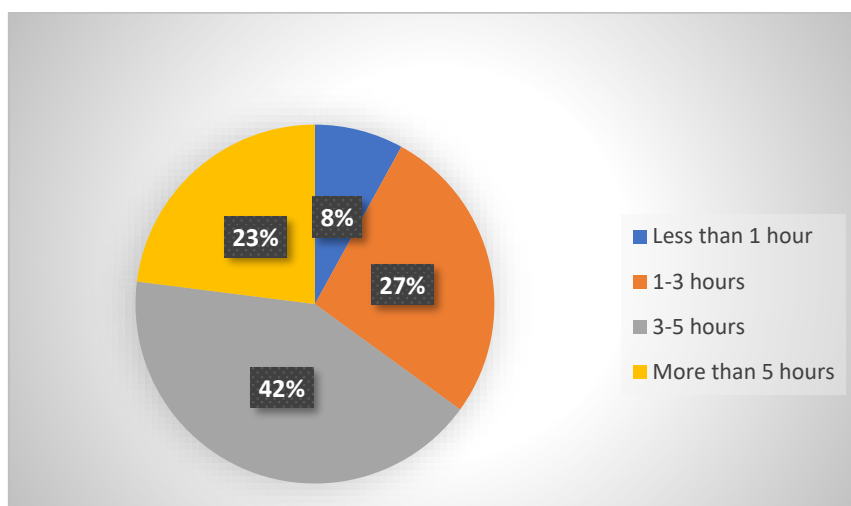


Figure 4: Daily Time Spent on Social Media

Interpretation:

A significant portion of respondents (42%) reported spending 3–5 hours daily on social media, while 23% use it for more than 5 hours. Only 8 participants indicated usage of less than 1 hour. This reflects a high level of engagement with social platforms among the surveyed population. The time spent suggests the potential for compulsive behavior, especially when it surpasses 3 hours per day. Such usage levels may negatively impact

productivity, sleep, and interpersonal relationships. The data aligns with concerns raised in recent literature about the addictive nature of social media and emphasizes the importance of interventions or digital detox strategies for frequent users.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to collect data from a representative sample of people using a structured questionnaire in order to identify the frequency, origins, and effects of social media addiction. The results showed that people of all ages, but especially those between the ages of 18 and 25, use social media excessively. Social media is mostly used for pleasure and socialising, according to the report. Many users spend three to five hours a day on these sites. There is a rising concern about digital addiction, and this degree of involvement shows that people are quite dependent on social media.

Fear of missing out (FOMO) and the psychological need to keep up with trends were two of the most common reasons given, with many respondents admitting they check their accounts often to prevent feeling left out. Additionally, users' mental well-being was found to be significantly impacted by their search of validation through likes, comments, and shares. A significant portion of the participants acknowledged that their mood and self-esteem were impacted by postings with poor engagement, highlighting the profound psychological influence of social media.

Several detrimental effects of social media addiction were also highlighted in the research. Overusing social media, which many do to alleviate boredom and stress, causes respondents to feel worried, distracted, and unproductive. Many also admitted that their online conduct had a negative impact on their real-life relationships and that it had disrupted their sleep. The reported incidences of cyberbullying and online harassment are deeply concerning and highlight a darker aspect of social media use.

A significant number of respondents indicated indicators of addiction by saying they had trouble reducing their social media use, even if they were aware of these harmful impacts. The importance of promoting better usage patterns and increasing digital literacy cannot be overstated.

Finally, the study highlights how important it is for people to think about and control their social media use. Although these platforms have many advantages, including connecting with others and exchanging information, using them too much can cause serious mental, emotional, and social problems. To help schools, psychologists, parents, and lawmakers create effective measures to promote balanced social media use, this study's findings are highly important. More studies on digital addiction, mental health, and intervention programs to improve digital well-being can be planned as a result.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Encourage Digital Health and Education Initiatives:** Educating the public on the warning signals, potential dangers, and outcomes of social media addiction is an urgent matter. Seminars and workshops should be regularly held by schools, businesses, and community groups to teach everyone, particularly young people, the value of responsible digital behaviour. Social media users can be empowered to recognise harmful habits and take proactive measures towards moderation through awareness initiatives.
- **Promote the Use of Apps to Track Screen Time:** It is recommended that people make use of screen time tracking apps or their phones' built-in capabilities. Users may gain insight into their daily social media usage with these tools, and they can also help them set appropriate boundaries. Users could attempt to spend less time online if they are more aware of their digital habits after seeing their usage patterns graphically.
- **Create Strategies for Dealing with Stress and Other Non-Online Options:** People should be motivated to find other ways to deal with stress and boredom, rather than relying solely on social media. Better alternatives include things like going on a walk, reading, writing in a diary, engaging in a hobby, or just spending time with friends and family in person. Reducing dependence on virtual environments and promoting greater emotional and psychological balance can be achieved via engaging in offline activities.
- **Make Digital Detox a Regular Part of Your Routine:** As a means of relieving stress and increasing participation in real-life activities, a digital detox is purposefully putting down electronic gadgets for a set amount of time. Whether it's a tech-free weekend or some designated "no screen" time each day, people should be encouraged to take little vacations from social media. Resetting attention spans, improving sleep, and increasing productivity are all possible outcomes of these activities.
- **Promote Honest Discussions Regarding Mental Health:** Users' mental health might be impacted by social media since it frequently promotes false comparisons and the need for affirmation. Anxiety, fear of missing out (FOMO), low self-esteem, and social pressure are all issues that might benefit from welcoming conversations in supportive environments. Organisations in the public and private sectors should make mental health resources like counselling and support groups available to their employees and students.

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