



"THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MENTAL HEALTH IN YOUNG ADULTS"

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ABSTRACT :

In the virtual age, social media has grown to be an quintessential a part of every day lifestyles, particularly amongst teenagers. While it gives several benefits which include connectivity, records sharing, and leisure, its developing usage has raised concerns approximately its effect on intellectual fitness. This studies paper explores the relationship among social media usage and intellectual health troubles among young adults aged 18–25. The study examines both the tremendous and bad psychological effects associated with structures like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Using a blended-approach approach, along with surveys and interviews, the research identifies styles linking social media habits to signs and symptoms of hysteria, despair, self-esteem issues, and sleep disturbances. Findings endorse that immoderate and passive use of social media correlates with terrible intellectual health results, while aware and balanced use can foster social support and properly-being. The paper concludes with guidelines for younger customers, mother and father, educators, and policymakers to mitigate risks and sell more healthy digital engagement.

Keywords: Social media, mental health, young adults, despair, tension, digital nicely-being, self-esteem

Introduction

In current years, social media has transformed the way individuals interact, speak, and understand the world around them. For young adults, mainly the ones elderly 18 to twenty-five, systems which include Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat have turn out to be more than just equipment for socialization—they are an vital a part of day by day workouts, self-expression, and identification formation. As digital natives, young adults frequently spend great portions in their day engaging with online content material, developing a digital environment that shapes their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. While the benefits of social media—inclusive of accelerated connectivity, get right of entry to to information, and opportunities for creative expression—are well documented, there's growing problem about its impact on mental fitness. Numerous research and anecdotal proof have suggested capacity links between social media utilization and issues such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, low vanity, and sleep disorders. The curated nature of content, regular exposure to idealized life, cyberbullying, and the addictive layout of social platforms can make contributions to mental distress, specifically amongst prone young users.

This studies seeks to explore the dual-edged nature of social media by using examining both its useful and unfavourable consequences on the mental fitness of teenagers. It goals to pick out unique patterns of utilization that can be associated with intellectual fitness worries, and to investigate the mental mechanisms underlying these institutions. By doing so, the observe endeavors to provide insights which could manual users, parents, educators, and policymakers in fostering a healthier virtual environment.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the extent and pattern of social media usage among young adults aged 18–25.
- To identify the relationship between frequency/type of social media use and symptoms of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, stress, and low self-esteem.
- To explore young adults' perceptions and self-reported experiences of how social media affects their mood, sleep, body image, and social interactions.

Literature Review

Several studies have highlighted an instantaneous hyperlink among social media usage and psychological misery in teens. According to Kuss and Griffiths (2017), excessive use of social networking web sites has been correlated with accelerated stages of anxiety, stress, and melancholy. The pervasive nature of social media platforms exposes users to consistent social comparison, leading to negative emotional effects. Social contrast idea (Festinger, 1954) supports this idea, positing that individuals examine their very own well worth in terms of others, that can lead to feelings of inadequacy, particularly while uncovered to idealized images and lifestyles on-line. Baran and Davis (2015) additionally emphasize that the addictive nature of social media can

cause compulsive use, which exacerbates mental fitness problems. They argue that the steady need for validation, mediated in the variety of likes, remarks, and followers, contributes to a decrease in self-esteem. The social validation hypothesis indicates that people derive their self-worth from the approval and remarks they get hold of on those structures (Papacharissi, 2010). When this approval is absent or negative, it can result in depressive emotions. Social media is frequently criticized for its position in shaping frame image and self-esteem. Studies have shown that publicity to digitally altered pix and influencer culture can notably impact the way young adults understand their bodies. Papacharissi (2010) argues that social media systems, especially Instagram, sell unrealistic beauty standards that affect self-perception. The evaluation of one's very own body to these idealized portrayals can make contributions to body dissatisfaction and decrease self-esteem (Fuchs, 2017).

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

This study follows a *descriptive research design*, aimed at identifying patterns and correlations between social media usage and mental health outcomes among young adults. The design is appropriate for capturing self-reported behaviors, experiences, and perceptions, and for understanding the extent and nature of the phenomena under investigation.

2. Research Approach

The study is based on a *quantitative research approach*, supported by primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. Quantitative analysis allows for measurable and comparable insights into the impact of social media on mental health.

3. Sampling Method

The study uses a *convenience sampling method* to select participants from the target demographic (young adults aged 18–25). This method was chosen for its ease of access and efficiency in reaching respondents within the specified age group.

4. Sample Size

A total of *100 respondents* participated in the survey. This sample size was deemed sufficient for identifying patterns and drawing general conclusions within the context of a student-level research project.

5. Data Collection Tool

Primary data was collected through a *structured questionnaire*, designed to address the specific objectives of the study. The questionnaire included:

- Multiple-choice questions
- Likert-scale questions
- Open-ended responses (where applicable)

The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

1. Social Media Usage Patterns
2. Impact on Mental Health
3. Perceptions and Self-reported Experiences

6. Data Collection Method

Data was collected through *online and offline surveys*, shared via email, social media platforms, and in person. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and their consent was obtained before participation.

7. Data Analysis

The collected data was compiled and analyzed using *percentage analysis* and tabulation to interpret respondent patterns. Each question was evaluated individually to derive meaningful conclusions relevant to the research objectives.

8. Limitations of the Study

- The sample size is relatively small and restricted to a specific age group.
- The study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias.

- The scope is limited to general mental health indicators and does not include clinical assessments.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Q1. How many hours per day do you spend on social media?

Particular	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	8	8%
1–2 hours	22	22%
3–4 hours	30	30%
5–6 hours	25	25%
More than 6 hours	15	15%

Interpretation:

Most young adults (70%) use social media for more than 2 hours daily, with 30% using it for 3–4 hours and 25% for 5–6 hours. This indicates a high level of daily engagement with social media platforms.

Q2. Which platforms do you use most frequently?

Particular	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Instagram	85	85%
Facebook	40	40%
Snapchat	50	50%
Twitter/X	20	20%
YouTube	75	75%
Others	10	10%

Interpretation:

Instagram and YouTube are the most frequently used platforms among respondents, with 85% and 75% usage respectively. Snapchat is also popular. Facebook and Twitter/X are less used among this age group.

Q3. At what time of the day do you use social media the most?

Particular	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Morning	10	10%
Afternoon	15	15%
Evening	45	45%
Late night	30	30%

Interpretation:

Evening (45%) and late night (30%) are the most common times for social media usage. This pattern could influence sleep quality and mental alertness.

Q4. How often do you feel anxious or stressed after using social media?

Particular	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Never	10	10%
Rarely	20	20%
Sometimes	40	40%
Often	20	20%
Always	10	10%

Interpretation:

A significant number (70%) of respondents report experiencing anxiety or stress at least sometimes after using social media, indicating a correlation between usage and emotional distress.

Q5. Has social media ever made you feel: (Multiple responses allowed)

Particular	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Inadequate or “less than others”	55	55%
Depressed or lonely	40	40%

Pressured to look or act a certain way	60	60%
None of the above	15	15%

Interpretation:

Over half the respondents have felt pressured or inadequate due to social media, and 40% have experienced feelings of loneliness or depression. Only 15% reported no negative emotions.

Q6. Do you compare yourself to others on social media?

Particular	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes, frequently	25	25%
Occasionally	45	45%
Rarely	20	20%
Never	10	10%

Interpretation:

A large proportion (70%) compare themselves to others at least occasionally, which can contribute to issues related to self-esteem and mental well-being.

Q7. Has social media affected your sleep patterns (e.g., staying up late, poor sleep quality)?

Particular	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	65	65%
No	25	25%
Not sure	10	10%

Interpretation:

65% of respondents feel that social media has negatively impacted their sleep patterns, which aligns with high evening and late-night usage reported earlier.

Q8. Do you feel social media has influenced your body image or self-esteem?

Particular	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Positively	20	20%
Negatively	50	50%
No impact	20	20%
Not sure	10	10%

Interpretation:

Half of the respondents feel that social media has negatively influenced their self-image or confidence, while only 20% report a positive impact.

Q9. Do you feel more connected or more isolated due to your social media use?

Particular	No. of Respondents	Percentage
More connected	30	30%
More isolated	40	40%
No change	20	20%
Depends on situation	10	10%

Interpretation:

40% of respondents feel more isolated due to social media, outweighing the 30% who feel more connected. This suggests that while social media fosters connection for some, it may also lead to social detachment for others.

Findings

1. Social Media Usage Patterns (Objective 1) • High Engagement: A majority of teenagers (70%) spend more than 2 hours day by day on social media, with 30% using it for 3–4 hours and 25% for five–6 hours. • Popular Platforms: Instagram (85%) and YouTube (seventy five%) are the most frequently used platforms, accompanied via Snapchat (50%). Twitter/X and Facebook are comparatively less popular. • Peak Usage Times: The most commonplace utilization times are inside the nighttime (45%) and late night time (30%), suggesting a sturdy tendency towards middle of the night scrolling which may additionally affect sleep.

2. Impact on Mental Health (Objective • Emotional Distress: 70% of respondents mentioned feeling annoying or burdened after the use of social media at the least once in a while. This highlights a mental impact related to social media publicity. • Negative Emotional Effects: o 60% felt compelled to act or seem a sure manner. O 55% felt insufficient, and 40% reported emotions of despair or loneliness. • Comparison Culture: 70% of contributors admitted to comparing themselves with others on social media, a aspect recognized to be connected to low shallowness and terrible mental fitness outcomes.

Perceptions and Personal Experiences • Sleep Disruption: sixty five% of teenagers reported that their sleep has been negatively affected by social media usage, especially because of past due-night time interest. • Body Image and Self-Esteem: Half (50%) of the respondents stated that social media negatively impacted their frame photo or self-esteem, even as handiest 20% determined it to have a tremendous impact. • Social Connection vs. Isolation: Although 30% sense extra related, a better forty% experience extra remoted due to social media, indicating that virtual connection won't constantly equate to emotional or social nicely-being.

Conclusion

The creation of social media has indelibly converted the modes of communicate, interaction, and self-expression amongst young adults. This look at aimed to apprehend the complicated relationship between social media usage and mental fitness results within the age organization of 18–25 years. The findings derived from the primary studies truly reflect that at the same time as social media offers avenues for connectivity, leisure, and records exchange, it simultaneously gives full-size risks to psychological properly-being. The research confirms that extended and unregulated utilization of social media structures is related to heightened stages of stress, tension, and depressive dispositions amongst teens. The incidence of social assessment, publicity to idealized lives, and the steady stress to preserve a curated virtual presence contribute significantly to decreased vanity and feelings of inadequacy. Furthermore, the look at observed a brilliant disruption in sleep styles because of excessive utilization, specifically at some point of past due-night time hours, which similarly compounds emotional distress. It is evident from the information that social media influences now not handiest the intellectual nation of individuals however additionally their self-notion and social relationships. The dual nature of those structures—performing as both a supply of connection and alienation—underscores the want for a more conscious and regulated method to their usage. While a subset of users reviews tremendous reports, which includes multiplied social connectivity and empowerment, those are regularly outweighed by means of the negative mental outcomes experienced by means of a bigger institution. In theoretical terms, this look at aligns with current mental frameworks which include Social Comparison Theory and Cognitive-Behavioral Models, which endorse that frequent exposure

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