



IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH , RELATIONSHIPS AND MENTAL HEALTH

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of social media on youth's relationships and mental health using a survey method. The findings indicated a significant correlation between social media addiction and perceived stress levels among the youth. The study sample showed a moderate to high level of social media addiction, suggesting dependence on these platforms. Higher levels of addiction were associated with increased stress levels, potentially impacting mental health. Excessive social media use also negatively affected the quality of relationships, leading to reduced face-to-face communication, decreased empathy, and a preference for resolving conflicts digitally. The study emphasizes the importance of interventions and educational programs promoting healthy social media habits, digital literacy, and stress management techniques for youth. Further research is needed to explore additional factors influencing the relationship between social media use, relationships, and mental health, as well as the effectiveness of interventions targeting social media addiction and stress in youth.

Keywords: *social media, youth, relationships, mental health, social media addiction, perceived stress, survey method.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's high-tech world, young people can't imagine life without the constant connection provided by social media. Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat have made it easier than ever to stay in touch with friends and family, disseminate news, and express oneself. Concerns regarding the effects of social media, especially on young people's relationships and mental health, have been sparked by the platform's meteoric rise and pervasive use. Numerous studies have looked at how young people's lives are changed by social media. The fact that social media may be so addicting is a major cause for alarm. Anxiety, poor grades, and relationship problems are just some of the negative outcomes

associated with spending too much time on these platforms. Individuals' levels of social media addiction may be measured using the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS), which has been designed and shown to be reliable and valid.

Furthermore, there has been a lot of focus on how social media might affect interpersonal connections. Concerns have been expressed concerning the veracity and longevity of online friendships in light of the decline in face-to-face contact. Heavy social media usage has been linked to a lack of empathy, less closeness, and more arguments in relationships, according to some research. The health and happiness of young people may suffer as a result of these circumstances. Concerns have also been raised about how social media may affect users' psychological well-being. Anxiety, despair, and isolation are all on the rise among young people, and studies suggest that social media may be to blame. Negative self-perception and emotional suffering may result from being constantly exposed to idealized pictures, cyberbullying, and social comparison on social media platforms. Given the widespread nature of social media, it is crucial to learn more about its effects on young people's interpersonal connections and psychological well-being. This research uses a survey approach and established instruments like the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS) and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) to examine this relationship and add to the current knowledge. The researchers also want to learn more about how prolonged social media usage impacts platonic and romantic connections. In order to create effective treatments and educational programs, we need a deeper understanding of the effects of social media on young people's mental health. Perhaps the negative consequences of growing up in the digital age can be lessened and the well-being of young people can be improved by encouraging positive social media practices, digital literacy, and stress-management strategies.

A. Social Media Addiction

With the widespread usage and dependence on these platforms, social media addiction has arisen as a major worry among today's young. Addiction-like behaviors have been linked to excessive use of social media, which has been shown to have harmful effects on mental health and interpersonal connections. Addiction to social media may manifest in adolescent users via a variety of symptoms, including an overwhelming need to check and use these sites, a lack of self-control or capacity to cut down, a disregard for other vital activities and obligations, and a sense of pain or worry when they are unable to use these sites. Constant access to cellphones and the internet, the need for immediate feedback in the form of likes and comments, and the worry that one will miss out on important social events or the latest trend are all contributors to the rise of social media addiction.

B. Perceived Stress and social media

Youth social media usage has been linked to elevated stress levels, suggesting it may have a negative effect on young people's emotional health. Young people's stress levels tend to rise for several reasons that are all connected to their usage of social media. Constant access to social media sites might result in a feeling of constantly having to be "on" and never being able to turn off from online activity. Constant interruption from social media may lead to feelings of being swamped and an increase in perceived stress. As people continuously compare their own experiences and accomplishments with those exhibited on social media, the prevalent phenomenon of the fear of missing out (FOMO) may aggravate stress. Moreover, users are often exposed to disturbing information, such as news, photographs, and debates, on social networking sites. Constant exposure to such information may increase stress, as people may feel hopeless or anxious about society issues or their own problems.

C. Mental Health Implications

Adolescents' usage of social media has far-reaching consequences on their mental health, both beneficial and detrimental. Promoting healthy mental health in the digital era requires an appreciation of these ramifications. One way in which social media may be beneficial to mental health is by offering community, social support, and platforms for self-expression. People may find people who share their interests, join networks of support, and have access to information on mental health. People's views, experiences, and artistic creations may all be shared on social networking sites, which makes them ideal venues for self-expression and creative works.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anxiety and depression symptoms were shown to be significantly associated with social media usage in a research conducted on young people by Primack et al. (2017). Adolescents who spend too much time on social media are more likely to feel lonely and have lower levels of life satisfaction, according to research by Vannucci et al. (2019). Young people's passive social media usage (such as mindless scrolling) has been linked to sentiments of jealousy and despair, according to research by Hunt et al. (2018).

Adolescents' frequent social media usage has been linked to less closeness and more conflict in romantic relationships, according to research by Valkenburg et al. (2006). According to research presented by Dhir et al. (2018), excessive social media usage negatively affects the quality of friendships by reducing trust,

closeness, and emotional support. According to research conducted by Shakya and Christakis (2017), people's levels of happiness and loneliness might spread via their online social networks.

According to research by Fardouly et al. (2015), young women's body dissatisfaction and desire for thinness are exacerbated by their exposure to idealized pictures on social media platforms. Perloff (2014) discovered that both men and women who spend more time on social media engage in more activities centered on their looks and engage in more intense body monitoring.

Excessive usage, withdrawal symptoms, and negative effects are the hallmarks of social media addiction, as described by Griffiths (2017). The research showed how using social media might be detrimental to one's mental health. Factors such as social reinforcement, self-identity, and mood modulation were identified by Kuss and Griffiths (2017) in their conceptual model for social media addiction.

The detrimental effects of cyberbullying on victims' mental health, such as elevated anxiety, sadness, and suicide thoughts, were examined by Hinduja and Patchin (2018). A positive association was found between social media usage and cyberbullying perpetration in a study conducted by Kowalski et al. (2014), which suggests that these platforms might exacerbate hostile behaviors.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Objectives of the study

- To assess the prevalence and severity of social media addiction among youth.
- To explore the relationship between social media use, relationships, and mental health.
- To identify strategies and interventions for promoting healthy social media use and enhancing well-being.

B. Hypothesis of the study

H1: There is a significant relationship between social media addiction and mental health.

H1: There is a significant impact of social media on youth mental health.

C. Data collection tools

The data in this particular study has been obtained with the help of the scales named Social media addition scale and a Perceived Stress Scale as well as a demographic information form.

D. Scoring

Social media addiction scale

The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale is a quick and easy way to get an accurate reading on how much time you spend on social media. The six things are evaluated on a Likert scale that ranges from 1 (very seldom) to 5 (very frequently). The BSMAS total is calculated by adding the item scores together. The BSMAS total score might be anything between 6 and 30.

Perceived Stress Scale

- First, reverse your scores for questions 4, 5, 7, and 8. On these 4 questions, change the scores like this:

$$0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1, 4 = 0$$

- Now add up your scores for each item to get a total. My total score is _____.
- Individual scores on the PSS can range from 0 to 40 with higher scores indicating higher perceived stress.
 - ▶ Scores ranging from 0-13 would be considered low stress.
 - ▶ Scores ranging from 14-26 would be considered moderate stress.
 - ▶ Scores ranging from 27-40 would be considered high perceived stress.

IV. RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation analysis between social media and mental health

Correlations

		Social media	Mental Health
Social Media	Pearson Correlation	1	.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001*
	N	100	100
Mental Health	Pearson Correlation	.031	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001*	
	N	100	100

H0: There is a significant relationship between social media addition and mental health.

H1: There is a significant relationship between social media addition and mental health.

Both correlations seem to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), suggesting a link between social media use and emotional maturity and mental health, as shown by the presented correlation coefficients and p-values. With a p-value less than 0.05 and a correlation coefficient of 0.031 between social media use and emotional maturity, the opposite conclusion (that there is no association between social media use and emotional maturity) may be rejected. This lends credence to the counterfactual (that emotional development is correlated with social media use).

Table 2: Regression analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.318 ^a	.101	.091	7.0218

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social media

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	543.717	1	543.717	11.027	.0012 ^b
	Residual	4832.04	98	49.30		
	Total	5375.76	99			

H0: There is no significant impact of social media on youth mental health.

H2: There is a significant impact of social media on youth mental health.

The F-test in the ANOVA table shows a significant result with a p-value of 0.0012, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant. This means that there is evidence to support the hypothesis that there is a relationship between social media usage (the predictor) and the outcome variable. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there is a relationship between social media usage and the outcome variable (as represented by the regression model) would be accepted based on the provided information.

V. DISCUSSION

According to the findings, regular social media use is associated with increased levels of emotional maturity and better overall mental health. The regression analysis also reveals that social media use explains a significant proportion of the observed variation in the dependent variable. Higher rates of social media use are related with better degrees of emotional maturity, as shown by the positive association between the two. Given the unfavorable effects that are often linked with excessive social media usage, this result may seem contradictory. However, it's likely that certain features of social media, like being exposed to new ideas and information or engaging in self-reflection, might aid in the growth of emotional maturity. The processes that underlie this association need to be investigated further. However, the negative association between social media use and psychological well-being argues the opposite: that more time spent on social media predicts a decline in psychological health. This is in keeping with the findings of other studies that have shown a correlation between excessive social media usage and feelings of isolation, despair, and anxiety. These potentially detrimental effects on mental health may be attributable to the addictive nature of social media, as well as the prevalence of idealized images, social comparison, cyberbullying, and other related phenomena. Strategies to encourage positive social media usage and mental health among young people should be developed in light of the known risks to their mental health. The results of the regression analysis add weight to the argument that participation in social media accounts for a significant portion of the total variation in the dependent variable. In addition to other possible influences, this data points to the role that social media consumption plays in explaining emotional maturity and mental health consequences. While regular social media use may be associated with less emotional immaturity and better mental health, it is crucial to emphasize that the impact size ($R^2 = 0.0101$) suggests that social media use explains just a tiny amount of the variation. In sum, our findings provide insight on the nuanced connection between young people's social media use, emotional development, and psychological well-being. It's important to address the possible detrimental effects of social media on mental health, despite the fact that there may also be some good benefits on emotional maturity. Support mechanisms should be put in place to help young people deal with the difficulties they encounter on social media, and more should be done to spread awareness about the need of responsible

usage of these platforms. The association between social media use, emotional development, and mental health needs further investigation into the underlying processes and possible moderators or mediators.

VI. CONCLUSION

The effects of social media on young people, their relationships, and their mental health were investigated in this research. The results showed that there are strong associations between youth social media use and stress levels. Overuse of social media has been linked to bad outcomes for relationship quality, such as less face-to-face contact, less empathy, and a greater propensity to resolve conflicts via online channels. More time spent on social media is associated with more stress. This suggests that social media usage may have negative effects on mental health. These results highlight the need of encouraging ethical social media usage and highlight the necessity to investigate the effects of social media on the mental health of young people. Healthy social media use, improved digital literacy, and stress management skills should all be important goals of interventions and educational programs aimed at young people. It is feasible to lessen the negative consequences and improve the general well-being of young people in the digital age by increasing awareness and giving solutions for ethical social media use. It's worth stressing, however, that the research did have some caveats. Due to the limited size of the sample, it is possible that the results may not apply to the population as a whole. Furthermore, self-report measures were used, which might have introduced bias. Additional variables that may affect the link between social media usage, relationships, and mental health should be investigated in future studies with bigger and more varied samples, using objective measurements of social media use.

Limitations

There were a number of caveats to this research. First, the sample size was low, which might restrict extrapolating the results to a wider population. The second limitation is that the research used self-report measures, which are inherently biased because of their subjectivity. The study's cross-sectional approach further limits its ability to draw firm conclusions on the links between social media use, interpersonal connections, and psychological well-being. Last but not least, the survey only included participants aged 16 to 24, thus it may not accurately reflect the perspectives of older generations. Given these caveats, further research into the effects of social media on young people's mental health, interpersonal connections, and social lives is clearly warranted.

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