

Impact of Social Media on Young Adults

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of social media on young adults, focusing on its dual role as a platform for connection and a potential source of mental health challenges. It examines patterns of social media use, its influence on mental health, emotional well-being, and social interactions, as well as its effects on values, beliefs, and behaviours. Primary data, collected through a questionnaire, highlights both positive aspects, such as fostering connections and enhancing creativity, and negative outcomes, including anxiety, depression, social isolation, and privacy concerns. The study emphasizes the importance of mindful social media use and offline social support systems to mitigate adverse effects and enhance its benefits.

Introduction

Social media refers to the group of websites or platforms available online that helps people to share and interact to others through them. They not only serve as a medium to communicate with each other but also a medium through which new ideas and information can be shared among societies which were earlier deprived of it.

With the advancement of technology, smart phones have become widely popular, as well as, social media. If used correctly one can reach a large mass of people through it and communicate their views. Owing to this it has also become a tool for marketing to reach out masses. Marketing is a term that can be used not only to propagate one's product or service but also a chain of thoughts.

Social media is a way to connect to people. Even if someone lives thousands of kilometres away, they can be reached instantly if they have social media. It has emerged to be the most quick and effective way of communication. Social media have provided us a platform where strangers can meet and form social relations and interact with each other.

The emergence of social media has had a significant impact on the way young adults interact with one another and express themselves. It has become a part of daily lifestyle among our youth. Social media can be beneficial in terms of increased communication and self-expression. But it can also have a negative impact on young adults' mental health and behaviours.

This paper aims to explore how social media can contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, through constant social comparisons. It will also look at how social media use may be linked to an increase cyberbullying. This research is done to understand the complex factors that shape the development of young adults in today's digital era.

Objectives

To explore the patterns of social media usage among young adults including frequency and duration.
To examine the influence of social media on the mental health and emotional well-being of young adults.

- To investigate the role of social media in shaping social interactions among young adults.
- To analyse the impact of social media on the formation of values and beliefs among young adults.
- To assess the potential positive and negative effects of social media.
- To investigate the reasons for the excessive use of social media among youth.
- To explore the effects of excessive use of social media on social relations.

Literature Review

Why youth love social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life: Boyd (2007) explores the ways in which youth incorporate social media into their everyday lives, highlighting the significance of these platforms in their social interactions. Social networking sites are an essential part of teenagers' daily lives, which emphasizes how important they are in influencing behaviours and social interactions.

The Benefits of Facebook “Friends:” Social Capital and College Students’ Use of Online Social Network Sites: Ellison et al. (2007 study looks at the favourable correlation between college students' use of Facebook and their social capital. Facebook's influence on the development of social relationships is evident in the fact that college students who use it typically have larger social networks and higher levels of social capital.

Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults : Lenhart et al. (2010) provide results from a nationwide survey that shed light on usage patterns for social media and mobile internet among teenagers and young adults. According to the report, teens and young people use social media and mobile internet almost exclusively, which highlights how important these platforms are to them.

Social network activity and social well-being: Burke et al. (2010) discover a possible negative relationship between rising Facebook use and falling subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is inversely correlated with Facebook use, suggesting that the underlying processes of this association need to be investigated.

Online social networking and addiction—a review of the psychological literature: Kuss and Griffiths (2011) examine the research on the subject, highlighting the psychological effects. The assessment calls for more research in this area, highlighting the potentially harmful consequences of online social networking on mental health and its addictive nature.

Passive Facebook usage undermines affective well-being: Experimental and longitudinal evidence : Verduyn et al. (2015), indicate that Facebook use in a passive manner can compromise affective well-being. Over time, passive Facebook use, such as news feed scanning, has been linked to a decline in affective wellbeing.

Active public Facebook use and adolescents' feelings of loneliness: Evidence for a curvilinear relationship: Frison and Eggermont (2016) explore the relationships between loneliness, types of Facebook use, and adolescents' depressed mood, suggesting certain uses can worsen loneliness. Certain types of Facebook use, such as passive consumption of content, are associated with increased feelings of loneliness among adolescents.

How does online social networking enhance life satisfaction? The relationships among online supportive interaction, affect, perceived social support, sense of community, and life satisfaction: Oh et al. (2017) explore how online social networking enhances life satisfaction through various factors, including supportive interaction and sense of community. Online social networking can enhance life satisfaction by providing opportunities for supportive interactions and fostering a sense of community among users.

Facebook Use Predicts Declines in Subjective Well-Being in Young Adults: Kross et al. (2013) find that increased Facebook use predicts declines in subjective well-being among young adults over time. Spending more time on Facebook is associated with lower levels of subjective well-being among young adults, highlighting the need for moderation in social media use.

Social Media Use and Perceived Social Isolation Among Young Adults in the U.S.: Primack et al. (2017) reveal that increased social media use is associated with higher levels of perceived social isolation among young adults in the U.S. Young adults who use social media more frequently report feeling more socially isolated, suggesting a potential downside of extensive social media use.

Association of Facebook Use With Compromised Well-Being: A Longitudinal Study: Shakya and Christakis (2017) conduct a longitudinal study showing that higher levels of Facebook use are associated with declines in well-being over time. Longitudinal analysis reveals a negative relationship between Facebook use and well-being, indicating that prolonged use of Facebook may have detrimental effects on well-being.

The associations between problematic Facebook use, psychological distress and well-being among adolescents and young adults: A systematic review and meta-analysis: Marino et al. (2018) examine the association between problematic facebook use, depression and anxiety symptom severity.

Facebook Use and Online Social Support: Frison and Eggermont (2015) find that perceived online social support can mitigate the negative effects of certain types of Facebook use on adolescents' depressed mood. Perceived online social support can buffer the negative effects of passive Facebook use on adolescents' depressed mood, highlighting the importance of supportive online interactions.

No more FOMO: Limiting social media decreases loneliness and depression: Hunt et al. (2018) show that limiting social media use leads to reductions in loneliness and depression among participants. Participants who limit their use of social media report lower levels of loneliness and depression, suggesting that reducing social media consumption can have positive effects on mental health.

Facebook Use, Envy, and Depression: Tandoc et al. (2015) reveal that passive Facebook use is associated with increased feelings of envy, which is linked to depression among college students. Passive Facebook use is associated with higher levels of envy, which in turn is associated with greater levels of depression among college students.

Depression Disclosures on Facebook: Moreno et al. (2016) find that depression disclosures on Facebook are associated with higher levels of depression among college students. College students who disclose their depression on Facebook are more likely to experience higher levels of depression, suggesting a complex relationship between online disclosure and mental health.

Reciprocal Relationships between Trajectories of Depressive Symptoms and Screen Media Use during Adolescence: Houghton et al. (2018) suggest that affective use of social media can exacerbate the relationship between anxiety and depression. Affective use of social media, such as seeking emotional support, may worsen the relationship between anxiety and depression, highlighting the need for mindful social media use.

The relationship between daily stress, social support and Facebook Addiction Disorder: Brailovskaia(2019) examine how daily stress impacts adolescents' depressed mood, focusing on the role of seeking social support through Facebook. Seeking social support through Facebook can help alleviate the negative impact of daily stress on adolescents' depressed mood, highlighting the importance of social support in coping with stress.

Social Media Use and Depression: Lin et al. (2016) Examine the relationship between young adults in the United States who utilize social media and depression; a strong positive correlation is found. Young adults who use social media more frequently had higher levels of depression, which suggests that excessive social media use may have harmful effects.

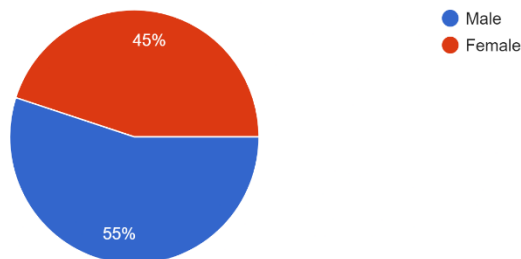
Association between Problematic Cellular Phone Use and Suicide: Wang et al. (2015) explore the association between problematic cellular phone use and suicide, highlighting the moderating effect of family support. Family support can moderate the relationship between problematic cellular phone use and suicide, emphasizing the role of social support in mitigating the negative effects of excessive phone use.

Primary Data Analysis

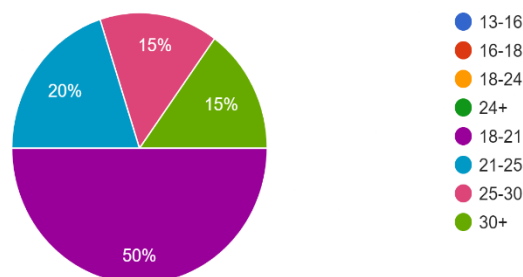
Primary data related to our project was collected and some analysis was done on the same. The data was collected using a questionnaire which used five-point Likert scale as its response method. Then the above collected data was analysed using statistical software. The results are presented below.

Distribution of the Demographics of the respondents.

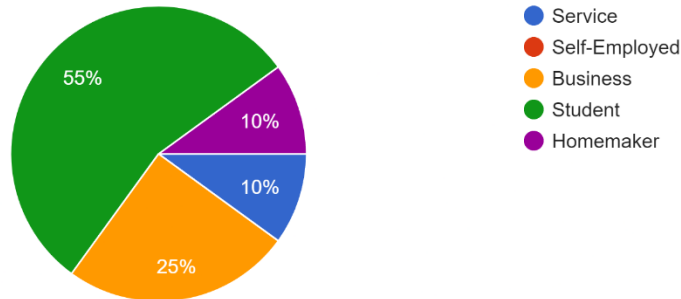
Gender



Age group

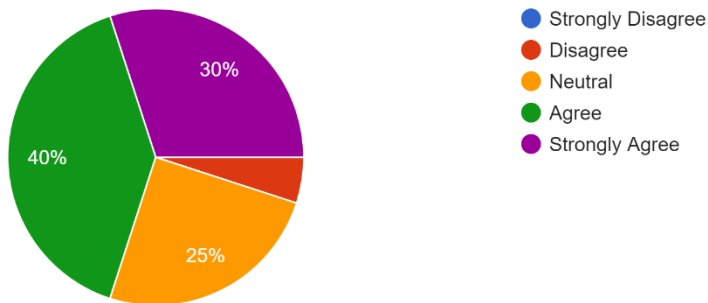


Profession

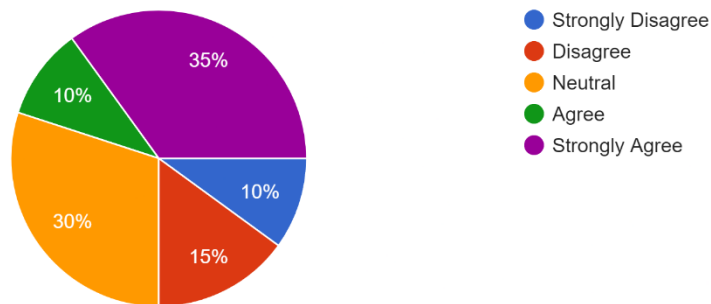


Responses to the questions:

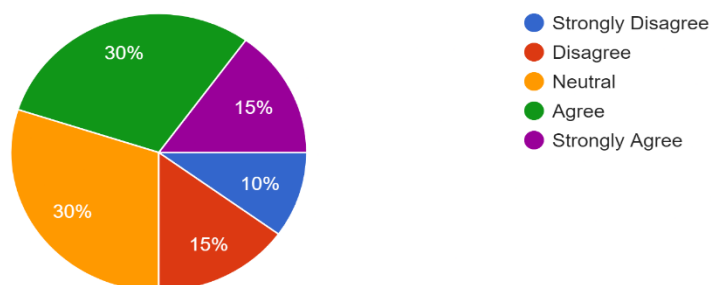
Q1. Social media helps you stay connected with friends and family?



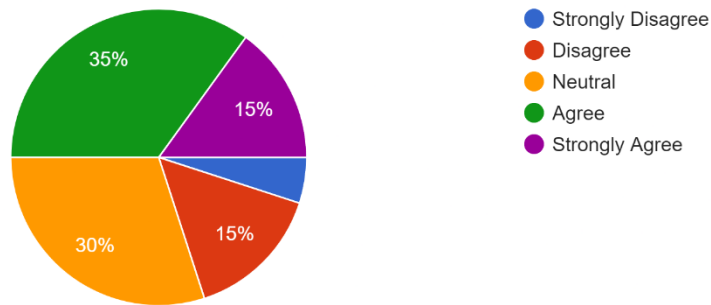
Q2. Does social media make you feel involved in your community?



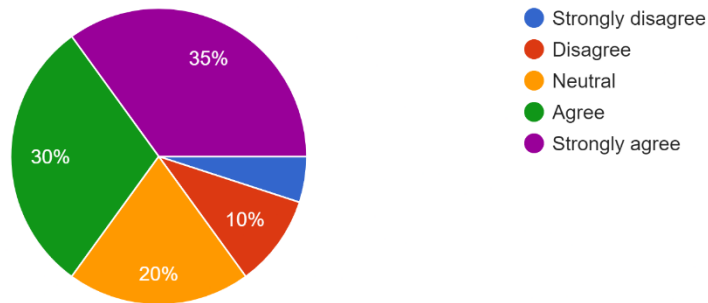
Q3. Does social media allow you to connect with people who share your interests?



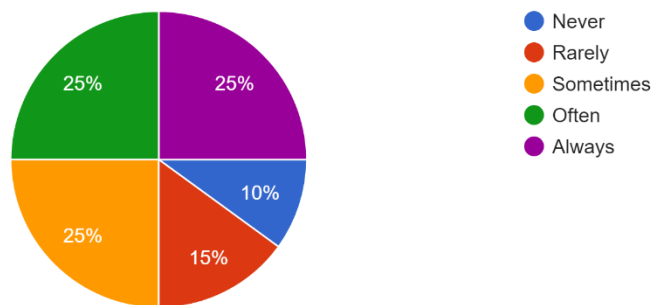
Q4. Do you feel pressured to present a perfect image of yourself on social media?



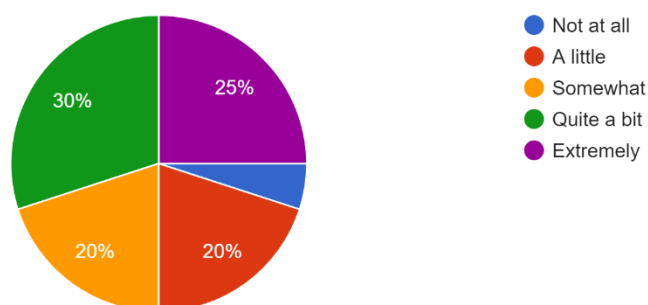
Q5. Does social media make you feel isolated from real-life social interactions?



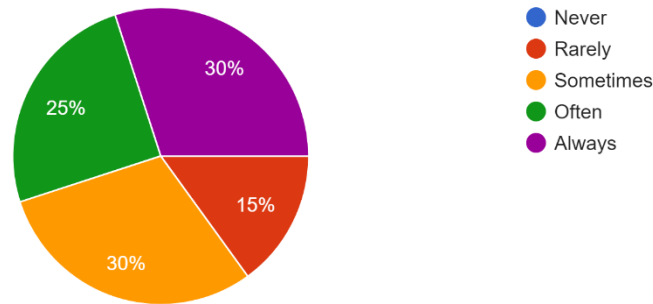
Q6. How often does using social media make you feel happy and uplifted?



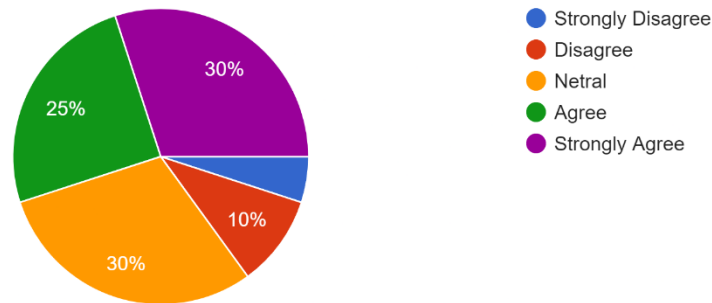
Q7. To what extent can social media be a source of stress and anxiety for you?



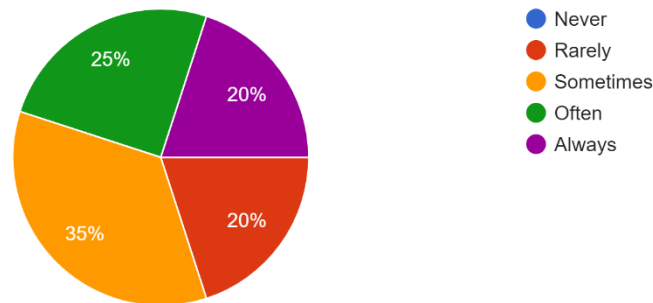
Q8. How often do you compare yourself to others on social media and feel bad about yourself?



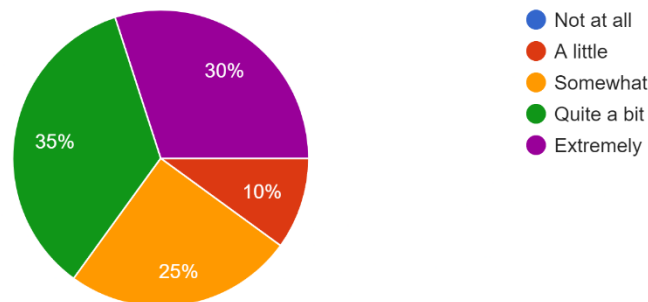
Q9. Does social media help you feel more confident and outgoing in general?



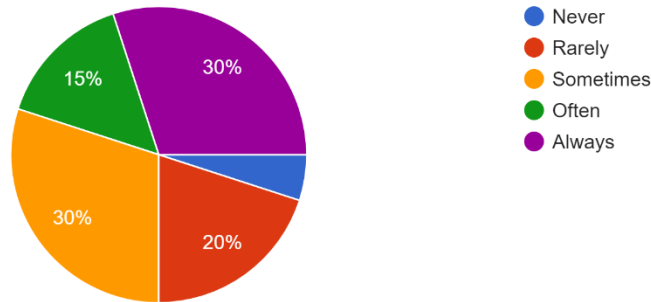
Q10. How often do you find yourself constantly checking social media for updates and notifications?



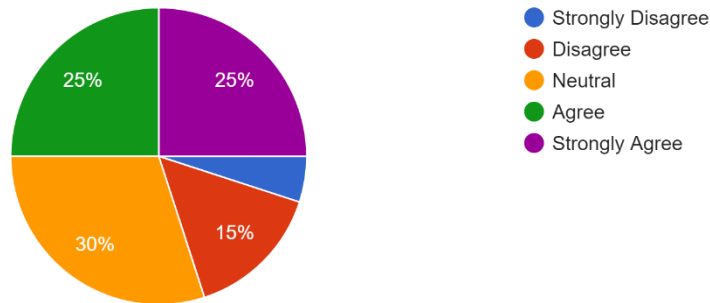
Q11. How much does social media use distract you from your studies or work?



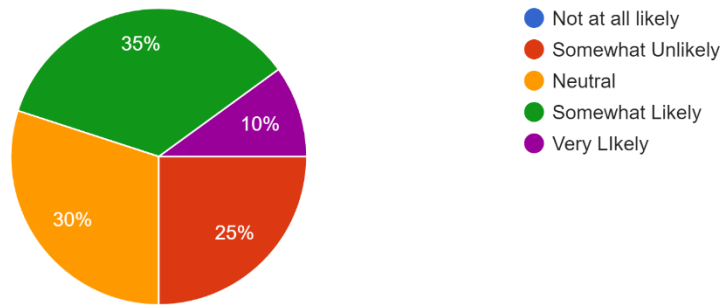
Q12. To what extent do you spend more time on social media than you originally planned?



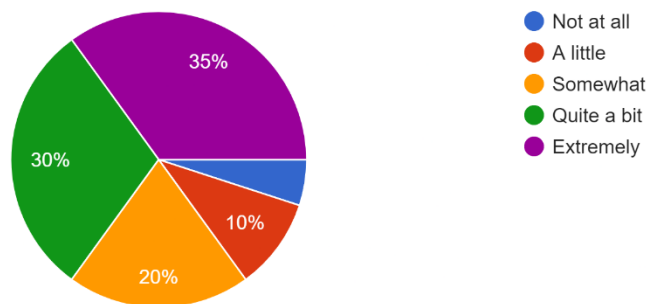
Q13. Has social media influenced you to try new things or hobbies?



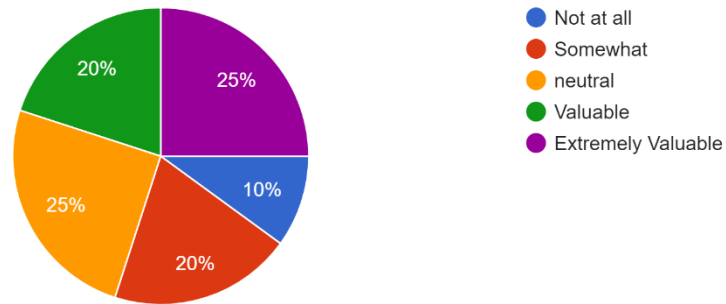
Q14. How likely are you to engage in risky behaviour because of things you see on social media?



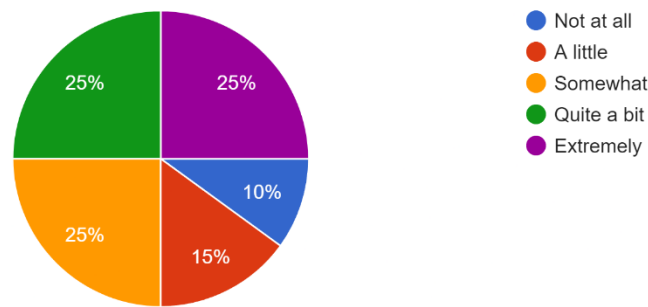
Q15. How much has social media impacted your sleep patterns (e.g., staying up late scrolling)?



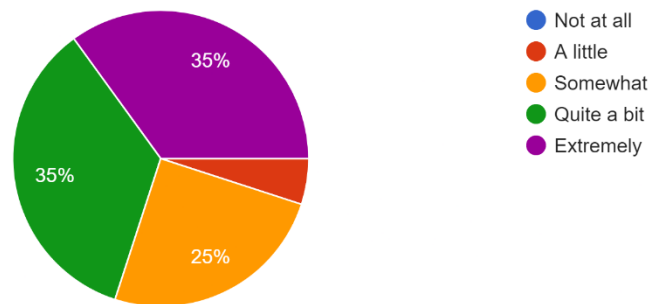
Q16. How valuable a source of news and information is social media for you?



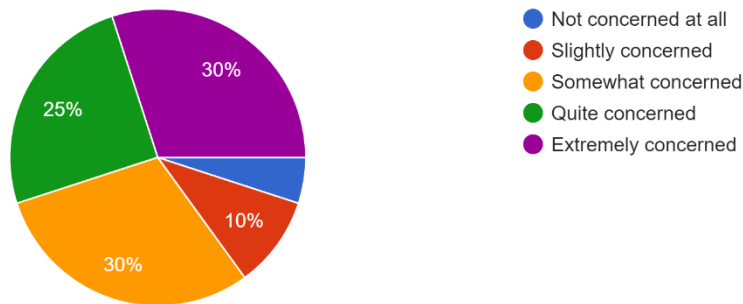
Q17. To what extent does social media help you learn about different cultures and perspectives?



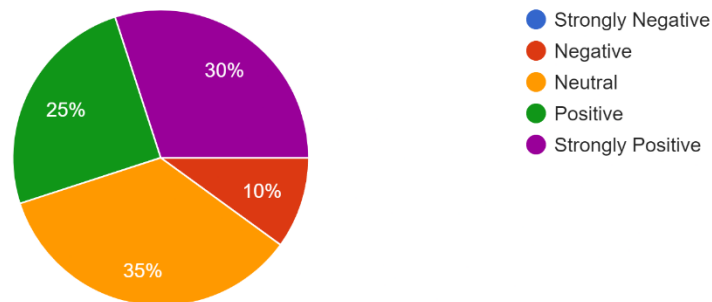
Q18. How much has social media increased your creativity and self-expression?



Q19. How concerned are you about the privacy of your personal information on social media?



Q20. Overall, how positive of an impact does social media have on your life?



Conclusion

Social media has become an undeniable force in the lives of young adults, shaping their interactions, self-expression, and mental well-being. While it offers opportunities for connection, self-discovery, and building social capital, research suggests a complex and sometimes negative influence.

The studies reviewed highlight potential downsides of excessive social media use, including increased anxiety, depression, and feelings of loneliness. Constant social comparisons fuelled by curated online portrayals can negatively impact self-esteem and mental health. Additionally, cyberbullying and passive consumption of content can further exacerbate these issues.

From our own data collections and findings, we are able to gather the position and importance of social media in our society. The data indicates that majority of youth believe that social media helps them to connect with their family and friends, feel inclusive in their community, share their interests and opinions with others. It also revealed that social media pressurises them to present a perfect image of themselves, feel isolated from real-life interactions, can be a source of stress and anxiety, force them in comparison and make them feel bad for themselves. It distracts them from their work or studies and more often than not they tend to spend more time on it than they originally planned. It affects the sleep pattern of the individuals and the users are also at a risk of privacy invasion.

However, the picture isn't entirely bleak. Social media can also provide a platform for positive social interaction, building a sense of community, and seeking social support. Online interactions can be particularly beneficial for geographically dispersed individuals or those facing social challenges. Studies indicate that the quality of social media use plays a crucial role. Engaging in active, supportive online interactions has been shown to enhance life satisfaction and buffer the negative impacts of passive content consumption.

Moving forward, promoting responsible social media use is crucial. This includes encouraging young adults to be mindful of their online behaviour, engaging in critical thinking about the information they encounter, and fostering a healthy balance between online and offline interactions. Furthermore, cultivating strong offline social support systems remains vital for buffering the potential negative effects of excessive social media use.

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