

Impact of Social Media on Psychological Well-Being Among Adults

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Abstract

Social media use has permeated every facet of daily life and has a significant impact on people's psychological health. This study examines social media's dual effects, emphasizing both its advantages—like improved connectivity, emotional support, and information access—and disadvantages—like addiction, social comparison, and cyberbullying. The study uses a mixed-method approach to investigate the relationship between mental health outcomes like anxiety, sadness, and self-esteem and variables including platform preferences, content consumption, and usage frequency. The study looked at how social media affected 100 persons' psychological health. The findings revealed poor subjective happiness levels and high social media addiction ratings. According to correlation study, excessive social media use and wellbeing are negatively correlated, indicating that higher levels of addiction are associated with lower levels of enjoyment. The results emphasize the necessity of digital well-being tactics to lessen social media's detrimental effects on mental health.

Keywords: Social media, psychological well-being, mental health, addiction, anxiety, self-esteem

Introduction

For millions of individuals throughout the world, social media has become an essential part of their everyday lives. Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok provide forums for information exchange, entertainment, self-expression, and conversation. But the increasing dependence on these platforms begs the question of how they affect mental health.

Social Media Use's Evolution

Social media's introduction during the last 20 years has transformed interpersonal connection by erasing barriers based on geography and culture. Social media use has increased, especially among adults, as smartphones and internet access have grown. According to research, the typical adult uses social media for many hours every day, underscoring the platforms' important influence on contemporary lifestyles.

Advantageous Effects on Mental Health

There are numerous psychological advantages to social networking, such as:

Social Connection: Platforms can let people connect with friends, family, and online communities, which can help them feel less alone. **Information and Resource Access:**

Social media gives users access to a multitude of coping mechanisms, motivational content, and mental health resources, enabling them to deal with psychological issues.

Identity formation and self-expression: People may freely express who they are and locate groups that share their interests and values, which fosters a feeling of community.

Implications for Psychological Health

Social-media has benefits, but its detrimental consequences on mental health have drawn a lot of attention: Low self-esteem and comparison: The carefully chosen quality of internet information frequently creates inflated ideals of success, beauty, and lifestyle, which breed discontent and poor self-perceptions.

Time Displacement and Addiction: Overuse of social media can lead to addiction, which lowers productivity and takes away from time spent engaging in in-person relationships or physical activity.

Cyberbullying and Harassment: Because of the anonymity offered by the internet, victims may become more anxious, depressed, or even consider suicide.

Social media is a powerful force that is changing how people connect, communicate, and view the world in the current digital era. The initial goal of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, twitter, and TikTok has been superseded by their development into effective instruments for entertainment, self-expression, and information sharing. Social media platforms present both opportunities and challenges for adults, who make up a sizable section of its user base, and have a dramatic effect on their psychological health.

Social media's popularity can be ascribed to its capacity to satisfy basic human wants for engagement and belonging. These platforms offer a virtual environment for interacting with various communities, sharing life events, and preserving relationships. Alongside these advantages, though, there have been worries expressed over the possible negative impacts on mental health of extended, uncontrolled social media use. The digital behaviors that these platforms encourage have been linked more and more to problems including addiction, anxiety, despair, and low self-esteem.

The Pervasiveness of Social - Media

Social-media has permeated every aspect of daily life throughout the last 20 years. According to recent estimates, social media is actively used by billions of people globally, with adults making up a sizable share of this population. Social media's importance in contemporary culture is highlighted by the way it is incorporated into all facets of life, from personal communication to professional networking. These platforms are frequently used by adults in particular to keep informed, network professionally, and partake in social or leisure activities.

Although social media is widely used, its effects on adults' psychological health are still complicated and multidimensional. While excessive or maladaptive use of social media can result in stress, loneliness, and a lower quality of life, it also offers opportunities for meaningful interactions, emotional support, and access to resources. This dichotomy calls for a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms through which social media affects mental health.

Social media's beneficial effects on psychological health

When utilized responsibly, social media has been shown to have the ability to improve psychological well-being. These platforms are essential for many adults to stay in touch with friends and family, especially in relationships where people live far apart. Additionally, social media makes it possible for people to locate and join groups of people who have similar interests, which promotes a sense of community and lessens feelings of isolation.

Social media can also be a powerful tool for self-expression and identity exploration, as adults frequently use it to curate their personal narratives, share accomplishments, and express opinions—activities that can increase self-esteem and give people a sense of purpose and validation. Additionally, the availability of peer support groups, mental health resources, and motivational content on social media can encourage users to seek help and adopt healthier coping strategies.

Social media's detrimental effects on psychological health

On the other hand, social media's detrimental effects on mental health have been well-documented. The concept of social comparison is among the most widespread problems. Social media's carefully chosen and romanticized content frequently establishes unattainable ideals for lifestyle, attractiveness, and success, which makes users feel inadequate and low in self-worth. Adults are especially affected by this issue since they may already be dealing with social expectations regarding their own achievements, families, and careers.

Addiction-like behaviors have also been connected to excessive social media use, when users feel pressured to check their accounts constantly, frequently at the sacrifice of productivity and in-person relationships. This obsessive activity can increase stress levels, interfere with sleep, and disturb everyday routines. The frequency of online abuse, cyberbullying, and exposure to upsetting material further adds to social media's detrimental psychological effects.

The Multifaceted Effect of Social-Media

Numerous factors, such as the frequency and purpose of use, personal characteristics, and the social situations in which these platforms are used, influence the association between social media use and psychological well-being. While active participation, like commenting and sharing, may have good impacts, passive consumption, like browsing through feeds without engaging, is frequently linked to negative results.

Attention should also be paid to how algorithms shape user experiences. Social media companies choose material using complex algorithms, frequently giving preference to postings that provoke strong emotional responses. Although this method increases user interaction, it also exposes users to content that is divisive or emotionally charged, which may increase stress and anxiety. Developing ways to encourage healthier social media habits requires an understanding of these dynamics.

The Importance of Research

The effects of social media on teenagers and young people have been extensively studied, but little is known about middle-aged and older adults' experiences. This group has particular difficulties that relate to their use of social media, including juggling work obligations, preserving family bonds, and managing health issues. To develop focused solutions, it is crucial to look into how these variables affect the psychological effects of social media use.

The COVID-19 epidemic has also highlighted the value of social media as a means of maintaining connections while people are physically separated. But it has also brought attention to the dangers of false information, panic attacks, and increased anxiety that come with using digital platforms.

One of the key factors influencing how people live and work nowadays is information technology, or IT. Tim Berners Lee's creation of the World Wide Web in 1991 made it possible for hypertext technology to link through the Internet. Users could only create groups with this very generic networked communication,

which did not immediately connect them to other users. Virtual communications have increased with the advent of Web 2.0, when social media platforms caused a change in how users communicated with one another. The Pew Research Center added that social media may help people find information, share their experiences, and improve their relationships with friends and family, among other advantages.

Leong (2019) et al., study aims to study the concerns regarding social media's potential effects on users' psychological health have grown as its use has increased. The primary goal of this paper is to clarify how social media use affects psychological health. By taking into account a number of mediators, such as social capital types (i.e., bonding and bridging social capital), social isolation, and smartphone addiction, it offers a more thorough analysis of the phenomena, building on contributions from many domains in the literature. The social capital theory, which is used in this research, offers one of the pertinent viewpoints that is worthwhile taking into account. Previous research has examined the relationship between social media use and psychological well-being using the social capital theory.

Aarts (2019) et al., aimed to study the relationship between social media use and wellbeing has been the subject of conflicting research. Multilevel structural equation modeling was used to analyze social support quantity (time giving and receiving) and quality as mediators at both the within-person (intraindividual) and between-person (interindividual) levels using data from the Midlife in the United States Refresher study (N = 782, ages 25–75). At both the within-person and between-person levels, providing assistance was a major mediator: higher social media use was linked to worse well-being and more time spent providing support. At the between-person level, support was a major mediator: more social media use was linked to longer support duration and worse wellbeing.

Keywords: social media, mental health and wellness, digital age, adults, anxiety, depression, addiction, social comparison, emotional support.

Review of Literature

Plackett et al., (2023) aimed to study problematic social media use has been linked to worse mental health, according to some research. Social media therapies, such as social media abstinence, have been suggested as a way to enhance users' mental health. On the other hand, little is known about how effective they are. The purpose of this systematic review was to compile research on how well social media treatments can enhance mental health. Evidence from this review suggests that social media treatments can improve mental health, particularly for depression and when combined with therapy-based approaches. To determine who might gain the most from social media interventions, more study using representative samples is required. This will assist in creating guidelines on how to handle problematic social media use for physicians and policymakers.

Verma et al., (2023) aimed to study the research on emotion regulation interventions for social media and provides an overview of digital emotion regulation in sEmotion regulation refers to the deliberate modification of an individual's affective state, which includes feelings of happiness, confidence, guilt, rage, and so on.

The ability to successfully control one's emotions is essential for day-to-day functioning. Today, a practice known as "digital emotion regulation" uses the widespread use of digital technology to intentionally alter our emotional states.

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Designing, developing, and implementing ethical technology can be facilitated by an understanding of digital emotion control. Teenagers and young adults use social media nearly exclusively. Despite the fact that social media's psychological effects have been extensively researched, there isn't yet an integrative model that takes into account all of social media's facets. The Multidimensional Model of Social Media Use, which intends to give researchers and practitioners a helpful framework for studying and comprehending young people's social media use in connection to their psychological well-being, is the focus of this theoretical paper. Three main aspects are covered by the model: social media behaviors, social media use motivations, and social media-connected communication partners.

Henzel et al., (2021) aimed to study numerous nations have imposed various lockdown and quarantine protocols in an attempt to stop the spread of COVID-19. Many people may have depended significantly on social media for connection, information, and enjoyment due to the significant decline in in-person encounters. The effects of social media use during rigorous lockdown on mental and physical health, however, are poorly understood. The current study examines the relationships between Wuhan citizens' (N = 1,214) use of social media and their physical and mental health. Our results demonstrated that whereas COVID-related information sharing and consumption were negatively correlated with psychological wellbeing, self-disclosure unrelated to COVID was positively correlated with psychological wellbeing. Additionally, more general social media use was linked to worse psychological health, which was linked to more physical symptoms.

Waterloo et al., (2021) aimed to study the over the past few years, research on how social media use (SMU) affects happiness and sadness has increased dramatically. This umbrella review's objective is to compile the findings from various reviews and meta-analyses. The metaanalyses produced conflicting relationships with well- and ill-being, particularly for time spent on SM, active SMU, and passive SMU, despite the fact that they are meant to be based on the same body of evidence. This comprehensive review outlines the gaps in the literature, discusses why their findings differ, and concludes with suggestions for additional research.

Zhang et al., (2021) studied the purpose of this systematic review was to compile the research on how well social media use therapies can enhance individuals' mental health. Some research suggests that increased use of social media is linked to worse mental health, and that using social media can become problematic when it begins to negatively impact a person's everyday life and mental health. Social media use therapies, such as social media abstinence, have been created and assessed to address this problem and enhance users' mental health. On the other hand, nothing is known about how well these interventions work to enhance mental health. This will assist in creating guidelines and suggestions for doctors and policymakers regarding the most effective ways to handle problematic social media use.

Adnam M et al., (2020) aimed to study the concerns regarding social media's potential effects on users' psychological health have grown as its use has increased. The primary goal of this paper is to clarify how social media use affects psychological health. By taking into account a number of mediators, such as social

capital types (i.e., bonding and bridging social capital), social isolation, and smartphone addiction, it offers a more thorough analysis of the phenomena, building on contributions from many domains in the literature. A quantitative analysis of 940 Mexican social media users is included in the report, and the suggested hypotheses are tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). The explanatory power of the empirical model is 45.1%. In order to resolve the discrepancies discovered thus far in the literature, this research offers empirical data and sound statistical analysis showing that both positive and negative impacts coexist.

Shin et al., (2019) aimed to study discovered that the association between social media use and suicidal attitudes was mediated by psychological well-being and social isolation. Use of social media was inversely correlated with social isolation and positively correlated with psychological well-being. Positive attitudes about suicide were linked to higher levels of social isolation, while negative attitudes toward suicide were linked to higher levels of psychological well-being. This study gives a knowledge of the impact of social media use on attitude toward suicide and implications for suicide-prevention approach employing social media.

Verma et al., (2016) studied social networking site use is now common among adults as well as teenagers, and it has even influenced adult culture. Utilizing social networking sites is beneficial in a variety of ways, including communicating with friends and loved ones, saving time when finishing tasks, and receiving numerous solutions and recommendations for issues.

Acosta et al., (2016) aimed to study social networking sites are beneficial when used sparingly and responsibly, but excessive use can result in addiction and a host of other issues, including FOMO, mental health issues, anxiety, depression, and exposure to artificial light, all of which have an adverse effect on psychological health. The goal of the current study was to determine the effects of social networking site addiction. Social networking sites (SNS) improve communication and task efficiency, but overuse can result in addiction, FOMO, mental health problems, anxiety, and sadness. Since excessive use has a negative impact on psychological well-being, moderation is essential

Rasid et al., (2016) studied the intricate connection between young adults' use of social media and mental health is examined in this concept paper. The concept of social media and its importance in young adults' life are introduced in the paper, with a focus on the significance of researching its impacts on their psychological and mental health. Social media platforms are become an essential component of young people's everyday lives. It has also taken on an intrusive role in young people's lives, influencing their access to a wealth of information, social contacts, and self-perception. These platforms present serious mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and poor self-esteem, despite the fact that they provide chances for social interaction, artistic expression, and educational involvement.

Methodology

Aim: to investigate how people' psychological health is affected by their use of social media.

Objectives

- To examine the connection between mental health markers like anxiety, depression, and self-esteem and social media use.
- To investigate social media's influence on psychological health, both good and bad.
- To determine social media usage trends that support mental health or distress.
- To evaluate moderating elements including screen time, type of engagement, and intake of material.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis: Adults' psychological health is not significantly impacted by their use of social media.

Alternative Hypothesis: Adults' psychological health is greatly impacted by social media use, either favourably or unfavourably.

Independent variable: Use of social media (frequently, length of time, and kind of interaction).

Dependent variable: psychological health (as determined by metrics such as life satisfaction, anxiety, sadness, and self-esteem).

Inclusion criteria:

- Adults aged 18-40 years
- Active social media users (at least 30 minutes per day) Individuals who consent to participate in the study.

Exclusion criteria

- Non-social media users
- Individuals with diagnosed severe psychiatric disorders
- Individuals below 18 or above 40 years

Sample Nature

Adults between the ages of 18 and 40 make up the sample, which was chosen by convenience or purposeful selection to guarantee representation of a range of social media usage habits.

Sample Size-100

Tools Description**Social Media Addiction Scale**

A. psychological test called the Social Media Addiction Scale is used to gauge how dependent a person is on social media.

-It assesses things like tolerance, mood swings, withdrawal symptoms, obsessive use, and adverse effects.

-Several items on the scale are assessed using a Likert scale, where 1 denotes

"strongly disagree" and 5 denotes "strongly agree."

-A greater degree of social media addiction is indicated by higher scores.

It aids in evaluating harmful usage patterns and how they affect mental health.

Subjective Happiness Scale

B. self-report tool called the Subjective Happiness Scale is used to gauge how happy a person feels overall.

Participants assess their level of pleasure in relation to others and in accordance with their own expectations using four items that are scored on a seven-point Likert scale. -Instead than measuring actual living situations, the scale is intended to measure an individual's subjective experience of well-being. -

Perceived happiness increases with higher scores.

-In psychology research, it is frequently used to gauge how happy certain populations are.

SNO.	TITLE	AUTHORS	PUBLICATIONS OF THE YEAR	JOURNAL	VOLUME ISSUE PAGE NO,	KEY FINDINGS
1.	The effects of social media use interventions on mental wellbeing	Ruth Plackett, Alexandra Blyth, and Patricia Schartau	2023	Journal of Medical Internet Research	23, Article e44922	Due mostly to selection bias from convenience sampling of university students, 96% of the studies had a weak global score, reflecting their usually poor quality.
2.	Digital Emotion Regulation on Social Media	Akriti Verma, Shama Islam, Valeh Moghaddam, and Adnan Anwar	2023	arXiv preprint	arXiv:2307.13187	The study provides an overview of digital emotion regulation (DER) within social media applications, highlighting how individuals consciously use digital platforms to modify their emotional states.
3.	The Mental Health Consequences of Facebook Use: A Systematic Review	Lathan, H. S., Kwan, A., Takats, C., Tanner, J. P., Wormer, R., Romero, D., & Jones, H. E.	2023	ScienceDirect	322 115807	The study highlighted the complexity of Facebook's effects, emphasizing the need for platform-specific evaluations of mental health impacts.

4.	Social-Media and Psychological Well-Being Among Youth: The Multidimensional Model of Social Media Use	Chia-chen Yang, Sean M. Holden, and Jati Ariati	2021	Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review	24(3),613-650	The study introduces the Multidimensional Model of Social Media Use (MMSMU), aiming to provide a framework for
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						understanding young people's social media use in relation to their psychological well-being.
5.	Social Media Use, Psychological Well-Being, and Physical Health During Lockdown	Zhiying Yue, David S. Lee, Jun Xiao, and Renwen Zhang	2021	Information, Communication & Society	26(7), 1452–1469	Engaging in selfdisclosure on social media about topics unrelated to COVID-19 was positively associated with psychological well-being.
6.	Social Media Use and Well-Being: What We Know and What We Need to Know	Patti M. Valkenburg	2021	Current Opinion in Psychology	45, Article 101294	The study concludes with suggestions for future research to address these discrepancies and enhance our understanding of the relationship between SMU and well-being.
7.	The Impact of Social Media Use Interventions on Mental WellBeing:	Ruth Plackett, Alexandra Blyth, and Patricia Schartau	2021	Journal of Medical Internet Research	25, Article e44922	The overall quality of the studies was deemed poor, with 96% receiving a weak

	Systematic Review					global score. This was primarily due to selection bias, as 70% of the studies utilized convenience sampling of university students
8.	The Impact of Social Media Use on Psychological Health	Adnam M et al.	2020	Journal of Medical Internet Research	24(5),613-656	The study analyzes the impact of social media on psychological health,

						considering mediators like social capital, social isolation, and smartphone addiction. A quantitative analysis of 940 Mexican users was conducted using SEM, showing both positive and negative effects with an explanatory power of 45.1%.
9.	The Effects of Social-Media on Psychological Health During COVID-19	Anjum et al.	2020	The International journal oof Indian Psychology	2349-3429	The review highlights a dual effect of social media during COVID-19. While platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter facilitated

						interaction and information sharing, they also spread stressful and false information, increasing anxiety and depression.
10.	The Connection Between Anxiety, Social Media Use, and Loneliness During Italy's COVID-19 Lockdown	Boursier, V., Gioia, F., Musetti, A., & Schimmenti, A.	2020	Front. Psychiatry	11 - 2020	The study found that increased anxiety and loneliness due to forced isolation led to excessive social media use.
11.	Public Transportation	Brailovskaia, J., &	2020	Plos.org	0243523	Analyzing data from 121 major US cities (2006-

RESULT

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	MIN	MAX	MEAN	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error (Skew)	Kurtosis	Std. Error (Kurt)
SM_TOTAL	100	4.00	28.00	18.49	4.68286	-0.124	0.241	0.865	0.478
SW_TOTAL	100	6.00	18.00	10.89	3.13628	0.168	0.241	-0.945	0.478

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

Variables	SM_TOTAL	SW_TOTAL
SM_TOTAL	1	0.139
SW_TOTAL	0.139	1

Discussion

SM_TOTAL (Social Media Usage) and SW_TOTAL (Subjective Well-Being) have a weak positive association ($r = 0.139$), according to the Pearson correlation values, however this correlation is not statistically significant ($p = 0.169$). our implies that among the 100 participants in our sample, increased social media use has no discernible effect on subjective well-being, either positively or negatively. The mean subjective well-being score is 10.89 with a standard deviation of 3.13, and the mean social med-

ia usage score is 18.49 with a standard deviation of 4.68, according to the descriptive data. Both variables' skewness and kurtosis values point to a distribution that is roughly normal, with a few minor deviations that don't seem to be an issue.

Key findings

- 1. Weak Positive association:** A weak positive association is indicated by the 0.139 Pearson correlation between social media usage (SM_TOTAL) and subjective wellbeing (SW_TOTAL). However, the link is not statistically significant ($p = 0.169$), indicating that the sample's subjective well-being is not significantly impacted by social media use.
- 2. Characteristic Statistics:** With a minimum score of 4 and a maximum score of 28, the average social media usage score is 18.49 (SD = 4.68). Subjective well-being scores range from 6 to 18, with a mean of 10.89 (SD = 3.13).
- 3. Signs of Normalcy:** With a skewness of -0.124 and a kurtosis of 0.865, the social media usage (SM_TOTAL) data shows a minor leftward skew but a generally normal distribution. With a kurtosis of -0.945 and a skewness of 0.168, subjective well-being (SW_TOTAL) appears to have a somewhat flatter distribution with a little rightward skew.
- 4.** Although the study's sample size of 100 participants ensures sufficient statistical power, the absence of a significant association raises the possibility that other factors are affecting participants' subjective well-being.

Recommendations

- **Refining Measurement Tools:** To better understand the impact of social media interaction, future research should take into account more complex metrics, such as distinguishing between active and passive use.
- **Including Qualitative Insights:** A deeper comprehension of the psychological impacts of social media may be possible by incorporating interviews or open-ended questions.
- **Examining Moderating Variables:** To ascertain how they contribute to the relationship between social media and wellbeing, variables such as personality traits, social support, and digital literacy should be investigated.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Establishing causality and monitoring changes in well-being over time in relation to social media usage patterns may be made easier with a lengthier study design.

Future Implications

- **Advanced Instruments for Measurement**
- To provide a more comprehensive understanding of its consequences, future study should concentrate on distinguishing between active and passive social media usage.
- Real-time evaluation of emotional reactions to social media content may be facilitated by the development of AI-driven sentiment analysis tools.
- **Longitudinal and Qualitative Research**
- Focus groups and in-depth interviews may be used to reveal psychological effects that quantitative data might miss.
- Long-term research will shed light on the long-term effects of extended social media use on wellbeing.

- **Personalized Techniques for Digital Well-Being**

- Future treatments might concentrate on specialized mental health techniques, such digital detoxification plans catered to each person's unique social media usage patterns.
- Research should be done to determine whether algorithm-based suggestions may be improved to encourage the consumption of healthy content.

- **Implications for Policy and Education**

- Programs for social media literacy could be introduced by policymakers to assist users in forming more constructive participation patterns.
- Employers could establish policies to balance employees' use of social media with their mental health.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, there has been a significant rise in mental health concerns among young adults, particularly issues related to low self-esteem and poor psychological well-being. Young adulthood is a critical developmental stage where individuals face academic pressures, social identity formation, and emotional challenges. While self-esteem is widely recognized as a key factor influencing mental health outcomes, there is still a lack of focused research examining the direct relationship between self-esteem and the overall psychological well-being of young adults in the Indian context. This study seeks to explore the extent to which self-esteem impacts the psychological well-being of young adults, aiming to contribute valuable insights that can inform mental health interventions and promote emotional resilience among this population.

Conclusion

According to the results, social media use and subjective well-being in this dataset do not significantly correlate. Even if there is a slight positive association, it is not statistically significant, suggesting that other factors might have a greater impact on well-being. These findings are consistent with conflicting research in the literature, which shows that the effects of social media on psychological health vary based on individual variations, usage habits, and content consumption. These findings align with previous research in the field, which presents mixed results regarding the impact of social media. Some studies report detrimental effects, while others highlight potential benefits, particularly when social media is used for positive engagement or support. Ultimately, the relationship between social media and mental health is complex and influenced by multiple individual and contextual factors, warranting further investigation through more nuanced and longitudinal studies.

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