

Impact Of Social Media On Mental Health And Quality Of Life Among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The rapid rise of social media has transformed how adolescents communicate, engage, and form social identities. This study examines the impact of social media on the mental health and quality of life among adolescents, a population increasingly reliant on digital platforms. While social media offers opportunities for self-expression, learning, and connectivity, it also poses significant risks, such as cyber bullying, addiction, and the fear of missing out (FOMO). These factors can contribute to anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. The study aims to explore the dual-edged nature of social media use by assessing its influence on adolescents' mental well-being, social relationships, and overall life satisfaction. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data was collected through structured questionnaires administered to adolescents aged 12–18, focusing on their social media habits, mental health symptoms, and perceptions of life quality. Qualitative data, derived from in-depth interviews, provided insight into individual experiences and emotional responses related to social media interactions. The results indicate a correlation between excessive social media use and increased mental health challenges, including heightened anxiety, low self-esteem, and disrupted sleep patterns. However, the study also highlights positive aspects, such as peer support and access to online resources that can improve self-awareness and coping mechanisms.

This research underscores the importance of fostering balanced and mindful social media consumption to mitigate negative impacts on adolescents' mental health. It calls for collaborative efforts from parents, educators, and policymakers to develop strategies that promote digital literacy, emotional resilience, and a healthy relationship with technology.

KEY WORDS: Social Media, Mental Health, Quality of Life, Adolescents, Impact.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of adolescents' lives, influencing how they communicate, interact, and perceive themselves. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Facebook offer a virtual space for self-expression, peer interaction, and access to information. However, alongside these benefits, concerns have emerged about the potential negative impacts on adolescents' mental health and quality of life. This study explores the complex relationship between social media use and mental well-being among adolescents, aiming to provide a nuanced understanding of how digital engagement shapes their overall life experience.

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the effects of social media as they navigate critical developmental stages marked by identity exploration and social comparison. The curated, often idealized content prevalent on social media platforms can create unrealistic expectations, leading to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and dissatisfaction with one's own life. Studies have shown that excessive social media use is correlated with increased rates of anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances among young people. Moreover, phenomena like cyberbullying, the fear of missing out (FOMO), and constant connectivity can exacerbate stress and negatively impact their mental health. Conversely, social media offers opportunities for positive experiences

that can contribute to adolescents' mental health and quality of life. It provides a space for connecting with friends, sharing experiences, and accessing mental health resources. For some, social media offers a sense of belonging and emotional support, especially for those who may struggle with face-to-face interactions. Online communities can foster acceptance and empathy, creating a platform for adolescents to engage in self-expression and activism. These aspects highlight the dual nature of social media's impact, which can vary widely depending on factors such as usage patterns, individual personality traits, and the specific platforms used.

This study employs a mixed-methods approach that includes both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Adolescents aged 12–18 from diverse backgrounds are surveyed to gather data on social media habits, mental health symptoms, and perceptions of life quality. In-depth interviews provide personal insights into the emotional and psychological effects of social media use. By analyzing both statistical trends and individual experiences, this study seeks to understand how social media contributes to both positive and negative aspects of adolescent life. The findings from this research aim to offer insights for parents, educators, and policymakers, underscoring the importance of promoting digital literacy and emotional resilience among adolescents. By fostering a balanced relationship with social media, young people can navigate its challenges while reaping its potential benefits, supporting healthier mental and emotional development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the relationship between social media usage patterns and mental health outcomes among adolescents:
2. To investigate the influence of social media on the quality of life of adolescents:
3. To identify the positive and negative aspects of social media use among adolescents and their coping strategies:

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The increasing prevalence of social media in adolescents' lives has sparked concerns regarding its potential impact on their mental health and overall quality of life. Adolescents, who are in a critical phase of identity formation and emotional development, are particularly susceptible to the influences of social media. While these platforms offer opportunities for connection, learning, and self-expression, they also pose risks that can lead to detrimental outcomes. Social media features such as curated content, popularity metrics, and public commentary can foster unrealistic standards and intensify social comparisons, often resulting in feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. Furthermore, the prevalence of cyber bullying, fear of missing out (FOMO), and excessive online engagement can contribute to heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and social isolation among young users.

Despite growing concerns, there remains a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the specific ways in which social media affects adolescents' mental well-being and quality of life. While some studies suggest a direct link between social media usage and adverse mental health outcomes, others highlight the potential for positive effects, such as increased social support and access to resources. This duality points to a complex relationship that is influenced by individual, environmental, and technological factors.

This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the multifaceted impact of social media on adolescents' mental health and quality of life. By examining the relationship between social media use patterns and psychological well-being, the research aims to identify both the positive and negative effects of social media engagement. Additionally, it will investigate the coping strategies adolescents employ to manage the challenges associated with social media use. Understanding these dynamics is essential for informing parents, educators, and policymakers, who play crucial roles in fostering digital literacy and supporting adolescents in developing a healthy and balanced relationship with social media.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive nature of study was used and the quantitative data obtained through a survey. Tools to collect data and techniques used for data analysis is been discussed below. Two Stage Stratified Proportionate Random Sampling" techniques are used for drawing the sample. The first level of the study is to stratify the sample. Then a sample of 1000 students is been selected randomly from these strata located in different parts of Chennai city.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The methodology implemented in the present study was discussed in the details pertaining to the data analysis done and the systematic interpretation of the results.

Table - 1 presents the gender-wise distribution of the respondents. The 49.9 percent of the respondents

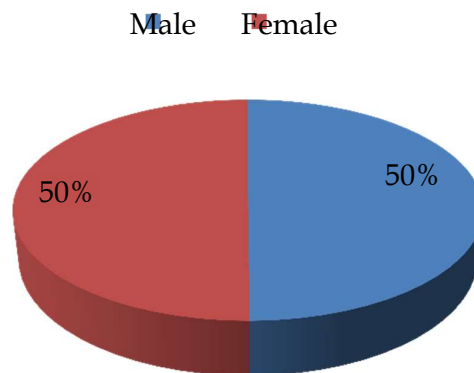
are male and 50.1 percent of the respondents are female. An attempt has been made to give due representation to the females also so that their views may also be sought on the concept of cyber bullying. Equal representation is given to both the genders.

Table - 1 Classification of Respondents on the basis of Gender

Gender	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Male	499	49.9
Female	501	50.1
Total	1000	100

Source: Data collected through a questionnaire, the SPSS output.

Figure -1: Classification of Respondents on the basis of Gender

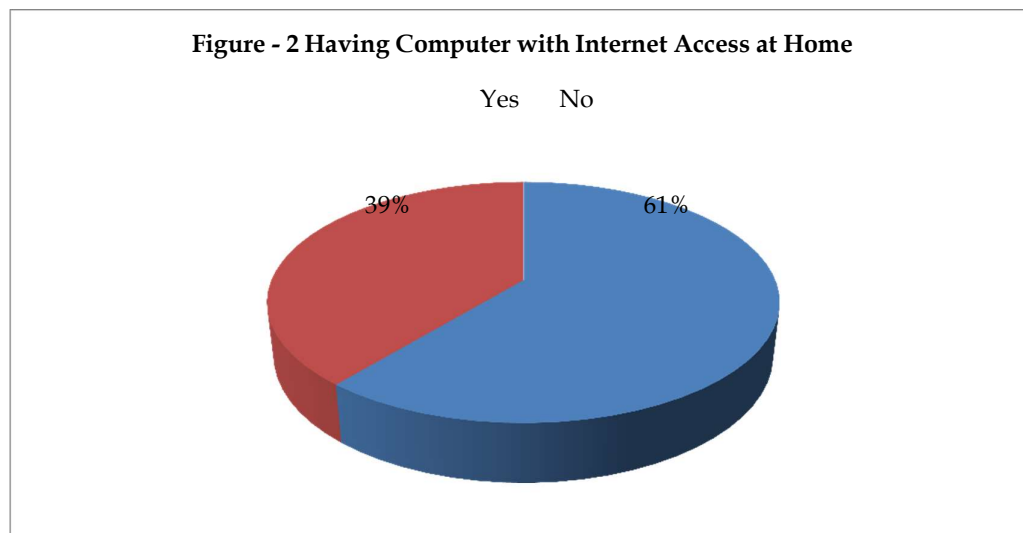


The table - 2 deals with the response of the respondents about whether they have a computer with Internet access at their home or not? As per the responses collected from the respondents it can be concluded that 61 percent of the adolescent respondents agreed that they have a computer with Internet access at their home, whereas 39 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement about having a computer with Internet access at home.

Table – 2 Having Computer with Internet Access Home

Response	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	610	61.0
No	390	39.0
Total	1000	100

Source: Data collected through a questionnaire, the SPSS output.

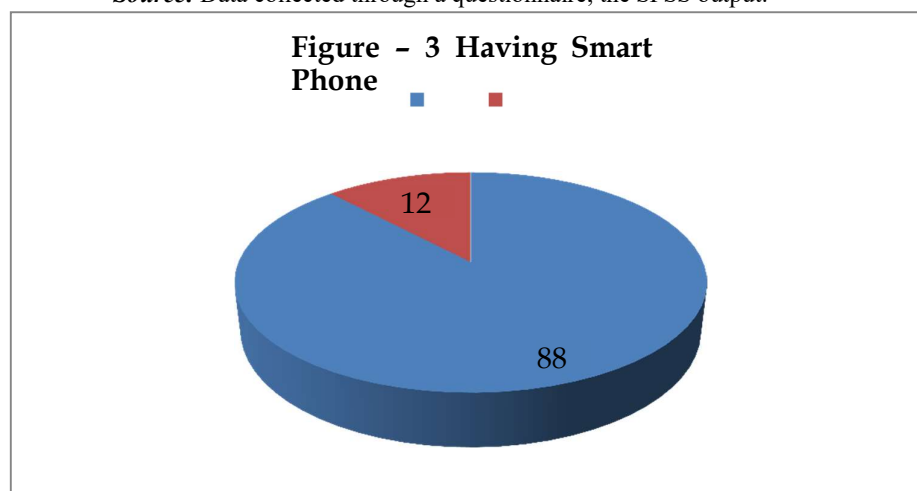


The data presented in the above table 3 shows that 88 percent of the adolescent respondents have smart phone with them and 12 percent of the respondents do not have smart phones.

Table - 3 Having Smart Phone

Response	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	880	88.0
No	120	12.0
Total	1000	100

Source: Data collected through a questionnaire, the SPSS output.

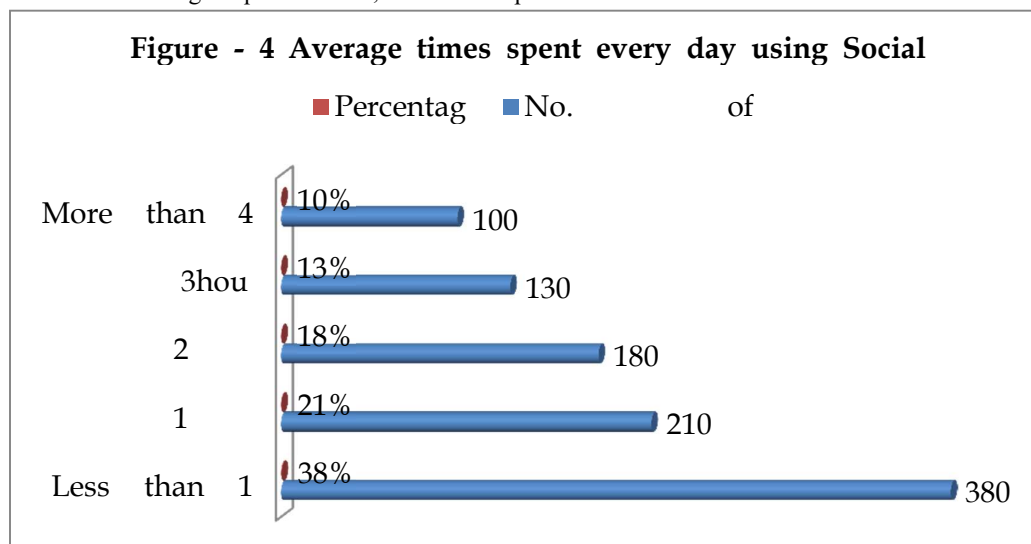


After analyzing the data collected from the respondents, it can be interpreted that the majority of the respondents i.e. 88 percent of the respondents do not spend their valuable time on surfing social network sites, whereas 12 percent of the respondents spend average one hour daily on using social network websites. 18 percent of the respondents spend 2 hours in the same and 13 percent of the respondent's spend around 3 hours in surfing social networking websites. Further, it can be revealed from the table that 10 percent of the respondents spend more than four hours in a day on social networking websites.

Table - 4 Average times spent every day using Social Networks

Response	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	380	38.0
1 hour	210	21.0
2 hours	180	18.0
3 hours	130	13.0
More than 4 hours	100	10.0
Total	1000	100

Source: Data collected through a questionnaire, the SPSS output.

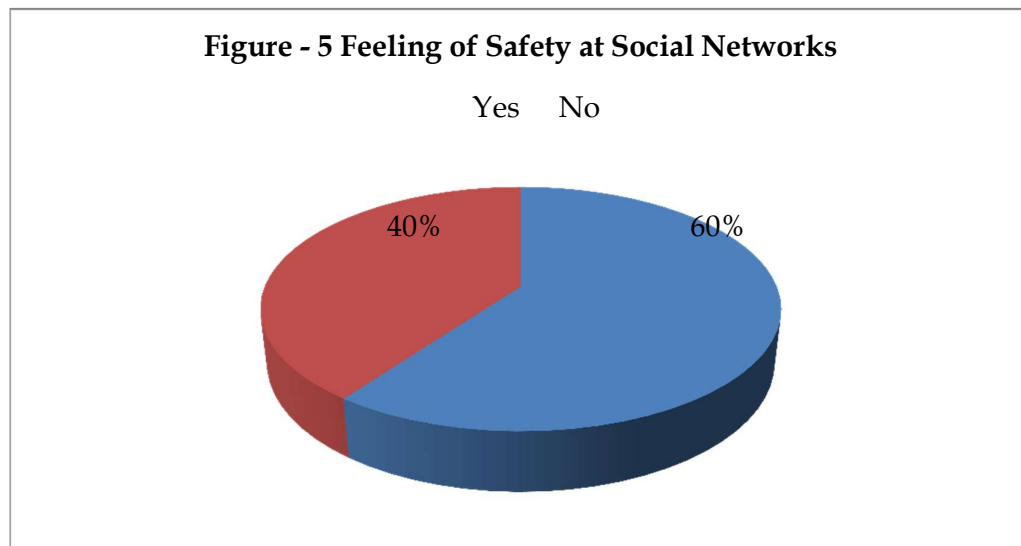


From the table 5 it can be analyzed that 60 percent of the respondents feel safe while they are using or surfing social network websites and application, whereas 40 percent of the respondents do not feel safe while doing the same.

Table 5 Feeling of Safety at Social Networks

Response	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	600	60.0
No	400	40.0
Total	1000	100

Source: Data collected through a questionnaire, the SPSS output.



OPINION OF THE RESPONDENTS TOWARDS ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

The table 6 deals with the online behavior of the respondents. The statements given in the table can be explained as under: - Out of 100 percent respondents, 57 percent of the respondents agree with the statement that online threats or conflicts can create trouble for them during their school time, while 43 percent of the respondents disagree with the same.

Table – 6 Online Behaviors of Respondents

Statements	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Someone has spread rumors, embarrassing jokes, and gossips about me online.	68.0	32.0
I have spread rumors, embarrassing jokes, and gossips about other online.	81.0	19.0
Someone has posted mean or threatening statement/ content about me online.	71.0	29.0
I have posted mean or threatening statement/ content about another, online.	82.0	18.0
Someone has sent me threatening or aggressive instant messages online using an instant messenger (live chat)for chat, text, video, audio, images or e-mail etc.	68.0	32.0
I have threatened or bullied another person online using an instant messenger (live chat) for chat, text messages,video, audio, images or e-mail etc.	80.0	20.0
I know someone who was a cyber-bully victim.	66.0	34.0
I know someone who used to cyber bully others.	74.0	26.0
I have been cyber bullied by another person (once or many times).	80.0	20.0
I have threatened or cyber bullied other persons (once or many times).	85.0	15.0

A cyber bully can easily detect my location by using software/ sites such as Google Earth, MNS live, or other programs based on the information I have posted online.	52.0	48.0
If I were contacted by some unknown (cyber bully) via instant messenger (live chat), I would tell an adult (parent, teacher etc.).	48.0	52.0
I sometimes say hurtful things to others online that I would not say in person.	61.0	39.0
Online threats or conflicts can get me into trouble even at school.	57.0	43.0

Source: Data collected through a questionnaire, the SPSS output.

Table - 7 Opinions of Respondents towards the Rate/ Frequency of CyberBullying

Statements	Never	Once in past	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
How often in the past years have you had an online/ virtual fight?	46.4	35.1	10.1	4.4	4
How often in the past years have you received online messages that made you worry about your safety?	63.8	21	10.8	2.4	2
How often in the past years have you received mean or nasty electronic messages (on devices like mobile, laptop, etc.)?	58.5	21.4	12.7	4.1	3.3
How often in the past years have you sent mean or nasty electronic messages (by devices like mobile, laptop, computer etc.)?	70.3	14.9	9.2	3	2.6
How often in the past have you felt harassed because someone sent embarrassing jokes, gossip or rumors about you?	62.9	24.2	6.8	3.5	2.6
How often in the past years have you posted or sent online embarrassing jokes, gossip or rumors about someone?	67.1	18.3	8.1	3.9	2.6
How often in the past years have you had someone pretend to be you online and send callous, mean or nasty messages?	69.1	16.8	7.5	5.4	1.2
How often in the past years have you pretended to be someone else online?	66.4	18.4	9.2	3.3	2.7
How often in the past years have you received statement/ material online that hurt your friendships or relation?	57.2	25.1	11.1	4.2	2.4
How often in the past years have you sent or posted material online that hurt someone else's friendships or relation?	68	18.9	8.7	2.2	2.2
How often in the past years have you had someone share your personal secrets or images online without your permission?	65	21.1	7.7	4.3	1.9
How often in the past years have you shared someone's personal secrets online without that	68.2	18.5	7.4	3.8	2.1

person's permission?					
How often in the past years have you been excluded from an online group by people who are mean or cruel to you?	66.3	19.2	8	4.6	1.9
How often in the past years have you excluded someone from your online group?	63.7	22	8.5	2.7	3.1

Source: Data collected through a questionnaire, the SPSS output.

MULTIPLE REGRESSIONS ANALYSIS TO DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES ON DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The further study is related to the cyber bullying, well-being, mental health, (psychological and physical health) and suicidal ideation of adolescents, which are consequently used in the multiple regression analysis. These variables are classified into two categories, namely dependent and independent variables. Cyber bullying is taken as dependent variable, whereas well-being, mental health and suicidal ideation are taken as independent variable.

The table 8 presents the multiple regression statistics. The value of the regression coefficient, as computed is 0.718 and the value of the coefficient of determination R^2 is 0.515. The value of the coefficient of determination R explains that 72% variation in cyber bullying can be explained by general well-being, mental health and suicidal ideation of adolescents, whereas only 28 percent variation in cyber bullying is explained by other factors which are not considered in this study. The standard error as computed is 0.19977 which is relatively very low and indicates the strong predictor regression model. The Durbin Watson statistics are also obtained to examine the assumption of independence. The value of Durbin Watson is 1.726 which is close to 2 and indicates that there is no problem of auto-correlation.

Table - 8 Model Summaries

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df 2	Sig. F Change	
1	.718 ^a	.515	.513	.19977	.515	264.276	4	995	.000	1.726

a. Dependent Variable: Cyber Bullying

b. Predictors: (Constant), Well-being, Mental Health and Suicidal Ideation.

In the multiple regression analysis the f-test is used to determine the overall significance or validity of the model. This test determines that at least one of the regression coefficients is different from zero. Table-57, indicates that the calculated f-value is 264.276 and the corresponding p-value is 0.000, which rejects the null hypothesis.

Table - 9 ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	P-value
Regression	42.185	4	10.546		
Residual	39.707	995	.040		

Total	81.892	999	-NA-	264.276	.000
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- a. Dependent Variable: Cyber Bullying
b. Predictors: (Constant), Well-being, Mental Health, Suicidal Ideation.

Table - 10 shows the output relating to the significant linear relationship between dependent variable cyber bullying and independent variables well-being, mental health, (psychological and physical health) and suicidal ideation. The standardized Beta-coefficient shows the relative contribution or importance of each independent variable in predicting the value of the dependent variable. It is also observed from the table-58, that the regression coefficient of well-being is -0.212, which means one percent improvement of well-being by holding other variables constant will reduced to 21 percent of cyber bullying. The t-value show that the negative relationship between cyber bullying and well-being and the corresponding p-value (0.000) is statistically significant. The results of mental health show the negative impact of cyber bullying, but have a statistically insignificant relationship between them. One percent improvement in mental health will reduce cyber bullying up to 0.4 percent. The analysis of the t-test shows a positive relationship among cyber bullying and physically health and suicidal ideation. One percent improvement in physical health will lead to 2 percent cyber bullying while the 17 percent increase in cyber bullying will increase one percent suicidal ideation. The p-value is 0.032 and 0.00 which are statistically significant.

Table 10 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.278	.066	.023	19.227	.000
Wellbeing	-.212	.019	-.330	-11.163	.000
Mental Health	-.004	.013	-.008	-.288	.773
Physical Health	.029	.014	.067	2.152	.032
Suicidal Ideation	.172	.011	.433	15.403	.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Cyber Bullying
b. Predictors: Well-being, Mental Health, Suicidal Ideation.

This section shows the relationship among cyber bullying, well-being, mental health, (psychological and physical health) and suicidal ideation of adolescents. Table 11 is related to the correlation matrix which reports all possible correlations between pairs of two variables. It shows the correlation between cyber bullying and well-being, mental health, (psychological and physical health), suicidal ideation is -0.62, 0.33, 0.42 and 0.65 respectively. The correlation between well-being and mental health, suicidal ideation is -0.42, -0.51 and -0.59 respectively. The value of correlation of mental health and physical health, suicidal ideation is 0.65 and 0.37 respectively. The correlation between physical health and suicidal ideation is 0.44. The study presents a significant relationship between cyber bullying and well-being, mental health and suicidal ideation.

Table 11 Correlation Matrix

	Cyber Bullying	Well-being	Mental Health	Physical Health	Suicidal Ideation
Cyber Bullying	1.00	-.62	.33	.42	.65
Well-being	-.62	1.00	-.42	-.51	-.59
Mental Health	.33	-.42	1.00	.65	.37
Physical Health	.42	-.51	.65	1.00	.44
Suicidal Ideation	.65	-.59	.37	.44	1.00

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Data collected through a questionnaire, the SPSS output.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

- The study reveals that excessive social media use is linked to increased anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem among adolescents. These correlations suggest that certain aspects of social media, like prolonged exposure to idealized content and online validation metrics, may serve as risk factors for mental health issues. This highlights the need for targeted interventions to mitigate these risks, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Findings indicate that while social media provides a platform for socialization, it can also disrupt adolescents' face-to-face interactions and family relationships, potentially impacting their overall quality of life. However, positive social media experiences can contribute to social support and a sense of belonging, emphasizing the importance of fostering healthy online relationships that complement offline interactions.
- Study underscores the dual impact of social media, noting both the benefits (such as connectivity and access to resources) and challenges (like cyber bullying and FOMO). This suggests that interventions should focus on promoting positive online behaviours while equipping adolescents with tools to manage the negative aspects effectively.
- The findings suggest that adolescents who demonstrate higher digital literacy and emotional resilience tend to experience fewer negative effects from social media. Therefore, incorporating digital literacy and emotional resilience training in school curriculums could empower adolescents to navigate social media more responsibly, thereby enhancing their mental well-being.
- The study emphasizes the need for a collaborative approach involving parents, educators, and policymakers to support adolescents in developing healthy social media habits. Practical recommendations include setting guidelines for balanced usage, creating open channels for communication about online experiences, and advocating for policies that prioritize adolescent mental health in the digital space.

CONCLUSION

The study on the *Impact of Social Media on Mental Health and Quality of Life Among Adolescents* reveals the complex and multifaceted effects that social media has on young people. Adolescents, who are in a formative period of emotional and psychological development, face unique challenges when engaging with digital platforms. The findings suggest that while social media offers significant benefits, such as opportunities for connection, learning, and self-expression, it also poses substantial risks to mental health. Increased levels of anxiety, depression, and social isolation are linked to excessive or problematic social media use, particularly when it involves cyber bullying, social comparison, and exposure to unrealistic standards of beauty and success. However, the study also highlights that social media's influence is not entirely negative. Many adolescents benefit from the support, sense of belonging, and access to mental health resources that social media can provide. This dual impact suggests that social media's effect on adolescents largely depends on how they engage with it. Positive experiences can promote emotional well-being and social connectivity, while negative interactions may exacerbate feelings of loneliness and inadequacy. The study emphasizes the importance of promoting digital literacy and emotional resilience among adolescents. Equipping young people with skills to critically assess and navigate social media can help them mitigate its negative impacts while reaping its benefits. Moreover, the role of parents, educators, and policymakers is crucial in fostering a balanced approach to social media use, advocating for responsible platform design, and creating supportive environments that prioritize adolescents' mental health.

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