

A Study on the Impact of Social Media on Mental Health

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How to cite this article: Prapti Naik, Aniket Kadam (2024). A Study on the Impact of Social Media on Mental Health. *Library Progress International*, 44(3), 2412-2416.

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the influence of social media, specifically focusing on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, on mental well-being. The research examines how these social networks affect different facets of mental health. The research utilizes a mixed-methods approach, includes both primary and secondary data, incorporating both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather data. The results offer important knowledge about the connection between social media usage and mental health, revealing the distinct effects these platforms can have on individuals' psychological well-being.

Keywords: Social media, use of social media, mental health.

INTRODUCTION

In today's time almost all of us have presence on social media platform and we use social media for some or the other reason. Everyday all of us spend at least some time on social media platform as this is the best platform to connect with each other but it cannot be the replacement for real-world human connection.

Unfortunately, technology like social media which are designed to bring the world closer to have better and easy connect is killing the quality time of human being. Human is a social animal and personal connection is very much required to sustain. Connection, which should result into happiness, positivity is turning into lonely and isolated feeling because of social media and creating mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

It is seen that people are spending more time on social media comparing their lives with so many others which results into frustration, dissatisfaction, unhappy feeling, which is impacting the mental and physical health, thus overall life. This requires a serious thought and action on such online use, hobbies and healthier balance.

Objectives:

The objectives of the study:

1. To explore the link between engaging with social media and its effects on mental health outcomes.
2. To compare the specific impacts of Facebook and Instagram on various dimensions of mental health.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The effect of social networking sites (SNS) on mental health has been a subject of considerable research and discussion in recent years. Scholars and psychologists have explored various aspects of this relationship, examining both benefits and harmful effects on individuals' well-being.

Several studies have highlighted the positive role of social networking sites in facilitating social support networks. Users often find emotional and informational support from their online connections.

Social media provides individuals with a space to express themselves creatively and share personal experiences. This self-expression can contribute positively to mental well-being by allowing users to communicate their thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

However, this too has many side effects. Research examining the connection between social media usage and

mental health presents varied results. Although there may be some positive effects, excessive use can also lead to negative consequences. One of the well-documented negative effects of SNS is the tendency for users to engage in social comparison, often leading to feelings of inadequacy and lower self-esteem. The curated nature of online content can contribute to unrealistic expectations and aspirations.

SNS can contribute to cyberbullying, adversely affecting the mental health of victims.

"Fear of Missing Out," leading individuals to feel anxious and dissatisfied with their own lives in comparison to the seemingly more exciting and fulfilling lives of others.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sample of 104 regular social media users is chosen using convenience sampling. The data is collected through primary and secondary sources. Primary data is collected by the way of questionnaire and for secondary data various books, journals, website are reviewed. The data is analysed through the tabular methods, graphs and comparison methods.

Limitations of the study

The study is only limited to the young teenagers who are using social media on regular basis in India.

Most respondents are from Maharashtra; the evaluation may be different for other regions.

The relation between the use of social media and its impact on mental health is complex yet there are many factors which mediates this relationship. Certain factors contribute to the negative impact of social media on mental health, while others experience either no effect or a positive impact on their mental health.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This section presents the analysis and findings derived from the collected data. The findings are organized based on the research objectives, comparing the effects of Facebook and Instagram on various mental health dimensions. The section includes graphs, tables, and quotes to support the results.

Table no. 1. Demographics of respondents from India.

Category	Respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	88	85
Female	16	15
Total	104	100

Age group		
15-20	57	55
21-35	39	38
35-40	8	8
Total	104	100%

Occupation status	Respondents	Percentage
Studying	80	77
Working	24	23
Other	0	0

Source: self-administered questionnaire.

From the above table it can be concluded that, out of the total respondents 85% are males, 15% are females. Age group of respondents ranges from 15 to 40. Out of which highest respondents are of age group 15-20, second highest are from the age group 21-35 and rest are of the age group 35-40. Highest percentage of respondents are from the age group of 15-20

1. Are you actively using Instagram and Facebook?

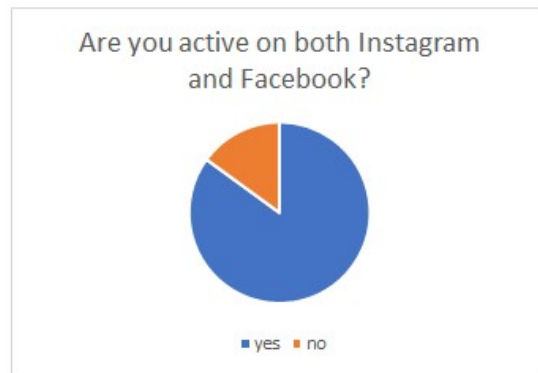


Diagram No. 1

Source: primary data

85% of the respondents were active on both Instagram and Facebook whereas 15% were not active.

2. How many hours a day do you use Instagram or Facebook?

Table no. 2

Options	No. of respondents	Percentage
Under 1 hour	10	9.61
1 to 2 hours	40	38.4
3 to 4 hours	50	48.0
4+ hours	4	3.84
Total	104	100

Source: primary data

From the above table, highest amount of people used social media for 3 to 4 hours a day, 9.61% that is almost 50 people out of 104, 9.61% of people use it for less than one hour and only 3.84% use it for over 4 hours.

3. Do you often compare yourself to people you see on social media apps?

Table no. 3

Options	No. of respondents	Percentage
Agree	25	24.03
Strongly agree	45	43.36
Disagree	29	27.88
Strongly disagree	5	4.80
Total	104	100

Source: primary data

From the above diagram it can be concluded that highest number of respondents strongly agree with the statement that is 45 out of 105 respondents strongly agree. 24% agree, 27.88% people disagree, 4.80% strongly disagree with the question.

4. Is your sleep schedule ruined due to access use of social media?

Table no. 4

Options	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	9	8.65
No	55	52.88
Maybe	40	38.00
Total	104	100

Source: primary data

From the above diagram it can be concluded that 48.07% of respondents agree with the given question which are more than the 38.46% who disagree with the given question and 13.47% respondents have neutral opinion.

5. Do you think social media platforms are doing enough to tackle the issue of mental health?

Table no. 5

Options	No. of respondents	Percentage
Agree	50	48.07
Disagree	40	38.46
Neutral	14	13.47
Total	104	100

Source: primary data

From the above diagram it can be concluded that highest number i.e. 48.07 % respondents agree with the given question. 38.46% disagree with the given question and 13.47% respondents have neutral opinion.

6. Has social media ever helped you in anyway in your life?

Table no. 6

Options	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	20	19.23
No	55	52.88
Maybe	29	27.88
Total	104	100

Source: primary data

20% of respondents said social media helped them in their life, contrary 55% disagreed with any help of social media and 29% were not sure about any of such help.

7. After using social media, do you ever feel defeated, defective, deserted or deprived?

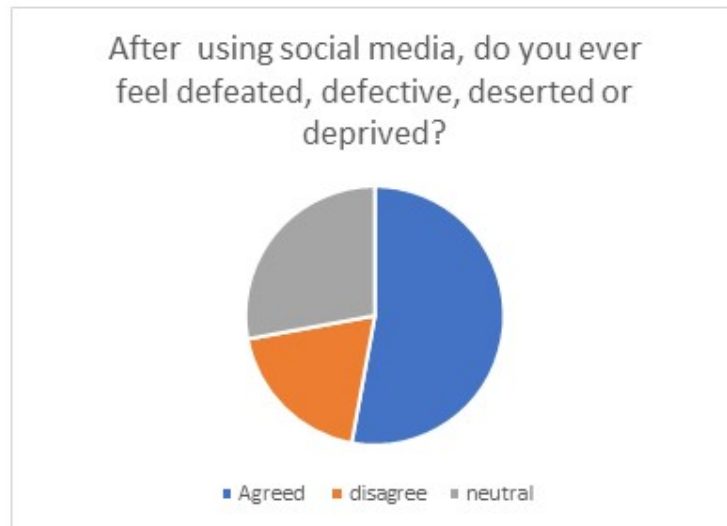


Diagram no. 2

Source: primary data

As shown in the diagram 55% respondents agreed saying that they feel defeated, defective, deserted or deprived after using social media. 20% respondent didn't agree this whereas 29% were neutral on this.

DISCUSSION

The above findings show that majority of respondents who spent more time on social media are actually not getting benefit but it is impacting the health through sleep disturbance, unnecessary comparisons, with the feeling of defective, deprived and defeated.

To conclude, the relationship between the amount of time spent on social networking sites and its impact on mental health is complex and layered. While SNS can offer positive benefits but at same time the potential for negative impacts should not be overlooked. This creates the scope for future research to understand the nuanced dynamics and develop strategies to maximize the positive aspects while mitigating the negative influences on mental health.

Social theories aim to understand the relationship between social media use and mental health by examining how these platforms shape individuals' behavior. Numerous studies have investigated the effects of prolonged social media use and its association with negative outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and stress.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research shows that social media does affect one's mental health. Based on the findings, it is recommended for individuals, mental health professionals, and related organizations to promote healthier use of social media and safeguard mental well-being.

Social media is means for fast electronic communication and content sharing. It is largely talk about the ill effects of its on mental health but limited use of social media also relieves loneliness, anxiety, depression and sleep problems etc. This also has proven as the best way to spread the awareness to take the businesses, knowledge to next level.

Social media is largely used to cut the time and many times by habit. But it can be used constructively without wasting much of time and for the benefit of human being.

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