

**AN ANALYTICAL RESEARCH OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL
HEALTH OF STUDENTS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

Students frequently use social media for communication and enjoyment, but it also has an impact on their mental health. This study looks into how students and young adults in the Coimbatore district use social media. 121 individuals provided information using a standardised questionnaire. For analysis, methods like correlation, chi-square testing, and rank analysis were employed. The results indicate that two of the main consequences of social media use are emotional attachment and mental fatigue. Time spent on social media and occupation were found to be significantly correlated. The study finds that excessive social media use can have an adverse effect on mental health and emphasises the importance of mental health awareness and moderate usage.

***Key words:** student, social media usage, social media satisfaction, mental health*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has transitioned from just entertainment to a crucial component of daily life, serving as a hub for social interaction, education, and career growth. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter enhance global communication, allowing student to share experiences and foster community bonds. They enable instant messaging, visual storytelling, and emotional expression, particularly among youth, who not only consume content but also create trends and discussions that reflect their values. Social media promotes creativity through DIY content and tutorials, encouraging students while providing global connection and career guidance. For businesses, it offers marketing strategies, consumer engagement, and opportunities for influencers to monetize their passions. Despite its benefits, social media poses risks such as addiction, misinformation, cyberbullying, and privacy issues. Excessive use can lead to isolation, stress from unrealistic comparisons, and potential impacts on self-esteem, alongside ethical concerns over content accessibility. The balance between online presence and real-life interactions represents a significant challenge for current generations. Overall, social

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media is an essential part of modern living, significantly affecting personal and professional realms, with mental health implications warranting careful consideration.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The growing use of social media among teenagers and young adults brings both benefits and mental health concerns. While some find community and support through these platforms, others experience stress from constant comparison, bad news, and online bullying. Features designed for engagement, like endless scrolling, can contribute to poor mental health outcomes. Additionally, not all users experience social media alike; younger individuals may face peer pressure, while older users may struggle with misinformation. There is a need for more detailed research to understand these differences and their effects on mental health. This paper aims to investigate the qualities of social media linked to mental health issues and to provide insights for policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals to foster a healthier online environment.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The study highlights the growing concern among various groups, including psychologists, teachers, and parents, regarding the impact of social media on mental health. Recent years have seen a rise in anxiety, depression, and stress, particularly among the youth, with social media identified as a key contributor. The design of these platforms often leads users to spend excessive time online, fostering unhealthy self-perceptions and unrealistic expectations due to filtered images and social validation through likes and comments. The research aims to explore the effects of social media across different demographics and how individuals cope with these pressures, such as through digital detoxes. This understanding could inform better online behavior, platform design, and educational initiatives, addressing the urgent need to comprehend technology's influence on mental well-being in our increasingly digital world.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This paper investigates the impact of social media on the mental health of individuals aged 15-40 in Coimbatore, focusing on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter. It examines both positive effects, such as increased happiness and connection, and negative consequences, including anxiety, loneliness, and low self-esteem. Key behaviors like addiction, disrupted sleep, and reduced real-world interactions will be analyzed alongside

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cognitive impacts on attention and decision-making. The study distinguishes between active participation and passive scrolling, as well as how different apps and content types (inspirational, funny, political, or lifestyle) affect users emotionally. It also addresses issues related to internet communication, such as cyberbullying and social comparison. By incorporating demographic factors like gender and education, the research aims to highlight trends and inform mental health policies. The study's context in Coimbatore enhances its relevance, ultimately providing valuable insights for individuals, educators, mental health professionals, and technology developers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the overall influence of social media use on mental health, considering both benefits and drawbacks
- To explore how different styles of engagement—such as posting and interacting versus silent browsing—shape emotional experiences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology outlines the approach taken to explore a problem, collect data, and derive conclusions. This research aims to understand the impact of social media on mental health using a quantitative method, focusing on numerical data over personal opinions. A structured questionnaire created via Google Forms serves as the primary data collection tool, ensuring uniform questions for participants. The questionnaire includes closed questions and a Likert scale to assess social media usage and its effects on self-esteem. Additionally, secondary data from academic journals and reputable sources enriches the research by providing context on mental health and digital behavior.

TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSIS:

- Chi-square tests,
- Correlation

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Location matters: Since this study took place only in the city of Coimbatore, it may not be entirely representative of what is happening in other parts of the country, where cultural, economic, or technological usage patterns might be very different.

- Sample size: The study had 121 participants, which is a good number for initial analysis but may not be representative of the full range of experiences, especially for those who are less active on social media or who are marginalized.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shannon et al. (2022) In their article *“Problematic Social Media Use and Mental Health in Adolescents and Young Adults: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis”* conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis to investigate the relationship between problematic social media use and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress among adolescents and young adults. The study aimed to synthesize existing empirical evidence and quantify the strength of these associations. A total of 18 studies were included in the review, representing over 9,000 participants from various cultural and demographic backgrounds. The authors focused specifically on studies that used validated measures of social media addiction and psychological distress. Standardised correlation coefficients were used to ensure comparability across studies. The meta-analysis revealed moderate but consistent positive correlations between problematic social media use and adverse mental health outcomes. These findings indicate that individuals who engage in addictive or compulsive social media behaviours are more likely to experience emotional distress. Such patterns are particularly common among adolescents and young adults. The review also noted that problematic social media use was associated with stress related to academic performance and social relationships. The authors discussed how constant connectivity can increase perceived pressure and fear of missing out. Additionally, exposure to idealised representations of others may contribute to low self-esteem and emotional distress. The consistency of findings across studies strengthens the validity of the conclusions. The authors concluded that problematic social media use represents a significant risk factor for mental health problems. They recommended early identification and targeted interventions. The study emphasized the importance of developing prevention strategies focused on healthy digital engagement.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

CHI – SQUARE

Null hypothesis:

There is no relationship between Occupation and Amount of time spent on Social Media.

Alternative hypothesis:

There is a relationship between Occupation and Amount of time spent on Social Media.

Occupation * How many hours do you spend on social media daily

Table no - 1

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.574 ^a	12	.003
Likelihood Ratio	28.258	12	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.953	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	122		
a. 11 cells (55.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .12.			

Interpretation :

The result of significance regarding the relationship between Occupation and Amount of Hours spent on Social Media, there is (.003) level of confidence. Since the p-value (.003) is less than the significance level (.05), the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating a significant relationship between occupation and time spent on social media.

CORRELATION :

Table no - 2

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How many hours do you spend on social media daily?	2.37	.911	122
Rate your level of emotional attachment to your favorite social media platform.	4.10	2.413	122

Correlations			
		How many hours do you spend on social media daily?	Rate your level of emotional attachment to your favorite social media platform.
How many hours do you spend on social media daily?	Pearson Correlation	1	.190*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.036
	N	122	122
Rate your level of emotional attachment to your favorite social media platform.	Pearson Correlation	.190*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	
	N	122	122

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation :

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between daily time spent on social media and emotional attachment to the favourite social media platform. The results showed a weak but positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .190$, $p = .036$). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant.

This indicates that individuals who spend more time on social media tend to report slightly higher emotional attachment to their favourite platform.

FINDINGS

Findings Based on Chi-Square Analysis

The Chi-square test was applied to examine the relationship between occupation and the amount of time spent on social media daily.

- The significance value (p-value) obtained was 0.003, which is less than the standard significance level of 0.05.
- Hence, the null hypothesis stating that there is no relationship between occupation and time spent on social media was rejected.
- The alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming a significant relation between occupation and daily social media usage.
- This finding indicates that individuals belonging to different occupational categories spend varying amounts of time on social media.
- Therefore, occupation plays an important role in influencing social media usage behaviour among the respondents.

Findings Based on Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was used to study the relationship between daily time spent on social media and emotional attachment to the favourite social media platform.

- The correlation coefficient (r) was 0.190, indicating a weak but positive relationship between the two variables.
- The significance value ($p = 0.036$) is less than 0.05, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant.
- This finding suggests that respondents who spend more time on social media tend to develop higher emotional attachment to their preferred social media platform.
- Although the relationship is not strong, it highlights that increased social media usage leading to emotional dependence on social media platforms.

SUGGESTIONS

- Encouraging Controlled Social Media Usage
- Reducing Emotional Dependence on Social Media Platforms
- Promoting mental health awareness

CONCLUSION

This study analyses the effects of social media on mental health among respondents in Coimbatore using multiple statistical methods. While loneliness has a minor but significant impact, the results indicate that occupation and emotional attachment have a strong influence on time spent online. There were also differences between groups in terms of experiences like loneliness, guilt, FOMO, and mental health awareness. In order to safeguard wellbeing, the results emphasise the necessity of using social media with awareness and moderation.

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