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# Impact of Social Media Overuse on Youth Well-Being

Aaradhya Singh<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Rekha Khosla<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Amity Business School, Amity University, Lucknow, India

**Abstract--** The rapid expansion of social media platforms has significantly transformed communication patterns and daily lifestyles, particularly among young individuals. While social networking sites provide opportunities for information sharing, social interaction, and creative expression, excessive use may negatively influence psychological health, academic performance, and social relationships. This study investigates the impact of social media overuse on youth well-being through a mixed-method research approach. Data were collected from 150 students aged 15–24 using structured questionnaires, supported by interviews with 20 participants. Quantitative analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, while qualitative responses were examined using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that excessive daily usage—especially beyond three hours—correlates with increased anxiety, reduced academic concentration, disrupted sleep patterns, and greater social comparison. However, moderate use was associated with benefits such as social connectivity, access to educational resources, and opportunities for self-expression. The study concludes that social media itself is not inherently harmful; rather, the negative consequences arise from unregulated and excessive engagement. Promoting digital awareness and balanced usage habits is essential to support youth well-being.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, social media has evolved from a communication medium into a central component of modern social life. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, and TikTok allow users to interact instantly, share experiences, and consume information in real time. Young people represent the most active group of social media users, often incorporating these platforms into daily routines for communication, entertainment, and self-expression.

The widespread availability of smartphones and affordable internet services has accelerated digital engagement among adolescents and young adults. For many individuals in this age group, social media serves as a tool for building social networks, accessing educational resources, and expressing personal identity. However, the growing dependence on these platforms has raised concerns regarding their potential impact on mental health, academic performance, and lifestyle habits.

Excessive social media usage refers to prolonged screen time, constant checking of notifications, and emotional reliance on online interactions. Such patterns can interfere with daily activities and healthy routines.

Adolescence and early adulthood are critical stages of emotional and social development, making youth particularly vulnerable to the effects of digital environments.

This study aims to examine the influence of social media overuse on youth well-being, focusing on psychological health, academic performance, sleep patterns, and interpersonal relationships. By analyzing both positive and negative aspects of social media engagement, the research seeks to provide a balanced understanding of its overall impact.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on social media usage among youth has expanded significantly across multiple disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and education. Studies consistently report that adolescents and young adults spend several hours daily on social networking platforms, often exceeding recommended screen-time limits.

### 2.1 Social Media Usage Patterns

Recent surveys suggest that more than four-fifths of young individuals access social media every day, with average usage ranging between three and four hours. Continuous connectivity is encouraged by smartphone accessibility, push notifications, and algorithm-driven content feeds that promote frequent engagement.

### 2.2 Psychological Consequences

Several researchers have identified links between heavy social media use and psychological challenges such as anxiety, depressive symptoms, and fear of missing out (FOMO). Constant exposure to curated online content can encourage comparisons with peers' lifestyles and achievements, which may reduce self-esteem and increase feelings of inadequacy.

Another issue frequently discussed in literature is the potential for addictive usage patterns. Features such as likes, comments, and infinite scrolling stimulate reward responses in the brain, encouraging repeated checking behavior and increasing screen dependence.

### 2.3 Academic and Sleep-Related Effects

Excessive engagement with social media may also affect academic productivity. Students often experience reduced concentration and increased procrastination due to multitasking between studying and online browsing.



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Late-night screen exposure can disrupt natural sleep cycles, leading to fatigue and reduced cognitive performance.

#### *2.4 Positive Outcomes of Social Media*

Despite these concerns, research also highlights several benefits of social media when used appropriately. Online communities can provide emotional support, encourage creative expression, and offer access to educational resources. Digital platforms also enable young individuals to develop new skills and expand professional networks.

Overall, previous studies indicate that the impact of social media depends largely on usage patterns and individual behavior rather than the technology itself.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### *3.1 Research Design*

This study employed a mixed-method research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component measured the relationship between social media usage and well-being indicators, while qualitative interviews explored participants' experiences and perceptions.

#### *3.2 Population and Sample*

The target population consisted of youth aged 15–24 years. A total of 150 students from schools and colleges participated in the survey. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation across gender, educational level, and usage intensity.

Additionally, 20 participants were selected for semi-structured interviews to provide deeper insights into behavioral patterns and emotional responses related to social media usage.

#### *3.3 Data Collection Tools*

Data were collected using three main methods:

##### *Structured Questionnaire:*

Participants completed a questionnaire containing demographic questions and Likert-scale statements related to emotional well-being, academic concentration, sleep quality, and social interaction.

##### *Semi-Structured Interviews:*

Interviews allowed participants to discuss their experiences with social media, including feelings of dependency, peer pressure, and online comparison.

##### *Observation:*

Behavioral patterns such as frequent phone checking and distraction during academic activities were recorded to support self-reported responses.

#### *3.4 Data Analysis*

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to identify relationships between variables. Qualitative responses were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to digital dependency, social comparison, and emotional well-being.

### IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

#### *4.1 Usage Patterns*

The results showed that 65% of respondents spent more than three hours per day on social media platforms, while 22% used them between one and three hours daily. Only a small proportion reported limited usage.

Most activity occurred during evening and late-night hours, often overlapping with study time and sleep schedules.

#### *4.2 Psychological Effects*

Approximately 58% of respondents reported feeling anxious or uncomfortable when unable to access social media for extended periods. Many participants acknowledged comparing themselves with others based on online posts, which affected their self-confidence.

#### *4.3 Academic Impact*

Students who spent more than four hours daily on social media reported greater difficulty concentrating during academic tasks. Frequent online distractions and multitasking were identified as key factors affecting academic performance.

#### *4.4 Sleep Disturbances*

Late-night social media browsing was associated with delayed sleep onset and reduced sleep quality. Participants who regularly used their phones before bedtime reported feeling tired and less productive the following day.

#### *4.5 Social Relationships*

While some respondents felt that social media helped them maintain connections with friends and family, others expressed feelings of loneliness despite having numerous online contacts. This suggests that digital communication cannot fully replace meaningful face-to-face interaction.



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V. DISCUSSION

The findings highlight the complex relationship between social media engagement and youth well-being. Moderate use appears to offer advantages such as connectivity, information access, and creative opportunities. However, excessive usage—particularly beyond three to four hours per day—correlates with several negative outcomes.

Psychological challenges such as anxiety and reduced self-esteem may arise from constant comparison and reliance on digital validation. Academic performance may also suffer due to distraction and poor time management. Furthermore, late-night screen exposure contributes to sleep disruption, which can affect both physical and mental health.

These results support earlier research suggesting that the intensity and purpose of social media use determine its overall impact.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study explored how excessive social media engagement influences the well-being of young individuals. The results indicate that while social media offers valuable opportunities for communication, education, and creativity, uncontrolled usage can negatively affect emotional health, academic productivity, and sleep quality.

The findings emphasize that the problem lies not in social media itself but in the absence of balanced usage habits. Encouraging responsible digital behavior, promoting awareness about screen-time management, and strengthening offline social interactions can help mitigate the risks associated with excessive engagement.

Future research could explore long-term psychological effects, gender differences in digital behavior, and the effectiveness of interventions designed to promote healthier technology use among youth.