

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

SUBMITTED TO

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY FOR THE PARTIAL

FULFILLMENT OF THE

Master of Arts Degree in Psychology (Counselling)

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INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, especially for adolescents. While it provides opportunities for communication, learning, and self-expression, it also raises concerns about its impact on mental health. Adolescents are in a crucial stage of psychological and emotional development, making them particularly vulnerable to the effects of social media. This study aims to explore the relationship between social media usage and adolescent mental health, with a focus on issues such as anxiety, depression, self-esteem, and overall well-being.

The widespread adoption of social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and TikTok has drastically transformed how adolescents interact with their peers and the world. Unlike previous generations, today's adolescents spend a significant portion of their time engaging in digital interactions rather than face-to-face communication. While social media offers numerous benefits such as fostering connections, promoting self-identity, and providing educational resources, it also poses substantial risks. The constant exposure to curated content, social comparisons, and the pressure to gain validation through likes and comments can contribute to mental distress.

Several studies have explored the psychological effects of prolonged social media use. Research indicates that excessive screen time can lead to disrupted sleep patterns, increased anxiety, and depressive symptoms among adolescents. Furthermore, the fear of missing out (FOMO) and cyberbullying have been identified as key stressors associated with social media use. These factors may exacerbate existing mental health conditions or even contribute to the onset of new psychological issues.

This research aims to bridge the gap in understanding the intricate relationship between social media engagement and adolescent mental health. By analyzing usage patterns, the nature of

online interactions, and their psychological effects, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into how social media influences adolescents' emotional well-being. The findings will be instrumental in guiding parents, educators, and policymakers to develop strategies that promote positive digital habits and mitigate the adverse effects of social media on mental health.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on adolescent mental health by providing empirical evidence on the impact of social media. The findings will help educators, parents, and policymakers develop strategies to promote healthy social media habits and mental well-being among adolescents. By understanding how different social media behaviors influence mental health, interventions can be designed to minimize the risks and enhance the positive aspects of digital engagement. Additionally, this study will provide insights into how social media platforms can be used as tools for mental health awareness and support.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the rapid rise in social media usage among adolescents, there is growing concern about its potential negative effects on mental health. Studies suggest that excessive social media use may lead to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and lower self-esteem. However, the extent of these effects and the specific mechanisms through which social media influences adolescent mental health require further exploration.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Operational definitions help clarify the variables used in the study and how they will be measured.

- **Social Media Usage:** The frequency and duration of engagement on social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and TikTok.
- **Anxiety:** A psychological state characterized by excessive worry, nervousness, or fear, assessed using standardized anxiety scales.
- **Depression:** A mood disorder marked by persistent feelings of sadness and loss of interest, measured using clinically validated depression inventories.
- **Self-Esteem:** The degree of self-worth and self-confidence among adolescents, assessed through standardized self-esteem scales.
- **Well-Being:** Overall mental and emotional health, including factors such as stress management and emotional resilience, evaluated using validated psychological assessments.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Review of literature is a vital part of any research. It helps the researcher to know the areas where earlier studies had focused on and certain aspects untouched by them.

Twenge et al. (2018) examined trends in adolescent mental health and found that increased social media use was linked to higher rates of depression and anxiety. Their study suggested that adolescents who spend more than three hours per day on social media platforms are at a greater risk of mental health issues.

Keles, McCrae, & Grealish (2020) conducted a meta-analysis on the relationship between social media use and adolescent mental health. They concluded that excessive social media engagement contributes to higher levels of anxiety and depression, particularly among girls.

Orben & Przybylski (2019) used large-scale data analysis to explore the effects of digital screen

time on adolescent well-being. They found a weak but significant negative association between excessive social media use and psychological well-being.

Nesi & Prinstein (2015) studied social media behaviors such as cyberbullying, online peer pressure, and social comparison, concluding that these factors play a significant role in shaping adolescent mental health.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the extent of social media usage among adolescents.
- To examine the relationship between social media use and adolescent mental health.
- To assess the impact of various social media platforms on anxiety, depression, and self-esteem.
- To explore possible interventions and coping strategies to mitigate the negative effects of social media on adolescent mental health.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- There is a significant correlation between excessive social media use and increased levels of anxiety and depression among adolescents.
- Adolescents who spend more time on social media have lower self-esteem compared to those who use it moderately.
- Positive social media interactions contribute to better mental health outcomes in adolescents.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design:** The study will adopt a quantitative approach using a survey-based research design.
- **Sample and Sampling Technique:** A sample of 200 adolescents aged 13-19 will be selected through stratified random sampling from different schools and colleges.
- **Data Collection Method:** A structured questionnaire will be used to assess social media usage patterns and mental health indicators.
- **Data Analysis Plan:** Statistical analysis, including correlation and regression analysis, will be used to identify relationships between social media usage and mental health variables.

Population of the study

All the girls studying in the higher secondary schools of city New Delhi will formed the population of the study

Research Design

To explore this comparative study on different dimensions of Girls Empowerment among Government and Private Higher Secondary School in city New Delhi, a tool descriptive research design will be used.

Sampling

In order to collect the data for the present study 05 higher secondary schools will be selected through stratified random sampling techniques. Out of these 05 higher Sec. Schools 03 shall be government and 02 shall be private schools. Again 100 girls shall have taken randomly as the subjects of the present investigation from the selected government and private schools of city New Delhi.

Tools for the Study

- **Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II):** A standardized tool used to assess depressive symptoms in adolescents. It consists of multiple items measuring mood, self-perception, and behavioral changes associated with depression.
- **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES):** A widely used psychological tool to measure self-worth and self-esteem. It consists of 10 statements that assess an individual's perception of their self-value.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

To analyze the collected data, the following statistical techniques will be used:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** Mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution will be used to

summarize demographic data and social media usage patterns.

2. **Inferential Statistics:** Correlation and regression analysis will be applied to examine the relationship between social media usage and mental health variables.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias.
2. The sample is limited to a specific geographical region, affecting generalizability.
3. The study does not account for individual personality traits that may influence the impact of social media.

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