



USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

AARCHI MORE¹

*Kes Shri .Jayantilal H. Patel Law College
Kandivali, Bhagat Colony, Kandivali West, Mumbai, Maharashtra*

MITALI CHAVAN²

*Kes Shri. Jayantilal H. Patel Law College
Kandivali, Bhagat Colony, Kandivali West, Mumbai, Maharashtra*

Abstract

Use of social media and its impact on mental health is all about how social media slips into nearly every part of modern talk and routine. Across age groups people log in, scroll through feeds - sites such as Facebook or Instagram fill time, share moments, build connections. Because it links so many, there's value in staying close to family or finding communities that understand. Yet when usage turns obsessive or comparisons creep in, stress follows closely behind. Some find confidence shaken after hours spent online; others feel pressure they did not expect. On one hand, ideas spread fast, movements grow, voices rise. But then again, silence gets louder for those who feel left out. Digital spaces keep growing, yet some apps now aim to boost young people's well-being. Problems with the body can grow worse across years.

Keywords: Social Applications, WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Addiction, low self-esteem, digital health.

Introduction: This piece looks into how social media affects lives, shaped by rapid digital shifts altering everyday interaction .Over 6 billion individuals utilise social media for both personal and professional purposes. Furthermore, the phenomenon of 'Fear of Missing Out' is frequently exacerbated by social media, leading to elevated stress and anxiety levels . Night-time exposure to digital devices and late-night scrolling behaviours on social media applications can significantly disrupt sleep architecture, consequently impairing overall mental health and reducing cognitive concentration during daily activities. Moreover, exposure to digitally manipulated images and idealized beauty standards, prevalent through filters and editing effects on platforms like Instagram . This pervasive online interaction can foster addictive behaviours and disrupt individuals' sleep patterns and attentional capacities. Around everywhere, it reaches people of all ages through apps such as Facebook and Instagram, used for personal and broader community reasons. Because it helps some stay connected , yet others struggle under constant comparison. Though advantages exist in staying informed or building networks, misuse often brings serious emotional strain. The conversation covers helpful roles alongside growing, psychological risks. Digital spaces keep growing, yet some apps now aim to boost young people's well-being. Life weaves them in tightly – offering ways to stay close to others while getting things done. Still, good results depend on how thoughtfully someone uses them. Jumping online without pause can invite unhealthy patterns. Left unchecked, that shift may harm both mind and body over time.

Literature Review

Effects of social media on people:

That year, around 3.8 billion people worldwide used social media - almost every second person on Earth (We Are Social, 2020). People dealing with mental health conditions are turning more toward phones, especially smartphones, according to newer reports (Firth et al., 2015; Glick, Druss, Pina, Lally, & Conde, 2016; Torous, Chan, et al., 2014; Torous, Friedman, & Keshavan, 2014). At the same time, data keeps piling up showing strong involvement with online networks within this group, researchers now looking at how habits differ by setting and diagnosis. Back in 2015, close to fifty percent of surveyed psychiatric patients showed regular activity on digital platforms, rates climbing when ages dropped lower. Younger users aren't alone though - kids, teens, adults, they're all part of it, drawn in for updates, fun, staying connected. Now built into everyday routines, it shows up everywhere. One look at fresh data shows close to fifty percent of teens feel almost always connected, some even admit they cannot do without it. Every tenth teen seems to skip a daily scroll through social media. Though platforms demand users hit age thirteen, nearly half of children aged eight to twelve dive in anyway. Screens pull attention for hours, particularly on apps such as Instagram or Snapchat. Time spent there ties closely to rising stress, mood swings, and inner tension. YouTube, Facebook - these spots add up without notice. Hours spent tapping and swiping may chip away at focus, rest, and balance - quietly shaping habits that feel hard to shake. Instead of connection, sometimes there's just emptiness staring back.

Staring at screens after dark messes up how well you sleep, making it harder to think clearly the next day. When people scroll too much before bed, their rest suffers without them even noticing. Pictures smoothed out by apps often leave viewers feeling bad about how they look. Filters change faces so much that real skin seems flawed by comparison. Hurtful words fly around online, sometimes turning into full attacks aimed at someone's appearance. Getting picked on through messages stings more than most admit. Talking mostly through texts might mean fewer talks in person, slowly wearing down conversation abilities. Real chats start fading when phones take over. Skills like reading emotions or holding eye contact slip away quietly. What people go through each day might quietly chip away at how they feel about themselves. On top of that, seeing others online can stir up a restless feeling - like something's being missed - which often makes worry grow stronger.

Research Methodology

•*Following are the pros of using social media:*

1.Fostering Social Connectedness and Mitigating Loneliness

Someone feeling anxious might message a cousin late at night instead of waiting days to talk. A quiet comment on a post sometimes opens up deeper conversations. Support shows up not in grand gestures but tiny replies that say I see you. Distance feels smaller when voices pop into your phone after sunset. Moments of sadness become easier to carry with just one thoughtful emoji. Connection grows in small exchanges, not perfect words. These threads woven daily hold weight without needing drama or noise.

2.Social Media's Role in Mental Health Support and Stigma Reduction

Away from one-on-one chats, digital networks shape how people find help when struggling inside. Some corners of the web focus only on sharing facts about emotional balance, ways to handle pressure, plus steps toward expert care. When answers sit just clicks away, handling inner battles feels less out of reach. Open talk spreads easier because screens allow voices that once stayed quiet. It feels smaller now, that weight of shame, when people speak up about struggling. Not fearing judgment helps. Outside face-to-face talks, digital spaces shape how we see mental health too. Some websites focus only on real research about emotional balance, ways

to handle pressure, what to do when help is needed. Seeing these things shared widely gives strength to act. Open chats bloom there, facts spread easily - this shifts views slowly. Less silence means less disgrace tagged onto inner battles.

3.Enhancing Self-Expression and Confidence Through Online Platforms

Posting pictures might lift your mood - seeing likes roll in sometimes makes you feel seen. Videos you build yourself? They carry pieces of who you are, shaping how others notice you. Writing down thoughts late at night pulls private ideas into open spaces, where replies from strangers reshape silence into connection. Clicking share is quiet courage showing up disguised as routine. Confidence grows sideways here, not straight up, spreading through small moments people often overlook.

4.Community Building and Collective Support

Across digital networks, people often stumble upon others who think alike. Through these connections, spaces grow where stories mix with guidance, care tucked inside each exchange. Belonging tightens when voices echo one another unexpectedly. Help arrives not just from neighbours, but from faces never seen, miles away. What forms is less a system, more a quiet web of presence, always there.

•Following are the cons of using social media

While social media offers various benefits, it also presents several significant drawbacks that can impact individual well-being and productivity.

1.Social Comparison and Psychological Distress

Curated posts on screens often show just the highlights. Life looks better there - always sunny moments, never the rain after. When people see these polished versions, something shifts inside. Their own days might seem dull by contrast. A quiet ache grows, not loud but persistent. It whispers maybe everyone else is living while they are just watching. Joy feels distant then, success even more so.

2.Addiction, Distraction, and Impaired Functioning

The pervasive nature of social media can contribute to problematic usage patterns, including excessive engagement and continuous scrolling. Such addictive behaviours can divert attention from essential academic or professional responsibilities, disrupting real-life commitments and impairing focus [Current document]. This can lead to decreased productivity and an imbalance between online and offline activities

3.Mental Health Deterioration and Cyberbullying

Staring at screens when the sun goes down tends to mess up how people sleep. Trouble falling asleep shows up more when scrolling happens late, that links closely to feeling stressed or anxious later. Hostile words flying around online spaces wear down how someone sees themselves over time. Getting picked on through messages or posts is not rare, it weighs heavy on inner peace. Harsh talk spreads fast on websites built for sharing, which drags mood lower with every encounter.

4.Fear of Missing out

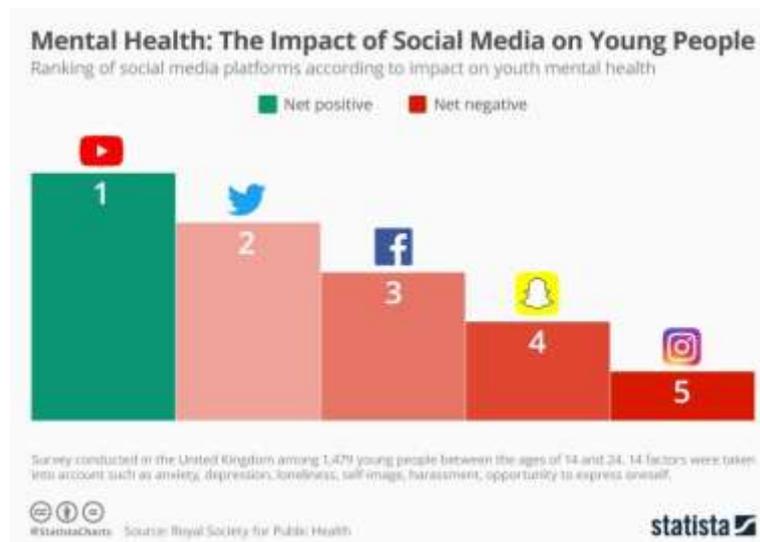
The constant visibility of others' activities and perceived enjoyment can induce the "Fear of Missing Out" . This psychological phenomenon arises from the apprehension that others might be having rewarding

experiences from which one is absent, leading to feelings of envy, anxiety, and a compulsive need to stay connected.

5. Nuanced Perspective on Social Media's Influence

It is crucial to recognize that the impact of social media is not inherently positive or negative but rather contingent upon individual usage patterns. Prudent and mindful engagement with these platforms is essential for mitigating potential harms and safeguarding mental health .

Results:



First comes YouTube, showing a clearer edge in supporting how young minds feel. Right behind it sits Twitter, where signs of harm start to appear. Next up is Facebook, taking the third spot. After that, Snapchat claims fourth place. Last on the list lands Instagram - this one weighs heaviest on teen well-being. A group of researchers looked at teens and young adults across the UK, focusing on feelings like sadness, worry, or being alone. Though online sharing spaces affect minds differently, one thing stands clear - they do not all carry the same weight. Certain apps seem to lift moods slightly, yet others quietly add pressure behind the screen. Results show no single trend fits everyone using these sites every day. Instead, effects shift depending on which platform someone uses most often.

• Development and Key Milestones of Social Media Platforms

Back at the start of the 2000s, the ground began shifting toward digital hangouts. Out of that time came Facebook - February 2004 saw its launch - and it caught on fast, turning into a go-to spot where people linked up, shared photos or messages, and formed circles online. What made it stick was how easily folks could keep in touch, post videos or pictures, and plan gatherings without stepping outside. Not long after, 2005 brought YouTube into play, opening doors nobody had really walked through before when it came to streaming clips across the web. Suddenly, anyone watching could react by leaving notes, tapping approval, following creators, or tossing their own films into the mix.

Back then, a new app quietly changed how people talk online. Right away it stood out because typing wasn't the only way to connect - users could send audio clips, photos, files, even make calls. Instead of fading like others did, it grew stronger by adding shared spaces where multiple conversations unfolded at once. Later came tools that let stores and customers chat directly, shifting how services reached users. One thing stayed clear - it did not just join the race, it pulled ahead without shouting about it.

• **The subsequent years witnessed a diversification of social media functions and the emergence of specialized platforms:**

Instagram: Gained significant traction as a platform primarily for sharing photos and videos. It evolved to become a crucial space for content creators, who produce engaging short-form video content, known as 'reels,' for a global audience.

Snapchat: Right off, pictures vanished fast here – no trace left behind. A different kind of online exchange began unfolding quietly through those fleeting images instead of endless posts. Moments showed up briefly then disappeared without sticking around too long. The whole idea ran opposite to saving everything forever somewhere visible. A quick way to share clips caught on with younger users. Because of its fun format, many teens started using it to show off their ideas. By way of different screens and tweaks.

TikTok: Launched in China as Douyin, TikTok rapidly achieved global prominence. It specializes in short-form video content, enabling users to upload personalized clips typically ranging from 15 seconds to 3 minutes, which transformed digital entertainment and content consumption.

This historical overview underscores the dynamic evolution of social media, characterized by continuous innovation and a significant increase in global user participation, as depicted in the provided data.



The Different Ways Social Media Affects Young People's Mental Health

Young people around the UK aging from 14 to 24 years took part to find how social media shape the inner world. With 1,479 participants involved, it was not about popularity but what happens behind the screen. Instead of just counting likes, researchers dug into things like sadness, worry, feeling left out, body thoughts, being picked on - also whether they felt free to share who they really are. Fourteen angles were weighed, painting each platform with mood tones: green if it leaned helpful, red when harm showed up more often. Outcomes weren't uniform; some apps lifted spirits, others dragged them down. How one site affected sleep or confidence could flip entirely on another. Expression mattered, yet so did exposure. Not every space built connection - a few deepened isolation despite seeming friendly. Results shifted by app, revealing that digital hangouts aren't neutral grounds.

Platform-Specific Impacts

The analysis revealed a distinct ranking of social media platforms based on their perceived impact on mental health:

•**YouTube** was identified as having the most positive overall impact on the mental health of young people, receiving the highest positive ranking.

•**Twitter** (now X) ranked second; however, the survey indicated that its effects began to show a negative trend.

•**Facebook** was positioned third, demonstrating a net negative impact on the mental health of the surveyed age group.

Snapchat followed, also exhibiting a net negative influence.

•**Instagram** was ranked fifth, indicating the most significant net negative impact on the mental health of young individuals among the platforms surveyed.

One reason stands out when looking at how social media affects mental health - each platform does not impact everyone the same way. Some spaces seem to build better experiences for younger people, whereas certain ones link to tougher emotional outcomes. What shapes these differences might lie in how each site is built, what kind of posts thrive there, and how users engage with one another.

Discussion: Online apps shape how teens think more than most notice. Around 95 out of every 100 youngsters use these sites daily, starting younger each year. Because of this steady screen time, remembering facts gets harder, while poor learning routines take hold - school results slip as a result. Focus fades easily now; many struggle to finish tasks without interruption. Lower grades follow, which quietly narrows what comes next in life and learning.

Yet at the same time, those same apps push narrow views of how bodies should look, creating feelings of being not good enough, constant comparisons with others, and lower sense of worth - especially for teenage girls.



Right there in the picture, kids sit near each other outside but stare at screens instead of talking. Notice how none of them look up even once - each caught in a private online world. Gadgets now shape childhood more deeply than ever before, changing how little ones connect. Screens teach useful things yet too much time on them pulls attention away from real life. Without shared games or conversation, some abilities just do not grow like they used to. Look closely - the quiet moment shows less movement, fewer laughs, thinner bonds between peers. Time spent swiping replaces climbing trees, chasing friends, making eye contact during stories. Each minute absorbed by tech is one less for learning trust through unscripted moments together. This situation quietly points to something important parents and schools should handle carefully - helping kids find balance when using screens. Without strong support, devices might take up too much space in their days, pushing out face-to-face talk, creative games, or time spent building bonds with others.

•Strategies for Responsible Social Media Engagement and Digital Well-being

To mitigate the potential adverse effects of social media consumption, individuals can adopt several proactive strategies aimed at fostering responsible engagement and promoting digital well-being.

1.Cultivating Mindful Usage and Time Management – Every so often, stepping back from screens brings a kind of quiet clarity. Boundaries around scrolling habits tend to hold up best when they're set in advance. Time spent online shifts smoothly into balance once routines take shape without pressure. Digital moments stay where they belong - alongside life, not in front of it.

2.Counteracting Social Comparison - What you see online isn't real life. Life shows up messy, uneven – yet screens glow with only polished bits. Seeing smiles stacked high doesn't mean your days fall short. Moments get picked, edited, lifted into light while shadows stay hidden. That gap between what's posted and what's lived can weigh heavy if mistaken for truth. Your worth stays whole even when unseen by followers. Quiet moments count more than loud highlights ever do.

3.Prioritizing Digital Privacy and Security - Keeping your info safe matters most. When it comes to sharing things like passwords, phone numbers, or where you live, staying careful makes a difference. Instead of leaving doors open, locking them tight keeps strangers out. Privacy settings turned up high do heavy lifting behind the scenes. Without strong guards, details can slip into wrong hands too easily.

4.Curating a Positive Online Environment - Who really needs constant bad news popping up? Dumping accounts that spread gloom or drama helps. When you stop following them, space opens up for better stuff. Stuff that doesn't weigh on your mood. A cleaner feed often means a clearer head. Seeing less pressure online can quietly ease tension. What shows up on screen shapes how you feel.

5.Fostering Media Literacy and Critical Evaluation – Truth online often hides behind a curtain of noise. Who checks what they see? A habit of doubt protects minds, especially when scrolling feeds filled with guesses dressed as facts. Pause. Ask where it came from. Relying on trusted outlets reshapes how ideas are absorbed. Misinformation loses power when met with careful thinking. Quiet scepticism shields emotions tangled in false narratives.

Finding and Analysis :

According to the study on social media and its impact on mental health showed that-

- Not long ago experts began noticing shifts in how people feel after scrolling through feeds online. Hours spent tapping from one video to another often tie into rising worry, low moods, tension. Teens especially - those still shaping their sense of self - tend to show these effects more sharply. While some connections bring comfort, others quietly chip away at calm. Platforms built for sharing moments sometimes magnify loneliness instead.
- Seeing highlight reels on screens tends to spark quiet doubts. People tend to share just victories, smiles, polished scenes. Others take it in without realizing it's a filtered slice. Slowly, some begin measuring their everyday against someone else's peak. That habit chips away at how they view themselves. Loneliness creeps in when silence follows endless scrolling.
- Late-night scrolling steals hours of rest for plenty of users. Phones in bed cut both how long and how deeply people sleep. When nights are restless, days often bring exhaustion, short tempers, little emotional strength. Weak recovery overnight sets the stage for deeper struggles with mood and mind down the line.
- Still, social media isn't every time damaging. Because it offers ways to reach out, many keep in touch with loved ones through messages or shared moments. When loneliness hits, certain folks find circles

online where they feel seen. Expressing emotions becomes easier when feedback comes from peers who relate. Support groups pop up in corners of the web, offering quiet strength without judgment.

- Truth is, it's not about the apps. What counts sits in our hands - the hours piling up, the habits forming. One moment you're checking a message, next you're lost in someone else's highlight reel. Staring at screens changes moods when there's no pause built in. Slowing down helps more than most admit. Quiet moments between notifications make space to breathe. Less rushing through feeds means clearer heads stay possible.

Conclusion

Every day now, people lean on social media just to stay in touch, share moods, or catch up on news - life runs through it lately. Weeks spent glued to screens often chip away at calmness inside. Hours fixated on devices? They quietly feed stress, restlessness, those lingering dips in mood . When young minds keep measuring themselves against polished snapshots online, emptiness creeps in, confidence wobbles, rest gets messy, and mood takes quiet hits. Spending time online might scatter your focus, making work or study harder. Truth is, social media's effect on your mind? Not good or bad by default. It shifts based on actions taken during use. Time spent staring at feeds weighs heavily, sure - yet behaviour in those minutes counts more. Balance actual experiences with careful online choices to avoid leaning too hard on gadgets. When people understand their own patterns, tools like apps can support them instead of pulling them down

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