IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MENTAL HEALTH: A SURVEY OF RECENT RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: These studies examine the impact of social media on mental health. Social media platforms have grown to be a significant aspect of daily life, offering opportunities for interpersonal connections as well as opportunities for mental health issues. **Methodology:** This research looks at how using social media is related to different mental health results. It tries to figure out what causes the bad effects, like sadness, anxiety, and low self-esteem, as well as the good effects, like community building and social support. Over 100 people between the ages of 18 and 50 took part in the study, which included both multiple-choice questions and polls. **Result:** The results show that the link between using social media and mental health is not as simple as it seems. A lot of people who use social media say they feel neutral or good afterward, but a big chunk of them also feels bad emotions like loneliness, anxiety, and sadness. **Conclusion**: Overusing social media can make it hard to sleep, lead to abuse, and cause people to compare themselves to others, all of which can hurt their self-esteem and body image. On the other hand, social media can also help people feel like they join and offer mental support. The results show that people should use social media in a healthy way and be aware of how it might affect them. The goal of future policies and actions should be to lessen the bad effects of social media use while boosting the good ones.

Keywords: Social Media; Mental Health; Anxiety; Self-esteem; Sleep Disruption

INTRODUCTION

Social media has a substantial influence on an individual's life. It had a significant influence on our personal lives and had a profound effect on our culture, economics, and overall well-being. It offers a place for individuals to discuss ideas, interact, relate, seek counsel, and give help. Mass media refers to a widespread method of communication that reaches and engages almost all members of a society to varying extents. Social media refers to any digital platform that enables users to rapidly generate and distribute material to the general audience. Various applications and websites, like Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, are specifically designed for the purpose of sharing photographs and videos.

The extensive use of the internet and social media presents a potential for innovation, social interaction, and education. However, policymakers and experts in the field of public health have

started expressing worries over the possible consequences on the mental wellness of young individuals. Social media is subject to numerous criticisms, which is why children and teens often access the internet and use social media discreetly from their bedrooms using mobile devices, without parental supervision. Moreover, social media has also altered the manner in which individuals mingle and engage with one another. Existing data indicates that teenagers who dedicate a significant amount of time to engaging with social media platforms are more susceptible to experiencing melancholy, diminished self-esteem, and eating problems (Kaur *et al.*, 2022).

Social media has a substantial impact on an individual's life. It had a significant influence on our personal lives and had a profound effect on our culture, economics, and overall well-being. It offers a place for individuals to discuss ideas, establish connections, establish relationships, seek counsel, and give help. Mass media refers to a widespread method of communication that reaches and engages almost all members of a society to varying extents. Social media refers to any digital platform that enables users to rapidly generate and distribute material to the general audience. Various applications and websites, such as Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, are specifically designed for the purpose of sharing photographs and videos (Macias & J, 2023).

The extensive use of the internet and social media presents a potential for innovation, social interaction, and education. However, policymakers and experts in the field of public health have started expressing worries over the possible consequences on the mental well-being of young individuals. Social media has faced several criticisms, leading to a situation where children and teens are inclined to use the internet and engage in private social media activities from their bedrooms, using mobile devices, without parental supervision. Moreover, social media has also transformed the manner in which individuals socialize and engage with one another. Research indicates that teenagers who dedicate a significant amount of time to engaging with social media platforms are more susceptible to experiencing sadness, having poor self-esteem, and developing eating problems (Bozzola, 2022).

Social media can help people connect with each other and get mental support, but it can also cause problems like worry, sadness, and low self-esteem. Cyberbullying, social comparison, and too much time spent in front of a screen are some of the main causes of these bad results. The impact of social media on mental health is examined in this research. Because social media platforms provide opportunities for interpersonal connections as well as mental health issues, they have become an integral component of daily life. This poll looks at new research that tries to figure out the complicated link between using social media and mental health. The goal is to help shape future policies and treatments.

OBJECTIVE OF STUDIES

- To examine the relationship between social media usage and various mental health outcomes.
- To identify specific factors contributing to negative mental health effects.
- To assess the role of demographics and individual differences.
- To inform interventions and policy recommendations.
- To evaluate positive impacts of social media on mental health.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media platforms provide unparalleled potential for creativity and education. They function as dynamic environments for the distribution of information, cooperative initiatives, and engaging educational experiences. Platforms such as YouTube and TikTok may provide instructional video that is both captivating and easily available to a worldwide audience. Furthermore, these platforms facilitate the rapid dissemination of groundbreaking ideas, nurturing an environment that promotes originality and cooperation (Coyne *et al.*, 2020).

As per the study by O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, (2011), social media enables people to engage in social contact, allowing them to sustain ties regardless of geographical constraints. For those facing social isolation or loneliness, these platforms may provide a feeling of community and inclusion. In addition, social media may function as a vital support system for persons with mental health difficulties, offering platforms for dialogue, guidance, and the exchange of personal encounters.

Steinsbekk *et al*., (2023), argued that research has repeatedly shown a correlation between excessive usage of social media and higher levels of sadness and anxiety. There is a significant correlation between the usage of social media and the presence of depressed symptoms. Moreover, there was a positive correlation between frequent use of social media and a subsequent rise in anxiety levels. The continual juxtaposition with idealized pictures and lifestyles shown on social media may intensify sentiments of inadequacy and diminished self-worth, hence leading to mental health concerns.

Social media has the potential to detrimentally impact self-esteem and body image, particularly among adolescent females. Being exposed to appearance-focused material on sites such as Instagram may result in feelings of body dissatisfaction and reduced self-esteem. The widespread use of manipulated and filtered photographs establishes unattainable ideals of beauty, leading to detrimental comparisons and anxieties about one's own body image (Coyne *et al.*, 2020).

The anonymity afforded by social media platforms may enable cyberbullying and online abuse, resulting in significant psychological repercussions. Those who are targeted by cyberbullying have an increased susceptibility to developing despair, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide. Online harassment, because of its enduring nature, may result in chronic stress and trauma, which can have long-lasting effects on mental health.

Excessive use of social media, especially before going to sleep, has been associated with disruptions in sleep patterns. Increasing use of social media was linked to worse sleep quality and longer time taken to fall asleep. The emission of blue light from screens might disturb the synthesis of melatonin, a vital hormone responsible for sleep regulation, hence causing sleep problems that can worsen mental health conditions.

Adolescents are more susceptible to the adverse consequences of social media as a result of their developmental phase. The teenage brain is in the process of maturing, making it more vulnerable to the impact of peers and prone to emotional instability. Additionally, throughout adolescence, individuals are at a crucial stage of developing their sense of self, and social media may disrupt this process by imposing unattainable standards and stress (Chassiakos *et al.,* 2016).

Adolescent social media addiction is an increasing worry. The incessant urge to monitor alerts, share updates, and seek validation from peers may lead to a compulsive behavioural habit. Social

media addiction has parallels with other behavioural addictions, such as gambling, and may result in considerable suffering and impairment in everyday activities.

Social media may also have a detrimental effect on academic achievement by causing distraction. There is a negative correlation between the amount of time kids spend on social media and their grades and academic accomplishment. Continuous disruptions and engaging in many tasks simultaneously might hinder focus and diminish the amount of time allocated for learning.

Literature Gap

A lot of study has been done on how social media affects mental health, but there are still big gaps. A lot of research hasn't been done on the long-term effects of social media use on people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures. Moreover, we need more complex studies that show how the effects of various social media sites are different. Also, most of the study that has been done so far doesn't look at how psychological traits, coping strategies, and offline social support can change how people are affected by social media. Getting rid of these gaps is important for making focused policies and actions.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to ascertain how "How Social Media impacts mental health" For the same reason, the quantitative method was chosen.

Sampling

People of different ages and genders participated in this research. This research included over 100 participants. Since the majority of respondents were liberal with their responses, it is simple to evaluate the set of data. Details of the study form are shown in [L1].

Table 1: Questionnaire Details

No of question	14
Question Type	Voting Poll, Multiple Choice
How many numbers of people participate	100+
Participants Age range	18 - 50+
Communicating Platform	WhatsApp, Mail, Skype

Source: Collected by author

Research Design

The scientific method was used to gather true information. For this approach, there were multiple choice questions and a poll where people could vote. For the study, a sample group of more than 100 participants was chosen.

RESULTS

The test was sent to the respondents through a number of popular messaging apps, such as Mail, WhatsApp, Skype, and others. People of different kinds of age, gender and profession have volunteered to take part in this poll. The following graphs show the visual review of each question and all the answers that participants gave to that question. For the analysis, "**SPSS Software**" was used.

The **First** question was "***How often do you use social media daily***?" **Table 2** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 2: Daily Social Media Usage among the Age Group of 18 -50

Hourly use of social media (hours)	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
1-3 hours	33	31.4
3-5 hours	28	26.7
Less than 1hour	21	20.0
More than 5 hours	23	21.9
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

Based on **Table 2** the majority of respondents—33, or 31.4%—state that they use social media for one to three hours per day, which suggests moderate usage. This is closely followed by 28 respondents (26.7%) who reported spending three to five hours a day, indicating a significant time commitment. Significantly, 23 people (21.9%) use social media for more than five hours every day, indicating a strong reliance on it, maybe for work or pleasure Conversely, 21 respondents (20.0%) reported using social media for less than an hour, which is linked to negative mental health outcomes including anxiety and lower productivity (Naslund *et al.*, 2020). These trends highlight the importance of understanding balanced usage to reduce hazards and maximise advantages like learning and connectivity. Consuming a section with little dependence, whether due to time constraints or intentional efforts to restrict consumption.

The **Second** question was "***How do you feel after spending time on social media?***" **Table 3** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 3: Feelings after Use of Social Media Among the Age Group of 18 -50

Feelings after use of social media	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Anxious and stressed	7	6.7
Depressed and lonely	14	13.3
Happy and inspired	36	34.3
Neutral	48	45.7
Total	105	100

Based on **Table 3**, responses to social media usage among 105 respondents. Lights the varied emotional impacts of social media use among participants. While 45.7% of respondents reported feeling neutral after spending time on social media, a significant portion (34.3%) found it to be a positive experience, describing themselves as happy and inspired. However, it is noteworthy that a combined 20% reported negative emotions, with 13.3% feeling depressed and lonely, and 6.7% experiencing anxiety and stress.

These findings align with previous studies, such as Keles *et al.,* (2023), who identified that excessive or unmoderated social media use can trigger negative psychological effects like anxiety and depression. However, platforms also provide advantages, such introducing users to uplifting material, which bolsters the encouraging comments seen.

The **Third** question was "***Which social media platform do you use the most?***" **Table 4** depicted the analysis of this question

Table 4: Most Used Social Media among the Age Group of 18 -50

Most used social media	Frequency(n)	Percent (%)
Facebook	67	63.8
Instagram	29	27.6
TikTok	6	5.7
Twitter	3	2.9
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

Based on **Table 4** Facebook is the most popular social media site, 63.8% of those surveyed? Facebook's wide user base and diversified features, which meet a range of user demands like networking, news, and entertainment, are reflected in its dominance. Instagram was selected by 27.6% of respondents, indicating that younger audiences who value visual material and trends pushed by influencers find it appealing. Only 5.7% of respondents chose TikTok, despite the app's increasing popularity worldwide. This could be a sign of low acceptance among the studied population, perhaps as a result of factors like age, cultural preferences, or data privacy concerns. Last but not least, Twitter's 2.9% usage indicates that it plays a specialized role in this group, mainly as a forum for conversations and real-time updates.

These results are consistent with research by Chugh & Ruhi, (2017), who found that Instagram caters to younger audiences who are visually orientated, while Facebook continues to dominate with older and multipurpose users. The findings highlight how crucial platform-specific outreach and engagement tactics are.

The **Fourth** question was: "***Do you think social media affects your sleep patterns?***" **Table 5** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 5: Social Media Effects on Sleep Pattern

Social media effects	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Not at all	13	12.8

Not really	33	31.4
Significantly	20	19.0
Somewhat	39	37.1
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

Based on **Table 5**, While 19.0% of respondents said social media had a major impact on their sleep, a sizable portion (37.1%) said it had a somewhat negative effect. These groups collectively account for more than half (56.1%) of the participants, indicating that for most people, social media use has at least a moderate impact on sleep. On the other hand, 12.8% said social media had no effect at all, and 31.4% said it had no real effect on their sleep.

These results are consistent with research like Serenko *et al*., (2021), which emphasizes how social media and screen time negatively impact sleep quality, mostly by causing people to stay up later and sleep for shorter periods of time. Sleep problems can be made worse by the suppression of melatonin production caused by the blue light that screens generate.

The **Fifth** question was "***How often do you compare yourself to others on social media?***" **Table 6** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 6: Self Comparison on Social Media

Name of social media	Frequency(n)	Percent (%)
Always	6	5.7
Never	15	14.3
Often	36	34.3
Sometimes	48	45.7
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

Based on **Table 6**, 5.7% always compare themselves to others, while 14.3% never do. A significant proportion, 34.3%, often engage in comparison, and the largest group, 45.7%, sometimes compare themselves to others.

The **Sixth** question was "***Have you ever experienced cyberbullying on social media?***" **Table 7** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 7: Frequency of Cyberbullying Experiences on Social Media

Cyberbullying Experiences on social media	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
But I know someone who has	29	27.6
Frequently	14	13.3
Never	39	37.1
Occasionally	23	21.9
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

Based on **Table 7**, 37.1% of the 105 participants said they have never been the victim of cyberbullying, suggesting that most have stayed away from direct instances. Nonetheless, 27.6%

of respondents admitted to knowing someone who has been impacted, highlighting the problem's wider social effects. Unbelievably, 13.3% of respondents reported experiencing cyberbullying regularly, and 21.9% reported experiencing it occasionally. This means that 35.2% of respondents were directly exposed to cyberbullying to some degree.

This is consistent with research by Habeeb, (2019), which showed how common cyberbullying is, particularly among social media users. The study emphasises the necessity for focused interventions by showing that although many people are unaffected, a sizable number experience direct or indirect exposure.

The **Seventh** question was "***Do you believe social media impacts your self-esteem?***" **Table 8** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 8: Social Media Effects on Self – Esteem

Social media effects	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Improves	27	25.7
Lowers	29	27.6
No effect	23	21.9
Not sure	26	24.8
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

According to the **Table 8**'s findings, opinions on whether social media has an effect on self-esteem are mixed. Of those surveyed, 25.7% said social media boosts their self-esteem, while 27.6% said it depresses it. A smaller percentage, 21.9%, thought social media had no impact, while 24.8% weren't sure. This demonstrates how intricate social media's influence on how people perceive the world is.

Both good and negative impacts are highlighted in supporting research. According to research by Papadopoulou, (2024), social media—specifically image-based sites like Instagram—can have a detrimental effect on self-esteem, especially among younger users who frequently contrast themselves with idealised portrayals.

The **Eighth** question was "***How does social media influence your perception of body image?***" **Table 9** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 9: Social Media's Influence on Body Image

Social Media's Influence	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Negatively	20	19.0
No influence	53	50.5
Not applicable	9	8.6
Positively	23	21.9
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

Based on **Table 9**, while 21.9% of respondents admit a beneficial influence from social media, 19% say it has a negative effect on their body image. Social media has no impact on body image, according to the largest group (50.5%), while 8.6% do not think it applies to them. These results are consistent with research showing social media, both positively and negatively, can influence body image. For example, Gambelli, (2024), discovered that young women in particular may experience body dissatisfaction as a result of viewing idealised photographs on social media sites like Instagram. On the other side, social media's capacity to promote body positivity and a variety of beauty representations could have a good impact.

The **Ninth** question was" ***Do you use social media to seek validation (likes, comments)?***" **Table 10** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 10: Frequency of Using Social Media to Seek Validation

Frequency of Using social media	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Always	20	19.0
Never	14	13.3
Rarely	21	20.0
Sometimes	50	47.6
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

Based on **Table 10**, While 19% of participants said they always use social media to get approval, 47.6% of participants said they do it sometimes. This implies that social media helps a sizable percentage of people satisfy their desire for social acceptance, while this function is not always present. The very high proportion of respondents who "rarely" or "never" look for validation (20% and 13.3%, respectively) could be a reflection of a rising understanding of the detrimental psychological effects of using social media to seek external validation.

Studies demonstrating that social media approval seeking might result in anxiety and feelings of insecurity provide credence to this (Habeeb, 2019).

The **Tenth** question was "***How often do you feel lonely despite being active on social media?***" **Table 11** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 11: Loneliness Experienced While Active on Social Media

Loneliness Experienced	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Always	13	12.4
Never	12	11.4
Often	36	34.3
Sometimes	44	41.9
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

Based on **Table 11**, despite being engaged on social media, the survey data shows that people experience different degrees of loneliness. Despite using social media, a sizable percentage of respondents (41.9%) said they sometimes feel lonely, and 34.3% said they often feel lonely. It's

interesting to note that 11.4% of participants said they never feel lonely, but 12.4% said they do. These results are consistent with study by Gambelli, (2024), which indicates that social isolation and loneliness may be exacerbated by greater usage of social media, especially when people compare their lives to those of others online.

The **Eleventh** question was "***Have you ever taken a break from social media for mental health reasons?***" **Table 12** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 12: Frequency of Social Media Breaks among Participants

Frequency of Social Media Breaks	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Multiple times	29	27.6
Never	32	30.5
Once	31	29.5
Wants to	13	12.4
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

Based on **Table 12** that a significant percentage of respondents (27.6%) had taken many vacations from social media for mental health reasons, suggesting that they are aware of the possible harm that social media may do to their wellbeing. A lack of knowledge or an unwillingness to detach because of social or professional obligations may be the reason why 30.5% of respondents said they had never taken a vacation. Interestingly, 29.5% of respondents said they had taken a break at least once, which could be a reflection of intermittent efforts to address mental health issues. Furthermore, 12.4% of respondents said they wanted to take a break but haven't yet, indicating that the need of these breaks is becoming more widely acknowledged.

The importance of digital detox for mental health has been highlighted by supporting research showing that taking breaks from social media helps lower stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms (Sivakumar *et al.,* 2023).

The **Twelfth** question was "***Do you find it difficult to disconnect from social media?***" **Table 13** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 13: frequency of Difficulty in Disconnecting from Social Media

frequency of Difficulty	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Not at all	16	15.2
Not really	36	34.3
Somewhat difficult	43	41.0
Very difficult	10	9.5
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

According to the Table 13 findings, a significant percentage of participants find it difficult to unplug from social media, with 41% saying it is "somewhat difficult" and 9.5% saying it is "very difficult." This implies that social media has ingrained itself into many people's everyday lives, making it more difficult for them to stop using it. The prevalence of social media in

contemporary life is shown by the fact that 49.5% of participants reported having some trouble unplugging.

According to supporting research, excessive usage of social media may result in psychological reliance, which makes it harder to disconnect from online platforms (Keles *et al.*, 2023).

The **Thirteenth** question was "***How often do you experience FOMO (fear of missing out) due to social media?***" **Table 14** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 14: Respondents' Challenges with Social Media

Respondents' Challenges	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Always	9	8.6
Never	42	40.0
Often	31	29.5
Sometimes	23	21.9
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

Based on **Table 14** a considerable percentage of respondents (40%) to the poll report never experiencing FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) as a result of social media, which indicates a degree of detachment or resistance to the pressures often connected to social media platforms. On the other hand, social media may have a significant emotional influence on this demographic, leading to feelings of fear or inadequacy, since 8.6% of respondents said they constantly suffer FOMO. The curated nature of social media, where users often share highlights of their life, may sometimes influence a significant majority of people, as seen by the 29.5% who report feeling FOMO frequently and the 21.9% who report experiencing it occasionally. This is consistent with research that demonstrates how idealised depictions of other people's lives on social media may lead to poor emotional effects, such as anxiety, despair, and a warped perception of reality (Chugh & Ruhi, 2017). The results highlight the nuanced connection between psychological health and social media usage.

The **Fourteenth** question was "***Do you use social media as a primary source of news and information?***" **Table 15** depicted the analysis of this question.

Table 15: News

Social Media Usage for News: Frequency Distribution	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Always	35	33.3
Never	20	19.0
Often	18	17.1
Sometimes	32	30.5
Total	105	100

Source: Collected by author through SPSS

Based on **Table 15**, findings, many respondents rely heavily on social media as their main source of news and information. Social media dominates the delivery of information, as shown by the fact that 33.3% of the 105 participants constantly depend on it for updates. Furthermore, 17.1%

of respondents often use social media, and 30.5% sometimes use it, suggesting that almost 80% of respondents utilise social media to some degree while looking for information.

On the other hand, 19.0% of people never use social media for news, indicating that a sizable minority still depends on other sources or conventional media. Various results are consistent with research by the Naslund *et al.,* (2020), which found that 53% of Americans get their news from social media, despite differing levels of confidence in various sites.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study provide important light on the ways in which social media use affects mental health, emotional stability, and information perception, among other facets of everyday life. The test was intended to gather a diverse range of participants from different age groups, genders, and occupations. It was disseminated via well-known messaging apps including Mail, WhatsApp, and Skype. Using SPSS software, the survey data were analysed to reveal a number of themes that are indicative of broader societal trends and psychological effects associated with social media use.

A significant percentage of respondents (31.4%) use social media for 1-3 hours each day, with 26.7% spending 3-5 hours, according to the first question, "How often do you use social media daily?" Although these figures indicate that moderate to high use is typical, they also highlight the possible dangers of excessive social media use, which has been connected in earlier research to anxiety and depression (Ostic *et al.,* 2021). The results highlight how crucial it is to encourage social media usage in moderation in order to prevent detrimental health effects while maximizing its benefits, such as connectedness and educational possibilities.

Table 3 examined sentiments after social media use in relation to emotional effect. After accessing social media, a sizable portion of respondents (45.7%) said they felt indifferent, whilst 34.3% said they felt motivated and pleased. Nonetheless, a troubling percentage of participants (20%) reported feeling depressed, anxious, or lonely. This supports research by Nesi *et al.,* (2021), who claimed that excessive usage of social media might cause psychological suffering. These emotional repercussions also demonstrate the nuanced influence social media has on one's own wellbeing.

Facebook topped the list of social media platforms most often utilised by respondents (Table 4), with 63.8% citing it as their first choice. This result is consistent with a study by Ajewumi *et al.,* (2024). that highlighted Facebook's large user base across a variety of categories. Remarkably, despite its widespread usage, TikTok was less often utilised by survey respondents, maybe as a result of age or privacy concerns. The findings imply that, depending on platform preferences, customised approaches are required to attract various social media audiences.

More over half of the responders to the sleep patterns question (Table 5) said social media had at least a moderate influence on their sleep, with 37.1% saying it had a relatively unfavourable effect. This supports earlier research that emphasized the impact of screen time on sleep disruption, such (Newsom & Rehman, 2023). The results highlight the need of encouraging better use practices and increasing awareness of the negative consequences of excessive screen time, especially in the evening.

Another important subject that was examined in the survey was self-comparison (Table 6). On social media, a sizable percentage of respondents (34.3%) often participate in social comparison,

which might have detrimental psychological repercussions. This is consistent with studies showing that social comparison, especially when users compare themselves to idealized depictions of others' lives online, may result in feelings of inadequacy and decreased self-esteem (Serenko *et al.*, 2021).

According to Table 7, 35.2% of respondents said they had either personally experienced or knew someone who had been impacted by cyberbullying, indicating that it is still a widespread problem. Because cyberbullying is so common, additional awareness efforts and more robust online safety measures are required. This is in line with the results of Kiriakidis & Kavoura, (2010), who highlights the psychological harm caused by cyberbullying and the significance of tackling this problem in the context of social media platforms.

Responses to the question of how social media affects self-esteem were not entirely consistent (Table 8). Some respondents said social media improved their self-esteem, while others said it had the opposite effect. This result is in line with Naslund *et al.*, (2020), observation that social media, especially image-based sites like Instagram, might have a detrimental impact on younger users' self-esteem by encouraging unattainable beauty standards.

Responses to the question of body image perception (Table 9) also differed. 19% of respondents said social media had a negative impact on their body image, whilst 50.5% said it had no effect at all. This corroborates other research, like that of Serenko *et al.*, (2021), which found that social media exposure to idealized body types might exacerbate body dissatisfaction, particularly in young women.

Regarding validation-seeking behaviour (Table 10), a sizable percentage of participants (47.6%) said they sometimes use social media to look for validation, while 19% said they do it often. The constant need for social acceptance may be explained by the demand for external validation via likes and comments, which has been connected to emotions of anxiety and insecurity (Kiriakidis & Kavoura 2010).

Another topic included in the poll was loneliness (Table 11). In line with studies by (Serenko *et al.*, 2021). 41.9% of respondents reported sometimes feeling lonely while being active on social media, indicating that social media might make loneliness worse. The contradictory character of social media is highlighted by this research, since individuals may feel emotionally detached yet having connections online.

A considerable portion of respondents (27.6%) who took breaks from social media for mental health concerns (Table 12) reported taking several breaks, indicating an increasing awareness of the detrimental effects of excessive social media usage. Newsom & Rehman, (2023), which emphasized the advantages of digital detox for enhancing mental health, is in line with this.

Social media's ubiquitous effect on day-to-day life is further shown by the difficulty of unplugging from it (Table 13). According to the findings, many respondents find it difficult to unplug, either somewhat or extremely difficult. This suggests that social media has become ingrained in everyday life and might develop in psychological dependence (Ajewumi *et al.*, 2024).

Last but not least, 29.5% of respondents said they often feel FOMO (Table 14), which is in line with Nesi *et al.*, (2021), research on the affective effects of idealized representations on social

media. FOMO reflects the complicated link between social media and mental health by contributing to worry and feelings of inadequacy.

Last but not least, Table 15 demonstrates that for a large percentage of respondents (33.3%), social media serves as their main source of news and information. This pattern has been progressively identified in studies by Ostic *et al.,* (2021), the majority of respondents use social media at least sometimes, despite 19% of participants not depending on it for news, underscoring the changing nature of information consumption.

To sum up, this poll offers valuable information on how social media affects a range of facets of life, such as emotional well-being, sleep habits, mental health, and self-esteem. Social media provides knowledge and connection, but it also carries serious hazards, including the possibility of anxiety, despair, and bad body image judgements. These results are consistent with other studies and highlight the significance of understanding the intricate connection between social media use and mental health as well as the need of moderate and thoughtful use.

LIMITATION

Numerous restrictions on the research might have an impact on how broadly applicable the results are. First off, there were only 105 participants in the sample, which could not be sufficient to represent a range of demographic or geographic groups. Second, using self-reported data raises the possibility of biases such memory recall mistakes and social desirability. A sample biased towards those who are more engaged online may also arise from the use of convenience sampling via apps like Skype, Mail, and WhatsApp. Furthermore, the research did not take into consideration outside factors that may have affected the participants' answers, such as their pre-existing mental health issues. The cross-sectional design is another drawback; it only records a single moment in time of social media use and its consequences, making it difficult to draw conclusions about causation. Lastly, even if SPSS analysis is reliable, it could not adequately convey the nuanced qualitative aspects of participants' experiences.

CONCLUSION

The study results emphasize the diverse influence of social media on mental well-being. Although social media provides chances for connectivity and assistance, it also poses hazards such as worry, sadness, and diminished self-worth. These unfavorable results are influenced by cyberbullying, social comparison, and excessive screen time. On the other hand, meaningful relationships and supportive groups may boost emotions of belonging and increase mental well-being. The study findings indicate that a substantial proportion of users encounter both favorable and unfavorable consequences, with a considerable number experiencing sentiments of isolation despite their active involvement in social media. These results highlight the need of using social media in a balanced manner and being aware of its possible effects. Future regulations and initiatives should focus on reducing the negative impacts and enhancing the good elements, in order to create a more wholesome digital environment for users.

FUTURE SCOPE

The results of the study provide a strong basis for further investigation into the complex connection between social media use and mental health. Results may be more broadly applicable if the sample size is increased across a range of demographics. Deeper insights may be obtained

by using sophisticated analytical methods, such as machine learning, for sentiment analysis of open-ended replies. To further understand individual experiences, a mixed-methods approach that includes qualitative interviews might be beneficial. The long-term psychological consequences of social media might be evaluated via longitudinal research. Furthermore, social impacts would be highlighted by comparison research across cultural or geographical settings. These developments may help create focused solutions to reduce dangers and maximize social media's advantages.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that they have no conflict of interests.

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