

## IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MENTAL HEALTH

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### ABSTRACT

Adolescents increasingly find it difficult to picture their lives without social media. Practitioners need to be able to assess risk, and social media may be a new component to consider. Although there is limited empirical evidence to support the claim, the perception of the link between social media and mental health is heavily influenced by teenage and professional perspectives. Privacy concerns, cyberbullying, and bad effects on schooling and mental health are all risks associated with this population's usage of social media. However, ethical social media use can expand opportunities for connection and conversation, as well as boost self-esteem, promote health, and gain access to critical medical information. Despite mounting evidence of social media's negative effects on adolescent mental health, there is still a scarcity of empirical research on how teens comprehend social media, particularly as a body of wisdom, or how they might employ wider modern media discourses to express themselves. Youth use cell phones and other forms of media in large numbers, resulting in chronic sleep loss, which has a negative influence on cognitive ability, school performance, and socio-emotional functioning. According to data from several cross-sectional, longitudinal, and empirical research, smartphone and social media use among teenagers relates to an increase in mental distress, self-harming behaviours, and suicidality. Clinicians can work with young people and their families to reduce the hazards of social media and smartphone usage by using open, non-judgmental, and developmentally appropriate tactics, including education and practical problem-solving.

### Keywords

Social Media, Mental Health, Depression, Anxiety, Loneliness, Social Isolation, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

### INTRODUCTION

Humans are naturally social species that depend on the companionship of others to thrive in life. Thus, while being socially linked with others helps alleviate stress, worry, and melancholy, a lack of social connection can pose major threats to one's mental health. Over the past 10 years, the rapid emergence of social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others has led to some significant changes in how people connect and communicate (Table 1). Over one billion people are currently active users of Facebook, the largest social networking website, and it is anticipated that this number will grow significantly over time, especially in developing countries.

Facebook is used for both personal and professional interaction, and its deployment has had a number of positive effects on connectivity, idea sharing, and online learning. Furthermore, the number of social media users globally in 2019 was 3.484 billion, a 9% increase year on year. Mental health is represented as a state of well-being in which individuals recognize their potential, successfully navigate daily challenges, perform effectively at work, and make a substantial difference in the lives of others. There is currently debate over the benefits and drawbacks of social media on mental health. Social networking is an important part of safeguarding our mental health. Mental health, health behavior, physical health, and mortality risk are all affected by the quantity and quality of social contacts.

Social media use and mental health may be related, and the displaced behavior theory could assist in clarifying why. The displaced behavior hypothesis is a psychology theory that suggests people have limited self-control and, when confronted with a challenging or stressful situation, may engage in behaviours that bring instant gratification but are not in accordance with their long-term objectives. In addition, when people are unable to deal with stress in a healthy way, they may act out in ways that temporarily make them feel better but ultimately harm their long-term goals and wellness. In the 1990s, social psychologist Roy Baumeister initially suggested the displaced behavior theory. Baumeister suggested that self-control is a limited resource that can be drained over time and that when self-control resources are low, people are more likely to engage in impulsive or self-destructive conduct. This can lead to a cycle of bad behaviors and outcomes, as individuals may engage in behaviors that bring short respite but eventually add to their stress and difficulties. According to the hypothetical terms, those who participate in sedentary behaviors, including social media, engage in fewer opportunities for in-person social interaction, both of which have been demonstrated to be protective against mental illnesses. Social theories, on the other hand, discovered that social media use influences mental health by affecting how people interpret, maintain, and interact with their social network.

Numerous studies on social media's effects have been conducted, and it has been proposed that prolonged use of social media sites like Facebook may be linked to negative manifestations and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. A distinct and important time in a person's life is adolescence. Additionally, risk factors such as family issues, bullying, and social isolation are readily available at this period, and it is crucial to preserve social and emotional growth. The growth of digital technology has affected numerous areas of adolescent lives. Nowadays, teenagers' use of social media is one of their most apparent characteristics. Being socially connected with other people is a typical phenomenon, whether at home, school, or a social gathering, and adolescents are constantly in touch with their classmates via social media accounts. Adolescents are drawn to social networking sites because they allow them to publish pictures, images, and videos on their platforms. It also allows teens to establish friends, discuss ideas, discover new interests, and try out new kinds of self-expression. Users of these platforms can freely like and comment on posts as well as share them without any restrictions. Teenagers now frequently post insulting remarks on social media platforms. Adolescents frequently engage in trolling for amusement without recognizing the potentially harmful consequences. Trolling on

these platforms focuses on body shaming, individual abilities, language, and lifestyle, among other things. The effects that result from trolling might cause anxiety, depressive symptoms, stress, feelings of isolation, and suicidal thoughts. The authors explain the influence of social media on teenage well-being through a review of existing literature and provide intervention and preventative measures at the individual, family, and community levels

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Chen, and Lee, in (2013) determined how Facebook interactions and psychological Distress interact with each other in two main areas: communication overload and personal self-esteem. The authors of the research defined communication overload as, "When too much Information is flowing into an individual's brain – emails, texts, phone calls, instant messages, Posts, and status updates – an individual can become overwhelmed." This research was drawn From an online survey given to 513 college students and only students with valid answers to all Questions on the survey were utilized in the research. Psychological distress was measured by using six items adapted from the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale and Facebook interaction was measured by eight items that

Indicated the frequency of Facebook activities in the past 30 days through a 7-point Likert-scale. The researchers had numerous hypotheses about this study, one of them being that "The Frequency of Facebook interaction is positively related to psychological distress" (Chen, W., and Lee, K. H., 2013). This study found out that frequent interaction with Facebook is associated With greater psychological distress through a two-step pathway that reduces self-esteem and Increases communication overload. The results of this research are important to help us begin to Understand the effects social media have on mental health, specifically Facebook. Since Psychological distress was positively correlated with the frequency of Facebook interaction, it

Can be inferred that the more an individual interacts with Facebook, the more psychological Distress that individual will deal with (as a result of an increase in communication overload and Reduced self-esteem). An earlier study that investigated social media and mental health comes from Hawi, N., & Samaha, M. in 2019. These researchers sought to find out the relationship between social Media, self-esteem, and self-construal. The researchers defined self-construal as "one's definition Of one's self, independent of others' opinions and views". Some of the assessment tools utilized In this research were the Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), the Satisfaction with Life Scale The impact of social media on mental health has been extensively studied, with a growing body of literature exploring various dimensions of this complex relationship. Key findings from existing research provide a nuanced understanding of both positive and negative influences. Depression and Anxiety:

- Twenge et al. (2019) in the Journal of Abnormal Psychology found a significant increase in major depressive episodes among young adults, coinciding with the rise of social media use.

- Primack et al. (2017) demonstrated a positive association between social media use and depression among young adults in their study published in Depression and Anxiety.

#### Loneliness and Social Isolation:

- The American Journal of Preventive Medicine published a study by Primack et al. (2017) linking high social media use to increased feelings of loneliness and social isolation.
- A cross-sectional analysis by Shakya and Christakis (2017) in the American Journal of Epidemiology suggested that higher social media use is associated with feelings of social isolation.

#### Fear of Missing Out (FOMO):

- Research by Elhai et al. (2018) in the Journal of Affective Disorders explored the connection between fear of missing out (FOMO) and problematic social media use, indicating a potential mediating role in mental health outcomes.

#### Positive Aspects:

- The Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication published a study by Lee et al. (2018) suggesting that social media can serve as a valuable platform for emotional expression, providing individuals with emotional support and enhancing well-being.

#### Sleep Disturbances:

- A systematic review by Woods and Scott (2016) in the journal Sleep Medicine Reviews highlighted the association between social media use, particularly before bedtime, and sleep disturbances, underscoring the importance of considering the impact on sleep quality.

#### Interventions and Strategies:

- Numerous studies, such as those by Naslund et al. (2016) in the Journal of Medical Internet Research, explore interventions and strategies to mitigate the negative impact of social media on mental health, emphasizing the potential role of digital well-being initiatives.

This literature review demonstrates the multidimensional nature of the relationship between social media and mental health, indicating the need for a comprehensive understanding when formulating strategies to promote positive outcomes in this digital age.

(SwLS), and the Self-Construal Scale (SCS). The researchers did not specify any hypotheses but The results showed that, among other variables, a lower sense of self-esteem and emotional Stability were significantly correlated with both internet addiction and social media addiction. That is, the less self-esteem and/or less emotional stability an individual has, the higher the Chances the individual develops an internet addition and/or social media addiction. Age, Satisfaction with life, and self-construal were neither correlated with internet addiction nor social media addiction.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Studying the impact of social media on mental health typically involves a mixed-methods research approach. This may include surveys, interviews, and content analysis. Surveys can help gather

quantitative data on usage patterns and self-reported mental health indicators, while interviews offer qualitative insights into individuals' experiences. Content analysis allows researchers to analyze the nature of social media content and its potential influence. Ethical considerations, participant consent, and a robust data analysis plan are crucial elements in this research methodology. In addition to the mentioned methods, researchers often employ longitudinal studies to track changes over time. Randomized control trials (RCTs) can be utilized to assess the causal relationship between social media use and mental health outcomes by implementing interventions or control conditions. Collaborations with mental health professionals and organizations help ensure a nuanced understanding of psychological well-being. Ethnographic research may also provide a contextual understanding of how social media is embedded in individuals' lives. Overall, a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach enhances the depth and reliability of findings in studying this complex interaction. To study how social media affects mental health, researchers use surveys, interviews, and data analysis. Surveys help gather numbers on social media use and mental health, while interviews give more personal insights. Looking at the actual content on social media is also important.

They might follow people over time to see changes and even run experiments to test if social media directly influences mental health. Working with mental health experts and considering people's backgrounds helps get a complete picture. It's also important to be aware of any biases and be open to different experiences. Sharing findings in scientific journals lets others learn from the research.

## **THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA 10**

The results of this research are important because they give us an idea for what variables are significantly correlated with internet addiction and social media addiction (see Table 1). Self-esteem and emotional stability are both negatively correlated with both internet addiction and social media addiction. This means that the less emotionally stable an individual is and/or the less self-esteem an individual has, the more likely that individual is going to develop an internet addiction and social media addiction. However, age, satisfaction with life, and self-construal were all not correlated with either internet addiction or social media addiction. These findings are important because we can begin to understand what traits people with internet addiction and/or social media addiction generally carry- less emotional stability and less self-esteem than the average person. This research is able to help us understand the previous research stated in this paper. If an individual is less emotionally stable and/or has a low self-esteem, that individual is more likely to develop an internet and/or social media addiction. If an individual carries an internet and/or social media addiction, what are the chances that individual interacts more than the average individual with Facebook? If it is the case that an individual with a social media or internet addiction interacts with Facebook more than the average person, because they have an addiction to either the internet or social media, previous literature has stated that individual will have a higher chance of developing psychological distress. This research is important not only because we can gather the fact that more interactions with Facebook generally causes more psychological distress in an individual, but we can begin to understand how internet addictions and social media

addictions also play into the role of Psychological distress We now know frequent interactions with Facebook may cause greater psychological Distress via a two-step pathway (Chen, W., and Lee, K. H., 2013) containing reduced self-esteem And increased communication overload (see Figure 2) but what would happen if someone Decides to quit using Facebook? In a study conducted by Morten Tromholt in 2016, the effects of Quitting Facebook were analyzed. 1,095 Danish participants were recruited via Facebook in 2016 For this research. It is notable, though, that eighty-six percent of the sample were women and the Average age of participants was thirty-four-years-old. The two hypotheses from Morten suggest that “Facebook use affects life satisfaction negatively” and “Facebook use affects emotions

Negatively”. After completing a fifteen-minute online questionnaire, the participants were Randomly assigned to one of two groups. One group was told not to use Facebook for a week and The other group was told to continue using Facebook for a week. The results of this study showed That the participants who did not use Facebook for a week reported significantly higher levels of Life satisfaction than participants who did use Facebook for a week- which confirms the Hypothesis that “Facebook use affects life satisfaction negatively”. This research also found that Facebook users gained aspects of well-being based on how they used Facebook. Heavy users of Facebook who quit the social media site for a week reported greater well-being than light users Of Facebook who quit the social media site for a week. This result means an individual does not Necessarily have to quit Facebook altogether to gain a higher sense of well-being, but change the Behavior in which the individual uses Facebook. Using Facebook less-heavily results in a greater Sense of well-being than using Facebook heavily

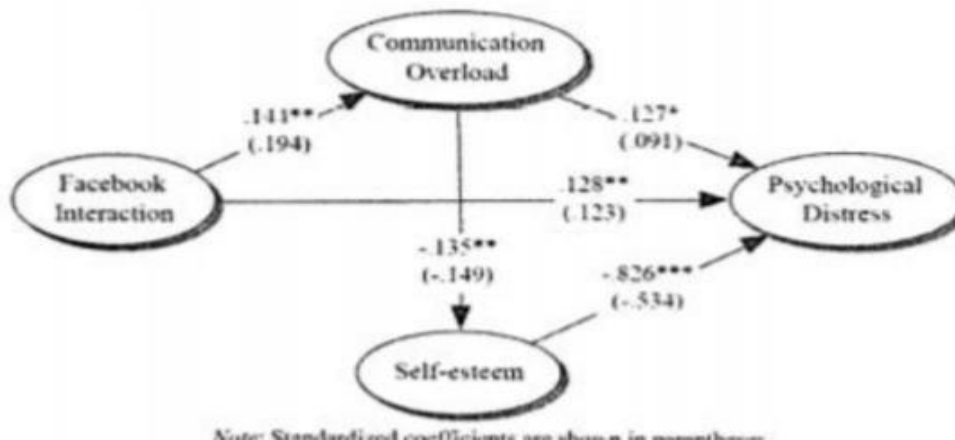


Figure - 1

This research by Morten Tromholt in 2016 shows the effects of quitting Facebook for a Week versus not quitting Facebook for a week. This research is important because it shows that Quitting Facebook for only a week increases an individual’s sense of life satisfaction and wellbeing. Now that we know using Facebook less or quitting the site altogether produces an increase In life

satisfaction and personal well-being, we can add that to the previous finding that Facebook Produces a greater psychological distress through diminished self-esteem and increased Communication overload to make general finding that Facebook, one of many social media sites, Is negative for one's mental health in a few different aspects. Adding to this fact that, among Other variables, a lower sense of self-esteem and emotional stability were significantly correlated With both internet addiction and social media addiction, we can start to see the negative effects of social media use altogether. If an individual has a lower sense of self-esteem And emotional stability, that individual is more likely to develop an internet addiction and social Media addiction. If an individual develops these addictions, we can conclude, based on prior Research, that the addictions will, generally, only lessen life satisfaction and well-being while Increasing psychological distress if the individual uses Facebook. In a recent study by Sherlock and Wagstaff (2019), Instagram use was looked at in order To try and establish a link between Instagram use and various psychological variables. The Participants of this study were 129 women between the ages of 18 and 35. First, the participants Completed a series of questionnaires that showed Instagram use is correlated with self-esteem Depressive symptoms, general and physical appearance anxiety, and body dissatisfaction. The Research showed that these correlations were mediated by social comparison. That is, if an Individual uses Instagram and consciously or subconsciously compares themselves to the people They are looking at or interacting with on Instagram, then Instagram use is correlated with the Variables listed above (Sherlock, M., & Wagstaff, D. L., 2019). In another portion of this study, Participants were exposed to a collection of either beauty, fitness, or travel Instagram images to See how interpretation and interaction with the images correlated with various psychological Variables. The results of this portion of the study showed that fitness and beauty images Significantly decreased self-rated attractiveness of the participants, and the size of this decrease In self-rated attractiveness was correlated with depressive symptoms, anxiety, body Dissatisfaction, and a decrease in self-esteem (Sherlock, M., & Wagstaff, D. L., 2019). As the previous study regarding Instagram use and various psychological variables showed (Sherlock, M., & Wagstaff, D. L., 2019), Instagram use and the way individuals interact with the Social media site are associated with negative mental health outcomes such as depressive Symptoms, decreased self-esteem, general and physical appearance anxiety, and body Dissatisfaction. These correlations were mediated by social comparison, so if an individual were To consciously or subconsciously compare themselves socially to the people or images seen on The site, then the negative outcomes would appear. Additionally, when exposed to fitness and Beauty images on Instagram, participants showed significantly decreased self-rated Attractiveness. The size of the decrease in self-rated attractiveness was correlated with depressive Symptoms, anxiety, body-dissatisfaction, and a decrease in self-esteem (Sherlock, M., & Wagstaff, D. L., 2019). These results are important because they begin to help us understand What Instagram use and looking at either fitness or beauty images on Instagram can do to a Person's mental health.

### **POSITIVE IMPACT**

Social media isn't inherently bad for mental health; it can be positive and uplifting too. In a study Conducted by the University of Melbourne and the Monash University, 70 studies were reviewed

Where, the result showed that the social media could be useful for connecting with others and Provide unique mental support for people with anxieties (Medicalxpress 2016, Cited 29.10.2018). In another study conducted by Michigan State University, it was found that when participants are More active in social media like Facebook, they give advice, show empathy or support in some way Which ultimately increases their well-being as compared to passive users (Kogan 2018, Cited 30.10.2018). Here, passive users refer to those who scroll the social media pages without any Specific purpose. Now, the social media bridges the space between communities all around the Globe through which people are sharing their inspiring stories, motivating to live a happy life, Promoting peace and supporting under challenging times. Ms. Devon who is a writer spends most of her time visiting schools and talking to young people About her experience. In an interview, she said, "I have found social media to be a wonderful place To connect with like-minded individuals. It's nice to know there are people out there who understand, And who offer encouraging words when needed." (Nichol 2018, Cited 30.10.2018.) Some of the benefits of social media on mental health are discussed below briefly:

a) Mental health support

Social media can provide mental health support. "It has immediacy for getting support When we need it most, and there's nobody around, or nobody we feel we can go to with Our problems (a common experience among people with mental health issues is one of the Feelings: burden to others)", said Katie Sutton who is the student Nursing Times editor for Mental Health branch. In her blog she gave an example of a nurse-maiden, Sally-Ann who Posted on Twitter at 11:20 pm as follow: "My daughter is having a severe panic attack, we r using a paper bag, but I can't seem to Settle her? She is so scared it's horrible any advice?" The tweet above got the attention of the several nurses offering advice and retweeting it. Sally-Ann twitted after 20 minutes saying her daughter is feeling better and thanked all the Suggestions she received. (Sutton 2013, Cited 26.10.2018.)

Nowadays not all people use social media as a platform to connect with friends and Relatives, but there are also many professionals who are giving advice and suggestion to The needy people through it. In the case of mental health, people who suffer from some Mental health issues such as anxiety, and depression, some find it difficult to share their Problems with the real people around them. In such cases, social media plays a supportive Role to connect such a person to seek help from different health professionals or people With similar experiences virtually. For instance, Elefriends is a social platform managed by The mental health charity (Mind) which provides urgent help on the mental health issues. There are also numerous community pages or groups in Facebook run by mental health Professionals to support mental health issues and to increase awareness. Instagram offers Support and helps when type '#depressed' in a search box. However, the user should also Be responsible for choosing the appropriate platforms to share their issues because social Media is also a place where online bullying happens all the time. In a new survey supported by Hope lab and Well Being Trust, it demonstrated that social Media is an integral part of young people's lives and that large number of teens and adults Experiencing moderate to severe



symptoms of depression turn to the internet for help. The survey report even alerted telling young people who have symptoms of depression to stay Off the social media may not always be wise; for some, it may cut off a critical lifeline, a Connection to advice, information, inspiration, and support. (Miller 2018, Cited 26.10.2018.)

## B) Personal Empowerment

Social media provide a range of benefits and opportunities to empower people in a variety Of ways. It plays the role of a creator, curator, and spectator. In more detail, through social Media, an individual can create their profile showing their best quality, share the profile With billions of audiences from around the world and seek for the right opportunity. The Social media is a place of knowledge from where people can learn the skills they are Interested in, read and follow the inspiring stories of a successful personality, get motivated And develop as a confident person. Further, in a blog written by Tazi, she mentioned an Australian model who quitted using Social media by describing them inauthentic and pointless. However, Tazi was not Convinced with that action and the reason she gave describing social media as Meaningless. Instead, Tazi said, "social media offers representation unheard of in Mainstream media." (Tazi 2015, Cited 3.11.2018.) Social media is accessible to everyone Around the world. The role of social media on social reformation is incomparable. Through Social media bad practices are shared, listened and got helped. It has become a place to Shout out. Today, the third gender are using social media to connect people like them in Next corner of the world, and fat girls are inspiring others to wear whatever they want freely, Black men and women are speaking about racial injustices, and disadvantaged people are Motivating others through their work despite physical weakness. Such activities in social Media are empowering people in different parts of the world and make them feel that they Are not alone. The founder and executive director of MEDIAGIRLS, Michelle Cove said, "I so appreciate Seeing teen girls using YouTube to help other girls, lift their spirit, and be authentic. I have Seen so many girls on YouTube performing in poetry slams, competing in fierce dancing Competitions, creating PSAs, teaching tutorials and more. There are so many incredible Role models." Likewise, Elizabeth Banks is an American Actress who created "WhoHaha" Channel in YouTube with an aim to make the audiences laugh until they pee. In an interview With CBS news, she said that women's voices are being oppressed which bugs me a lot. She continued saying, "I think there's a way to be supportive, creative and positive online And that's what I'm trying to put into the world, and I know YouTube shares that goal." (Park 2017, Cited 03.11.2018.)

Similarly, "Black Girl Magic" is a concept created by CaShawn Thompson in 2013 to Celebrate the beauty, power, and resilience of black women. 'Black Girl Magic' is a term Used to illustrate the universal awesomeness of black women. Since then, the moment Started to take over social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook with #BlackGirlMagic. (Wilson 2016, Cited 03.11.2018.)

In this way, considering the benefits that social media platforms are offering, it is a beautiful Gift of technology in the modern era. Social media is a voice for voiceless, face for faceless And oxygen for breathless. Through social media, people with mental health issues are Getting support, help,

and inspiration. For developing and under-developed country where The mental health services are marginalized, people are learning about their mental health Issues with the help of social media platforms. In some way, social media platforms are Promoting good mental health to make a better world.

## **NEGATIVE IMPACTS**

Before the invention of social media, bad practices still occurred in places, but now the ratio has Increased incredibly. Such bad practices used to have an impact on the specific locations, but now The effect is global. Because of the freedom and an ineffective restrictions policy, people are also Misusing social media platforms resulting in negative impacts on the mental health such as Cyberbullying and suicide, increase in anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression. In the United States, Ashwanty Davis killed herself after a video of her in a schoolyard fight went Viral on the app Musical.ly. Davis was only ten years old. Less than a week later, Rosalie Avila who Was a 13 years old teen hung herself after receiving abusive online messages. Similarly, on December 31<sup>st</sup>, a popular YouTuber Logan Paul posted a video making fun of the body of a man Who hung himself in Japan's Akutagawa forest. (Christ, 2018.) These examples are the results of The negative impacts of social media. There are many similar examples throughout the world. Some of the significant negative impacts of social media on mental health are discussed below:

### a) Cyberbullying

Bullying is any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) toward youth by another youth or group Of youths, who are not siblings or current dating partners, involving an observed or Perceived power imbalance (CDC, 2018, Cited:13.10.2018). Online bullying allows Perpetrators the powerful advantage of anonymity. When afforded the ability to hide behind A computer screen, perpetrators act without regard for the consequences and feel less Accountability and guilt for their actions (Moreno & Strasburger 2014a, 55). The worst of Cyberbullying is it can happen anytime, anywhere publicly or privately. This kind of cruel Practices in social media has a direct impact on the psychological health of a targeted Person which can lead to the wrong decision of committing suicide in the worst situation. In detail, one study surveyed college students on how often they had experienced Electronic bullying behaviors and found that 38% knew someone who had been Cyberbullied, 21.9% had been cyberbullied, 8.6% had acted as a cyberbully (Moreno & Strasburger 2014b, 56 & 57). Cyberbullying causes the feeling of loneliness, low selfesteem, suicidal ideation, increase social anxiety and depression. Likewise, emotional Distress, anger, sadness, detachment, externalized hostility, and delinquency is also the Symptoms seen in cyberbullied person. The popular social media platform such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are where cyberbullying is widely practiced. For instance, Amanda Todd, 15 years old, was a Canadian teen who posted a video on YouTube sharing her experiences on bullying both online and in school. In the video, she Told a story of how she suffered from the depression and anxiety with the series of white Cards. She had to change the school multiple times, but the bullying continued. After Posting the video on YouTube, she committed suicide in 2012. That incident got the Attention of the news media globally. (NG, 2012a, Cited 13.10.2018.)“We

typically, as a school district, don't talk about such deaths, but with the family's Endorsement we did choose to do so because it is important to point out the dangers Associated with social media and cyber-bullying", Quinton, spokeswoman for the Coquitlam School District, said (NG, 2012b, Cited 13.10.2018). In a 2018 summit on cyberbullying prevention hosted by the Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention, first lady of the US, Melania Trump pointed out that social media is an Inevitable part of our daily lives in today's global society which can be beneficial but also Harmful if misused. She addressed many children and adults are being the victim of Cyberbullying, and now it's time to commit ourselves to teach practicing safe social media Use for the better future generation. Melania Trump also introduced "BE BEST" campaign Launched in May 2018 which will focus on three main pillars: Well-being, social media use And opioid abuse. (Bennett & Klein 2018, Cited 26.10.2018.)

b) Social media Addiction

The problem of social media addiction has become a global problem in the present era. Social media platforms are like galaxy; every day we learn a little more about it, and every Day it moves a bit further away (Jacobson 2009, 13). Social media were developed to Provide a platform for communication in its initial stage. Now they offer so many features That it has become difficult to stay away from them. In one way or other, people are Connected to social media. The excessive use of social media in today's society has Created a new problem: the problem of addiction. Social media addiction is becoming very Serious and has equated with addictions to hard drugs like heroin and crack cocaine (Woods 2014, Cited 15.10.2018). Furthermore, research has found out that certain activities in social media such as texting And getting a reply, getting likes, notifications and positive comments, releases a chemical 'dopamine' produced by the brain which is very addictive. Dopamine is the same chemical That makes feel good when we smoke, drink and gamble. So, social media give the same Level of pleasure as drugs and gambling that keep users to involve in social media activities Again and again. This is why the object of addiction becomes more important to an addict Than anything in their lives. (C. Nakaya 2015, 13 & 14.) Such addiction has a direct effect On mental health. Addicts have low self-esteem, feeling of envy, anxiety, sleeping disorder And in the worst situation, they commit a crime. There are a lot of horrible incidents around The world because of social media addiction. For example, Sushma Goswani was a 24-year-old Indian woman, who committed suicide By hanging herself from a ceiling fan in 2014 after her parents restricted to use Facebook. On the suicidal note she wrote, "Is Facebook so bad? I cannot stay in a home with such Restrictions as I can't live without Facebook". (Dua, 2014, Cited 15.10.2018.) Similarly, Larry Carlat used to be a married editor of a popular men's magazine, but he Became addicted to Twitter. He used to tweet 20 to 30 times a day, seven days a week. After tweeting for over three years, he had 25,000 followers. However, he lost his job, got Divorced and faced financial difficulties. Later in 2011, he decided to quit Twitter. (Carlat 2011, Cited 15.10.2018.)

c) Depression, Anxiety and low self-esteem

Depression is a common mental disorder that causes people to experience depressed Mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feeling of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or Appetite, low energy and poor concentration (Mental Health Foundation 2018, Cited 22.10.2018). Likewise, Anxiety is a type of fear usually associated with the thought of a Threat or something going wrong in the future but can also arise from something happening Right now (Mental Health Foundation 2018, Cited 22.10.2018). The relationship between Depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem are inter-related. They can happen at any time, Anywhere and from anything. Recently, excessive use of social media is found to be an Essential cause of depression and anxiety. In a survey conducted by Dr. Heather Cleland Woods at Glasgow University, 467 Teenagers were questioned on their overall and night-time social media use. The result Revealed that overall social media use, night-time specific use and emotional investment All had a significant impact on quality of sleep linked with the higher level of depression And anxiety. Similarly, a study of 700 secondary school students in Ottawa found that those Who use social network sites have poor mental health three times more than those who Don't use them. (Levy 2015, Cited 22.10.2018.) The causes of depression and anxiety among people are varied depending on the Perception of the people towards social media. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is one of the Reasons people use social media nowadays. FOMO means fear of missing out among the Group of friends, families and specific unions. It is also a fear of being unnoticed. FOMO Keep users coming back to social media repeatedly that might even lead to addiction and Then to depression.

Checking messages frequently even when there are no messages, keeping an eye on the notification bar all the time are the symptoms of FOMO. In a TEDx Talks with Bailey Parnell, she said that we ignore simple things such as chatting, tagging, Checking notification, and taking selfies in social media because these activities are fun to Us, but the problem is such actions are repetitive. "When a micro-moment happens over, And over time, that's when we have a macro problem," she continued. (Parnell 2017, Cited 22.10.2018.) Here, she refers to the macro problem as depression. According to WHO report (2018), Depression is a common mental disorder with more than 300 million people affected worldwide. When the depression is at its worst situation, it can Lead to suicide. In the same report, it is also said that suicide is the second leading cause Of death in 15-29-year-olds and every year about 800,000 people die due to suicide. Depressed people have a certain level of anxiety disorder and low self-esteem as well. The Causes of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem via social media can be online Harassment, blackmailing, inappropriate texts or visuals, addiction to the likes and Comments and comparison with friends having a better life. In the past few years, scholars Have carried out various empirical studies investigating the causations and consequences Of depression in the context of the use of social media: intensity of social media use, online Communication, and online threats. In a study conducted by Lin et al. (2016), it was found That social media use was significantly associated with depression. In a similar kind of Survey by Scherr and Brunet (2017), the result showed depressive users are likely to spend More time on Facebook. (Dhir 2018, 144.)

In another perspective, comparing with friends in social media is also the rising cause of Depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. In recent time, the impossible standard is set Much closer

to home, not by celebrities and models but by classmates and friends. These Standards for some have become a nightmare because when people see their friend on The social media more beautiful than them and lots of people praising their beauty, people Feel that they are not as attractive as their friends. It creates a problem of body shaming. Another aspect of social media is the highlight reels. It means showing the best and most Envidable moments while concealing the efforts and common element of ordinary life —These highlight reels of someone nearby cause low self-esteem to many people. The result Is people try to avoid being social in real life Therefore, the relationship between depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem is closely Related. Depression can cause stress and low self-esteem, anxiety can lead to depression And low self-esteem and vice-versa.

## **FINDINGS**

Research suggests that excessive use of social media is associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression, and feelings of loneliness. A study published in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* (2019) found a significant increase in major depressive episodes among young adults, coinciding with the rise of social media use. Additionally, constant comparison with others, cyberbullying, and the pressure to maintain a curated online image contribute to negative mental health outcomes. However, it's important to note that individual experiences may vary, and some positive aspects of social media, such as online support communities, can also impact mental well-being. Certainly. Further research highlights the role of social media in fostering a fear of missing out (FOMO) and a heightened need for social validation. The addictive nature of continuous scrolling, coupled with the instant gratification associated with likes and comments, may contribute to a negative cycle where individuals seek constant online affirmation. This, in turn, can impact self-esteem and mental health.

Moreover, a study in the *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* (2018) found that limiting social media use to approximately 30 minutes per day resulted in significant reductions in symptoms of depression and loneliness. This suggests a potential correlation between the duration of social media engagement and its impact on mental well-being. On the positive side, research also indicates that using social media for meaningful interactions and supportive connections can have a positive influence on mental health. Engaging in positive online communities and expressing oneself creatively can contribute to a sense of belonging and improved emotional well-being. It's essential to consider both the positive and negative aspects when examining the impact of social media on mental health. Further studies emphasize the impact of social media on sleep patterns, revealing that excessive use, especially before bedtime, is linked to sleep disturbances. The exposure to blue light from screens and the stimulation caused by social media content can disrupt circadian rhythms, leading to sleep problems and subsequent effects on mental health. Additionally, the phenomenon of "social comparison theory" suggests that individuals often compare themselves to others on social media, leading to feelings of inadequacy and lowered self-esteem. The curated nature of online content can create unrealistic standards, fostering a sense of dissatisfaction with one's own life. Research also highlights the potential correlation between heavy social media use and attention and concentration issues, especially among adolescents. Constant

notifications, multitasking, and the need for instant gratification may contribute to difficulties in maintaining focus and cognitive function. In conclusion, while social media offers numerous benefits, including connectivity and information sharing, it is crucial to acknowledge its potential negative impact on mental health. Balancing usage, fostering positive online interactions, and promoting digital well-being are essential considerations in addressing the complex relationship between social media and mental health.

## **CONCLUSION**

The relationship between social media and mental health is intricate. While positive aspects enhance social connections and support, negative consequences like cyberbullying and social comparison cannot be overlooked. Individual differences play a crucial role, emphasizing the need for personalized interventions. Addressing mental health challenges associated with social media requires a balanced approach that acknowledges both the positive and negative aspects, fostering a digital environment that promotes well-being. Continued research is vital to adapt strategies as social media platforms evolve and influence mental health dynamics. In conclusion, the impact of social media on mental health is multifaceted, reflecting a delicate interplay between positive and negative influences. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing the diverse experiences of users and the need for nuanced interventions. As technology evolves, it becomes imperative to stay abreast of emerging patterns and adapt strategies to promote a healthier online environment. To mitigate negative effects, fostering digital literacy and resilience against cyberbullying is crucial. Encouraging mindful social media use, promoting realistic self-perception, and providing resources for mental health support can contribute to a more positive online experience. Collaboration between researchers, mental health professionals, and platform developers is essential to implement evidence-based solutions and shape policies that prioritize user well-being. In essence, understanding the complex relationship between social media and mental health allows us to navigate the digital landscape more responsibly.

Balancing the benefits of connectivity with the potential drawbacks requires ongoing dialogue and proactive measures to ensure that social media remains a tool for positive social interaction and support. In the ever-evolving landscape of social media and its impact on mental health, this research highlights the necessity for a holistic approach. Recognizing the coexistence of positive and negative influences emphasizes the need for tailored interventions and educational initiatives. The dynamic nature of user experiences demands continuous adaptation of strategies to address emerging challenges. As we conclude, it is evident that social media plays a pivotal role in shaping the mental well-being of individuals. Mitigating the adverse effects involves collaborative efforts from various stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, mental health professionals, and platform developers. Striking a balance between harnessing the positive aspects of social media and mitigating its negative consequences is imperative for cultivating a digital landscape that enhances, rather than hinders, mental health. In the years ahead, ongoing research will be instrumental in unraveling new dimensions of this relationship, allowing for more targeted interventions and contributing to the ongoing dialogue surrounding the complex interplay between

social media and mental well-being. In conclusion, the intricate interplay between social media and mental health necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the diverse impacts it has on individuals.

Positive aspects, such as connectivity and support, underscore the potential benefits, while acknowledging the darker side, including cyberbullying and social comparison, is vital for crafting effective interventions. This research underscores the importance of user awareness and responsible platform design. Empowering users with digital literacy skills can help them navigate the online space more mindfully. Simultaneously, collaboration between researchers, mental health professionals, and social media platforms is critical in implementing proactive measures that prioritize the well-being of users. As we move forward, it is essential to foster an environment that harnesses the positive potentials of social media while mitigating its negative repercussions. Striking this delicate balance requires ongoing research, adaptive policies, and a collective commitment to cultivating a digital landscape that promotes mental health and enriches our online experiences.

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