



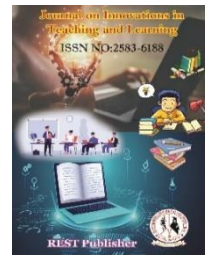
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# A Study on Impact of Social Media on Mental Health of Gen Z

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**Abstract:** For many people, social media has become an essential part of their everyday life. Through social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, users can interact with friends and family, share content and personal stories, and take part in online forums. Social media offers a lot of advantages, but its consequences on mental health have drawn criticism. Social media use may contribute to mental health problems like addiction, anxiety, and sadness, according to some research. Social media use and mental health outcomes, however, have not been found to be significantly correlated in other studies. Reviewing social media's current effects on mental health is the goal of this study. It's become harder for teenagers to imagine their lives without social media. This research aims to review the current impact of social media.

**Keywords:** Social media, mental health, addiction, social media addiction, social media effects, online interaction, mental health outcomes.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has evolved in recent years from a simple medium for communication to a cultural phenomenon that has a significant impact on young people's daily lives all over the world. In addition to changing how young people engage with one another, social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Twitter have also affected how they view themselves, society, and their place in it. Social media, which has billions of active users, offers young people a never-before-seen level of connectivity by enabling them to interact with groups around the world, share experiences, and express their creativity. This digital environment is not without its difficulties and complications, though. Young people are exposed to an extensive range of knowledge and social norms as they make their way through numerous online contacts, which might influence their opinions and actions. Social media can help people feel supported and like they belong, but it can also have detrimental effects including anxiety, despair, and low self-esteem. A loop of approval and rejection that can be harmful to mental health is created when users compare their value to the idealized lifestyles of others due to the well manicured appearance of online profiles.

Furthermore, social media's influence goes beyond personal experiences; it affects more general social dynamics including activism, political participation, and cultural trends. Positive change is possible, as seen by the growing number of young people using these platforms to promote social justice, climate change, and mental health awareness. But there are also serious problems with the polarization of views and the dissemination of false information, which can threaten the very communities they aim to create. This study intends to explore the complex relationship between social media and young people, looking at both positive and negative impacts. This study will offer a thorough grasp of how social media influences young people's experiences in modern society by examining topics including identity formation, mental health, social interaction, and civic involvement. In the end, the results will add to a thoughtful conversation on social media's role in young people's development, emphasizing the necessity of well-rounded strategies that optimize its advantages while minimizing its drawbacks.

By educating educators, parents, and legislators about the effects of social media, we hope to open the door to better ways of promoting the welfare of the next generation in a society that is becoming more and more digital.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

1. Primack et al. (2017) - This meta-analysis shows a notable link between social media usage and heightened anxiety and depression levels among young people, emphasizing the adverse psychological impacts of online engagement.
2. Tiggemann and Slater (2014) - The study finds that exposure to idealized images on platforms like Instagram contributes to body dissatisfaction and eating disorders among adolescent girls, emphasizing the impact on self-esteem.
3. Kuss and Griffiths (2017) - This systematic review discusses social media addiction, identifying withdrawal symptoms and advocating for interventions to promote healthier online behaviours.
4. Best et al. (2014) - The authors argue that social media fosters social connections among youth, enhancing their social skills and providing valuable opportunities for maintaining friendships.
5. Rosen et al. (2013) - This research indicates that dependence on digital communication may impair in-person interaction abilities, heightening social anxiety and decreasing empathy in adolescents.
6. Junco (2012) - Findings indicate that frequent social media use during study times is linked to lower academic performance, attributing this to significant distractions.
7. Liu et al. (2016) - The authors highlight that social media can facilitate collaborative learning and information sharing, potentially enhancing academic engagement among students.
8. Turkle (2011) - This work discusses how adolescents use social media for identity exploration, allowing for safe self-expression and personal growth.
9. Odgers and Jensen (2020) - The study warns that social media can amplify peer pressure, leading to conformity and negative self-perception regarding lifestyle choices among youth.
10. Twenge et al. (2017) - This research links increased social media use with a rise in depressive symptoms among adolescents, suggesting a need for awareness of the digital environment's impact on mental health.
11. Frison and Eggermont (2016) - The writers investigate how social media may contribute to feelings of isolation and decreased life satisfaction, particularly when users evaluate themselves against their peers.
12. Valkenburg and Peter (2011) - This study suggests that online communication can enhance relational intimacy among friends, providing support but also exposing youth to negative experiences.
13. Steers et al. (2014) - This research identifies a relationship between Facebook use and decreased life satisfaction, particularly when users engage in upward social comparison.
14. Ahn (2011) - The research finds that social media has the potential to act as a source of social support, providing emotional assistance to teenagers during important stages of their development.
15. Miller et al. (2016) - This research examines how social media influences youth political engagement, suggesting that it can mobilize and inform young voters effectively.
16. Heffer et al. (2020) - Findings indicate that social media can exacerbate sleep disturbances in youth, contributing to mental health issues through disrupted sleep patterns.
17. Dredge et al. (2014) - This research demonstrates that heavy usage of social media may result in heightened feelings of inadequacy and a decline in self-esteem in young people.
18. Verduyn et al. (2015) - The authors analyze the impact of passive versus active social media use, concluding that passive consumption can lead to negative emotional outcomes.
19. Baker and Oswald (2010) - This research explores how social media use relates to self-esteem, indicating that higher engagement correlates with increased feelings of social connection but also vulnerability to negative feedback.
20. Ravari et al. (2019) - The study discusses the role of social media in shaping youth attitudes toward mental health, suggesting it can provide valuable information but also perpetuate stigma.
21. Khalaf A M, Alubied A A, Khalaf A M, et al. (August 05, 2023)  
A systematic review, "The Influence of Social Media on the Mental Health of Young People" investigates how social media usage affects mental health among adolescents and young adults. This paper reviews earlier studies and discusses several issues, including anxiety, depression, self-worth, and other mental health indicators influenced by social media. In conclusion, the research stresses the need to grasp the complex dynamics between social media and mental health to formulate effective approaches that enhance the well-being of young people in today's digital environment.
22. Dylan Walsh, sept 14, 2022  
A study that links social media use to a loss in mental health is discussed in an article from the Ideas Made to Matter platform at the MIT Sloan School of Management. Additionally, the study found that passive social media consumption—that is, scrolling through feeds without actively participating—was

especially harmful to mental health. The part that FOMO and perceived social isolation play in aggravating mental health issues linked to social media use. In order to lessen these negative consequences, the findings emphasize the necessity for people, parents, educators, and policymakers to be aware of how social media affects mental health and to encourage better online practices and digital literacy.

23. Ágnes Zsila and Marc Eric S. Reyes, 06 July 2023  
The research "Social media use and adolescent mental health: a systematic review and meta-analysis" that was published in BMC Psychology looks closely at the relationship between social media use and outcomes related to teenage mental health. By performing a systematic review and meta-analysis of the corpus of current literature, researchers examined many facets of social media use, including frequency, length, and content consumption, in relation to mental health indicators including anxiety, depression, and self-esteem. In order to reduce the potential harm, the study highlights how important it is to educate youth to use social media safely and to develop their digital literacy.
24. Christian Montag, Zsolt Demetrovics, Jon D. Elhai, Don Grant, Ina Koning, Hans-Jürgen Rumpf, Marcantonio M. Spada, Melina Throuvala, Regina van den Eijnden  
The article "Social Media Use and Adolescent Mental Health: Findings from the UK Millennium Cohort Study" in the Journal of Adolescence examines the relationship between adolescent social media use and mental health using data from the UK Millennium Cohort Study. Additionally, the study reveals that some social media behaviors—such as using social media excessively and having negative online experiences—are significant predictors of poorer mental health. Strangely, the study also suggests a reciprocal relationship, suggesting that while higher levels of depressive symptoms predict longer-term increases in social media use, excessive social media use may worsen depressive symptoms.
25. Lawrence Robinson and Melinda Smith, M.A., February 5, 2024  
The intricate connection between mental health and social media use is examined in this essay. It discusses the different ways social media can have an impact on people, both favorably and unfavorably. Positively, it emphasizes the advantages of information availability, support systems, and social connectivity. However, it also addresses the negative aspects, such as the possibility of heightened emotions of isolation, jealousy, and despair as a result of irrational comparisons and cyberbullying. Additionally, it offers advice on how to spot the warning indications of detrimental impacts on mental health and, if necessary, seek professional assistance.
26. Int J Environ Res Public Health., January 29, 2023  
A National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) featured article explores how social media affects mental health, with a particular emphasis on how it affects anxiety and depression in teens and young adults. Excessive use of social media has been linked in studies to a higher risk of anxiety and depressive symptoms, particularly in teens and young adults. The study also identifies particular social media behaviors and activities that are linked to poor mental health outcomes, including cyberbullying, social comparison, and idle scrolling.
27. Jacquelyn Johnson, PsyD. September 15th, 2021  
The article provides a number of statistics and insights while examining the relationship between social media and mental health. It draws attention to how social media use is pervasive around the world and how it affects mental health. According to statistics, excessive social media use, particularly among young people, can exacerbate feelings of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. The essay emphasizes how social comparison affects mental health and how glorified lives and Photoshopped photos on social media sites like Instagram can make people feel worse.  
Overall, the article sheds light on the complex relationship between social media and mental health and urges awareness and moderation in use to mitigate potential negative effects.
28. Alice G. Walton, June 30, 2017  
The Forbes article offers a thorough analysis of how social media affects mental health. Negative effects including heightened emotions of loneliness, envy, and anxiety brought on by comparing oneself to others are also covered, though. The article explores how social media can be addictive and how dopamine-driven feedback loops can lead to excessive use. Additionally, it examines how cyberbullying exacerbates mental health issues, particularly in adolescents. Overall, it provides a balanced view of the complex relationship between social media and mental well-being and advocates moderation and self-awareness in digital consumption.
29. Elia Abi-Jaoude, Karlene Treurnicht Naylor and Antonio Pignatiello CMAJ February 10, 2020  
The relationship between teenage social media use and mental health is examined in an article published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ). It displays the results of a meta-analysis and systematic review of previous research. High levels of social media use have been linked in studies to a higher risk of depression in teenagers. Overall, it underscores the importance of considering social media

- use as a potential risk factor for adolescent mental health problems and calls for targeted interventions to mitigate these risks and promote well-being in this population.
30. John A. Naslund, Kelly A. Aschbrenner, Gregory J. McHugo, Jürgen Unützer, Lisa A. Marsch, Stephen J. Bartels, 20 October, 2017  
The article from *Early Intervention in Psychiatry* that is referenced looks at how social media use affects mental health, with a particular emphasis on how it is associated to anxiety and depression symptoms in young people. It displays the results of a meta-analysis and systematic review of pertinent research. According to research, young individuals' usage of social media and their symptoms of anxiety and depression are significantly positively correlated. Overall, this article contributes to understanding the complex interplay between social media use and mental health outcomes and advocates tailored approaches to mitigate potential negative effects on well-being.
31. Pratyasha Jain *International Research Journal of Social Sciences* 3 (6), 38-47, 2013  
The main goal of the article is to determine if social networking sites are a benefit or a drawback to modern society. As social networking sites like Facebook, Myspace, YouTube, and Orkut gain popularity, more and more people are incorporating them into their daily lives. Young people are drawn to social networking sites because of their features. These social networking sites undoubtedly offer marketing, job opportunities, personal development, and information sharing, but the most common risk is that they frequently involve online predators or persons. India's youth are greatly impacted by these SNS. The entrance to these social networking sites is clearly visible, yet there is no way to get out of them.
32. Vivek Tripathi *Journal of Social Sciences* 52 (1-3), 1-7, 2017  
India is a country of youths. These youth are so involved with their virtual life that the boundary between real and reel has become quite thin. They share all their emotions of love and hate, aggression and violence are prevalent on various social media networks. The teenagers are frequently immersed in a violent virtual environment, which has had a significant impact on their daily lives. Cyberbullying has been identified as a significant harmful aspect of these young individuals social media lives.
33. Youth 2.0: social media and adolescence Michel Walrave, Koen Ponnet, Ellen Vanderhoven, Jacques Haers, Barbara Segaert Springer, 2016  
Michel Walrave is a professor at the Department of Communication Studies of the University of Antwerp. He is responsible for the research group MIOS which conducts research on, amongst others, young people's uses of digital technologies. His research is centered around online self-disclosure and privacy.
34. Impact of social messengers especially WhatsApp on youth-a sociological study Ashish Sharma, Aditya Kumar Shukla  
With the development of technology, life has become more convenient and easy. Maintaining communication with colleagues can be challenging in today's fast-paced society. Social media has surfaced as a blessing in disguise, allowing us to stay connected with friends, family, and associates. Social media is rapidly evolving around the world and has a wide range of effects on people. Today, we have a variety of social messengers such as Tango, Facebook, WhatsApp, Line, Yahoo, Hike, We Chat, Skype, Imo, BBM, Viber, and others that allow us to stay in touch with society and individuals. WhatsApp has been the most popular medium of engagement in recent years due to its ease of use.
35. A study on impact of social media on youth S Sushma Rawath, Dr R Satheeshkumar, Venkatesh Kumar *Journal of Management (JOM)* 6 (1), 89-96, 2019  
The use of social media by India's new generation youths has increased dramatically. In today's world, the use of social media has become an essential element of human existence. This research sheds light on the patterns of social media usage and their impact on young. The new age social networking culture has been recognized and enthusiastically received.
36. Impact of Social Networking Sites (SNS) on the youth Shabnam S Mahat, SD Mundhe *National conference on Innovations in IT and Management* ISBN, 978-81, 2014  
In today's fast-paced world, there are so many burning issues around us that we must consider and act on; it is an alarm for us to be aware of society and current issues such as human rights abuse, education, the negative effects of global warming, the poor performance of political leaders, crime against women, corruption, and so on, all of which must be discussed openly with society in order to effect change and bring about a revolution.
37. The US Surgeon General's Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health was published online by the US Department of Health and Human Services in 2023  
Youth utilize social media almost universally. Up to 95% of young people aged 13 to 17 report using a social media platform, with more than a third stating they use it "almost constantly." Although most social media services in the United States require a minimum age of 13, approximately 40% of youngsters

- aged 8 to 12 use social media. Despite its widespread use among children and adolescents, there have been no robust independent safety evaluations of social media's influence on youngsters.
38. The social media basis of youth protest behavior: The case of Chile Sebastián Valenzuela, Arturo Arriagada, Andrés Scherman Journal of communication 62 (2), 299-314, 2012  
Protest Protests have become an important tool for political change in Chile. Using survey data obtained in Chile in 2010, we investigate the relationship between social media use and young protest, as well as the underlying mediating and moderating factors. We discovered that Facebook use was highly related with protest activity, even after controlling for political grievances, monetary and psychological resources, values, and news media use.
39. Social media use and mental health among young adults Chloe Berryman, Christopher J Ferguson, Charles Negy Psychiatric quarterly 89, 307-314, 2018  
In recent years many parents, advocates and policy makers have expressed concerns regarding the potential negative impact of social media use. Some studies have indicated that social media use may be tied to negative mental health outcomes, including suicidality, loneliness and decreased empathy. Other studies have not found evidence for harm, or have indicated that social media use may be beneficial for some individuals.
40. Internet and social media use as a resource among homeless youth Eric Rice, Anamika Barman-Adhikari Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication 19 (2), 232-247, 2014  
Little is known about internet and social media use among homeless youth. Consistent with typologies prevalent among housed youth, we found that homeless youth were using internet and social media for entertainment, sociability, and instrumental purposes.
41. Khurana - The study explores the dual-edged impact of social media on youth. While platforms offer connectivity and information sharing, they can also lead to time consumption and cybercrime exposure. Data limitations, particularly the focus on Delhi, suggest a need for broader research to understand the nuanced effects of different platforms and content on young people's lives. Despite these risks, youth demonstrate awareness and strive to balance their social media usage.
42. Wojdon , Krystian - The introduction aims to investigate the impact of social media on young people's lifestyles, focusing on habits, addiction, and potential negative consequences. While acknowledging the broad appeal of social media, the research could benefit from a more specific research question or hypothesis. Additionally, supporting general statements with concrete examples or case studies would strengthen the introduction's impact. Incorporating a brief summary of existing research on social media addiction would provide valuable context and highlight the need for further investigation in this area.
43. Ursula Oberst - The study explores the link between mental health, fear of missing out, and social media use in adolescents. It found that both fear of missing out and excessive social media use can lead to negative outcomes. The study also revealed gender-specific patterns, emphasising the need to address these factors for improved adolescent mental health.
44. Ali Kirik - The study found that many Turkish youth exhibit social media addiction, influenced by age, time spent online, and frequency of visits. While gender didn't play a significant role, addiction peaks at age 17. These findings emphasise the need for interventions targeting these factors to address social media addiction in Turkish youth.
45. Rahmadhula Haand - The study explores the link between social media addiction and depression in Afghan university students. The findings align with previous research, suggesting that excessive social media use can contribute to mental health issues. Understanding how cultural factors influence this relationship in Afghanistan is a crucial area for future research.
46. Ramesh Masthi - This Bengaluru study found social media addiction is common among high schoolers, with private school students showing surprisingly higher rates. While gender wasn't a factor, more private school girls used social media. The study highlights the need for further research to understand these differences, including the reasons behind them and the long-term effects of social media addiction on these students.
47. Keir Irwin - This study explores how social media can contribute to violence among young people. It highlights how social media can glorify violence, creating a virtual space where violence is normalised. Anonymity and the wide reach of social media further amplify this issue. The study calls for further research to understand the mechanisms and potential solutions to address this problem.
48. Betul Keles - This study explores the link between social media and loneliness in young adults. The research highlights the need for interventions promoting healthy online habits and tackling loneliness, while calling for further investigation into the specific mechanisms and long-term impacts.
49. Holly Scott - This study explores the link between social media use and sleep quality in UK adolescents. It found a correlation between excessive social media use and poorer sleep patterns. They study calls for further research into the underlying mechanisms and long-term impacts of social media on sleep.

50. Atte Oksanen - This study explores how social media can facilitate access to drugs for young people. It identifies factors like low self-control, poor mental health, and weak social bonds as contributors to online drug purchases. The study highlights the importance of addressing these risks to prevent drug use and promote the well-being of young people in the digital age.
51. Pilar Aparacio - This study explores the link between social media and body image concerns in adolescents. It suggests that exposure to unrealistic beauty standards on social media can contribute to negative body image, especially through social comparison and cyberbullying. The study calls for further research into the underlying mechanisms and individual differences in how adolescents are affected by social media content.
52. Lennart Roudsepp - This study explores how social media can contribute to body image dissatisfaction in adolescent girls through upward social comparison. It highlights the negative impact of exposure to unrealistic beauty standards and calls for further research into the underlying mechanisms and individual differences in how adolescents are affected.
53. Micheal Daly - This study explores the link between social media use and depressive symptoms in adolescent girls. It finds a weak correlation, suggesting social media isn't a major driver of depression and other factors might be more influential.
54. Tim Mackey - This study explores how social media can contribute to the non-medical use of prescription drugs (NUPM). It highlights the significant prevalence of NUPM and how social media platforms are used to buy and sell prescription drugs. The study emphasises the importance of addressing this issue to prevent drug use and promote the well-being of young people.
55. Monica - This research explores the factors contributing to digital distraction in university classrooms. It identifies individual factors like gender and age, and contextual factors like teaching style and classroom management. The review also touches on internet addiction. Understanding these factors can help educators create a more focused learning environment.
56. Robert - This research discusses the mixed findings on the relationship between social networking sites (SNS) and academic performance. While some studies show a negative impact, others find no significant link. The review highlights factors like time spent on SNS, purpose of use, and individual characteristics as potential influencers. Understanding these factors can help mitigate negative impacts of SNS on academic performance.
57. Christopher Pherugson - This research challenges the idea that the internet is the primary cause of societal problems like depression, aggression, and political polarisation. It argues for a more nuanced understanding, highlighting the need to consider other factors beyond technology. The research encourages further research to develop a balanced understanding of the internet's impact on society.
58. Emily - This research explores the potential of using social media and technology monitoring to prevent youth suicide and school violence. By identifying digital warning signs, early intervention could be possible. However, ethical concerns and the need for further research to evaluate its effectiveness are highlighted. This research contributes to understanding the complex relationship between technology, mental health, and adolescent behaviour.
59. Anirbhan, Anusha - This research explores using social media and technology monitoring to prevent youth suicide and school violence. By identifying digital warning signs, early intervention could be possible. However, ethical concerns and the need for further research to evaluate its effectiveness are highlighted. This research contributes to understanding the complex relationship between technology, mental health, and adolescent behavior.
60. Grace Sinclair - This research explores the potential risks of OnlyFans for adolescents, highlighting concerns about exposure to explicit content and links to risky online behaviors. The study emphasises the need for social media literacy education, parental guidance, and further research to ensure the safety and well-being of young people in the digital age.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 1. Research Design:

1. Type: A mixed-methods approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative techniques.
2. Purpose: To comprehensively examine how social media influences various aspects of youth life, including mental health, social interactions, and academic outcomes.

#### 2. Research Questions

1. What is the connection between social media usage and mental health in young people?
2. How does social media impact the social skills and relationships of youth?
3. What are the effects of social media on academic performance among young individuals?

4. How do youths perceive challenges such as cyberbullying and privacy on social media?

**3. Population and sample**

- Target Population: Individuals aged 13-24 years.
- Sampling Method: Quantitative & Qualitative.
- Quantitative: Random sampling from educational institutions and online platforms to ensure a diverse sample.
- Qualitative: Purposive sampling for conducting detailed interviews or focus groups.

**4. Data Collection Methods -**

Quantitative Data:

- Surveys: Online questionnaires distributed via social media, schools, and community organizations. The survey will include Likert-scale questions to evaluate social media usage frequency, mental health perceptions, and academic performance.
- Demographics: Collect data on age, gender, socioeconomic status, and education level.

Qualitative Data:

- Interviews: Conduct semi-structured interviews to gather personal accounts regarding social media experiences.
- Focus Groups: Organize discussions to facilitate interaction and gain deeper insights into shared experiences and perceptions.

**5. Data Analysis**

- Quantitative Analysis:
  - Utilize statistical software to analyze survey responses.
  - Perform correlation and regression analyses to explore the relationships between social media use and various outcomes like mental health and academic performance.
- Qualitative Analysis:
  - Conduct thematic analysis of interview and focus group transcripts to identify prominent themes and trends in youth experiences with social media.
  - Employ coding methods to categorize responses and extract insights.

**6. Ethical Considerations**

- Obtain informed consent from participants, with parental consent required for minors.
- Ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents.
- Allow participants the right to withdraw from the study at any point.

**7. Limitations**

- Acknowledge potential response bias in self-reported data.
- Recognize limitations in generalizability due to the sample size or demographic focus.
- Consider the rapidly evolving nature of social media, which may impact the relevance of findings over time.

**8. Timeline**

- Establish a detailed timeline for each phase of the research, including preparation, data collection, analysis, and reporting.

**9. Budget**

- Outline the expected expenses for tools, software, participant incentives, and other necessary resources.

This methodology outlines a systematic approach to investigating the effects of social media on youth, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences. This comprehensive strategy will enhance the understanding of this complex issue.

**Objectives:**

Objectives of the study:

- To understand the ways in which individuals are interconnected through social media platforms.
- To comprehend the influence of social media on an individual's mental health.
- To explore how people curate their lives on social media in contrast to their real-life experiences.
- To examine how social media serves as a distraction for the younger generation, leading to increased addiction.

To understand the strategies individuals, employ to distance themselves from social media distractions.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

**Preferred Social Media Platform:** Based on the survey responses, Instagram is by far the most popular social media platform among participants, with **78.9%** selecting it as their primary choice. This shows that Instagram plays a dominant role in the daily online activities of Gen Z, likely due to its visually engaging content and interactive features like reels and stories. After Instagram, **15.8%** of respondents use WhatsApp most frequently. While WhatsApp is primarily a messaging app, its features like status updates and group chats may contribute to its continued relevance in social interactions. Snapchat, on the other hand, is the least preferred among the three, with only a small percentage of users selecting it as their primary platform.

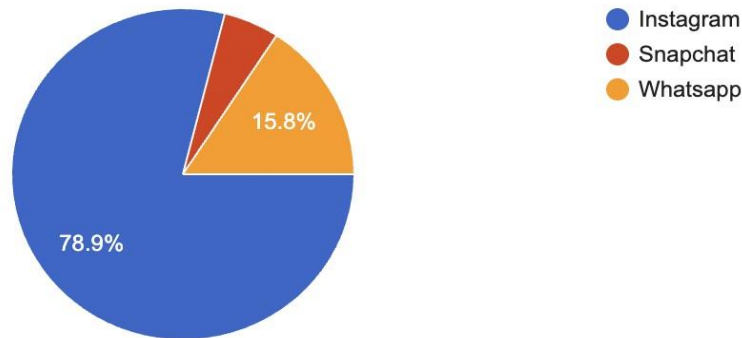


FIGURE 1. Preferred Social Media Platform

**Daily Social Media Usage:** The responses indicate that social media is an important part of Gen Z's daily routine. A significant **42.1%** of respondents use social media for **0-2 hours** a day, which displays a moderate level of engagement. However, **38.6%** respondents spend **2-4 hours** on these platforms, showing a higher level of dependence. Additionally, **19.3%** use social media for **4-6 hours**, reflecting such respondents who are deeply addicted to social media.

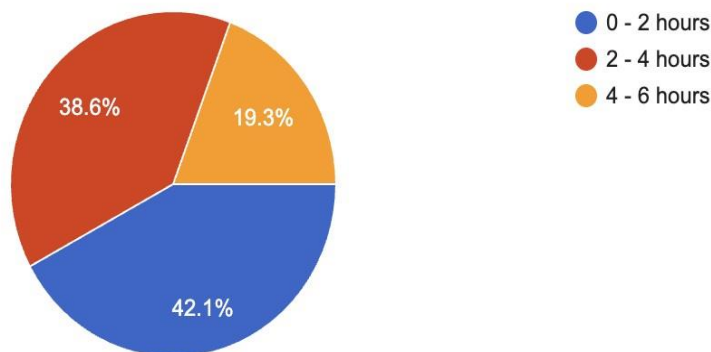


FIGURE 2. Daily Social Media Usage

**Emotions Experienced While Using Social Media:** The research data reveals a mix of both positive and negative emotions associated with social media usage. **39.3%** of respondents reported feeling joy, indicating that social media serves as a source of entertainment for them. However, a considerable portion of users experience negative emotions. **16.1%** reported feeling envy, possibly due to social comparisons, while **14.3%** felt inadequacy, suggesting that social media can sometimes create standards not based on reality. Additionally, **14.3%** of users reported experiencing **loneliness**, and **10.7%** felt anxiety, highlighting the potential mental health concerns linked to excessive social media use.



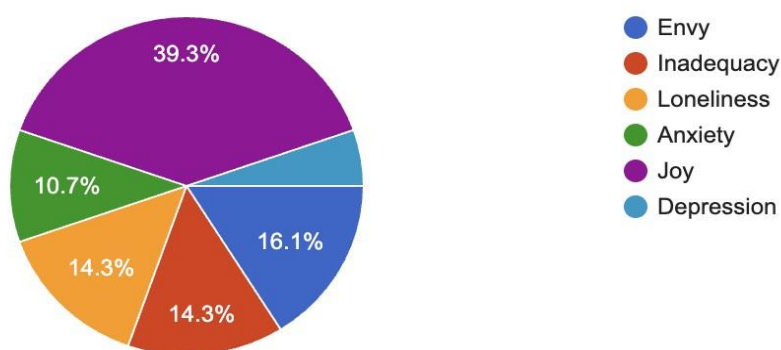


FIGURE 3. Emotions Experienced While Using Social Media

**Mixed feelings about social media:** It's unusual to notice how split people are on this. About 37% feel like social media does negatively impact their mental health, while 28% don't think it affects them at all. Then there's the 35% who are on the borderline, unsure whether it really has a bad effect or not. This just goes to show that the impact of social media isn't the same for everyone, it all depends on how they use it and how it makes them feel.

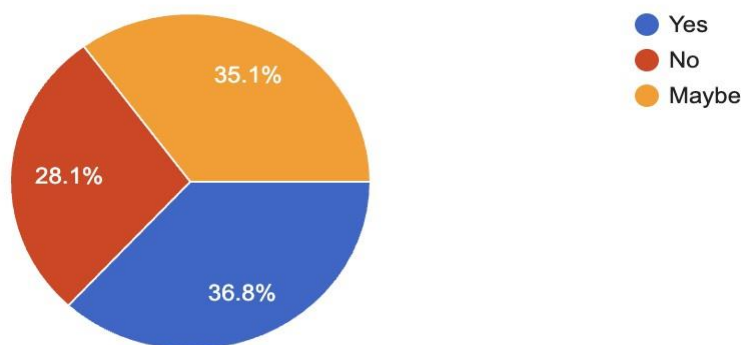


FIGURE 3. Mixed feelings about social media

**How People Try to Stay Mentally Healthy on Social Media:** Over our research period it was seemingly interesting to see how people manage their social media habits for better mental health. The most common approach (31.6%) is limiting screen time probably to avoid endless scrolling. Others prefer taking breaks from social media (24.6%) or getting involved in offline activities (22.8%), which seems like a solid way to stay balanced. Unfollowing negative accounts (19.3%) is another smart move, but very few rely on just ignoring negative comments. It seems like most people actively take steps rather than just brushing negativity aside.

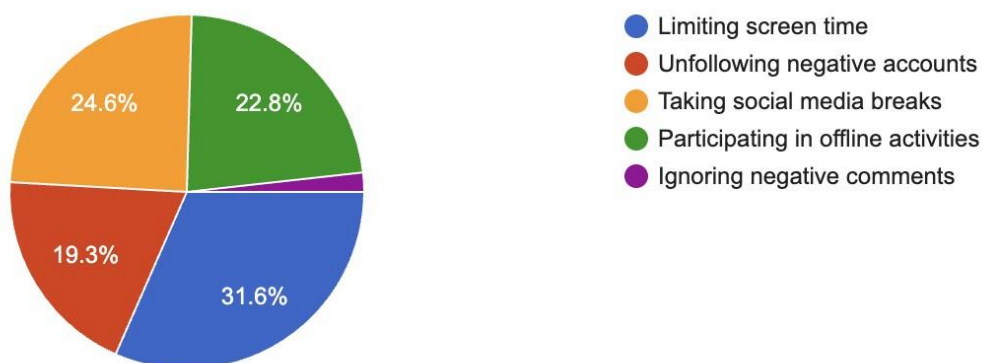
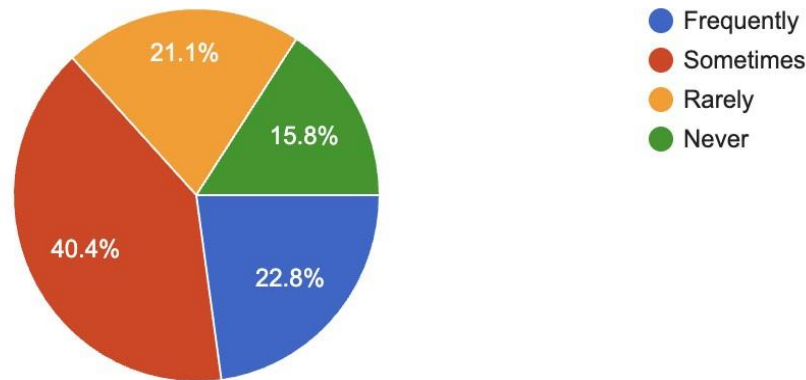


FIGURE 4. How People Try to Stay Mentally Healthy on Social Media

**Comparison on Social Media:** Following our research we were not surprised that social media makes people compare themselves to others, but the numbers say a lot. A big chunk (40.4%) admit they sometimes feel this way, while 22.8% experience it frequently.

On the other hand, 21.1% say they rarely compare themselves, and 15.8% claim they never do. Clearly, for most people, social media can trigger self-comparison, even if it's not all the time.



**FIGURE 4.** Comparison on Social Media

**Research Gap:** A key research gap in understanding the impact of social media on mental health lies in the need for more longitudinal studies. While numerous studies have explored the relationship between social media use and mental health outcomes, there is still a lack of long-term research that can provide insights into the lasting effects of social media on well-being. Longitudinal studies are essential as they allow researchers to follow individuals over time and examine how their social media use and mental health evolve. This type of research would help determine whether social media use causes mental health issues or whether pre-existing mental health problems influence social media engagement. Furthermore, investigating the impact of specific platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) on mental health over time can uncover how different features of these platforms affect users' psychological well-being.

Another significant research gap is the need for more diverse samples in studies. Much of the existing research has focused on specific populations, such as adolescents or college students, limiting the generalizability of the findings. To truly understand how social media affects mental health, studies need to include individuals from diverse age groups, cultural backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. For example, the impact of social media may differ for older adults or marginalized communities due to varying access to technology, cultural influences, and differing societal pressures. Exploring these differences can lead to more comprehensive findings and targeted interventions.

Additionally, there is a need for more intervention studies that focus on mitigating the negative effects of social media on mental health. While some research has identified potential harmful impacts, such as increased anxiety, depression, and loneliness, there is still limited understanding of how to effectively intervene. More studies are required to develop and assess interventions that aim to promote healthier social media use. These could include strategies for reducing overuse, encouraging positive online interactions, or enhancing digital literacy to help individuals navigate social media in a healthier way. Furthermore, exploring how social media platforms themselves can implement features or programs that foster mental well-being would also be a valuable direction for research.

In conclusion, filling in the gaps in intervention development, diverse sample inclusion, and longitudinal research will contribute to a more thorough understanding of the connection between social media and mental health, which will ultimately direct more successful tactics for enhancing wellbeing in the digital age.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In summary, there is a complicated and multidimensional relationship between social media and mental health, and the consequences vary based on a number of factors, including platform design, user demographics, and individual usage patterns. Even while studies have repeatedly demonstrated a link between social media use and mental health, this association is not always clear-cut. On the down side, social media has been connected to mental health problems like anxiety, despair, and feelings of inadequacy. These problems are frequently brought on by pressure to project a flawless image, social comparisons, and false depictions of other people's lives. These elements may lead to a reduction in self-worth and general wellbeing, particularly if users become unduly preoccupied with their online persona. But social media can also help people achieve better mental health results. It can give people the chance to meet new people, exchange stories, and locate encouraging groups, all of which can lessen feelings of isolation and loneliness. Social media platforms provide emotional support to certain people by connecting them with like-minded others who provide empathy and affirmation, as well as information. Because social media can have both positive and negative effects, it is important to take a balanced approach to comprehending how it affects mental health. Future studies should look into how different demographics are impacted by particular social media platforms and usage habits in order to better understand these distinctions. Age, cultural background, and socioeconomic level can all have different affects from social media, thus it's important to look at these different aspects in order to draw more thorough results. Investigating social media's potential as a tool for mental health intervention is also gaining traction. Social media could be a useful tool for raising awareness, providing assistance to individuals in need, and disseminating preventive mental health information by utilizing its extensive reach. Ultimately, creating solutions to promote healthy online behaviors requires a knowledge of the intricate relationship between social media and mental health. Promoting well-being in digital spaces is essential since they continue to influence how we live our daily lives.

## 6. SUGGESTIONS AND FINDINGS

These recommendations and scope are thoughtful and cover important topics in the literature on the effects of social media on mental health. Here are some further ideas and a quick reflection:

Further Ideas for Upcoming Studies:

Neurobiological Mechanisms: Future research could examine the neurobiological mechanisms that underlie the impact of social media on mental health. This can entail investigating how social media use affects hormone levels (such as cortisol or dopamine) or brain activity, particularly in relation to stress, anxiety, and addiction. Such studies may provide a more direct understanding of the physiological mechanisms at play.

1. Comparative Impact of Active vs. Passive Use: Studies could examine if social media activity (posting, commenting) and passive consumption (scrolling, watching) have different effects on mental health. By being aware of this difference, advice for social media use for better mental health might be improved.
2. Impact of Social Media Algorithms: Since many social media platforms employ algorithms to select content, studies could concentrate on the effects of algorithm-driven user experiences. For example, what effects do filter bubbles, echo chambers, or excessive exposure to particular kinds of content have on mental health and mood?

Possible Domains for Scope Expansion:

1. Social Media Content Types: It could be beneficial to investigate the disparate impacts of various content categories (such as news stories, influencer posts, memes, and user-generated material) on mental health. Do self-comparisons based on the carefully manicured lifestyles of influencers, for instance, have a greater impact than articles about news?
2. Examine Social Media and Particular Mental Health Conditions: To further explore the relationship between particular social media usage patterns and mental health issues such as anxiety, sadness, or body dysmorphia, more research might be conducted. It might examine if using social media makes these conditions worse, if at all, and whether some groups are more susceptible than others (such as teenagers or those with underlying mental health issues).
3. Social Media's Function in Emergencies: Examining how social media is used in coping mechanisms may provide pertinent insights in light of recent global issues like pandemics and natural catastrophes. During such emergencies, can social media increase distress or serve as a source of support?

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