

Examining the Effects of Social Media on The Mental Health of Young People in Delhi

Dr. Deepika Malhotra

Assistant professor
DIET Rajender Nagar SCERT Delhi

Abstract:

This research delves at the effects of social media on the psychological well-being of Delhi's youth. The study seeks to examine patterns of social media use and their association with psychological well-being in the context of rising digital participation, especially among young. A survey-based quantitative research approach was used, and 567 participants were polled. The data was analyzed using statistical tools like SPSS and SmartPLS. Several aspects of social media use are examined in the research, such as the amount of accounts, the preferred platforms, the frequency of use, and the goals of interaction. Furthermore, Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale was used to evaluate mental health, which includes aspects like self-determination, control over one's surroundings, personal development, good relationships, life purpose, and self-acceptance. According to the results, a large percentage of young people spend a lot of time on social media, mostly for fun and making friends. Overuse of social media is linked to diminished autonomy, elevated social comparison, and psychological discomfort, despite the fact that it improves communication and information availability. Balanced and conscious usage of social media is vital for sustaining mental well-being, as the research shows both good and negative aspects.

Keywords: Social Media, Mental Health, Youth, Psychological Well-being etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

Nowadays, technology has come a long way. When it comes to human life, technology is both a boon and a wonder. When it comes to directed and unguided media, technological devices make it easy to change information. As a vital component of our everyday lives, social media provides a dynamic platform for sharing, accessing, and exchanging ideas and information. Blogs, microblogs, wikis, social networks, online forums, mobile apps, videos, podcasts, and discussion groups are all part of it. All across the globe, millions of individuals use one of the many social media platforms. Numerous social media platforms and mobile applications have left their imprint on the world, including Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, YouTube, Google+, WhatsApp, WeChat, Telegram, Snapchat, and TikTok. Because of social media, young people's lives have transformed. It helps us build ties with the public and with other people in our social circles. Over 692 million individuals in India use the Internet, out of a total population of over 1.4 billion, according to UN estimates. India will have over 1 billion internet users by 2030, and based on the statistics, it's easy to predict that the number of social media users will also expand. Teenagers may spend as much as 27 hours each week on social media, compared to an average of 2.4 hours for adults. In terms of total internet users, India is second only to China, according to a study by the Internet and Mobile Association of India.

1.2 Social Media and Youth

Among young people in India in particular, there is widespread agreement that social media networks may have both positive and bad effects. In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic situation in India, it is crucial to closely observe and analyze the increasing dependence of the nation on social media platforms. Several governments have instituted lockdown policies in an effort to contain the virus. As a result, many places of worship and schools had to close their doors, cutting down on people's ability to go out and meet new people. By limiting the potential for the virus to spread inside communities, these regulations sought to safeguard

public health. Adolescents and children's daily routines and mental health must undergo a radical transformation due to contact limits and isolation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Махмудова, Н. (2026) This article takes a look at how young people's mental health has been affected by social media. A variety of factors are considered, including the good and bad impacts of social media on things like anxiety, depression, self-esteem, and social skills. While social media may be a great tool for connecting with others and enhancing cognitive abilities, using them excessively can lead to mental health issues. Drawing on findings from the fields of psychology and sociology, this study emphasizes the need of teaching young people how to effectively self-regulate and become digitally literate.

Rani, Dr. (2026) The proliferation of social media platforms over the last decade in India has radically altered the social milieu in which today's youth grow up. India has one of the world's largest and fastest-growing internet user bases, with over 467 million active social media users in 2023. This is mostly due to the country's large population of young adults, namely those between the ages of 15 and 30. Although social media sites provide users great chances to communicate, express themselves, and obtain information, they also pose a number of psychological risks, which sociologists and mental health professionals are studying more and more. Social comparison theory, symbolic interactionism, and the sociology of digital culture are the three sociological frameworks used to examine the effects of social media on the mental health of young people in India. Many factors are being studied in this study, such as anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, sleep disturbances, social validation, and the development of an individual's sense of self. The study compares and contrasts gender use on social media, looks at the digital access divide between rural and urban locations, and finds out how schools and families assist kids manage their time online. At the study's conclusion, the authors provide policy suggestions to better the digital health of young Indians.

Zeng, Xilin (2025) The complicated consequences of social media on the mental health of digital-era teenagers are explored in this research. The mental health, social relationships, and identity development of today's adolescents (those between the ages of 12 and 19) are profoundly affected by the pervasiveness of social media in their daily lives. Despite the opportunities for social connection and support, particularly for marginalized populations, frequent usage brings significant risks such as anxiety, depression, and cyberbullying. Data from real-world studies shows that algorithm-driven platforms like Instagram and TikTok make problems with social comparison and body image even worse, especially for teenagers with attachment difficulties. Overexposure to idealized information promotes unrealistic self-evaluations, which may cause emotional distress and, in extreme circumstances, thoughts of suicide or self-harm. Physical health issues, such as sleep disorders caused by excessive screen time, enhance psychological vulnerability. Although positive effects, such as increased peer support and reduced loneliness, are readily apparent, the link between social media use, platform characteristics, and individual variations complicates the picture of the impact on adolescent mental health. Present study has methodological shortcomings that restrict generalizability. These include relying on self-reported cross-sectional data and using small, culturally constrained samples. However, the results show that parents, schools, and lawmakers must act quickly to reduce risks and encourage healthy development in adolescents by implementing treatments supported by research.

Shewale, Divya & Shirsath, Bhagyashri (2025) Research into the link between social media use and psychological well-being is of paramount importance in light of the exponential growth of online participation. This article summarizes what is now known about the effects of social media on users' psychological health. Anxiety, despair, and low self-esteem are some of the negative effects that have been studied. The addictive nature of these platforms, as well as online abuse and social comparison, are common causes of these problems. There is some evidence that teenagers who use over three hours per day on social media are more prone to mental health issues than those who use less. These worries aside, there are many positive aspects of social media that may help people connect with others, get emotional support, and express themselves. Even mental health assistance tools and services are available on certain sites. But there has been little success with social media treatments meant to improve mental health. The significance of finding ways to make the most of social media's benefits while reducing its drawbacks is highlighted in this review.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In order for research to be effective, it must be based on a well-crafted design. The methods and resources that will be used to address the primary research topic are detailed in this plan. A well-defined design, such as an experiment or a survey, guarantees a systematic approach and reduces the impact of subjective views. This does double duty: it makes the findings more credible and opens the door for other researchers to replicate the study, expanding our collective understanding of the subject. This study used a survey research strategy to examine the impact of social media on mental health, building on a previously established and well-constructed research design.

3.2 Statistical Tests and Tool Used

The researcher conducted statistical analysis using SPSS version 25. Furthermore, SEM analysis made use of Smart PLS. For statistical analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), you can't do better than SmartPLS. Many academics from many fields utilize it because of its intuitive interface, which makes it easy to do different steps of the PLS-SEM process.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Giving a thorough synopsis of the acquired data and spotting trends, patterns, and correlations are the goals of the data analysis chapter. In this section, you can find details on the research strategy, data collection methods, analytic tools and procedures, and final findings. The goal of data analysis is to find links and patterns in data by using mathematical and statistical methods.

Table 4.1 Frequency Table of Demographics

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	271	47.8
Female	296	52.2
Total	567	100.0
Age		
18- 21 years	296	52.2
22- 25 years	271	47.8
Total	567	100.0
Educational Qualification		
Under Graduate	302	53.3
Post-Graduate	252	44.4
Ph.D	13	2.3
Total	567	100.0

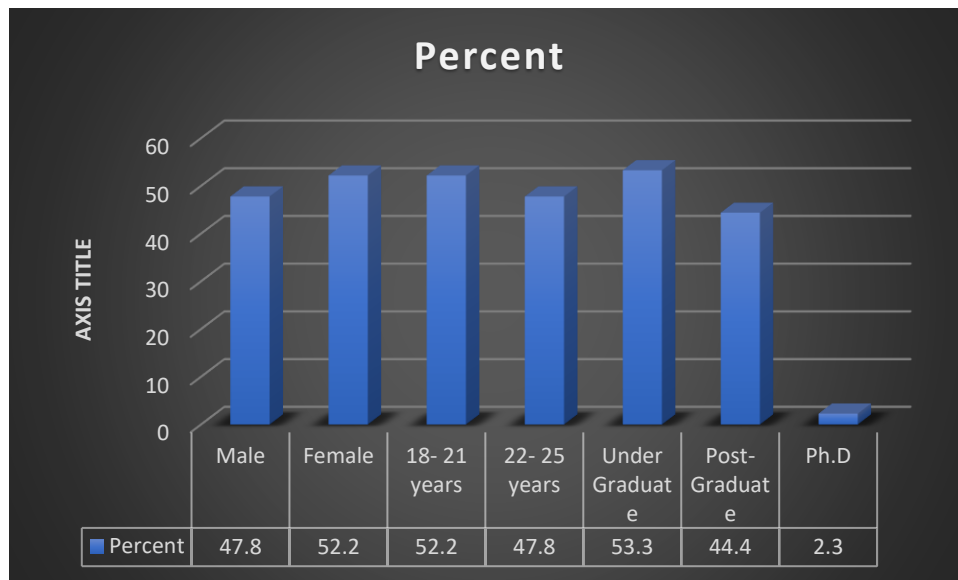


Figure 4.1: Bar Chart of Demographic Division of the Sample

4.1 Social Media Usage of the Sample

This research primarily aims to analyze the effects of social media use on the psychological well-being of young people in Delhi. Our study relied heavily on knowing how young people use these social media sites. Thus, we moved our attention from the demographics to the patterns, frequency, duration, and goals of participants' social media use after clarifying the demographic breakdown and offering a thorough gender-wise analysis of the sample's age and educational credentials.

Table 4.2 How often do you use Social Media Platforms in a Typical Day?

1. How often do you use social media platforms in a typical day? * Gender					
			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
1. How often do you use social media platforms in a typical day?	Less than 1 hour	Count	52	52	104
		% within	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	3-4 hours	Count	85	93	178
		% within	47.8%	52.2%	100.0%
	1-2 hours	Count	94	97	191
		% within	49.2%	50.8%	100.0%
	More than 4 hours	Count	40	54	94
		% within	42.6%	57.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	271	296	567	
	% within	47.8%	52.2%	100.0%	

According to the statistics, most people spend between one and four hours a day on social media. The biggest number of people using it for one to two hours is 191 people, followed by 178 people using it for three to four hours. A smaller but notable subset of responders (94 in total) spends above 4 hours, indicating very active participation. While there is a fairly even distribution of genders across all categories, the category with the highest use (more than 4 hours) has a small female dominance. Both sexes use social media regularly, and there seems to be a tendency toward longer sessions, which might affect users' psychological well-being.

Table 4.3 Which Social Media Platforms do you use Most Frequently?

2. Which social media platforms do you use most frequently? * Gender					
			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
2. Which social media platforms do you use most frequently?	Facebook	Count	44	42	86
		% within	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%
	Instagram	Count	54	56	110
		% within	49.1%	50.9%	100.0%
	WhatsApp	Count	77	97	174
		% within	44.3%	55.7%	100.0%
	X/Twitter	Count	20	22	42
		% within	47.6%	52.4%	100.0%
	Snapchat	Count	7	8	15
		% within	46.7%	53.3%	100.0%
	Telegram	Count	30	33	63
		% within	47.6%	52.4%	100.0%
	YouTube	Count	39	38	77
		% within	50.6%	49.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	271	296	567	
	% within	47.8%	52.2%	100.0%	

In terms of platform use, the results reveal that WhatsApp has 174 users, Instagram has 110 users, and YouTube has 77 users. Snapchat has the lowest user base compared to Facebook, Telegram, and X (Twitter), all of which have moderate use. It seems that females lean somewhat toward communication and visual engagement platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp, as compared to guys. Instagram demonstrates the growing significance of visual culture and social comparison among young people, while WhatsApp's ubiquity indicates its relevance in everyday communication.

Table 4.4 How many Social Media Accounts do you have?

3. How many social media accounts do you have? * Gender					
			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
3. How many social media accounts do you have?	1	Count	43	61	104
		% within	41.3%	58.7%	100.0%
	2-3	Count	132	133	265
		% within	49.8%	50.2%	100.0%
	4-5	Count	69	67	136
		% within	50.7%	49.3%	100.0%

	More than 5	Count	27	35	62
		% within	43.5%	56.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	271	296	567
		% within	47.8%	52.2%	100.0%

Among those who took the survey, 265 have two or three social media accounts, while 136 have four or five. Fewer still have more than five accounts, and even fewer have just one. This shows that young people have a diverse online presence, since they often participate across many platforms. There seems to be no significant difference in the amount of time spent in front of screens between the sexes, which may be a result of the fact that both men and women actively use many online personas.

Table 4.5 Purpose of using Social Media

4. Purpose of using social media * Gender					
			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
4. Purpose of using social media	Educational Purposes	Count	48	40	88
		% within	54.5%	45.5%	100.0%
	Entertainment Purposes	Count	65	78	143
		% within	45.5%	54.5%	100.0%
	Social Connection Purposes	Count	75	90	165
		% within	45.5%	54.5%	100.0%
	Informational Purposes	Count	61	60	121
		% within	50.4%	49.6%	100.0%
	Professional Networking Purposes	Count	7	8	15
		% within	46.7%	53.3%	100.0%
	Other Purposes	Count	15	20	35
		% within	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
	Total	Count	271	296	567
		% within	47.8%	52.2%	100.0%

While men are more likely to use social media for research and education, women are more likely to use it for fun and making friends. Overexposure and decreased productivity may impact mental health, as social media is mostly utilized for enjoyment and engagement rather than for academic or professional development.

4.2 Mental Well-Being of Sample

After thoroughly examining the demographics and social media habits of the sample, our research proceeded to evaluate the individuals' psychological health. A comprehensive model of mental health, the RYFF model of psychological wellness served as a framework for this investigation.

Table 4.6 Frequency Table of the Constructs

The psychological well-being assessment developed by Ryff											
Variable	Item No.	Item	SD	SW	D	D	N	A	SW A	SA	Total
Autonomy	A1	“I am afraid to voice my opinions on social media, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.”				7	7	42	56	455	567
	A2	“My decisions are usually influenced by what everyone else is doing on social media.”				0	7	49	70	441	567
	A3	“I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.”				0	14	63	91	399	567
	A4	“I don’t have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from those of others.”				0	35	84	119	329	567
	A5	“It’s difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters.”				7	14	77	56	413	567
	A6	“I don’t tend to worry about what other people think of me on social media.”				42	63	112	350		567
	A7	“I don’t judge myself by what I think is important, rather by the values of others think is important.”	7	7	7	35	98	105	308	567	
Environmental Mastery	EM 1	“In general, I feel I am not in charge of the situation in which I live.”	14			7	91	77	140	238	567
	EM 2	“The demands of everyday social media often get me down.”				7	49	49	112	350	567
	EM 3	“I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me.”	7			7	35	70	70	378	567
	EM 4	“I am not good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily social media.”	7	7		28	14	70	77	364	567
	EM 5	“I feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities.”				7	70	105	168	217	567
	EM 6	“I have difficulty arranging my social media in a way that is satisfying to me.”					42	63	63	399	567
	EM 7	“I haven’t been able to build a living environment and a social media style for myself that is much to be liking.”				14	84	112	133	224	567
Personal	PG 1	“I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons.”	7			14	49	98	133	266	567
	PG 2	“I think it is unimportant to have new experiences that challenge how I think about	7	0		70	84	147	259		567

		myself and the world.”								
	PG 3	“When I think about it, I haven’t really improved much as a person over the years.”		14	14	63	119	119	238	567
	PG 4	“I haven’t the sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time.”		7	14	28	112	154	252	567
	PG5	“For me, social media has not been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.”	7	0	21	49	84	189	217	567
	PG 6	“I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes on my social media a long time ago.”	7	21	21	77	91	133	217	567
	PG 7	“I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things.”				77	84	105	301	567
Positive relations	PR1	“Most people don’t see me as loving and affectionate.”		14	21	63	119	133	217	567
	PR2	“Maintaining close relationships have been difficult and frustrating for me through social media.”		14	21	63	105	168	196	567
	PR3	“I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns.”	7	7	21	70	119	147	196	567
	PR4	“I don’t enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members and friends.”	7	0	91	63	189	217		567
	PR5	“People would describe me as an ungiving person, unwilling to share my time with others.”	7	7	28	126	84	182	133	567
	PR6	“I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others on social media.”		7	112	105	161	182		567
	PR7	“I know that I can’t trust my friends, and they know they can’t trust me.”		14	14	105	126	154	154	567
Purpose in life	PS M1	“I don’t live social media one day at a time and don’t really think about the future.”	7	7	7	56	105	126	259	567
	PS M2	“I don’t have a sense of direction and purpose in social media.”			28	63	84	133	259	567
	PS M3	“I don’t have a good sense of what it is I’m trying to accomplish in social media.”	7	0	21	91	112	140	196	567

	PS M4	“My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.”				77	112	210	168	567
	PS M5	“I don’t enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them reality”	7	7	21	70	119	154	189	567
	PS M6	“Some people wander aimlessly on social media, I am one of them.”	14		42	119	161	231		567
	PS M7	“I sometimes feel as if I’ve done all there is to do in social media.”			14	42	84	140	287	567
Self Acceptance	SA 1	“When I look at the story of my social media on social media, I am unpleased with how things have turned out so far.”				42	84	196	245	567
	SA 2	“In general, I don’t feel confident and positive about myself.”			21	14	70	105	357	567
	SA 3	“I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of social media than I have.”			28	28	77	112	322	567
	SA 4	“I don’t like most parts of my personality.”		7	14	49	140	147	210	567
	SA 5	“In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in social media.”	14	7	49	126	70	119	182	567
	SA 6	“My attitude about myself is probably not as positive as most people feel about themselves on social media.”		7	70	84	147	259		567
	SA 7	“When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes me feel bad about who I am.”		14	14	63	119	119	238	567
Psychological Well-Being	SW L1	In most ways my social media is close to my ideal		14	28	112	154	252	7	567
	SW L2	The condition of social media is excellent	7	7	21	70	119	154	189	567
	SW L3	I am satisfied with my social media			0	7	49	70	441	567
	SW L4	So far I have gotten the important things I want in social media.		3	0	11	63	91	399	567
	SW L5	If I could create my social media over, I would change almost nothing.	3	4	21	91	112	140	196	567
Frequency			143	196	994	2797	4690	6783	11046	26649
Relative Frequency			0.54%	0.74%	4.38%	12.33%	20.68%	29.91%	48.70%	117.50%

Using Ryff's six dimensions—autonomy, environmental mastery, personal progress, good connections, purpose in life, and self-acceptance—Table 4.6 provides a thorough examination of the respondents'

psychological well-being. The general trend in the replies points to a propensity to agree with many assertions that are worded negatively, which raises some worries about the mental health of the young people. When asked about their level of autonomy, many people said they felt pressured to conform to the beliefs of others on social media and had trouble expressing themselves, which is a reflection of the diminished autonomy and heightened social pressure that people feel in online communities. Regarding environmental mastery, several participants voiced concerns about feeling unable to keep up with the demands of social media and their online duties, suggesting a lack of command over their digital lives. When asked about their level of personal growth, many people said they didn't think social media helped them much, and a few even said they were stuck in a rut when it came to self-improvement. Several respondents have trouble keeping intimate and meaningful connections, according to the study of good relations; this may be due to feelings of loneliness or a lack of confidence in others, or to the fact that their online interactions are shallow and unsatisfying. The lack of direction and meaningful involvement on social media was also mentioned by many respondents as an issue in the dimension of purpose in life. This suggests that their use is frequently unstructured and lacking in long-term value. Finally, problems with poor self-esteem and negative self-perception are brought to light by the self-acceptance dimension. Respondents often made unfavorable comparisons to others and were unhappy with their online persona. While social media is an important part of young people's life, the results from Table 4.6 show that it also comes with a number of problems that, if not handled properly, may have a negative impact on their mental health.

5. CONCLUSION

The impact of social media on young people's mental health is a major issue in today's technological world. In order to delve into these dynamics, this research used the RYFF Psychological Well-Being Scale to measure the mental health of young people and their social media use habits. A number of aspects of mental health were investigated in this study, including independence, mastery of one's environment, personal development, sense of purpose, acceptance of oneself, and positive relationships with others, as well as the effects of using social media for educational, informational, social connection, and professional networking purposes. This research set intended to answer the question, "How do certain components of social media use contribute to or detract from the mental well-being of youth?" by examining these links. The complexity of contemporary digital connections was brought to light in this investigation, as was the need for targeted interventions and techniques to promote healthy social media habits among young people. This section provides a summary of the results, with an emphasis on what this study means for the future of mental health promotion in the digital age and what kinds of treatments may be put into practice.

According to the research, there are two ways in which social media influences the psychological well-being of Delhi's youth. Although Facebook is a great tool for connecting with others, exchanging knowledge, and communicating, using it too often or without proper regulation may cause serious mental health problems. According to the results, the majority of young people spend a lot of time on social media, and they often use different sites for different purposes, such as amusement and interacting with friends. Unfortunately, there are also negative psychological repercussions linked to this degree of participation, including less autonomy, more social comparison, emotional reliance, and worse self-acceptance.

Social media use is associated with an increased risk of anxiety, a diminished sense of purpose in life, and trouble forming and sustaining meaningful connections, according to research on psychological health. On the other hand, it's not completely off-limits since, when utilized properly, it can be a platform for education, connection, and individuality. Accordingly, the research stresses the need of social media moderation and awareness. To assist young users in cultivating more positive online habits, it is important to advocate for awareness campaigns, digital literacy initiatives, and mental health treatments. To maximize social media's benefits and mitigate its drawbacks, future studies should investigate its effects over the long term and investigate intervention techniques.

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