



Effects Of Social Media On Mental Health: A Review

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Abstract:

Research indicates that excessive use of social media can be related to depression and anxiety. This study conducted a systematic review of social media and mental health, focusing on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Based on inclusion criteria from the systematic review, ameta-analysis was conducted to explore and summarize studies from the empirical literature on the relationship between social media and mental health. Using PRISMA guidelines on PubMed and Google Scholar, a literature search from January 2010 to June 2020 was conducted to identify studies addressing the relationship between social media sites and mental health. Of the 45 studies identified, 25 were included in the meta-analysis. The findings indicate that while excessive and expanding use of social media, particularly among those who are sensitive, is associated to depression and other mental health disorders, it may also foster a sense of community among users.

Keywords: Social Media, Social media and anxiety, social media and loneliness, social media and social relationships, Social Media and Depression

Introduction:

In terms of how it affects people's mental health, the imbalance brought on by excessive social media use is of significant concern to society, academia, and parents. Overusing social media platforms is one of the most popular modern hobbies. Websites like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, online games, virtual worlds like Second Life, Sims, YouTube, blogs, and others that support web 2.0 & 3.0 technology are all examples of social media. These trendy websites are quickly growing and provide the younger population with easily accessible gateways for communication and enjoyment. According to Merriam-Webster's definition from 2014, social media are "forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and micro-blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)." In the past ten years, social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and others have significantly improved the virtual world by enabling users to share an unprecedented quantity of private content, including images, videos, and private thoughts and feelings.

In light of this, social media has a significant impact on a variety of modern digital life areas outside of online communication, including marketing, politics, education, health, and even fundamental human connection. Although social media is a relatively new phenomenon, there are many of these areas where it clearly has advantages. Numerous empirical studies have assessed the overall impact of frequent usage of social media on users' physical and mental health. This misconception is particularly concerning when it comes to today's younger generation because teenagers and young people spend a lot of time engaged in online socialization and may as a result be more at risk of bad results. Numerous studies categorized the relationship between social media use and its unfavorable effects, such as an increase in anxiety, tension, depression, and loneliness. Social media use among the younger population is growing, which raises concerns about potential negative consequences. Furthermore, as indicated by the rising number of everyday users, social media users have quickly embraced online social contact as a necessary component of daily life. In actuality, 61% of people on the earth have a social network account. The number of accounts will approach five billion in 2022. TikTok had a massive increase in users in 2022, up 389 million, or 32%. The closest gender parity is seen on Instagram, where there are 50.8% men and 49.2% women. Twitter has the biggest gender gap, with 57.2% of its users being men. (Social App Report 2023: Revenue, User and Benchmark Data (businessofapps.com))

Figure 1 shows that the majority of the user's usage of internet by the age group of 16 to 64 who visited social networking sites in July 2023. According to Kepios data, total population 8.05 billion (57.2%), unique mobile phone subscribers 5.56 billion (69.1%), individuals using internet 5.19 billion (5.19%) and social media user identities 4.88 billion (60.6%) accessed social media sites. This figure represents 60.6 percent of the global population, marking yet another significant milestone in global social media use.

Figure-1: Usage of Internet in the month of July 2023

Total population	8.05 Billion (57.2%)
Unique mobile phone subscriber	5.56 Billion (69.1%)
Individuals using the internet	5.19 Billion (64.5%)
Social media user identities	4.88 Billion (60.6%)

Need of reviews on social media:

Systematic studies can locate, collect, and assess all available data in both quantitative and qualitative ways to produce a thoughtful and precise response to the research issues at hand. Additionally, there are several systematic researches on mental health that have been undertaken all around the world. However, due to the literature's heavy emphasis on medical science, there aren't many studies that combine social media and are conducted in the framework of social science. Due to the fact that social media is still a relatively new phenomenon; little research has been done on any possible associations between social media use and mental health.

This research is taken an effort to carefully review every necessary material in order to fill the knowledge gap on the effect of social media on mental health, which is a passive lifestyle that, if used excessively, raises the risk of health difficulties. This study is significant because it provides information on the focus of the peer-reviewed literature, which can aid the researchers in providing a perspective for comprehending the future care related to climate change strategies that deserve academic attention. This study has great value since it demonstrates the extent to which peer-reviewed literature may aid academics in understanding potential issues with regard to mental health approaches that need scientific consideration. How do social networking sites affect mental health? Is the main research problem that underpinned the current systematic review?

Method of research:

The aim of the research was to find studies that examined the impact of social networking sites on mental wellness. The primary database we utilized to discover the pertinent articles were Google, Google Scholar and CeRA (Consortium for e Resources of Agriculture). The following keywords have been used to discover the related articles from internet i.e. Social media, social media and stress, social media and depression, social media and loneliness, social media and mental health. The data was used to discover the reviews regarding use social media sites since 2020 to till date.

Table-1: research articles searched through keywords

Keywords	Google Scholar	CeRA
Social media	18,100	5858
Social media and stress	315000	199
Social Media and Depression	128000	82
Social Media and loneliness	45800	20
Social Relationships and Mental Health	52600	391

A total of 45 publications related to the research issue were chosen from the results in Table 1. Following the application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, duplicate papers were deleted, and a total of 25 articles were chosen for evaluation.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria:

The review included full-text peer-reviewed academic papers over the past five years. All selected papers were written in English, and any research that was not peer-reviewed or duplicated was removed from the final list.

Social Media and Depression

A study conducted by Liu yi Lin B.A (2016) on association between social media use and depression among US young adults and observed that the compared with the lowest quartile of total time per day spent on social media, participants in the highest quartile had significantly increased odds of depression after controlling for all covariates. Compared with those in the lowest quartile, individuals in the highest quartile of social media site visits per week and those with a higher global frequency score had significantly increased odds of depression. A study conducted by Boak and *et.al.* (2018) on social media use and mental health among students in Ontario and confirmed that students who spend more than 2 hours per day on social media are considerably more likely than occasional users to rate their mental health as fair or bad. Bhawna et al. (2020) conducted a study on social media and depression, and the findings show that 02.1%, 12.2%, and 85.7% of 98 students access social media by computer, mobile phone, or both computer and mobile phone, respectively. Because of their heavy use of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and Whatsapp, 42.9% of male students and 57.1% of female students were depressed. According to the study, higher education students should utilise social media on a regular basis and with self-regulation in order to prevent or manage depression and lead a happy and well-managed life. Tonya Mosley and Serena McMahon (2020) investigated social media use linked to anxiety, depression among teens and analyzed how much time students spend on social media, television, and computers. According to the findings, the more time children spent focused on computer gadgets, the worse their anxiety and depression symptoms became. A study conducted by Wang et al., (2018) and It has altered human lifestyles and behavior patterns. Much data suggests that mobile social media use can alter people's mental health and behaviors. Nazari, A. et al. (2023) conducted a study on social media and mental health in Lorestan university students and discovered that the study's findings suggested that students' mental health was impacted by their heavy use of social media. Furthermore, inappropriate social media use was directly related to mental health. Age, gender, income level, marital status, and unemployment among non-native students were found to have significant correlations with social media use and mental health. Despite the overwhelming evidence that social media impairs mental health. The score of problematic use of social

media is significantly higher in women, the age group less than 20 years, unemployed, non-native students, dormitory students, and students living with friends or alone and single, divorced, and widowed.

Social Media and loneliness

Deters and Mehl (2013) investigated whether posting Facebook status updates increases or decreases loneliness and discovered that increased SNS activity, both active and interactive usage, decreased loneliness because it increased the feeling of connectivity, but it also shows that passive users are more likely to experience increases in loneliness. According to a study by Emily B. O'Day (2021) on social media use, social anxiety, and loneliness, persons who are socially uncomfortable and lonely tend to engage online more problematically and look for social support online to make up for a lack of in-person support. Negative SMU is linked to social anxiety and loneliness, and loneliness seems to be a risk factor for subpar online behaviour. Study carried out by Abby Halston (2019) on Social Media and Loneliness and observed that there were minimal correlations between the two significant results, namely, hours spent on Pinterest and checking order Twitter, with only the numbers from checking order Twitter fitting with previous studies' results as the correlation between hours on Pinterest and loneliness was negative, indicating that there was a decrease in loneliness with increased utilization of the platform rather than an increase in loneliness. Sohn et al. (2018) studied college students' sense of intimacy and connectedness on social media as they transitioned from college to the working world over a six-month period and discovered that intimacy on social media and feelings of connectedness (i.e., bonding capital) predicted declines in loneliness over time, highlighting that using social media to stay connected with friends can reduce loneliness. Taken together, it indicates that online social interaction that enhances emotions of closeness with others, such as posting or sharing, helps to reduce loneliness, and that, while direct social input from others is desirable, it is not essential. A study conducted by Hunt and Young (2018) on undergraduates' usage of Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat and found that, when compared to SMU as usual, people who decreased their SMU to 10 minutes per platform per day noticed reductions in loneliness. In 2013, Clayton, Osborne, Miller, and Oberle conducted a study on how undergraduates use Facebook and observed that they looked into emotional attachment, interaction behaviors, and reasons for using the platform. The study found that lonely individuals use Facebook to connect with others, but it only played a minor role. Additionally, lonely people received emotional support through online interactions. In a study on pathological Internet use, Caplan (2006) found that social anxiety explained a sizable portion of the variation in the relationship between loneliness and preference for online interaction. Despite the fact that receiving support through social media generally may benefit users, decreasing their fatigue and boosting their satisfaction, more lonely users experience greater stress while using social media as compared to less lonely users, limiting their ability to realise the potential benefits of their SMU. Pittman and Reich (2016) studied people's frequent usage of several social media platforms and discovered that, although text-based platforms such as Twitter and YikYak had no influence on loneliness, image-based platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat had a medium effect. They hypothesized that this was due to some of these platforms' image-based design, which may promote social connectivity and reduce loneliness. Users of just Facebook, according to Petrocchi et al. (2015), reported more severe SMU. They put out the idea that those who solely use Facebook could utilize social media to avoid loneliness, but people who use several social media platforms might be more socially connected and engaged across platforms and, as a consequence, feel less lonely.

Social Relationships and Mental Health

Naslund and Aschbrenner (2019) conducted a study on the risks to privacy associated with the use of social media and discovered that people suffering from mental diseases may face significant risks when using social media. The study specifically investigated the perspectives of social media users with serious mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia spectrum disorders, bipolar disorder, or major depression, and discovered that more than one-third of participants expressed privacy concerns when using social media. In a study on the relationship between social media use and mental health conducted by Osman et al. in 2022, it was found that while frequent and excessive use of these platforms, especially by those who are already vulnerable, is linked to depression and other mental health disorders, even though social media can help users feel more connected to others. A study of social media users with mental illnesses done by Naslund et al. 2017 revealed that the capacity to learn from the experiences of others and the ability to tell personal narratives about living with mental illness were two of the most important reasons for using social media. Sheldon (2012) found that Facebook users were less lonely than non-users, suggesting that those who are more socially anxious and lonely may be less likely to engage in online social networks, but the impacts were negligible.

Discussion:

The findings of the study suggest that excessive Facebook use is linked to mental health hazards. One research that sticks out in this conclusion is Park et al. (2013), who evaluated total life happiness before and after Facebook. According to the study's findings, excessive Facebook usage leads to poorer levels of satisfaction with oneself and one's life. As a result, the association between social media usage and mental health differs when only Facebook is addressed, and the amount and quality of time spent on Facebook may be an essential component to explore in future studies.

Conclusion:

Our research shows that people with mental health issues use social media to express themselves, and we should continue to use it to promote wellness. Regardless of whether these platforms reflect a distorted reality for some, they serve as platforms for people to express themselves. For people dealing with mental health issues, this type of expression can be

therapeutic. Our research also indicates that, in general, Facebook and Twitter have been used to improve mental health by connecting people who are experiencing similar mental health issues and creating a pleasant environment. We must continue to build communities within social networks to help people feel more connected and possibly have better mental health. However, the most crucial conclusion of this study is that social media sites offer unexplored potential for early identification. Providing knowledge and skills to handle social media constructively in schools is an effective strategy to promote self-esteem and mental health. The most essential recommendation from this study as we progress into the digital era is to build forums on these social media sites to enhance community health. Finally, how individuals utilise technology has a big impact on healthcare practitioners. Social media use should be extensively evaluated from a clinical and public health approach.

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