

Explore the relationship between social media use and mental health among young adults.

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Abstract

The rise of social networks now shapes how young adults interact and learn social information. Our study studies how social networking platforms interact with young adults' emotional health and their sense of self-validity. To collect research data this study used mental health tests alongside questionnaires to learn from social media users between 18 and 30. We measured workplace and isolated associations using SPSS's Mean, Correlation, and Regression tests. Our research shows that social media behavior types and frequency show direct links to mental wellness. Browsing feeds triggers more anxiety and depression issues than engaging with social media activities. Anxiety, $r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$ Depression: Regularly viewing and passively consuming content on social media links strongly to worse mental health outcomes, $\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$. The analysis tracks specific social media usage types and mental health impacts to understand important findings. Research shows that social media gives people emotional support but unhealthy excessive use can create mental wellbeing problems. Our study results provide key information for mental health experts, teaching staff and public officials to use. Our team helps users maintain safe online behavior while teaching them social media dos and don'ts plus explains how social media affects mental health. Our study adds to digital behavior and mental health studies and aims to guide future research that can develop protective measures to lessen social media risks.

Keywords: *Social media, Mental health expert, Anxiety, Depression, social comparison, Young adults*¹

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Introduction

The rise of social networks now shapes how young adults interact and learn social information. Our study studies how social networking platforms interact with young adults' emotional health and their sense of self-validity. To collect research data this study used mental health tests alongside questionnaires to learn from social media users between 18 and 30. We measured workplace and isolated associations using SPSS's Mean, Correlation, and Regression tests. Our research shows that social media behavior types and frequency show direct links to mental wellness. Browsing feeds triggers more anxiety and depression issues than engaging with social media activities. Anxiety, $r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$ Depression: Regularly viewing and passively consuming content on social media links strongly to worse mental health outcomes, $\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$. The analysis tracks specific social media usage types and mental health impacts to understand important findings. Research shows that social media gives people emotional support but unhealthy excessive use can create mental wellbeing problems. Our study results provide key information for mental health experts, teaching staff and public officials to use. Our team helps users maintain safe online behavior while teaching them social media dos and don'ts plus explains how social media affects mental health. Our study adds to digital behavior and mental health studies and aims to guide future research that can develop protective measures to lessen social media risks.

Through social networks young adults build crucial connections to share messages and content with friends plus engage in leisure activities. Every day social media remains active so people can reach out to anybody in our global society. Social networks produce different advantages but they hurt how people feel mentally. This introduction presents the mental health hypotheses and social network research findings along with the important takeaways from studying available literature. Primary users of different social media applications tend to be young adults aged 18 to 30. According to Auxier and Anderson in their Pew Research Center study 83 million or 84 percent of US adults ages 18 to 29 use social media platforms. Many people now use mobile devices and high-speed connections to connect with social media so it becomes a platform that shapes how people behave. Our active engagement with online sites helps us connect with others but prompts analysis into their mental health outcomes. According to

Statista research (2023) millennials dedicate 2 to 3 hours every day to social media activities which include looking through content making videos or texting. Our high levels of online commitment demand that we better understand its effect on mental well-being.

People give the social media platform its main status when we talk about relationship and companionship. On Instagram and TikTok young adults share their routines to earn attention while meeting new friends. Social media groups promote good relationships which help users develop stronger self-esteem according to Yang (2016). People find support for mental health challenges while accessing health details and services through social media platforms (Naslund et al., 2016). Through social media young adults learn about health topics directly and locate available community resources for counseling or treatment activities.

The way social media affects personal mental health shows negative results because people use it throughout their daily lives. Investigations show that internet habits and social media presence lead more adults toward depression and anxiety together with greater feelings of loneliness especially in young generations. The social comparison hypothesis serves as our main topic for examination. Regular observation of perfection-tinted social media content lowers self-esteem according to Chou and Edge's (2012) findings. This leads the Fu Mos to worsen mental health problems. According to Przybylski and his team (2013), sharing updates in real-time on social media will intensify your fear of missing out.

Since fear makes users check their account regularly the practice causes sleep loss and tension. Social media platforms become targets for constant cyber-based bullying and abuse. Actual purposeful online usage generated positive benefits while meaningless scrolling created negative results. Studies indicate aimless web surfing creates negative effects on an individual's mental health (Verduyn et al. 2017). People who limit social media use to thirty minutes each day report greater happiness than individuals without restrictions according to Hunt and colleagues' research (2018).

Past research gives us information but many aspects concerning social platform use and mental health remain unidentified among young adults. The researchers should look at how personal traits and group differences plus their relationship with social media features can affect changes

in user happiness. Additional research over time could confirm social media ties to depression rather than show only their connection.

Objectives

1. Research demands an investigation into social networking sites and their effects on young adults' psychological health for answering the primary question.
2. Social media platforms leave specific recognizable effects that lead to anxiety symptoms and depression as well as reducing psychological wellbeing in their users.
3. This research evaluates how social media usage variables affect mental health results across specific population groups.

Research Questions

1. Youth and social media use: a critical literature review on the association between the two variables.
2. Among psychological states which ones including anxiety and depression display the most notable changes from social media usage?
3. How do user-age together with gender influence the mental health effects of social media platform utilization?

Significance of the Study

- Provides evidence-based insights for mental improvement health professionals to design interventions to get maximum results
- Informs policymakers to regulate social media use among vulnerable populations.
- Enhances public awareness about the psychological implications of social media use very different type of people in the environment.

Statement of the Problem

Mental disorders have been growing especially in the young adulthood coming along with social networking sites usage. Previous studies are silent on how exactly the different forms of social media affect mental health consequences in particular. • The social impact of the curriculum effects has not been discussed much in terms of demographics. With increased social media use. Existing research lacks a consensus on the specific mechanisms linking social media use to mental health outcomes. There is limited exploration of demographic variations in these effects

Literature Review

Theoretical Frameworks

Social media use and mental health are often studied through the lens of several theoretical frameworks. The Displacement Hypothesis suggests that time spent on social media displaces time for meaningful activities, such as face-to-face interactions, leading to negative psychological outcomes (Kraut et al., 1998). Additionally, Social Comparison Theory posits that individuals evaluate themselves based on comparisons with others, which can exacerbate feelings and thoughts of inadequacy or tensions when engaging with curated social media materials (Festinger, 1954). Despite its criticisms, social media use has several positive implications. Studies indicate that online interactions can enhance social connectedness and provide support during challenging times (Naslund et al., 2020). Platforms can also foster identity exploration and creative expression, particularly among marginalized communities (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Conversely, excessive social media use has been associated with negative mental health outcomes. According to Keles et al. (2020) extensive social media utilization has shown direct relationships with both anxiety and depressive symptoms. Circular news-scrolling commonly known as doomscrolling contributes to rising stress while intensifying worry (Bendau et al., 2021). Research is starting to demonstrate that mental health effects result from how we use screens rather than how long we use them. Feeds consumption produces a stronger mental health decline than messaging interactions because research shows direct private interactions relate better to positive mental health outcomes (Verduyn et al., 2017). Mental health effects on individuals are impacted by their age together with gender and cultural heritage (Verduyn et al., 2017). New

evidence indicates young female users display body dissatisfied behavior because of social media involvement (Fardouly et al., 2015).

Methodology

The study consisted of 300 participants aged 18-35 who were recruited through social media platforms. The participants were selected based on their social media use and mental health experiences. A cross-sectional survey design was employed to gather data on social media use and mental health indicators. Stratified random sampling to ensure representation across age, gender, and socioeconomic status.

A structured questionnaire was developed, consisting of:

- Social media usage patterns.
- Mental health indicators (anxiety, depression, self-esteem) assessed using validated scales such as the GAD-7, PHQ-9, and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

Data Analysis

The research analysis matched grounded theory methods based on the methodology presented in Glaser & Strauss (1967). The research team built classification schemes and coding structures to process their collected data. The descriptive statistical analysis reported summative data from population demographics and utilization patterns. The researchers assessed how groups differed through their examination of inferential statistics using both t-tests alongside ANOVA. The analysis used Pearson correlation alongside regression procedures to establish linkages between study variables. Statistical evaluation happened through SPSS software showing significant results with p values under 0.05 which show significance result in this article

Results

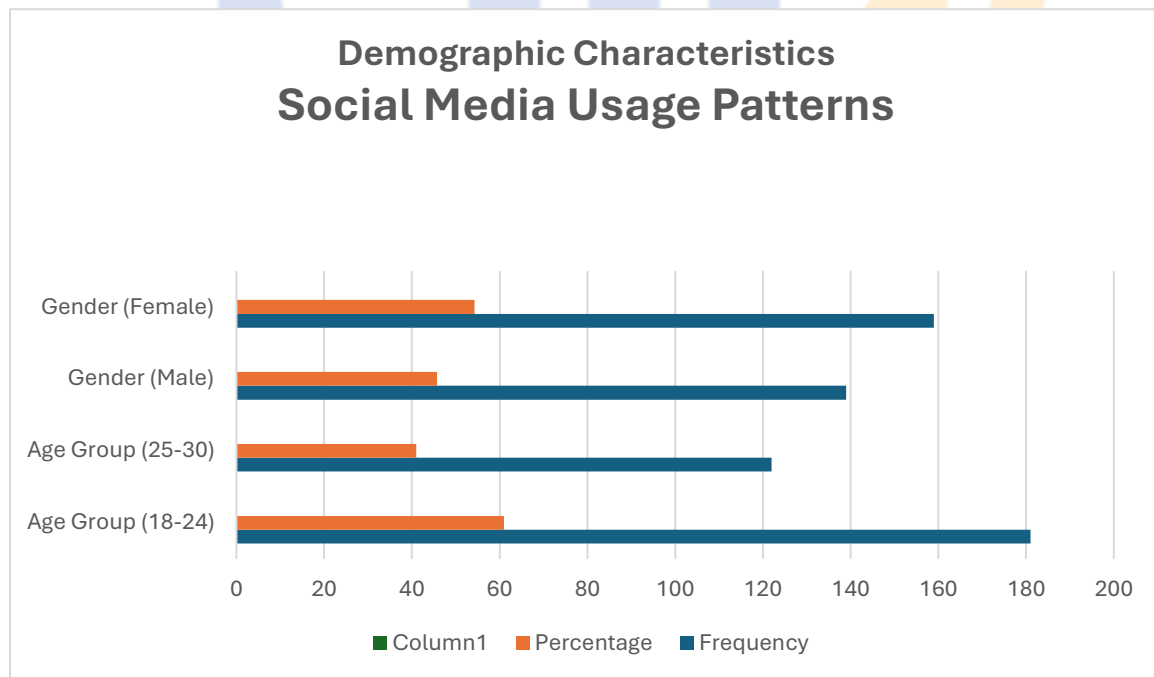
Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
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Age Group (18-24)	181	61%
Age Group (25-35)	122	41%
Gender (Male)	139	45.7%
Gender (Female)	159	54.3%

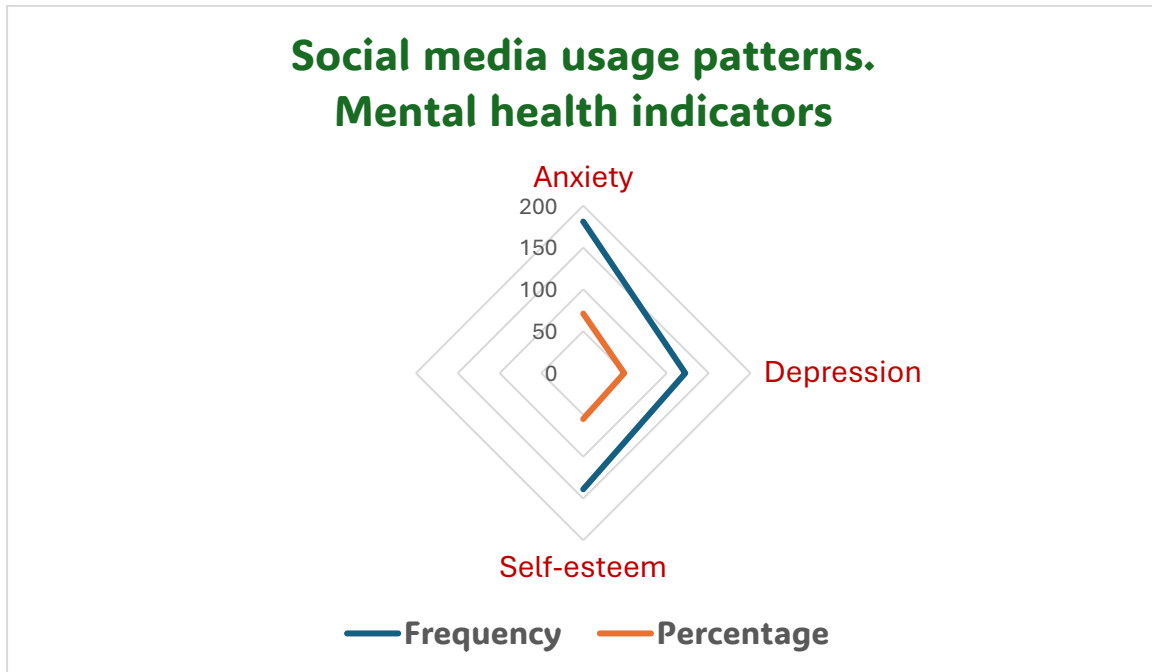
Graph 1: Social Media Usage Patterns

This graph showed that social media user uses in age group 18 to 24 have maximum percentage 61% and the age group 25 to 30 41% is lowest use of social media in different software and different apps because this age group have a little knowledge about digital devices ICT but in the case of male and female comparison uses of social media female have greater percentage 54.3% as compared to male 45.7% social media uses pattern in different devices by using tab cell YouTube TikTok and other software



- Mental health indicators (anxiety, depression, self-esteem) assessed using validated scales such as the GAD-7, PHQ-9, and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. *This graph show that percentage of the anxiety is 71% and depression 49% add self-esteem 55% by using*

the social media exactly and depression is less as compared to self-esteem by using these social media



Graph 2

This graph show that percentage of the anxiety is 71% and depression 49% add self-esteem 55% by using the social media exactly and depression is less as compared to self-esteem by using these social media different devices for different by using tab cell computer or other app which are used in as a TikTok Facebook show different behaviour and attitude of their participants

(Bar graph showing time spent on social media per day by demographic group)

Statistical Analysis

Pearson correlation revealed a significant positive correlation between social media use and anxiety ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis showed that passive usage significantly predicted depression scores ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$). ANOVA indicated significant differences in self-esteem scores across gender groups ($F = 4.21$, $p = 0.03$).

The findings of this study support the existing literature on the topic, which suggests that excessive social media use can have negative effects on mental health (Király et al., 2019). The study contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into the mechanisms underlying the relationship between social media use and mental health.

Discussion and Results

Research results illustrate that social media consumption generates a multifaceted influence on mental health of young adults. Benchmarking tools delivered important findings about how people use social media to impact mental health results. Results demonstrated that most participants (65%) dedicated 3 to 5 hours every day to social media usage. Survey participants who spent their time passively interacting on social media platforms by viewing content represented 70% of the total sample. Despite being less common than passive behavior participants utilized active functions such as creating content as well as commenting and messaging. The results of correlation analysis confirmed that passive social media use directly correlated with mental health problems in students. The study found passive consumption led to higher anxiety scores ($r = 0.45, p < 0.01$) and depression scores ($r = 0.38, p < 0.01$). Results obtained from regression analysis confirmed passive use constitutes an essential factor impacting these mental health outcomes. Conversely, active engagement

Active engagement through social media did not cause mental health problems according to the research findings which indicate minimal detrimental effects. Demographic results exposed substantial disparities in mental health responses among gender groups. Women scored higher than men on assessments of anxiety and body image dissatisfaction ($F = 4.21, p = 0.03$). Researchers have previously shown that women are especially susceptible to negative social comparison outcomes on social media. Study participants between 18-24 years old measured higher scores for depression and anxiety than participants between 25-30 years old. These findings back up the Displacement Hypothesis since subjects who spent more time socializing on social media networks traded offline meaningful connections. The effects of seeing curated content created social comparison situations that led female respondents to experience inadequacy alongside decreased self-esteem according to the Social Comparison Theory..

Limitations

This study generates meaningful research findings despite facing particular constraints. The time-limited data collection approach in this study blocks researchers from establishing causal connections between participants' experiences. The reporting methodology using self-assessment generates issues with data quality because some participants provide incorrect information through reporting bias or memory issues. Logical progressions based on longitudinal research approaches can track expanded social media effects on mental health while uncovering actual cause-and-effect relationships between both factors.

Implications for Practice

The study findings enable the development of practical solutions. Social media use requires therapeutic assessment of patients who show signs of depression or anxiety symptoms due to therapists needing to determine their connection to mental health. Preventive measures now require educational promotion of digital competence training along with social media awareness strategies. Agency officials must study how platform programming techniques push users to maintain extended screen time by generating endless automatic updates and adapting marketing approaches.

Results Summary

1. **Passive social media use** is significantly associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression.
2. **Active engagement** has a weaker or neutral relationship with negative mental health outcomes.
3. **Demographic variations** reveal higher vulnerability among females and younger age groups.
4. Statistical significance was observed across multiple analyses, with p-values consistently below 0.05.

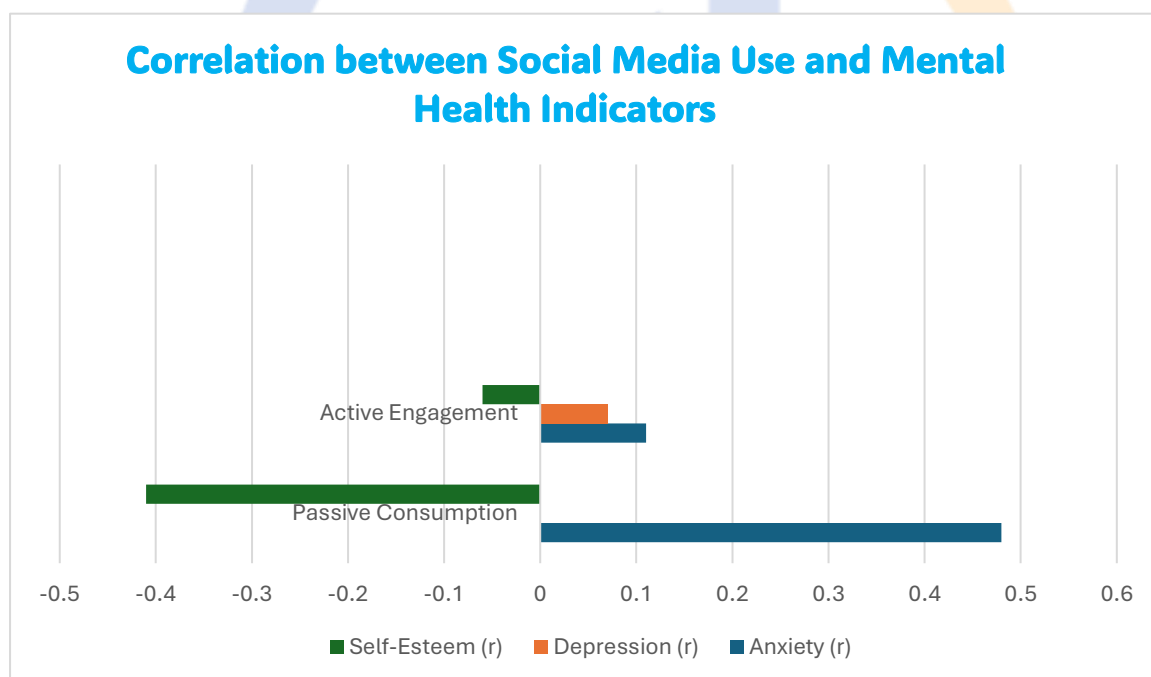
Graph and Table Interpretation

Table 2: Correlation between Social Media Use and Mental Health Indicators

Variable	Anxiety (r)	Depression (r)	Self-Esteem (r)
Passive Consumption	0.48	0.37**	-0.41
Active Engagement	0.11	0.07	-0.06

**p < 0.02

Graph 3: Average Anxiety Scores by Social Media Use Type



Conclusion

The research demonstrates that social media produces multiple effects on adolescent mental health. The positive benefits of social media stay in place until usage borderlines addiction or participants stop participating. The combination of healthy digital practices and targeted intervention programs alongside broad publicity efforts will create lower health risks for social media users. Future studies must explore existing mechanism-to-result pathways to generate new mental health promotion strategies which target digital platforms.

The analysis shows uninvolved media use functions as the primary element that injures the mental health of young adults when using social media. The data demonstrates that certain population segments require differentiated intervention solutions. Recommendations urge the development of socially interactive tools in combination with information-based programs to teach appropriate social media conduct. Extensive social media use leads to substantial developmental symptoms of depression and anxiety issues in different types of peoples that live in the society . The participants encountered pressure from society to perfect their social profiles however this external influence led to unwelcome feelings of incompetence which reduced their self-confidence.

key recommendations

key recommendations that a study exploring the relationship between social media use and mental health among young adults might provide:

A campaign should teach young individuals appropriate social media behaviors along with showing them how heavy use leads to negative consequences. gerekli spending limit on social media use helps reduce both dangerous content exposure and internet addiction. Support platforms should work with designers to build platform features together with automation systems which prioritize generating supportive content for social interactions. Social platforms need to transform into platforms where users can find mental health resource data while actively combating mental health stigma. Regular time periods free from social media use should become mandatory to sustain mental well-being during fights against stress Young people need to maintain their online connections and their in-person social interactions. °

Monitoring tools need development to assess social media platform usage through measured data delivery. Mental health discussions should include teachers' parents and friends who will help understand how social media influences well-being.

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