

# The Effects Of Social Media On Mental Health

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## Abstract

Using psychological theories and new empirical research, this study investigates the connection between social media use and mental health. Social media provides opportunities for expression and connection, but excessive or maladaptive use has been linked to negative psychological effects like depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. In addition to discussing risk-reduction tactics, the research explores the mechanisms underlying these impacts, including social comparison, cyberbullying, and sleep disruption.

**Key Words:** Effects, Social media, Mental health.

Date of Submission: 29-05-2025

Date of Acceptance: 09-06-2025

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## I. Introduction

The way people express themselves, communicate, and obtain information has been completely transformed by social media platforms. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and X (previously Twitter) have billions of users worldwide and have ingrained themselves into everyday life. Despite their advantages, social media's possible detrimental effects on mental health, particularly for teenagers and young adults, have drawn more attention. This essay seeks to examine the ways in which social media usage impacts mental health and offer suggestions for more constructive interaction.

## II. Positive Effects Of Social Media

Despite its criticism, social media can positively impact mental well-being in several ways:

- **Social Connection:** Platforms help users maintain relationships and overcome geographical and social barriers.
- **Community Support:** Social media can offer solidarity, especially for marginalized groups (e.g., LGBTQ+ communities, people with disabilities).
- **Self-Expression and Identity Exploration:** Creative platforms like Instagram and TikTok allow users to explore and express identities.

Several studies, including those by Naslund et al. (2016), highlight that individuals with serious mental illness often use social media to seek social support and reduce feelings of isolation.

## III. Negative Effects Of Social Media

### Anxiety and Depression

Studies have consistently linked heavy social media use with symptoms of anxiety and depression. A 2018 study published in *Computers in Human Behavior* found that passive use (scrolling without interacting) increases feelings of envy and loneliness.

### Social Comparison

Social media often presents idealized versions of people's lives, leading to harmful upward social comparisons. This can result in feelings of inadequacy, body dissatisfaction, and lower self-esteem, especially among teens.

### Cyberbullying

Online platforms can be breeding grounds for cyberbullying, which is strongly correlated with suicidal ideation, anxiety, and depression.

### Sleep Disruption

Excessive screen time, especially before bed, is associated with disrupted sleep patterns, which can exacerbate mental health issues.

#### **IV. Demographic Vulnerabilities**

##### **Adolescents and Young Adults**

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable due to identity formation and heightened sensitivity to peer feedback. Research by Twenge et al. (2017) shows a sharp increase in depressive symptoms among teens correlating with increased screen time post-2012.

##### **Gender Differences**

Females are more likely to experience negative mental health outcomes from social media, possibly due to higher rates of online harassment and greater sensitivity to appearance-related content.

#### **V. Mechanisms Of Influence**

- **Dopamine Feedback Loops:** Social media platforms are designed to provide intermittent positive feedback (likes, shares), fostering addictive behaviors.
- **Fear of Missing Out (FOMO):** Constant exposure to others' social activities can create anxiety about being left out.
- **Surveillance and Self-Consciousness:** Knowing one is being watched can increase self-monitoring, which may harm mental well-being.

#### **VI. Mitigation Strategies**

- **Digital Literacy Education:** Teaching users to critically assess online content can reduce the impact of harmful comparisons.
- **Parental Monitoring and Open Dialogue:** Encouraging healthy habits and communication can buffer negative effects among youth.
- **App Design Changes:** Platforms could implement features like time-use reminders or hiding like counts to reduce pressure.

#### **VII. Conclusion**

Social media is a powerful tool that can both benefit and harm mental health. Its effects depend on how it is used, the individual user's vulnerabilities, and the broader social context. Awareness, education, and thoughtful design are key to maximizing its benefits while minimizing its harms.

#### **Acknowledgement**

I am whole-heartly grateful to thank **Almighty God** and my **Parents** for enduring grace, blessings and gave me strength for success of this project.

I express my sincere and whole hearted gratitude to **MS. Usha Paul (Principal)**, MIET Kumaon College of Nursing, and **Mr. Gaurav (Principal)**, Rajshree Medical College and Hospital, granting me the permission to conduct the research and for all timely help, technical guidance and motivation which inspired me to complete my research work.

The present study has been completed with the team work of both the authors that have their own level of knowledge and experience on the research statement. Both have made this research article by utilizing their precious time and knowledge on the current situation of the society.

I greatly acknowledge all **the participants** who were involved and gave their precious time.

I greatly acknowledge all **the experts** who guided me for the suggestions. It is my privilege to thank the **entire faculty**, for their constructive criticism, suggestions and addressing all my queries which helped in shaping of the research article.

I wish to express my thanks to, Librarians **Mr. Tribhuvan librarian** and administrative staff for basic support for providing me the necessary facilities when required.

I offer my profound indebtedness to my Mother **Mrs. Bimla Masih**, my Father **Mr. Prem Kumar Masih**, my Brother **Mr. Anuj Masih** for their inspiration, continuous prayers, constant support, blessings, boundless love, everlasting support and indomitable trust which make me able to complete this monotonous task in the part of my dream.

I whole heartedly give special thanks to my dearest friends for continuous support during my hard times and providing motivation to move forward in my work and complete this research article.

I wish to thank from the core of my heart all the well-wisher whose blessings propelled me to achieve my dreams. Thanks to all.

**With gratitude**

**Ms. Ankita Masih**

**Mr. Mohd. Malik Khan**

### **Authors' Biography**

Ms. Ankita Masih who is the primary author as Nursing Tutor she was able to write this article by the guidance of her respective faculties. Now at present she is working as a nursing tutor at MIET Kumaon College of Nursing, Haldwani.

Mr. Mohd. Malik Khan who is the 2<sup>nd</sup> author in this article as a Assistant Professor. Now he is working as an Assistant Professor at Rajshree Medical College and hospital, Bareilly, U.P. He also contributed his knowledge in this article as a good help to complete this article.

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# The Effects Of Social Media On The Mental Health Of School-Going Children

Author

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## Abstract

*This paper explores the complex effects of social media on school-age children's mental health, with a focus on India. Even if social media platforms provide opportunities for self-expression, learning, and connection, excessive or uncontrolled use has been connected to negative psychological effects like anxiety, depression, disturbed sleep, and low self-esteem. This study explores the advantages and disadvantages of social media, emphasizing the need for responsible use and preventative measures. It does this by drawing on current research and professional evaluations.*

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Date of Submission: 29-05-2025

Date of Acceptance: 09-06-2025

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## I. Introduction

Social media use among Indian school children has significantly increased as a result of the widespread availability of cell phones and the internet. They now rely heavily on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp in their daily lives. Although these platforms have advantages, there is rising worry that they may have a detrimental effect on kids' mental health.

## II. Positive Effects Of Social Media

Despite prevalent concerns, social media can offer several benefits to school-aged children:

- **Social Connectivity:** Especially when they are physically apart from their family, platforms let kids stay in touch and communicate with their peers.
- **Information Access:** Campaigns for mental health awareness and educational materials are easily accessible, which facilitates the spread of knowledge.
- **Self-Expression:** Using a variety of venues, kids can discover and showcase their identities, skills, and creativity.

A study by Johns Hopkins Medicine emphasizes that social media can provide support networks and affirm children's identities, potentially buffering against stress. [Hopkins Medicine](#)

## III. Negative Effects Of Social Media

However, excessive or inappropriate use of social media has been associated with several mental health challenges:

### Anxiety and Depression

Multiple studies have linked high social media usage with increased symptoms of anxiety and depression among adolescents. The constant exposure to curated images and lifestyles can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-worth.

### Sleep Disturbances

Engaging with screens late into the night can disrupt sleep patterns, leading to sleep deprivation, which adversely affects mood and cognitive functions. [India Today](#)

### Cyberbullying

The anonymity of online platforms can facilitate cyberbullying, leading to emotional distress, social withdrawal, and in severe cases, suicidal ideation.

### Attention and Academic Performance

Frequent notifications and the habit of multitasking can impair attention spans, leading to decreased academic performance. [India Today](#)

### Body Image Issues

Exposure to idealized body images and lifestyles can lead to body dissatisfaction and eating disorders, especially among young girls. [Wikipedia](#)

#### **IV. Indian Context**

Children in India are spending more time on screens as a result of the country's fast digitization. According to a qualitative study, Indian teenagers frequently turn to social media for approval, which might result in overuse and reliance. [PMC](#)

Additionally, excessive usage of social media was linked to higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression in a study that included 204 Indian teenagers. [PubMed](#)

#### **V. Mitigation Strategies**

To harness the benefits of social media while minimizing its risks:

- **Digital Literacy Education:** Incorporate curricula that teach responsible online behavior and critical evaluation of content.
- **Parental Involvement:** Encourage open dialogues between parents and children about online experiences and set boundaries for screen time.
- **Platform Accountability:** Advocate for social media platforms to implement features that promote well-being, such as screen time reminders and content moderation.
- **Mental Health Support:** Provide accessible counseling services in schools to address issues arising from social media use.

#### **VI. Conclusion**

Social media presents important chances for learning and interaction, but when used carelessly, it can seriously harm school-age children's mental health. To secure the welfare of the next generation, a cooperative strategy involving educators, parents, legislators, and the platforms themselves is necessary.