Impact of Social Media on Student Mental Health: A Multidisciplinary Study

I. Santhiya

Assistant Professor of Information Technology, Sri Kaliswari College (A), Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu

Abstract

Social media forms an essential part of students' lives, providing opportunities for learning, networking and self-promotion. But it has received the greatest attention for its abuse overuse, which is cause mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, sleep problems and reduced focus in school. Social media's effects on Student mental health in a multi-disciplinary perspective This paper explores the academic, psychosocial and mental impact of social media users student health through a multi-disciplinary perspective, taking into the view from psychology, education, sociology and computer science. The research examines the influential impacts of digital platforms, positive and negative, paying specific attention to how constant connectivity, peer comparison, and algorithm-driven content can shape emotional well-being. It also reviews previous strategies such as digital literacy, time-management strategies, AI-based mental health monitoring systems, and campus counselling support. Further approaches emphasize a balanced use of technology, promote "digital wellness" as an essential component of higher education. Insights from arts, behavioural sciences, and data analytics, this study proposes a broad framework to understand the challenges posted by social media, ensuring healthier learning environments for students in the digital era.

keywords: social media overuse, student mental health, digital addiction, academic performance, psychosocial impact and digital wellness

Introduction

The media platforms like FaceBook, Instagram, WhatsApp and TikTok helps for learning, entertainment and to communicate with others. The students are particularly represented to be is one of the most active user. In 2023, Statista report states that **92%** of college students in India spend **3-4 hours daily online** and **actively use social media.** These platforms enhance Learning and networking besides that overuse of social media leads to anxiety, depression, and affect the academic focus. Moreover, the dependency on social media has created a serious huge impact on students mental health such as depression, sleep disturbances, cyberbullying and digital media addiction has been reported in the educational institutions. The general issues that reported acknowledge the global nature of these issues and emerge the need for international collaboration to address them. **WHO** states the significant impact of **COVID-19** pandemic on mental health, including a 25% increase in general distress and emotional instability across the global. This paper aims to explore the impact of social media on student's mental health through a **multidisciplinary perspective**, integrating insights from psychology, sociology, education and technology.

Literature Review
Social Media Usage among Students

The **Statista** report 2023 states that **"**Share of active social media users in India and worldwide", with more than 90% of students actively use social networking platforms daily. These networks are useful for communication and collaboration, Ellision, Vitak and Gray in their article "Social Media and well-Being in Higher Education" argue that compulsive usage has negative implication for personal well-being and academic focus.

Psychological Impacts

Primack and his team says that "Social Media use and perceived social isolation among young adults in the U.S found that students who spend mora than 3 hours per day on social media are significantly more likely to report symptoms of anxiety and depression. Likewise, Andreassen in her comprehensive review "Online Social comparison, and online validation loops are major triggers of low self-esteem and stress among students.

Educational Impacts

Twenge and camphell found that in their study "Association between screen time and lower Psychological Well-being Among Children and Adolescents" noted that excessive social media usage contribute to reduced attention spans and academic decline. Similarly Rosen, Carrier, and Cheever in "Social Media and Academic Performance: The Role of Multi-tasking demonstrated that between study and social media can reduce learning ability by almost 40%.

Sociological Dimensions

The Pew Research centre's report "Teens, Social media, and Technology" reported that about 64% of students compare themselves with peers online, which influences their self-confidence and identity. The world Health Organization (**WHO**) stated that 1 in 5 students globally has experienced cyberbullying. These often cause Emotional stress, sadness and Social Withdrawal.

Technological Concerns

Kuss and Griffiths, in *"Social Networking Sites and Addiction: Ten Lessons Learned,"* highlighted that the design of engagement-driven algorithms fosters compulsive and addictive behaviours in students. At the same time, Firth et al. in their article *"The Online Brain: How the Internet May Be Changing Our Cognition"* suggested that technology, when applied positively, can provide **AI-driven mental health tools, wellness trackers, and digital detox applications** to support healthier social media use.

Findings and Discussion
Positive Impacts of Social Media

Social media platforms provides for the students with opportunities for knowledge, communication and discussion in the classroom. They approve learners in interactive session, access academic resource and participate in online meeting and for the group study it helps to enhance their learning outcomes. In addition platforms like LinkedIn, ResearchGate and Educational forums support students to develop professional networks. Social media additionally supports creativity and self-expression, offering students a space to share ideas, projects and talents. Studies have revealed that when used constructively these platforms can boost motivation, then increase digital literacy and strengthen students in the academic oriented knowledge (Smith 2021; Gupta & Varma 2020)

Improved Connectivity & Support

- A 2024 new research study discovered that 81% student's sensed social media helped them to stay connected with peers and family.
- **64% of college students** informed that online communities provided them with emotional support during stress periods (APA, 2023).

Academic & Knowledge Sharing

- According to EDUCAUSE (2024), **72% of university students** apply social media platforms (WhatsApp, LinkedIn, YouTube) for group learning and knowledge discovering.

- A multicultural study (India & USA, 2023) discover that most of the students using educational groups on social media scored 12-15%, it is higher in assignments compared to non – users.

Skill Development

- LinkedIn's Global Student Report (2023) displays 58% of students earned confidence in communication and digital skills through social media.

Negative Impacts

Besides benefits, there also some challenges and demerits can be faced among students in social media use. Overreliance on these platform may reduce concentration and leads to academic distraction by spending more time on scrolling through feeds. Research analyses that over use of social media can interrupt sleep cycles and increase the risk of anxiety, depression and feelings of social isolation (Kaur & Sharma, 2021; Miller). Furthermore comparing our self with these platforms like Instagram, Facebook may lower our self-esteem and unhealthy competition with peers. The institutions and families should encourage safe and responsible digital habits. Therefore, the social media can be powerful educational tool and its misuse can affect negatively both academic performance and psychological wellbeing.
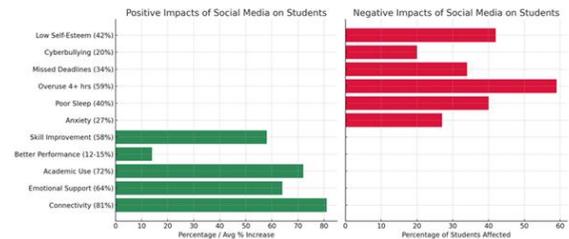
Mental Health Issues

- In 2023, WHO states that **27% of adolescents** experience anxiety linked to over excessive use of social media.
- 40 % of students reported poor sleep and reduced concentration due to late night scrolling on social media by A UK study (Royal Society for Public Health, 2024)

Addiction & Academic Distraction

- **34% of undergraduates** reported procrastination and missed deadlines due to excessive social media engagement (Nature Human Behaviour, 2023).

Cyberbullying & Self-Esteem

- UNICEF (2024) states **1 in 5 students worldwide** has faced online harassment.


Cross-Disciplinary Insights

The social media are affected on student mental health cannot be upstand from a single disciplinary perspective. Psychology provides a how prolonged screen time, social comparison and online interactions. It influence the emotional well-being, self-esteem and anxiety levels. The Educational research which highlights the two parts such as opportunities for collaborative learning and the challenges of digital distraction with academic environments. In sociological point, social media defines a peer relationships, identity formation, and community belonging, which often shaping a student's cultural and social experiences in profound ways such as [Johnson & patel in 2020]. At the same time, computer science to contribute and developing an advanced tools like artificial intelligence to monitoring system, sentiment analysis and digital wellness applications to data and potential risk in combining the perspective a holistic framework that not only explains the hard effects of social media but also suggests practical intervention to ensure healthy, more productive the student enhancement in the age of digital world

Research by Global WebIndex,

This report generated in *February* 2025. *63.9% of the world's population uses social media. The average daily usage is* **2 hours and 21minutes** *(February 2025).*
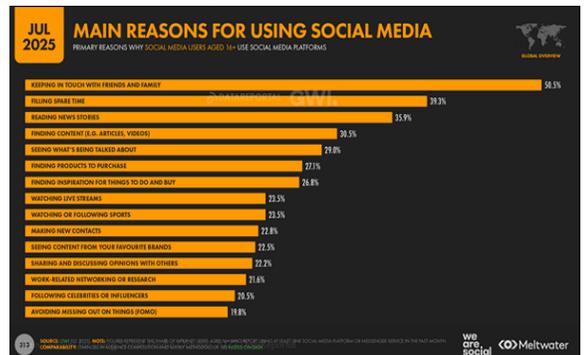
Which are the most popular social networks by demographics (age and gender)?
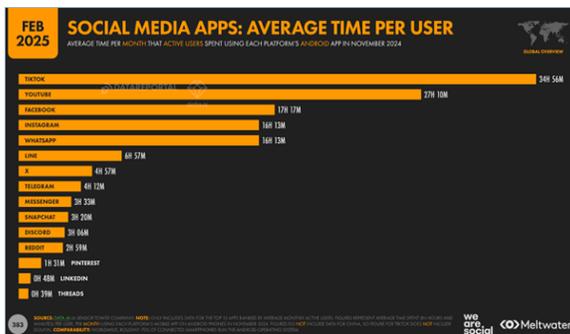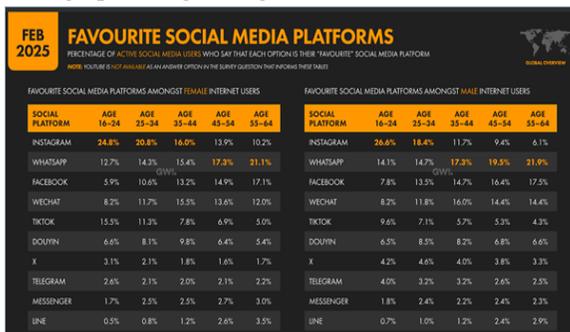
Detailed analysis by the team at Kepios shows that there were **5.41 billion** social media users around the world at the start of July 2025, equating to **65.7 percent** of the total global population.
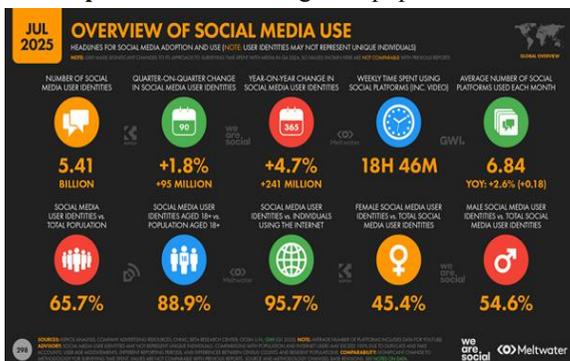

Reasons for using social media

Summary of this Feb & July reports

Between February 2025 and July 2025, social media adoption grew rapidly, with the number of users rising from 5.24 billion to 5.41 billion, an increase of about 170 million people. The quarterly growth rate accelerated from 0.5% to 1.8%, while yearly growth also strengthened from 4.1% to 4.7%. In terms of engagement, the average daily time spent on social platforms increased by nearly 20 minutes, moving from 2 hours 21 minutes to around 2 hours 41 minutes. The average number of platforms people use each

Month remained almost stable at around 6.8, showing only a slight increase. Adoption levels improved across the population, with 65.7% of the global population and 88.9% of adults (18+) using social media by July. Additionally, 95.7% of internet users were active on social media, up from 94.2% in February. Interestingly, the gender distribution of users (45.4% female vs. 54.6% male) did not change over this period, indicating consistent demographic patterns despite rapid overall growth.
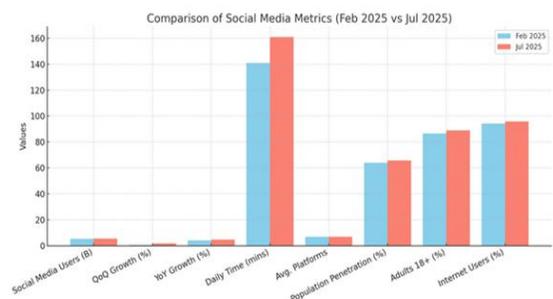
Future Approaches and Solutions
Digital Wellness Programmes
Colleges should engage in integrating digital wellness courses in curriculum, creating awareness among students over screen time and recognize unhealthy usage.

Role of Artificial Intelligence
The existing and upcoming AI apps can monitor user screen habits and provide mental health support for humans through chatbot and alerts.

Policy Recommendations
To encourage healthy digital interactive. Institutions should maintain social media guidelines to promote balanced and discourage cyberbullying.

Counselling and Support Systems
Universities should create awareness programmes to point out the social media related stress to students through strengthening counselling services.

Promote Healthy Digital Habits
To reduce negative mental health effects, we should encourage good hobbies, peer bonding and regular breaks from digital screen.

Conclusion
In conclusion, the study tells about social media about both positive and negative effects on student mind. The positive effects are provide opportunities for learning and the self-development. And then negative effects can caused by addiction, stress, less concentration and distraction on academic focus. A multidisciplinary perspective shows that solutions but must not be limited to psychology alone. It should also included such as technological innovation, educational reforms and sociological insights. It should approaches to promoting in future like digital wellness, integrating artificial intelligence for mental health monitoring and fostering. The awareness about responsible for social media use. So the educational institutions can build healthy learning environments in the digital world.

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