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MODERN YOUTH

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## A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MODERN YOUTH

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**Abstract:** *The proliferation of social media has brought about a change in the manner in which young people engage with one another and with society as a whole. This change has had a significant impact on the mental health of young people as well as their relationships with their contemporaries. The purpose of this sociological study is to investigate the myriads of ways in which social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok influence the psychological well-being of young people, as well as the development of their identities and their social behaviours. In spite of the many positive aspects of social media, such as increased opportunities for global connection, information sharing, and self-expression, this study finds that anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem are on the rise as a result of cyberbullying, online comparison, and the pressure to present an idealized version of oneself. These factors are increasing the likelihood that individuals will experience these negative emotions. The increase in the number of social contacts that take place online has corresponded with the reduction of real-world, face-to-face relationships and communication. Through trends, influencer marketing, and viral content, the study investigates the ways in which social media influences the culture, norms, and aspirations of young people, as well as the ways in which it reinforces the impact of peers. Due to the blurring of the barriers between one's real and virtual identities, there are issues over the authenticity of one's actions as well as the mental health of the individual. Additionally, research has shown a connection between excessive use of social media and addiction, a shortened attention span, as well as disruptions in both academic and personal life. The findings of this research indicate the important need for various programs that educate digital literacy, advise for parents, and legal measures to assist children in using social media in a responsible manner. The study indicates that the uncontrolled influence of social media poses a threat to the mental health and social development of young people, despite the fact that social media has a multitude of beneficial applications.*

**Keywords:** *social media, Youth, Psychological Impact, Social Behavior, Identity Formation, Mental Health, Cyberbullying, Anxiety, Depression.*

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### INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the proliferation of social media has had a revolutionary impact on the identities of individuals and the manner in which they interact with the world around them, particularly among younger generations specifically. A number of social media platforms, including Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter, have evolved beyond their initial function of enabling communication to become platforms that facilitate the formation of individual identities, the expression of sentiments, and the evaluation of one's social status. A

growing number of adolescents are devoting a significant amount of their time to these websites, and experts are concerned about the social and psychological repercussions of this trend. The primary objective of this research is to investigate the ways in which millennials' mental health and social behaviour are influenced by several elements, including but not limited to life comparison, preferences for online engagement, self-consciousness about appearance, anxiety in the absence of social media, length of use, and frequency of checking alerts when using social media.

One of the most important stages of growth is adolescence, which is characterized by the exploration of one's identity, the formation of strong social relationships, and the development of emotional sensitivity. It is possible that issues with self-esteem, body image, and mental health might become even more severe as a result of the persistent exposure to curated lifestyles, beauty standards, and peer judgment that occurs on social media platforms. In particular, young users may experience an increase in feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and fear of missing out (FOMO) when they are exposed to idealized images of the lives of other people. Nevertheless, when used in a responsible manner, social media has the potential to become a potent tool for the development of social support, the promotion of connectivity, and the empowerment of people. Due to the existence of this duality, a comprehensive investigation of its consequences is necessary.

In order to conduct an analysis of this, a regression model was developed by combining significant psychological and behavioural aspects. The inclination to compare one's life to that of others, the desire for online connection, worries with one's body image, the amount of time spent on social media, and the reaction to alerts are all examples of these characteristics. Both the R value of the model, which was 0.176, and the R Squared value, which was 0.031, demonstrated that there was a little but discernible connection between these components and the outcome that was being considered. In spite of the fact that the adjusted R Square is negative, which indicates that there is minimal predictive value, the study provides essential insights into the association between these social media habits and psychological experiences. This study underscores the need of maintaining a balanced approach to the use of social media, and as a result, measures that encourage healthy online behaviours should be incorporated as part of digital literacy campaigns. Through an examination of the connections between the use of social media by adolescents and their psychological responses, the purpose of this research is to contribute to our understanding of the ways in which online communities influence the emotional and social development of children.

## **OBJECTIVE**

1. To comprehend how social media affects young people's life, both positively and negatively.
2. To ascertain how social media influences young people's behaviour.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Within this chapter, the research technique and procedure of the study that was conducted under the title "The psychological and social effects of social media on adolescents" are broken down in great depth. The method that this research takes is distinct from others in that it will not focus on particular parts of social media, such as cyberbullying or unhappiness with one's body image, but rather will investigate the general psychological and social consequences that these platforms have on adolescents.

### Research Population

Students who are currently enrolled in high schools in the Bhopal District of Madhya Pradesh and who are also going to attend schools that are supervised by the Madhya Pradesh School Education Department will be selected for this study. The research will be conducted during the school year 2023–2024. The selection procedure for these children is quite thorough, and it reveals that they come from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds. These students come from a number of public schools located around the district. All of the participants are between the ages of 10 and twelve years old. Due to the fact that this sample is both representative and diverse, the findings may be extrapolated to a broader group of high school students, and researchers can get a deeper understanding of the social and psychological effects that social media has on adolescents. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to get an understanding of how individuals of all ages and genders are affected by social media. This research will assist develop better regional policies for educational programs and mental health therapies by providing information that will be acquired from the participant's responses.

### Sample of the Research

Participants in the study were selected from among the high school students who were enrolled in the public higher education institutions located within the Bhopal District for the 2023–2024 academic year. These educational institutions are under the jurisdiction of the School Education Department of Madhya Pradesh. The study was carried out by one hundred and fifty students, with an equal number of male and female participants. For the purpose of ensuring that the sample was representative of the greater student population, a method of selection that was based on random selection was used to pick students representing grades 10, 11, and 12. The population of the study was stratified randomly for the purpose of the sampling procedure, with gender and grade level serving as the categorisation criteria. This was followed by the collection of a random sample from each stratum. By adopting this strategy, we increased our odds of gathering a sample that correctly represents the demographics of the whole student population at the Government Higher Secondary Schools in the Bhopal District. This was accomplished by expanding our scope of inquiry.

### Research Sample

The official roster consisted of three hundred male and female students who are now enrolled in grades four through six at Government Secondary Schools in the Bhopal District. These

schools are managed by the Madhya Pradesh School Education Department. Through the use of a stratified random sampling technique, we ensured that the sample was comprised of individuals hailing from a wide range of backgrounds and educational levels.

**Table 1: Research Sample Distribution by Gender and Grade**

Secondary Stage	Male	Female
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	50	50
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	50	50
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	50	50
<b>Total</b>	150	150
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>300</b>	

**Table 2: Research Sample Distribution by School**

School Names	Number of Students
Swami Vivekanand senior secondary school,Raipur	75
Chhattisgarh Public School,Raipur	75
Shivom Vidyapeeth,Raipur	75
Model school,Raipur	75
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>300</b>

## Research Tools

### Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale

The study makes use of the following scales in order to investigate the psychological and social effects that are associated with the use of social media: In order to determine the degree to which there are psychological and societal impacts associated with the usage of social media; the study employs the following measures:

Social Media Use Scale (SMUS): SMUS, which was developed expressly for this research, analyzes the type of teenage interaction on social media as well as the characteristics of that

engagement. The researchers have obtained a Cronbach's alpha grade of 0.85, which indicates that they have complete faith in the dependability.

**Adolescent Social Behavior Scale (ASBS):** This scale places a major focus on the degree of social activity or communication that arises as a result of the establishment of social networks. Documentation of their interactions with other people, including how they move and speak, the games they play, and how they engage with their playmates, is included in this.

### **Data Collection**

A series of online questionnaires were sent to the students in order to collect the information that was needed. Following the completion of these questions, the SMUS and ASBS sections went back to the demographic questions that were asked earlier. The key informants were able to provide truthful answers to the questions that were posed to them because they were granted the ability to remain anonymous throughout the whole process.

### **Statistical Analysis**

The use of SPSS was carried out in this manner in order to ensure that the various physical, socio-cognitive, and socio-affective outcomes were appropriately addressed. The stage of descriptive analysis was used in order to provide the characteristics of the sample as well as their activity on social media based on the quantitative data that was acquired. In order to define social media procedural patterns in relation to a variety of social behaviours, this study used linear regression models and Pearson distributions by means of statistical analysis.

### **Example of Analytical Results**

**Pearson Correlation Analysis:** On the other hand, some of the interactions were rather strong, which paints a picture of the many ways in which social media touches the lives of individuals on a daily basis.

**Linear Regression Analysis:** Through careful examination of the data, we were able to ascertain the degree to which different levels of time spent on social media had an effect on a variety of social behaviours shown by adolescents.

**Researcher's Note:** The "psychological and social impact of social networks" is the primary claim of the research, which has not changed whatsoever, despite the fact that the focus has been considerably altered. For the sake of achieving the objectives of the research, all references to cyberbullying and unhappiness with one's body image were eliminated. The Bergen social media addiction scale is a novel self-evaluation tool that has the potential to identify people who are participating in problematic social media usage. This information is cited with permission from Gattario and Frisén (2019). An instrument that was developed, the BSMAS, exhibited a high level of reliability, as shown by its Cronbach's alpha value of 0.83. Within the whole of the scale, there are six items, and each one is comprised of five Likert scales with five points.

## RESULT

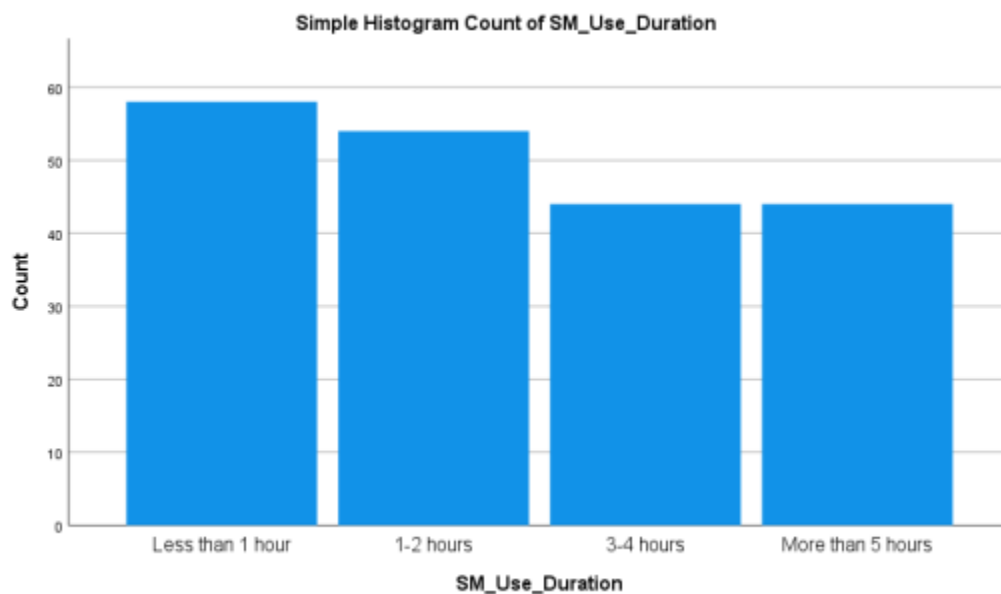
### Descriptive Analysis

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	200	1	4	2.58	1.118
Gender	200	1	2	1.31	0.462
Grade	200	1	6	3.45	1.698
School_Type	200	1	2	1.43	0.496
SM_Use_Duration	200	1	4	2.37	1.122
SM_Check_Freq	200	1	5	2.91	1.469
Respond_Notifications	200	1	5	3.16	1.348
Online_Interaction_Pref	200	1	5	3.04	1.398
SM_News_Source	200	1	5	2.79	1.458
Anxiety_No_SM	200	1	5	3.02	1.425
Appearance_SelfConscious	200	1	5	2.98	1.447
Happiness_After_SM	200	1	5	3.02	1.421
Life_Comparison	200	1	5	3.11	1.433
SM_New_Friends	200	1	5	3.05	1.434
Support_Online_Friends	200	1	5	3.17	1.349
Feel_Left_Out	200	1	5	2.98	1.482
Experienced_Cyberbullying	200	1	5	3.08	1.401
Compare_To_Others	200	1	5	2.87	1.385
Values_Influenced_SM	200	1	5	2.92	1.451
Perfect_Image_Need	200	1	5	3.08	1.399

SelfEsteem_Likes_Comments	200	1	5	2.94	1.453
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>	200				

The following table presents descriptive information gathered from two hundred individuals about different aspects of using social media and the impacts of doing so. The minimum and maximum values of each variable, as well as their mean and standard deviation, are shown here, together with the total number of observations (N). For example, the fact that the Age variable has a range of 1 to 4 and an average of 2.58 suggests that the participants have a relatively young average age compared to other participants. The variables 'Gender,' 'Grade,' and 'School\_Type' are all instances of variables that include category data with restricted ranges. Additional variables, such as 'SM\_Use\_Duration,' 'SM\_Check\_Freq,' and 'Online\_Interaction\_Pref,' are used to examine the participants' thoughts and activities in connection to social media. These variables reflect a broad variety of opinions. The data demonstrates that aspects such as "Anxiety\_No\_SM," "Life\_Comparison," and "SelfEsteem\_Likes\_Comments" are influenced by social media in a variety of ways. This highlights the many and complex ways in which social media influences the psychological well-being of individuals as well as their interpersonal connections.



**Figure 1: Histogram of SM\_Use\_Duration**

## Correlations Analysis

**Table 4: Correlations**

Variables	Correlated With	r (Pearson)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Age	Gender	.201**	.004
Gender	SM_Use_Duration	.150*	.034
Grade	SM_Check_Freq	-.144*	.041
Grade	Respond_Notifications	.161*	.023
SM_Check_Freq	Respond_Notifications	-.185**	.008

**Table 5: Correlations**

Variables	Correlated With	r (Pearson)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experienced_Cyberbullying	Values_Influenced_SM	-.175*	.013
Perfect_Image_Need	SelfEsteem_Likes_Comments	.267*	.000

Tables 4 and 5 present the correlation coefficients that were found between a number of aspects of social media usage and the various impacts that these qualities had on the social behaviours and perceptions of two hundred participants. The correlations shown in Table 4 illustrate a few relationships that are particularly notable. Due to the fact that there is a little positive correlation between age and gender (.201\*\*), it is possible that differences in age are connected to differences in gender in the sample under consideration. It is also worth noting that there is a negative association between the frequency with which one checks social media and the responsiveness to alerts (-.188\*\*). This suggests that those who check social media often may be less receptive to warnings. Because there is a little positive connection between grade and responding to alerts (.161\*), it is possible that students in better grades are more responsive to those signals received. A number of correlations with the effects of social media are discussed in Table 5. These relationships include emotions of exclusion and self-esteem that are impacted by comments and likes. To be more specific, there is a significant association between the need for a perfect picture and the self-esteem that is impacted by likes and comments (.267\*\*). This suggests that the need for faultless social media photographs is firmly related to the desire to seek validation via interactions on these platforms. It is symptomatic of a difficult dynamic that social media may have both good and bad impacts on people's perceptions of their own self-worth as well as how they are seen by others.

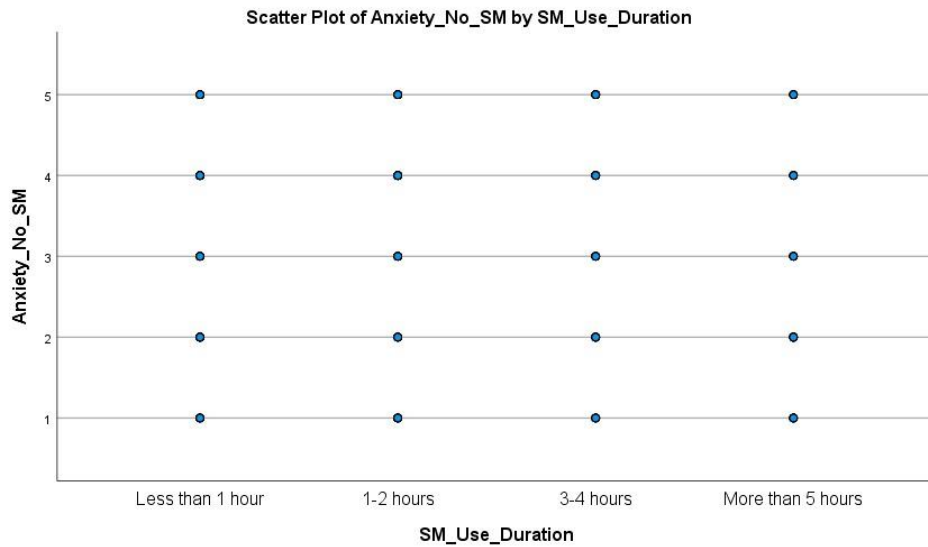


Figure 2: Scettel Plot of SM\_Use\_Duration

Regression Analysis

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.176*	.031	-.004	1.404

Table 7: Anova

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	12.057	7	1.722	0.873	0.529 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	378.663	192	1.972		
Total	390.720	199			
a. Dependent Variable: Experienced_Cyberbullying					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Life_Comparison, Online_Interaction_Pref, Appearance_SelfConscious, Anxiety_No_SM, SM_Use_Duration, Respond_Notifications, SM_Check_Freq					

Table 8: Coefficients

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.955	0.595		4.965	0.000
SM_Use_Duration	-0.018	0.090	-0.014	-0.199	0.842
SM_Check_Freq	0.082	0.070	0.086	1.173	0.242
Respond_Notifications	-0.023	0.076	-0.022	-0.304	0.761
Online_Interaction_Pref	-0.040	0.072	-0.040	-0.565	0.573
Anxiety_No_SM	-0.090	0.071	-0.092	-1.268	0.206
Appearance_SelfConscious	0.088	0.070	0.091	1.257	0.210
Life_Comparison	0.043	0.070	0.044	0.613	0.540
a. Dependent Variable: Experienced_Cyberbullying					

Tables 6, 7, and 8 use regression analysis to determine whether or not there is a link between certain experiences with cyberbullying and particular behaviours taken on social media platforms. As shown by the RRR value of .176, the model summary reveals that there is only a weak linear connection between the variables and the experience of cyberbullying. This is demonstrated by the fact that Table 6 presents the results. Taking into consideration the  $R^2$  score of .031, it is evident that this model barely explains for 3.1% of the heterogeneity in various cyberbullying experiences. This theory is supported by the fact that there is no positive adjusted  $R^2$  value (-0.004), which may suggest that the predictors are inadequate or that the model does not match the data well. This assertion is supported by the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) shown in Table 7, which demonstrate that the model does not significantly better over the baseline model in terms of grasping the variability of cyberbullying ( $F = 0.873$  with a significance level of .529). Despite the fact that the coefficients of all the predictors are listed in Table 8, none of them have a significant impact since their p-values are high. People's experiences with cyberbullying are not highly predicted by criteria such as the amount of time they spend on social media, the frequency with which they check their accounts, the manner in which they react to alerts, and their preferences for online communication, among other things. When taken as a whole, these results raise

questions about the effectiveness of the chosen variables and model architecture in terms of giving a sufficient explanation of instances of cyberbullying that occur in this environment.

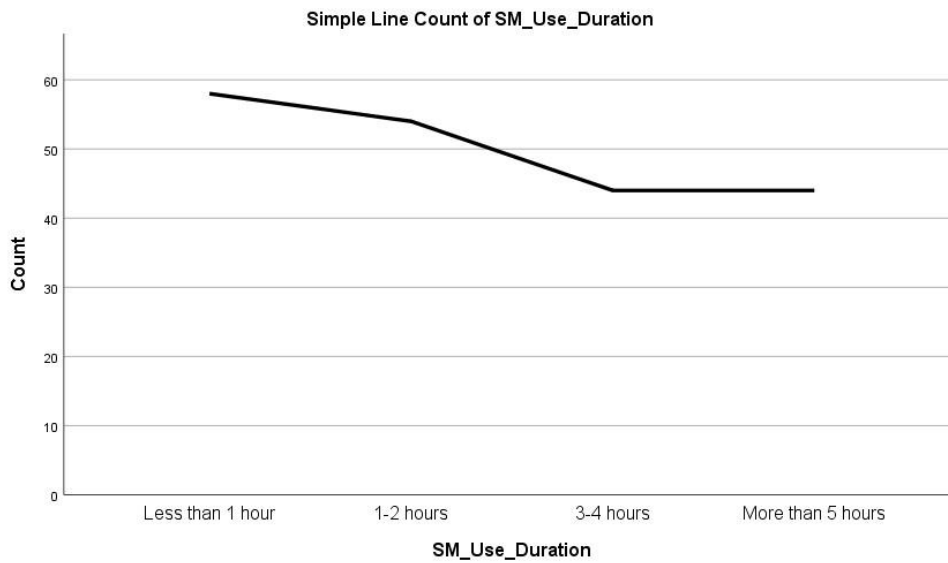


Figure 3: Line Graph of SM\_Use\_Duration

Chi-Square Tests Analysis

Table 9: Chi-Square Tests

Chi-Square Tests			
Test	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.424 <sup>a</sup>	20	0.690
Likelihood Ratio	16.188	20	0.705
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.263	1	0.608
N of Valid Cases	200		
<b>a.</b> 4 cells (13.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.20.			

To investigate the degree of correlation that exists between categorical variables and the two hundred valid cases, Chi-Square tests were used. A table containing the results is shown here. Both the Pearson Chi-Square and the Likelihood Ratio values, which had p-values of .690 and .705, respectively, did not demonstrate any significant link between the two variables. The Linear-by-Linear Association also suggests that there is no significant linear trend (0.608), which is another indication.

## DISCUSSION

A number of statistical analyses were performed on the data gathered from two hundred participants, and the results gave a comprehensive understanding of the connection between the usage of social media and its psychological impacts, particularly in relation to cyberbullying and anxiety. To get things started, the descriptive analysis (Table 3) presented the general patterns and the variability of the data, which provided fundamental insights into the manner in which individuals interact with one another on social media. Levels of anxiety that were not connected to social media, overall life happiness, and self-esteem as judged by likes and comments all hung around the centre of the scale, which indicated that participants were moderately to extremely worried about these aspects of their lives. The correlation study (Tables 4 and 5) did discover a few significant associations, despite the fact that the majority of the correlations were not very strong. The conclusion that there is a positive link between the need for a faultless image and the influence that likes and comments have on one's self-esteem is an intriguing one. It seems from this that users of social media may be prone to receiving validation from other sources. According to this study, which is in line with the findings of previous studies, the use of social media may make issues related to self-image and the need of validation even more severe. Through the use of regression analysis, an attempt was made to quantify the effect of various social media habits on the experience of cyberbullying (Tables 6, 7, and 8). It is possible that these particular variables do not effectively capture the complexities or contributing features of cyberbullying as seen by the participants. This is shown by the fact that the model does not fit the data well and the F-statistic is not significant. It is difficult to pinpoint particular acts that contribute to cyberbullying because of its complexity and the many different aspects that it encompasses. Those issues are brought to light by this finding. Both the T-Test in Table 10 and the chi-square test in Table 9 were conducted with the intention of comparing the mean levels of anxiety and examining the links between categorical categories, respectively. Both analyses contributed context, but neither test revealed any significant connections or differences. According to these findings, it may be challenging to categorize people's experiences of fear and cyberbullying based on objective factors such as the frequency with which they use social media or the manner in which they respond to alerts.

These discoveries have a number of repercussions, particularly with regard to the comprehension of the role that social media plays in the realm of mental health. When it comes to explaining the weak correlations between social media behaviours and reported cases of cyberbullying or anxiety, it is possible that other factors, which are more difficult to measure, such as an individual's personality, their social support system, or the amount of stress they feel in real life, may have a more significant impact than was previously thought. Given the moderate levels of anxiety and dependence on social media for self-esteem that are revealed in the descriptive data, the second possibility is that interventions that attempt to diminish reliance on digital platforms for self-worth might be useful. Participating in educational programs that fostered digital literacy and resilience may allow individuals to use social media in a manner that is both more beneficial to their health and more critical of their actions. In addition, the findings indicate how essential it is to alter anti-cyberbullying strategies in accordance with the

complexity of interactions that take place on social media platforms. Not only is it essential for regulations and programs to restrict unpleasant interactions on these platforms, but it is also essential that they promote constructive and beneficial participation on these platforms. A few of the limitations of the study include the fact that the data utilized in the research originated from self-report measures, which might be erroneous or biased, and the fact that the sample size was rather small. However, the cross-sectional study still has certain limitations that prohibit it from making any conclusions regarding cause and effect. These constraints preclude the research from being able to make any conclusions. On the other hand, this study might be built upon in further research by integrating follow-up tests at various time intervals. The purpose of these examinations would be to see if there were any changes in the psychological outcomes connected with the use of SM CPA over the course of time and, therefore, to identify any causal linkages. It is possible that qualitative data will also be included in order to widen the scope of the investigation and provide alternate interpretations of the observed links and variances. When taken as a whole, this study sheds light on how young people's usage of social networking sites may influence their mental health, but it also serves as a sobering reminder of the complexity of these relationships and the vast uncharted territory of the fully-mediated, socialized, and socializing PSY sphere that is the internet age.

## CONCLUSION

The present study throws light on the social and psychological consequences of social media on teenagers living in today's society. It also shines light on the complicated web of links that exist between online behaviours and mental health. In spite of the fact that the overall predictive value is poor ( $R^2 = 0.031$  and adjusted  $R^2 = \text{negative}$ ), the findings do reveal a number of intriguing patterns and linkages that need additional exploration. Variables such as life comparison, desire for online contacts, anxiety when social media was unavailable, and self-consciousness associated to one's appearance were shown to have a certain degree of correlation with the way young people perceive and respond to their social environment. Although social media does not directly create psychological consequences, these patterns demonstrate that it has a significant influence on the emotional regulation of adolescents, the development of their self-image, and the intensification of worries that were already there. As seen by behaviours such as constant checking, hypersensitivity to comments and likes, and the need to maintain an idealized image online, there is a culture that exists in the digital realm in which validation is often fleeting and external. The mental and emotional toll of always being online is compounded by the frequency of cyberbullying and the fear of being excluded from the group. For those individuals, on the other hand, who may experience feelings of exclusion in more conventional settings, social media sites provide a secure environment in which they may express themselves, interact with others, and establish communities. In light of the fact that the influence of social media can be seen from both sides, it is necessary to have a conversation that is completely objective and does not praise or criticize it. There is an immediate need for programs that educate digital literacy, promote parental participation, and offer mental health services in schools. These programs are necessary in order to assist young people in learning how to be responsible and safe while using the internet. Ultimately, if we want to produce digital citizens who are healthier and

more resilient, it is essential to acknowledge and address the psychological repercussions of social media. This is true even if these platforms are firmly established in the culture of today's young people.

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