



Impact Of Social Media On Mental, Physical And Psychological Health Of The Youth; An Empirical Study In Union Territory Of Chandigarh

Dr. Kajal Sharma

Department of Sociology

Panjab University

Chandigarh

Abstract

Defleur et al. (1973) discussed mass communication in their book *Sociology: Human Society*. Understanding how a group functions as a civilization requires an examination of many different levels of communication, one of them being mass communication. Social media is one social structure that sociologists are particularly interested in studying how it has changed over time. The subject of social media is vast and intricate. This study is a comparative study in Union Territory of Chandigarh that aims to investigate the social media usage patterns of youth (between the age category of 15-20, 21-25, 26-30, and 31-35 years), the prevalence of social media addiction, and the mental, physical and psychological health of the youth. The study also makes certain recommendations to the families and educational institutions that would assist young people in managing their addiction to social media and ultimately assist them with their mental health problems.

Key words: social media, youth, mental health.

Introduction

Social media is a very old concept; it is not a new phenomenon. Social media has existed for a while. Social media first evolved to facilitate easier communication between individuals. Social media is both a huge and complex topic. It has a plethora of features such as information on anything and everything. Through social networking sites, millions of individuals interact with one another and share content with others today. The current study attempts to investigate the influence of social media on the mental health of the youth.

A definition of "Youth" is necessary for researchers to comprehend the target audience for their work. The United Nations defines "youth" as between 15 and 24. This definition is based on UNPY¹, The United Nations Programme of Youth. Conversely, as per "Youth Charter of Africa - 2006"² the phrase "Youth" designates everyone between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five years. The "World Youth Report – 2018"³, states that there are 1.2 billion young people worldwide. Individuals everywhere in the world. Young people in the 15–24 age range are indicative of roughly sixteen percent of the world's population. 87% of young people reside in underdeveloped nations, and of these, 62% of young people reside in Asia⁴.

The Indian "National Youth Policy - 2003"⁵ defines a youth as someone who is between the ages of 13 and 35. On the other hand, the Indian "National Youth Policy - 2014"⁶ defines the young age group as those between the ages of 15 and 29, which accounts for 27.5% of the country's population.

It is evident that there are numerous definitions of "Youth" at the regional and international levels. To put it simply, "youth" is best understood as a time when we move from the independence of maturity to the reliance of childhood and the realization of our interconnectedness as members of a community or civilization. For this study, the researcher designated the age range of people aged 15 to 35 as "Youth" in light of these various classifications.

What is social media

Social media usage is increasing daily. Users and business owners are benefiting from social media. Social media not only facilitates communication but also gives many people influence and aids in their ability to produce money. Several people shop online at Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, and other stores using this platform. Social media is a versatile and multipurpose instrument.

Social media is defined by Whats.com as "Social media is a collective word for websites and applications which emphasis on collaboration, content sharing, community-based input, communication, and engagement. Among the various forms of social media are wikis, forums, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, and social curating.

Cohen⁷, (2011) offered thirty definitions of social media in his web-based work. Using web-based and mobile technology to transform communication into an interactive discussion is known as social media. Conversely, as per Cohen's definition, it encompasses an extensive range of material formats and facilitates cross-platform interactions via social sharing. Participants that have the ability to create, comment, or lurk on social media networks participate at varying levels. Additionally, it involves conversations from one to many, many to one, and

¹ <https://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/UNPY-presentation.pdf>

² https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/african_youth_charter_2006.pdf

³ https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/african_youth_charter_2006.pdf

⁴ <https://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/UNPY-presentation.pdf>

⁵ http://www.rgniyd.gov.in/sites/default/files/pdfs/scheme/nyp_2014.pdf

⁶ http://www.rgniyd.gov.in/sites/default/files/pdfs/scheme/nyp_2014.pdf

⁷ <http://heidicohen.com/social-media-definition/>

one to one. Social media can be accessed using a computer, tablet, or mobile phone because it is device agnostic. Additionally, Cohen goes over a few more definitions that provide us additional details about social media characteristics.

Defleur et al. (1973) in his book *Sociology: Human Society* wrote about mass communication. Mass communication is one of the many levels of communication that must be examined in order to comprehend how a group functions as a society. Print, television, film, social media, and other mediums are used by mass communication to reach big audiences. Every community has its own objectives. Sociologists have a keen interest in the ways that various social structures have evolved unique mass communication systems in order to achieve these objectives.

Advantages and disadvantages of social media

Social media has both positive and negative aspects. The way that people utilize social media is entirely up to them. Any overuse can have disastrous effects on a person, which is why users of social media with varying usage patterns experience minor issues. Both significant benefits and drawbacks of social media use exist. Numerous scholars from across the globe have discussed the benefits and drawbacks of social media.

Rostam (2020) conducted an investigation of the benefits and drawbacks of social media and advocated for users to utilize it thoughtfully and with sufficient knowledge. An inadequate understanding of social media usage might be detrimental.

Vakil & Kasmi (2017) discussed its potential benefits, stating that it improves information delivery and discovery and encourages open conversation. It enables staff members to post news, exchange links, and have idea discussions. They have also talked about the drawbacks of social media, including how it makes it easier for hackers to perpetrate fraud and raises the risk of online crimes and scams.

Jadoon (2014) discussed the benefits and drawbacks of social media. The writers point out that social media allows for global connectivity while also outlining its benefits. In discussing its drawbacks, he claims that using social media lessens in-person communication. Social media has the potential to connect you with improper people, which can lead to harassment and cybercrime. He brought up the possibility of fraud and identity theft occurring to users. He also discusses the corresponding waste of time. Social networking is a great way to squander valuable time while keeping you interested in various activities. Last but not least, a lot of social networking platforms have privacy breaches that allow big businesses to invite you and sell your personal data. He clarifies that on social networking sites, websites are not products; rather, people are.

Social media and mental health

Even with all the modern conveniences, youngsters are experiencing mental health problems. They are still surrounded by technologies, which makes them feel pressured, anxious, lonely, and alone. These things occur

when someone uses these kinds of platforms excessively. Technology can never truly amuse people the way that physical interaction can.

Nesi (2020) talked on the effect of social media on the mental health of young people. Young people's lives have successfully been impacted by new media. A growing corpus of research has started to investigate how social media use may affect teenagers' mental health. The proliferation of new media means that creating evidence-based strategies and making good use of these technologies for mental health will be necessary to promote social media use among children in a healthy manner.

In his study on online social networking and mental health, Pantic (2014) found that throughout the previous ten years, people's interactions and communication patterns have undergone significant changes due to online social networking. It's unclear if some of these modifications have an impact on typical human behavior.

Naslund, Bondre, Torous, and Aschbrenner (2020) talked about the advantages, risks, and opportunities that social media presents for mental health. They are aware that social media has taken on a vital role in people's life and that this has led to mental health issues. Many of us deal with mental illness by turning to social media instead of emotional assistance.

Robinson & Smith (2021) reveals that people are gregarious animals. We require friends in order to survive, and the quality of those relationships has a profound effect on our happiness and mental well-being. Strangely, a technology that connects people can actually increase feelings of loneliness and isolation as well as exacerbate mental health issues like depression and anxiety.

In their 2020 study, Sharma, John, and Sahu examined the impact of social media on mental health and discovered how far the platform has come. Although social media has many negative effects, there are also positive aspects, according to author analysis. There is no denying that technology advancements are to blame for the rise in social media usage that is having negative repercussions.

Al-Menayes (2015) carried out a study on internet addiction in a sample of Kuwaiti university students. The data collected revealed three distinct aspects of social media: the amount of time users spend on social media, their experience using social media, and the level of enjoyment they gain from using it. Additionally, there was a negative correlation between the individuals' academic performance and social media addiction.

The study by Pawar and Shah (2019) found a strong correlation between self-esteem and social media addiction. Self-esteem declined as a result of increased social media use.

Children's ability to exercise self-control can be impacted by families that exhibit poor affective involvement and no parental investment in the issues that affect the adolescents' lives (Hosseini et al., 2012). As a result, teenagers may have a tendency to use the internet excessively in an attempt to find useful information to solve their problems (Cacioppo et al., 2019). They may also do this as a coping mechanism for psychological distress resulting from a poor relationship with their parents (Soh et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2009), as well as in an effort to

find emotional and social support outside of their families (Khang et al., 2013; Wang & Zhang, 2020). According to other research, dysfunctional families are also linked to a number of psychological issues, such as high impulsivity and depressive symptoms, which can increase the likelihood of developing an internet or social media addiction (Ho et al., 2014; Younes et al., 2016; Li et al., 2019). Adolescents who use social media excessively frequently develop a distorted view of friendship and become victims of cyberbullying. In the framework of family-based therapies, parents believed that prolonged use of social media exposed their already fragile child to cyberbullying. According to Lewis et al. (2015), the survey reveals a sense of parental hopelessness and powerlessness over their kids, which is at odds with how they see social media and the internet as persistent threats to their parental authority.

A study was carried out by Choudhury and Ali (2020) to determine the incidence of social media addiction in young people. According to the findings of the descriptive research, 31.6% of people suffer from social media addiction. It was discovered that, while comparing the genders, women were more addicting than men.

Objective of the study –

Studying the psycho-social components of social media addiction is becoming more important as concerns about young people using social media excessively develop. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how young people (between the age category 15-20, 21-25, 26-30, and 31-35) use social media, how common social media addiction is, and how these factors relate to young people's mental health.

Sampling and techniques for data collection

For the purpose of gathering primary data, a sample framework of 200 respondents from Chandigarh was gathered. To accomplish the goal of sample selection, simple random sampling approach has been applied. In order to collect the results, the researcher stratifies the sample by assigning the respondents to different age groups. The study investigates the ages between 15-20, 21-25, 26-30, and 31-35. Within a total of 200 sample frame, fifty respondents each from all age groups were divided making a total of 200 respondents. Additionally, the findings of these selection techniques are persuasive and noteworthy.

Locale of the Study

With the aforementioned goals in mind, the comparison study that was put forth was carried out in union territory of Chandigarh. The samples were gathered from many Chandigarh parks where it was discovered that youths were more prevalent. Since it was observed that young people were more frequently seen wandering about the parks in sectors 17, 10, and 36, these areas were chosen as the study area.

Table 1: Type of family of the respondents.

	15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	Total
Joint family	10(20)	10(20)	20(40)	20(40)	60(30)
Nuclear family	40(80)	40(80)	30(60)	30(60)	140(70)
Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)

The above table 1 shows that 70 percent of the respondents belong to nuclear family, 30 percent belongs to joint family.

Table 2: Current place of stay of the respondents.

	15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	Total
With Family	40(80)	20(40)	30(60)	40(80)	130(65)
Hostel	10(20)	10(20)	10(20)	0(0)	30(15)
Paying Guest	0(0)	20(40)	10(20)	10(20)	40(20)
Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)

Table 2 shows the current place of stay of the respondents. Majority of the respondents stayed with family (65%) which is followed by those who stayed as paying guest (20%) and 15% stayed in the hostel.

Table 3: Time spent in internet and social media by the respondents.

	15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	Total
Less than 3 hours	0(0)	3(6)	5(10)	3(6)	11(5.5)
3-5 hours	3(6)	7(14)	12(24)	13(26)	35(17.5)
5-7 hours	3(6)	12(24)	13(26)	15(30)	43(21.5)
More than 7 hours	44(88)	28(56)	20(40)	19(38)	111(55.5)
Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)

Table 3 shows the time spent over internet and social media by the youth. Findings indicate that 55.5 percent of the respondents spent more than seven hours a day. Followed by 21.5 percent of the respondents spends five to seven hours. There were 17.5 percent of the respondents who spends three to five hours a day on social media. It was found that only 5.5 percent of the respondents spends less than three hours a day on the social media. It was found that 44 respondents in the 15-20 years of age category spends more than 7 hours a day on the social media.

The present study supports the findings of Jadoon (2014) which states that “Social networking is a great way to squander valuable time while keeping you interested in various activities.”

Table 4: Do you feel addictive to social media.

	15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	Total
Yes	48(96)	45(90)	43(86)	46(92)	182(91)
No	1(2)	2(4)	3(6)	2(4)	8(4)
Sometimes	1(2)	3(6)	4(8)	2(4)	10(5)
Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)

Table 4. shows the addiction of the youth towards social media. The respondents were asked that do they feel that they are addictive of social media. There were 91 percent of the respondents who feel addicted. There were 5 percent of the respondents who sometimes feel that they are addicted to social media. There were only 4 percent of the total respondents who do not feel addicted to social media. The respondent in the age category 15-20 years were in majority (96 percent) who strongly feels that they are addicted to social media.

Table 5: Effect of online networking in day-to-day communication of the respondents.

	15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	Total
No effect on face-to-face communication	2(4)	4(8)	3(6)	4(8)	13(6.5)
Somewhat effect	3(6)	6(12)	5(10)	7(14)	21(10.5)
Replaces most face-to-face communication	45(90)	40(80)	42(84)	39(78)	166(83)
Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)

Table 5. shows the effect of social media usage and online networking in the day-to-day communication of the respondents. Majority of the respondents 166 (83 percent) reported that it has replaced most of their face-to-face communication. Further 21 respondents (10.5 percent) had somewhat effect on face-to-face communication and 13 respondent (6.5 percent) of the total population reported it has no effect on face-to-face communication. The respondents from 15-20 years age category (90 percent) believe that social media has replaced most face-to-face communication in their life.

Table 6: Prevalence of psychological distress among the youth after using social media

	15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	Total
Depression	50(100)	38(76)	47(94)	38(76)	173(86.5)
Anxiety	50(100)	46(92)	50(100)	40(80)	186(93)
Stress	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)
Social isolation	48(96)	38(76)	41(82)	32(64)	159(79.5)
Insomnia (sleep deprivation)	47(94)	34(68)	36(72)	43(86)	160(80)
Hyperactive mind	41(82)	27(54)	32(64)	37(74)	137(68.5)
Mood swings	47(94)	38(76)	46(92)	46(92)	177(88.5)
Lack of concentration	48(96)	41(82)	38(76)	46(92)	173(86.5)
Low self-esteem	46(92)	42(84)	48(96)	48(96)	184(92)
Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)

***The respondents have given multiple answers. Total percentage was calculated from the total number of respondents separately (i.e., 50 each).**

Table 6 shows the prevalence of psychological distress among the youth after using social media. It was found that 100 percent of the respondents feel stressed after using social media. There were 93 percent of the respondents who feel anxiety after using social media. There were 86.5 percent of the respondents who faces depression after using social media. From the above table it came out clear that respondents in 15-20 years age category were more prone to psychological distress. They feel depressed, anxious and stress (100 percent each) after using social media. There were 92 percent of the respondents who feel low self-esteem. 86.5 percent of the respondents lacks concentration. 88.5 percent of the respondents suffers mood-swings. The present study supports the findings of Robinson & Smith (2021), Pawar and Shah (2019) which states that “increase feelings of loneliness and isolation as well as exacerbate mental health issues like depression and anxiety.”

Table 7: Effect of social media on the physical health of the youth

	15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	Total
Effect on Visual health	48(96)	38(76)	41(82)	32(64)	159(79.5)
Slowdown of locomotor activities	41(82)	27(54)	32(64)	37(74)	137(68.5)
Gastritis issues	48(96)	41(82)	38(76)	46(92)	173(86.5)
Cervical spondylitis	48(96)	46(92)	46(92)	47(94)	187(93.5)
Headaches	47(94)	48(96)	38(76)	36(72)	169(84.5)
Body aches	46(92)	42(84)	34(68)	36(72)	158(79)
Muscle tension	47(94)	40(80)	32(64)	32(64)	151(75.5)
Migraine	40(80)	32(64)	30(60)	25(50)	127(63.5)
Weight gain/loss	39(78)	24(48)	27(54)	22(44)	112(56)
Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)

***The respondents have given multiple answers. Total percentage was calculated from the total number of respondents separately (i.e., 50 each).**

Table 7 shows the effect of social media on the physical health of the youth. It was found that 93.5 percent of the respondents suffers from Cervical spondylitis. 86.5 percent suffers from Gastritis issues. There were 84.5 percent of the respondents who complaints of headaches. 79 percent suffers body aches. From the above table it was found that the age group 15 to 20 years suffers most of the health issues after using social media.

Conclusion

Social media addiction is a new type of addiction that has been brought about by exposure to the rapidly advancing technology. Users that utilize social media and social networking sites more frequently exhibit a fixation with these platforms, even when they are not being used, much like drug addicts. The results of the current study showed that youths in the 15–20 age range who live with their family spend more than seven hours a day on social media. Additionally, they think that the majority of their in-person interactions have been overtaken by social media. They are more vulnerable to emotional exhaustion. They experience tension, anxiety, and depression after utilizing social media. Not just they suffer psychologically, they too face physical issues like visual health problems, Cervical spondylitis, Gastritis issues, headaches, body aches and many more. Despite the fact that social media causes several issues for young people. However, their fear of missing out on something trendy prevents them from being able to reduce usage. Another category of psychological problems they encounter is the concept of FOMO (fear of missing out).

Recommendations to the problem

The prevalence of social media addiction and the co-morbidity of depression, anxiety, and stress are highlighted by the study's findings, which also demonstrate the necessity for professional intervention. It focuses on the problem of mental health brought on by overuse of social media. Another important factor is the function of families. Though, it can be challenging to keep adolescents and young children away from the internet and social media these days due to the increased prevalence of online learning, social media addiction is treatable with professional assistance, just like any other behavioral addiction. Preventative measures and early intervention are necessary to address mental health issues and promote addiction recovery. It is important to regularly screen young people for mental health disorders and social media addiction. Education institutions ought to mandate counseling services in order to raise youth awareness of social media usage and provide students with access to them in times of need. One other well-known environmental risk factor linked to social media addiction is dysfunctional or unhealthy families. Thus, family therapy is a crucial therapeutic approach that should be introduced to young people.

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