



Impact On The Mental Health Due To Overuse Of Social Media On Gen Z

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Abstract: In the contemporary era of digital connectivity, social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have achieved widespread presence, and Generation Z (Gen Z) has emerged as heavy users. While social media offers many benefits, there have been concerns about its potential adverse effects on the mental health of Gen Z. This report presents a synthesis of the challenges of excessive use of social media and examines its impact on the psychological well-being of Generation Z. The phenomenon of social comparison, fueled by curated online personas and idealized representations, has emerged as a significant factor influencing negative mental health outcomes among Gen Z. Constant exposure to complex images and lifestyles on platforms like Instagram can create feelings of inadequacy and promote feelings of social isolation. Isolation Cyberbullying is another major problem, as the anonymity and accessibility of social media platforms makes it easy to bully and intimidate online. The experience of cyberbullying can exacerbate Gen Z's stress and anxiety, weakening their mental resilience and well-being. In addition, the fear of missing out (FOMO) caused by social media, which shows the seemingly exciting experiences of peers, increases anxiety and dissatisfaction. Gen Z individuals may feel excessive pressure to participate in social activities and maintain an online presence, which increases stress and lowers self-esteem. While social media undoubtedly offers opportunities for connection and self-expression, its pervasive influence requires a nuanced understanding of its impact on mental health. By promoting digital literacy and promoting informed interactions with social media, stakeholders can empower Gen Z to navigate online spaces in ways that promote their well-being. This summary emphasizes the importance of continued research and dialogue at the intersection of social media use and mental health. The aim is to inform interventions and support mechanisms adapted to the needs of Generation Z in the digital age..

Keywords - Social Media, Generation Z, Mental Health, Social Comparison

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, social media is everywhere. You must have heard of Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, right? Well, these are just a few examples of social media that many of us use on a daily basis. And it's not just adults who are interested in social media; young people, especially Generation Z, are also heavy users. Now social networking can be a great thing. It helps us keep in touch with friends and family, share our cool stuff and even learn new things. But here's the thing: researchers are starting to wonder if excessive social media use isn't so good for our mental health, especially for generations like yours. You might be thinking, "But how social can it get? Isn't media bad for us? Well, that's what many people thought. But recent studies have shown that spending too much time on social media can make us feel bad .

Imagine scrolling through Instagram and seeing all those pictures of people having the time of their lives - parties, vacations, perfect selfies. It can make you feel like everyone else is having fun or looking better than you. This feeling is called social comparison, and it's one of the reasons why social media can sometimes make us feel bad about ourselves. Another big problem with social media is cyberbullying. You must have heard about school bullying, right? Well, cyberbullying is like that, but it happens online. People can be

really mean or even bully others on social media and it can be very hurtful. Then there's this thing called FOMO, or the fear of missing out. It's that anxious feeling you get when you see your friends posting everything they're up to and you feel like you're missing out on all the fun. FOMO can make you feel stressed and unhappy, even when you're actually fine. While social media has its benefits, like helping us connect with others and share our lives, it's important to be aware of how much time we spend on it and how it makes us feel. Researchers are still looking for the best ways to use social media in a healthy way, especially for Gen Z youth. By understanding the impact of social media on our mental health, we can learn to use it in ways that make us feel good about ourselves and our lives.

1.1 Aim:

To investigate the Impact on the Mental Health due to overuse of Social Media on GenZ.

1.2 Objective:

- To understand Current Scenario of Mental Health on Social Media.
- Examine the relationship between Social Media usage and Mental Health.
- Examine the Role of Social Media patterns in Influencing Mental Health outcomes.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing literature concerning the connection between social media utilization and mental health repercussions among Generation Z is vast, incorporating a multitude of theoretical frameworks, empirical investigations, and interdisciplinary viewpoints. Early research celebrated the positive aspects of social media, including enhanced connectivity and social support (Boyd, 2008). However, subsequent studies have raised concerns about its impact on mental well-being, particularly among younger generations. Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, has grown up in an era dominated by digital technology and social media, leading to numerous studies examining the psychological consequences of excessive social media use. A growing body of evidence suggests a complex relationship between social media use and various aspects of mental well-being among Generation Z. While some studies report positive associations with self-esteem and subjective well-being, others highlight detrimental effects such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, and body image dissatisfaction (Elhai, 2018) (Przybylski, 2013). Social comparison theory offers insights into the impact of social media on mental health, indicating that frequent exposure to idealized images and lifestyles can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy (Fardouly, 2015) (Primack, 2017).

Cyberbullying is another significant concern associated with social media use among Generation Z. Online harassment and negative interactions contribute to increased stress, anxiety, and depression, posing unique challenges for intervention and prevention efforts (Festinger, 1954) (Valkenburg, 2007). Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has emerged as a prevalent phenomenon, leading to heightened anxiety and dissatisfaction among individuals constantly exposed to curated representations of others' lives on social media (Kowalski, 2014) (Valkenburg, 2007). Despite the growing body of research, several gaps and controversies remain. Methodological limitations, including reliance on self-report measures and cross-sectional designs, hinder the establishment of causal relationships and the generalizability of findings. Additionally, the rapid evolution of social media platforms and digital technologies necessitates ongoing research to understand emerging trends and their implications for mental well-being.

III. RESEARCH GAP

While all the research has been done on the impact of social media on the mental health of Gen Z, there is still a lot we don't know. One big gap is understanding not only how much time people spend on social media, but also how they use it. Are they just browsing their feeds or actively chatting with friends or sharing things about themselves? Knowing this helps us understand how different ways of using social media affect mental health differently.

We also focus a lot on the negative effects of social media, for example how it can make people feel bad. But we don't always talk about the good things it can do for mental health, like bringing people together who might feel isolated or helping them express themselves in ways they couldn't before.

Another thing we need to explore is how factors like race, income, and sexuality may affect how social media affects mental health. People from different backgrounds can have different experiences online and this is important to understand if we want to help everyone.

By looking more closely at these issues, we can learn how to make social media a healthier place for Gen Z to feel supported and connected without harming their mental well-being.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do specific features of social media platforms contribute to mental health?
2. What are the potential long-term effects of social media usage on mental health, particularly among young adults?
3. How can social media platforms be designed or regulated to promote healthy usage, habits, and reduce negative mental health impacts?

V. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The level of mental health fluctuated among Gen Z was correlated with social media usage.

VII. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted among urban Indian youth between the ages of 14 and 27 years. The effect of overuse of social media on mental health in Generation Z was understood using quantitative methods. A questionnaire was used to collect responses from 51 respondents and the data was used in the study.

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

This data analysis aims to explore and quantify these effects, providing a comprehensive understanding of the correlation between social media overuse and mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and stress within this demographic.

Q1) How often do you use social media platforms?

Here's a breakdown of the frequency of social media usage:

- Multiple times a day: 47 responses
- Once a day: 2 responses
- A few times a week: 1 response

From this data, it's evident that the overwhelming majority of respondents use social media multiple times a day, indicating a high frequency of social media usage among the surveyed population.

Q2) On average, how many hours per day do you spend on social media?

Based on the provided responses, it seems that respondents vary in their daily social media usage:

- More than 4 hours: 15 responses
- 2-4 hours: 19 responses
- 1-2 hours: 11 responses
- Less than 1 hour: 5 responses

From this data, it appears that a more portion of respondents spend more than 2 hours per day on social media, with a considerable number spending more than 4 hours daily. This suggests that social media is a substantial part of the daily routine for many individuals in the surveyed population.

Q3) Do you feel that your social media usage has affected your mental health?

Here's a summary of the responses:

- (Strongly Disagree): 4 responses
- (Disagree): 11 responses
- (Neutral): 20 responses
- (Agree): 14 responses
- (Strongly Agree): 5 responses

From these responses, it appears that opinions are somewhat divided, with a relatively equal number of respondents expressing disagreement, neutrality, and agreement regarding the impact of social media usage on their mental health. This suggests that while some individuals perceive a negative impact, others may not feel affected or may even perceive positive effects on their mental health due to social media usage.

Q4) Have you ever experienced feelings of anxiety or depression related to your social media usage?

Based on the responses provided, here's a breakdown of the frequency of experiencing feelings of anxiety or depression related to social media usage:

- Rarely: 18 responses
- Occasionally: 18 responses
- Frequently: 5 responses
- Never: 9 responses

It appears that the majority of respondents have experienced feelings of anxiety or depression related to their social media usage to some extent, with a significant portion reporting that it occurs occasionally. However, there are also respondents who rarely or never experience these feelings, indicating individual differences in how social media affects mental well-being.

Q5) How do you perceive your CONFIDENCE LEVEL when using social media?

Based on the provided responses, here's a summary of how respondents perceive their confidence level when using social media:

- Boosted: 8 responses
- Not sure: 19 responses
- Diminished: 5 responses
- Unaffected: 18 responses

It appears that opinions are somewhat divided, with a significant number of respondents expressing uncertainty about how social media usage affects their confidence level. However, among those who have a perception, there are varied experiences, including feeling boosted, diminished, or unaffected in confidence when using social media. This suggests that the impact of social media on confidence is nuanced and can vary among individuals.

Q6) Have you ever felt pressure to maintain a certain image or lifestyle on social media?

Based on the responses provided, here's a summary of whether respondents have felt pressure to maintain a certain image or lifestyle on social media:

- Yes: 24 responses
- No: 26 responses

It appears that a majority of respondents have experienced pressure to maintain a certain image or lifestyle on social media, while a significant portion have not felt this pressure. This indicates that the impact of societal and peer influences on social media could differ from person to person.

Q7) How do you think social media impacts your relationships with friends and family?

Based on the responses provided, here's a summary of how respondents perceive the impact of social media on their relationships with friends and family:

- No impact: 15 responses
- Weakens: 9 responses
- Strengthens: 19 responses
- Not sure: 7 responses

It appears that the majority of respondents feel that social media either strengthens their relationships with friends and family or has no impact on them. However, there is also a notable minority who perceive that social media weakens their relationships, and some respondents are unsure about the impact. This means that the effect of social media on relationships can vary among individuals, and factors such as usage patterns and communication varies.

Q8) Have you ever experienced cyberbullying or negative comments on social media?

Based on the responses provided, here's a summary:

- Never: 30 responses
- Occasionally: 19 responses
- Frequently: 1 response

The majority of respondents reported never experiencing cyberbullying or negative comments on social media. However, there is a smaller portion who have experienced it occasionally, and one respondent reported experiencing it frequently. This suggests that while many individuals have not encountered such negative experiences, they still occur for some, albeit less frequently.

Q9) What strategies do you use to manage your social media usage and protect your mental health?

Based on the responses provided, here are the strategies that respondents use to manage their social media usage and protect their mental health:

- Setting usage boundaries: 16 responses
- Limiting screen time: 22 responses
- Taking breaks from social media: 26 responses
- Seeking support from friends or family: 4 responses

It's clear that taking breaks from social media is the most commonly reported strategy for managing social media usage and protecting mental health, followed by limiting screen time and setting usage boundaries. Seeking support from friends or family is mentioned by a smaller number of respondents. These strategies reflect proactive steps individuals take to maintain a healthy relationship with social media and safeguard their well-being.

IX. CONCLUSION

An examination of both data and scientific literature reveals a strong association between prolonged social media engagement and mental health indicators such as anxiety, depression, and self-esteem. The data reviewed in this study offer compelling evidence that mental health risks increase with greater social media use. This correlation suggests that the widespread presence of social media platforms in the lives of Generation Z comes with significant consequences, highlighting the need to consider the role of digital technology in shaping their experiences when addressing youth mental health issues.

Social media platforms have become integral to the daily lives of young people, serving as primary tools for communication, self-expression, and information gathering. However, increased screen time and the immersive nature of these platforms can contribute to mental health problems. Prolonged engagement with social media has been linked to increased feelings of loneliness, decreased face-to-face interactions, and exposure to cyberbullying. These factors collectively contribute to the deterioration of mental health among young users. The constant comparison with idealized images and lifestyles portrayed on social media can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem, leading to anxiety and depression.

This study also emphasizes the importance of implementing specific actions and preventive measures to encourage healthier online habits and mitigate the harmful consequences of excessive social media use. By promoting awareness of the potential risks associated with excessive digital engagement and equipping young people with the necessary skills to navigate online spaces consciously, we can enable them to benefit from social media while safeguarding their mental well-being. Educational programs focusing on digital literacy and mental health awareness can play a crucial role in this endeavor. Teaching young people to critically evaluate the content they encounter online and encouraging them to set boundaries on their social media usage can help alleviate some of the negative effects.

Furthermore, parents, educators, and policymakers must collaborate to create a supportive environment that fosters healthy online behaviors. This includes establishing guidelines for appropriate social media use, encouraging offline activities that promote physical and mental health, and providing resources for those struggling with the adverse effects of social media. Counseling services and mental health support should be readily available to help young people cope with the pressures and challenges of the digital world.

Overall, this study underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing the complex interactions between Generation Z's social media use and their mental health. By acknowledging the link between digital inclusion and disparities in mental health outcomes, we can develop strategies and initiatives that promote a more balanced and positive relationship with technology. For instance, creating social media campaigns that

highlight the benefits of digital detoxes, fostering online communities that support mental health, and encouraging the use of social media for positive self-expression and community building can contribute to a healthier digital environment.

In conclusion, addressing the mental health challenges posed by excessive social media use among Generation Z requires a multifaceted approach. By promoting digital literacy, encouraging a balance between online and offline activities, and providing robust mental health support, we can help young people navigate the digital age more effectively. Ultimately, these efforts can enhance the overall well-being of young people, allowing them to harness the benefits of technology without compromising their mental health. Recognizing the critical role of digital technology in their lives and proactively managing its impact is essential for fostering a healthier, more resilient generation.

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XI. APPENDIX

Impact on the Mental Health of Gen Z due to overuse of Social Media

□ □ □ □ □

I am Nitya Sehgal, a postgraduate first year student pursuing Diploma in Communication Design and Technology at Pearl Academy in Delhi-NCR. I am conducting this survey for my research on Impact on the Mental Health of Gen Z due to overuse of Social Media.

Your participation in this study is highly valued. By filling out this form, you will contribute significantly to understanding how Overuse of Social Media Impact Mental Health of GenZ . Filling out the form will take approximately 3 minutes of your time.

To ensure the study's accuracy, it's important for participants to meet specific criteria:

- Aged between 14 to 27
- Gen Z

Confidentiality is of utmost importance. Your personal information will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality, and you can withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences. Your participation will significantly contribute to enriching our understanding of these critical aspects of urban life.

Under the guidance of Professor Niketa Chakrabarti and Professor Harsh Mehta.

By proceeding with this survey, you are agreeing to participate in this survey voluntarily.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact +91 9582897792.

Do you feel that your social media usage has affected your mental health? *

1 2 3 4 5
Positively Negatively

Have you ever experienced feelings of anxiety or depression related to your social media usage? *

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

How often do you use social media platforms? *

- Multiple times a day
- Once a day
- A few times a week
- Rarely

On average, how many hours per day do you spend on social media? *

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- A few times a week
- 2-4 hours
- More than 4 hours



...

How do you perceive your CONFIDENCE LEVEL when using social media? *

- Boosted
- Unaffected
- Diminished
- Not sure

Have you ever felt pressure to maintain a certain image or lifestyle on social media? *

- Yes
- No

...

How do you think social media impacts your relationships with friends and family? *

- Strengthens
- Weakens
- No impact
- No sure

Have you ever experienced cyberbullying or negative comments on social media? *

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Have you ever experienced cyberbullying or negative comments on social media? *

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

...

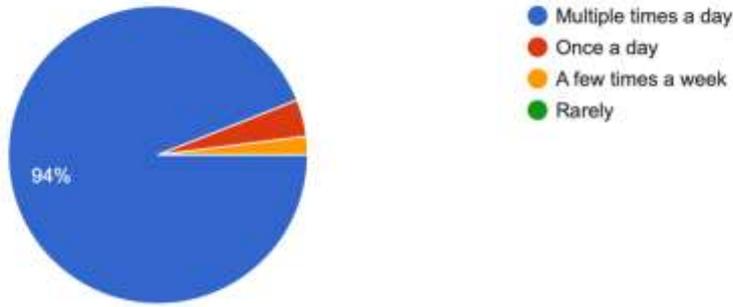
What strategies do you use to manage your social media usage and protect your mental health? *

- Limiting screen time
- Setting usage boundaries
- Taking breaks from social media
- Seeking support from friends or family



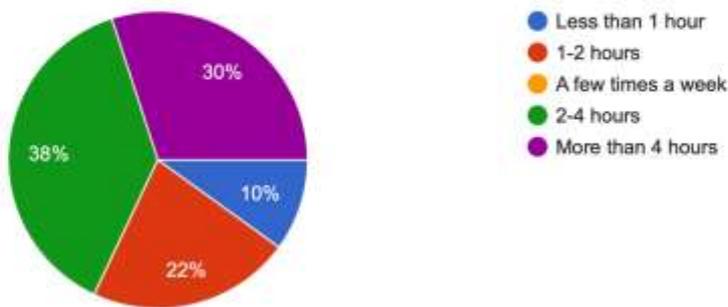
How often do you use social media platforms?

50 responses



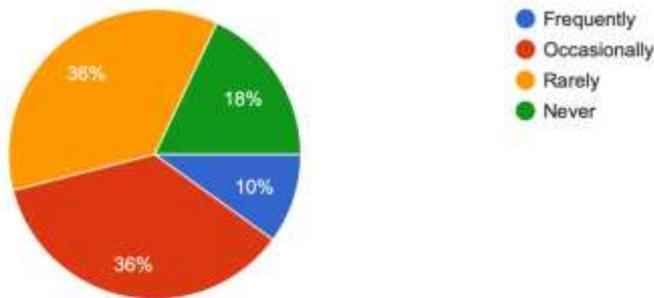
On average, how many hours per day do you spend on social media?

50 responses



Have you ever experienced feelings of anxiety or depression related to your social media usage?

50 responses



Do you feel that your social media usage has affected your mental health?

50 responses

