



# The Impact Of Social Media On Senior Secondary Students: A Comprehensive Review Of Psychological, Academic, And Behavioural Effects.

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**Abstract:** This review emphasizes review on the psychological, academic, and behavioural effects of social media on senior secondary students, emphasizing emotional maturity, mental health, academic performance, and evolving digital behaviour patterns. The widespread use of mobile devices and social media has increased adolescent dependency. While these platforms enable connectivity, collaboration, and educational opportunities, excessive use is linked to psychological distress, behavioural addiction, sleep disturbances, reduced attention spans, and poorer academic outcomes. Drawing from cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, this paper explores gender and regional differences and examines mediating factors like self-esteem, cyberbullying, and online peer pressure. It highlights the importance of supervised social media use, digital literacy programs, targeted interventions, and further research to understand the complex, evolving impacts on students' cognitive, emotional, and academic development.

**Index Terms** – Social media, Students, Behavioural effects, Academics.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This review synthesizes research on the psychological, academic, and behavioral effects of social media on senior secondary students, emphasizing emotional maturity, mental health, academic performance, and evolving digital behavior patterns. The widespread use of mobile devices and social media has increased adolescent dependency. While these platforms enable connectivity, collaboration, and educational opportunities, excessive use is linked to psychological distress, behavioral addiction, sleep disturbances, reduced attention spans, and poorer academic outcomes.

Drawing from cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, this paper explores gender and regional differences and examines mediating factors like self-esteem, cyberbullying, and online peer pressure. It highlights the importance of supervised social media use, digital literacy programs, targeted interventions, and further research to understand the complex, evolving impacts on students' cognitive, emotional, and academic development.

## II. PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has become an integral part of daily life, particularly for adolescents, with profound implications for their psychological well-being. Research highlights both positive and negative psychological effects of social media use, shaped by factors such as usage duration, type of engagement, and individual differences like gender and socioeconomic context.

**Negative Psychological Effects:**

Excessive use of social media—particularly usage exceeding two hours per day—has been consistently associated with elevated levels of psychological distress among adolescents. O’Drea and Campbell (2011) reported a negative correlation between the duration of time spent on social networking platforms and mental well-being, with increased exposure linked to symptoms of anxiety and depression. Similarly, Duminirache et al. (2012) observed that the extent of identity-related information shared on Facebook significantly correlates with depressive symptoms, suggesting that self-presentation online may heighten self-comparison and reduce self-esteem. Further reinforcing these findings, Tsikita et al. (2014) and Hanprathe et al. (2015) documented a strong positive relationship between prolonged social media use and internalizing emotional problems—such as anxiety and depression—particularly among high school students. Vernon et al. (2017) identified sleep disruption caused by night time engagement with social media as a mediating factor in the rise of depressive symptoms. Barry et al. (2017) also found moderate associations between general social media activity and indicators of both anxiety and depression. Gender differences in emotional outcomes are significant. According to Prison and Eggermont (2016), female students are more likely to experience psychological distress as a result of both passive and active social media use, with perceived social support acting as a key mediating variable.

**Positive Psychological Effects:**

Social media can foster connectivity and perceived social support, potentially mitigating feelings of isolation. Prison and Eggermont (2016) noted that active engagement on platforms like Facebook can enhance social support, which may buffer depressive symptoms in some cases. Access to information and online communities can also promote self-expression and emotional coping, particularly for students facing academic or social stressors.

**Mediating Factors:**

The psychological impact of social media is moderated by factors such as sleep quality, gender, and usage patterns (active vs. passive). For instance, passive consumption (e.g., scrolling without interaction) is more strongly linked to depression than active engagement (Prison & Eggermont, 2016). Socioeconomic disparities, particularly in rural areas, limit access to supervised social media use, potentially exacerbating negative effects. While social media offers opportunities for social connection and support, excessive and unregulated use poses significant risks to adolescents’ mental health, including increased anxiety, depression, and reduced emotional maturity. Interventions, such as parental supervision and school-based education on responsible use, are crucial to mitigate these effects. Further research is needed to explore long-term impacts and the role of socioeconomic factors in shaping these outcomes.

**Additional Effects:** Victims of cyberbullying on platforms like Instagram often experience long-lasting anxiety and social withdrawal. Adolescents frequently compare themselves to idealized portrayals of peers, impacting body image and self-worth. A continuous desire to stay updated contributes to anxiety and compulsive checking behaviour

**III. ACADEMIC IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

The impact of social media on students' academic performance has become an increasingly critical topic of research and concern. Although social media platforms present valuable opportunities for collaborative learning, information exchange, and peer interaction, their excessive and unregulated use is frequently linked to negative academic consequences.

**Negative Impacts:**

Excessive engagement with social media significantly reduces the time students can allocate to essential academic activities such as reading, completing assignments, and preparing for examinations. Constant interruptions from app notifications and the tendency to multitask further disrupt students’ concentration during study sessions. Prolonged exposure to social platforms often leads to procrastination, causing delays in fulfilling academic responsibilities. Additionally, late-night browsing disrupts sleep patterns, resulting in daytime fatigue and diminished academic productivity. The dominance of short-form content on these

platforms may also hinder the development of deep reading skills, critical thinking, and sustained analytical FOCUS.

### **Academic Benefits:**

Social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Discord facilitate collaborative learning by enabling students to form study groups, exchange notes, and clarify academic doubts in real time. These platforms also serve as valuable educational resources, offering tutorials, examination strategies, and expert insights that enhance traditional classroom instruction. Active participation in online academic discussions, debates, and content creation can strengthen students' writing, presentation, and research abilities. Additionally, exposure to academic influencers and success stories from peers can motivate students to strive for higher performance. Through educational pages and online communities, students can access information about webinars, competitions, scholarships, and career development opportunities.

## **IV. BEHAVIOURAL AND SOCIAL EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **Behavioural Impacts:**

A growing number of adolescents exhibit compulsive behaviours, such as frequently checking for social media updates, which can lead to a dependency on constant digital interaction. Prolonged exposure to fast-paced content formats like reels and stories has been shown to diminish attention span, reduce patience, and impair the ability to engage in sustained offline activities. The perceived anonymity offered by online platforms often results in disinhibited behaviour, where users may act more aggressively, rudely, or impulsively than they would in face-to-face settings. Emotional regulation is also influenced by digital validation, as likes, comments, and follower feedback significantly affect mood and self-worth. Moreover, the influence of online trends and social media personalities frequently shapes students' language, appearance, and lifestyle choices—often without critical reflection.

### **Impact on Social Life:**

Overreliance on online communication may hinder real-life conversational skills and emotional connection. Constant exposure to curated lives of others can lead to low self-esteem, jealousy, or dissatisfaction. Online platforms increase vulnerability to harassment and indirect pressure to follow peer behaviours. Ironically, high social media use may result in feelings of loneliness and lack of genuine support despite having many "online friends." The line between private and public life becomes blurred, affecting personal boundaries and etiquette.

## **V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Promote balanced and purposeful use of social media among students, particularly during academic hours and late evenings. Parents should establish clear screen-time rules at home and encourage offline engagement through reading, sports, and creative hobbies. Maintaining open, non-judgmental communication with children is essential to help them share their online experiences and challenges freely.

In schools, digital literacy must be integrated into the curriculum to educate students on responsible online behaviour, including privacy settings, cyberbullying prevention, and digital etiquette. Social media can also be harnessed for academic purposes facilitating group discussions, resource sharing, and collaborative learning.

Strengthening school-based counselling services is vital to support students dealing with anxiety, depression, or academic stress linked to online exposure. Institutions should implement structured digital engagement policies that promote mental well-being while ensuring access to educational content.

To bridge the rural-urban digital divide, supervised ICT labs should be established in rural schools to provide safe, equitable access to technology. Teachers must be trained to recognize early signs of digital overuse, emotional distress, and academic decline among students.

Students themselves should be encouraged to manage their online time effectively, prioritize studies over distractions, and make use of educational platforms such as digital libraries and academic communities. They

should also feel empowered to seek support from parents, teachers, or counsellors when struggling with peer pressure, low self-esteem, or social media-induced stress.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Social media is an inseparable part of adolescent life, especially among senior secondary students. While it can serve as an educational tool and source of support, overuse or mismanagement can derail mental and academic well-being. It is essential to equip students with digital resilience, critical thinking, and emotional regulation to harness social media positively.

### Figures and Tables

Figure 1 Estimated distribution of social media impacts students

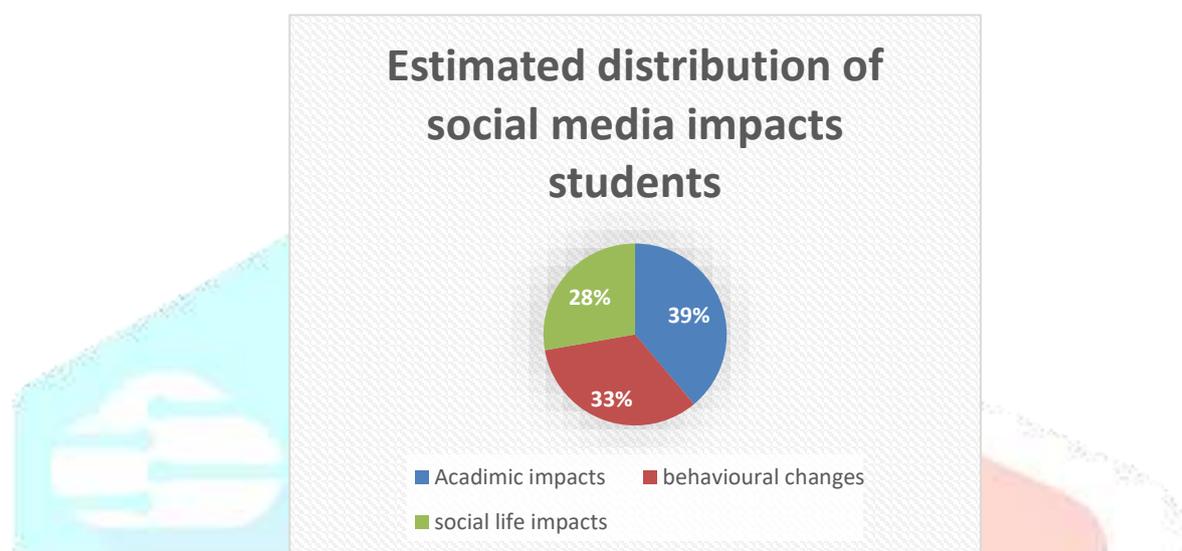


Table 1: psychological effects of social media use

S.No	Key Findings	Mediating factors	References
	Positive correlation between social media time and psychological distress.	Low self-esteem	Barry et al. (2017)
	Facebook identity-related sharing linked to depressive symptoms.	Sleep disruption	Duminirache et al. (2012)
	Greater emotional investment predicts depression.	Passive browsing vs. active participation	Vernon et al. (2017)
	Higher usage increases anxiety in students.	Perceived social support	Yan et al. (2017)

Table 2: Negative impacts of Social media on academic performance

S.No.	Negative Impact	Description	Reference
1	Time Displacement	Excessive time on social media reduces focus on study and homework tasks.	Das & Mishra, 2014
2	Reduced Concentration	Frequent notifications and multitasking interrupt deep learning and attention.	Sharma, 2017
3	Procrastination	Delays in completing assignments or preparing for exams due to online distraction.	Nadeem et al., 2017
4	Sleep Disruption	Late-night usage causes poor sleep, leading to fatigue and low classroom performance.	Vernon et al., 2017
5	Surface-Level Learning	Preference for short, fast content weakens analytical and critical thinking skills.	O'Drea & Campbell, 2011

6	Academic Burnout	Overstimulation and constant online presence may cause mental fatigue and disengagement.	Sampassa-Kaviying & Lewis, 2015
7	Decreased Academic Motivation	Over-reliance on entertainment content may reduce interest in academic goals.	Barry et al., 2017

Table 3: impact on behaviour and social life and

S.No.	Impact Area	Negative Impact	Description	Reference
1	Behaviour	Digital Addiction	Compulsive use of social media leads to dependency and reduced self-control.	Hanprathe et al., 2015
2	Behaviour	Impaired Attention Span	Constant scrolling reduces patience and ability to focus on tasks.	Sharma, 2017
3	Behaviour	Online Disinhibition	Anonymity leads to increased aggression or inappropriate behavior online.	O'Drea & Campbell, 2011
4	Behaviour	Mood Fluctuations	Emotional dependency on likes/comments affects stability.	Barry et al., 2017
5	Behaviour	Peer Influence and Imitation	Influencer-driven behavior impacts self-identity and decision-making.	Vernon et al., 2017
6	Social Life	Reduced Face-to-Face Interaction	Digital communication replaces in-person social skills.	Njue & Anand, 2018
7	Social Life	Social Comparison	Viewing idealized posts leads to jealousy and low self-esteem.	Duminirache et al., 2012
8	Social Life	Cyberbullying and Peer Pressure	Online harassment and group norms influence behavior.	Sampassa-Kaviying & Lewis, 2015
9	Social Life	Emotional Isolation	High social media use correlates with loneliness and lack of genuine support.	Yan et al., 2017
10	Social Life	Blurring of Personal Boundaries	Oversharing affects privacy and real-life relationships.	Prison & Eggermont, 2016

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