



A Study On The Impact Of Social Media Posting On Mental Health Among College Students In Surat City

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Abstract: Social media posting has become an integral part of daily life among college students, influencing self-expression, social interaction, and online identity. While social media platforms provide opportunities for connection and visibility, there are growing concerns regarding the impact of frequent posting behaviour on students' mental health. The present study examines the impact of social media posting behaviour on the mental health of college students in Surat City, focusing on students enrolled in the Commerce and Management streams. Using a structured questionnaire and analysing 123 responses from colleges across Surat City using SPSS, the research examines four key factors influencing social media posting behaviour, including Social Approval, Social Comparison, Fear of Missing Out, and Habit or Addiction. The impact on mental health is assessed through four key indicators: anxiety, stress, depressive mood, and sleep and well-being. In the present study, Exploratory factor analysis identified two principal factors significantly affecting social media posting behaviour, Posting Habit and Comparison and Social Approval Seeking. Correlation and multiple regression techniques revealed statistically significant associations between social media posting behaviour and mental health outcomes. Results of the said study indicate that increased social media posting behaviour is associated with higher levels of psychological distress, including anxiety, stress, depressive mood, and sleep disturbance. The study highlights the need for greater awareness of responsible social media engagement among college students.

Index Terms - Social Media, Social Media Posting Behaviour, Mental Health.

I. INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has fundamentally altered how people communicate and interact socially. A significant aspect of this revolution is social media, which has experienced remarkable growth over the last twenty years as part of this change. As of October 2025, there were 5.66 billion social media users worldwide. This equates to 68.7 per cent of the global population, indicating that more than two in every three individuals now use social media each month. (DataReportal, 2025)

GWI's data also reveals that the typical social media user actively uses or visits an average of 6.75 different social platforms each month, and spends an average of 18 hours and 36 minutes using social media each week, which includes browsing social networks and watching online videos on platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. (GWI, 2025)

This digital revolution has not bypassed the world's most populous nation either, as India ranks second globally in terms of internet users. A report by Kepios indicated that there were 1.03 billion internet users in India in October 2025, with 500 million active social media user identities. For perspective, this figure was equivalent to 34.1 per cent of India's total population at the end of 2025. Data from the top social media platforms indicate that there were 455 million user identities aged 18 and above using social media in India at the end of 2025, representing 43.9 per cent of the total population in this age group. By the end of 2025, 35.6 per cent of these users were female, whereas 64.4 per cent were male. (Kemp, 2025)

The average daily internet usage among Indians is 6 hours and 49 minutes, while the average time spent on social media is 2 hours and 28 minutes per day. (Howe, 2025)

This extensive engagement with social media platforms necessitates a thorough examination of their implications for mental health and psychological well-being. Globally, 18.4 per cent of students are affected by social media addiction, with 36.9 per cent of Indian college students demonstrating addictive social media behaviours associated with anxiety, eye strain, and poor sleep. (Gopakumar et al., 2025)

College students, in particular, deserve focused research attention, as they are not only among the most frequent users of social media but also at a critical stage in their psychological and social development. Extended use of social media by students has been closely associated with sleep disruptions and increased anxiety levels. (Osman, 2025)

Another study also highlights that excessive usage of social media, including time spent and number of social networking sites, negatively impacts students' mental health, contributing to depression and anxiety. (Priya et al., 2020)

While extensive research has focused on the general trends of social media usage, there remains a vital gap in understanding the impact of specific social media posting behaviours on mental health outcomes. Social media posting involves actively creating and sharing content on platforms, such as status updates, photos, videos, and stories. This behaviour differs from passive browsing or consumption, as it entails intentional self-presentation and the expectation of social feedback.

Despite the significance of posting behaviour in shaping online interactions and self-perception, limited research has specifically examined its impact on the mental health of college students in the Indian context. The present study addresses this gap by examining the impact of social media posting behaviour on the mental health of college students in Surat City, focusing specifically on students enrolled in the Commerce and Management stream.

This research investigates four key factors that influence social media posting behaviour: **Social Approval, Social Comparison, Fear of Missing Out, and Habit or Addiction**. The impact on mental health is assessed through four key indicators: **anxiety, stress, depressive mood, and sleep and well-being**. By identifying the key factors that drive social media posting behaviour and examining their relationships with mental health outcomes, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how posting behaviour affects the psychological well-being of college students.

1.1 DEFINITION:

1. Social Media: Social media are described as digital platforms, services, and applications built around the convergence of content sharing, public communication, and interpersonal connection. (Bengtsson & Johansson, 2022)

2. Social Media Posting Behaviour: Social media posting behaviour refers to the patterns and frequency of content sharing on social media platforms, influenced by the feedback such as likes and comments that users receive. (Stsiampkouskaya et al., 2021)

3. **Mental Health:** Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It has intrinsic and instrumental value and is integral to our well-being. (World Health Organization: WHO, 2019)

II LITERATURE REVIEW

(Osman, 2025) conducted a cross-sectional study involving 268 health sciences students at Mogadishu University in Somalia to examine the association between social media use and mental health indicators. The study found that 84.7 per cent of participants spent more than three hours daily on social media. High social media use was significantly associated with sleep disturbance, mental exhaustion, social isolation, and anxiety, with particularly strong odds observed for anxiety. However, high usage was significantly less likely to be associated with eating disorders. The findings suggest that excessive social media engagement may contribute to adverse psychological outcomes among university students.

(Gopakumar et al., 2025) conducted a cross-sectional study among 320 college students in Tamil Nadu to assess the prevalence of social media addiction. The study reported a 5.6 per cent prevalence rate and found that students spending more than three hours daily on social media were significantly more likely to exhibit addictive behaviour. Social media addiction was also associated with relationship problems, indicating potential psychosocial consequences among college students.

(Yamini & Pujar, 2022) examined the effect of social media addiction on the mental health of emerging adults in Karnataka, India, using a sample of 160 undergraduate students. The study reported high levels of social media engagement and addiction among participants. A negative correlation was found between social media addiction and mental health, indicating that higher levels of addiction were associated with poorer psychological well-being among students.

(Rajesh, Deepa & Krishna Priya, 2020) conducted a descriptive study among 90 MBA students from two deemed universities in Chennai to examine the impact of social media on mental health. The findings indicated a significant association between time spent on social media and the number of social networking sites used. Excessive usage was found to negatively affect students' mental health, contributing to symptoms of depression and anxiety. The study concluded that higher engagement with multiple social networking platforms is associated with increased psychological distress among students.

III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

3.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT:

The rapid growth of social media has profoundly affected the everyday lives of college students, with content sharing becoming a widespread activity motivated by social interaction, the pursuit of validation, and habitual use. While social media enables communication and self-expression, concerns have emerged regarding its potential psychological effects, including anxiety, stress, and depressive symptoms. However, limited empirical research specifically examines the impact of social media posting behaviour, rather than general usage, on students' mental health. Therefore, this study investigates whether social media posting behaviour significantly affects the mental health of college students in Surat City.

3.2 RESEARCH GAP:

Previous research has predominantly focused on general social media use and its link to mental health, yielding varied results. Limited attention has been given to social media posting behaviour as a multidimensional construct involving social approval, social comparison, fear of missing out, and habitual or addictive engagement, particularly among college students in Indian urban contexts such as Surat City. Hence, there is a need to examine the behavioural dimensions of social media posting and their specific impact on mental health within this demographic.

3.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

1. To identify the key factors influencing social media posting behaviour among college students.
2. To examine the impact of social media posting behaviour on the mental health of college students.

3.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS:

1. H_{01} : There are no significant factors influencing social media posting behaviour among college students.
2. H_{02} : Social media posting behaviour has no significant impact on the mental health of college students.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN:

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to identify the key factors influencing social media posting behaviour and to examine its impact on the mental health of college students. The study is based on cross-sectional data collected through a structured questionnaire. Statistical techniques, including Exploratory factor analysis and regression analysis, were employed to achieve the research objectives.

3.6 SAMPLING DESIGN:

The study was conducted among college students in Surat City who actively engage in social media posting. A total of 123 valid responses were included in the final analysis. A convenience sampling technique was adopted due to accessibility and time constraints. Only respondents who reported posting content on social media were considered for examining the impact on mental health.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION TOOL:

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered using Google Forms. The questionnaire included items measuring social media posting behaviour and mental health indicators such as anxiety, stress, depressive mood, and sleep disturbance. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

IV RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS:

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS:

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender Distribution of Respondents					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	66	53.7	53.7	53.7
	Female	57	46.3	46.3	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

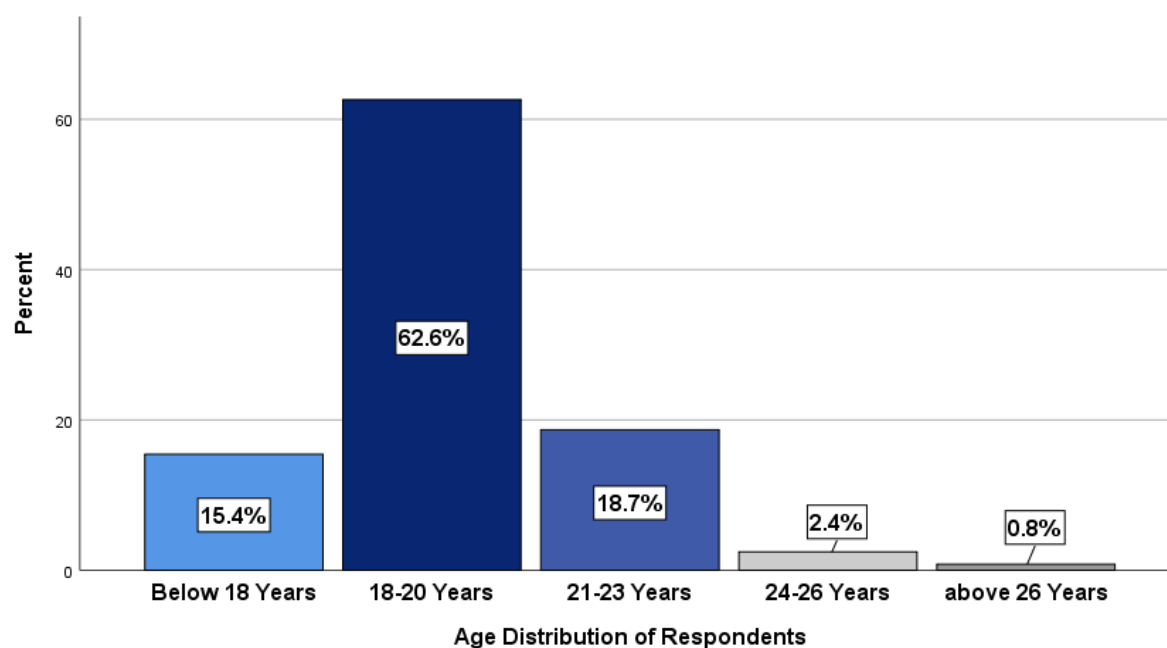
Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

The Gender Distribution table shows that out of 123 respondents, 66 (53.7 per cent) were male and 57 (46.3 per cent) were female, indicating a slightly higher representation of male students in the sample.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Distribution of Respondents					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 18 Years	19	15.4	15.4	15.4
	18-20 Years	77	62.6	62.6	78.0
	21-23 Years	23	18.7	18.7	96.7
	24-26 Years	3	2.4	2.4	99.2
	Above 26 Years	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

Figure 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

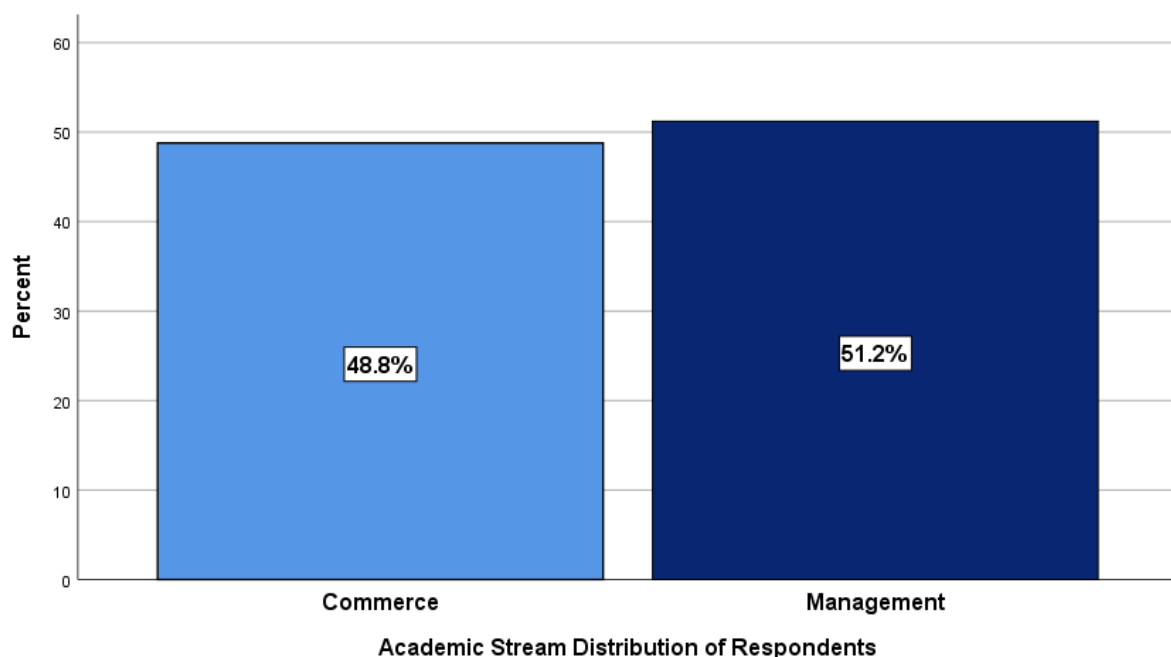
Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

The Age Distribution of Respondents table shows that out of 123 respondents, 77 (62.6 per cent) were aged 18–20 years, followed by 23 (18.7 per cent) in the 21–23 years category and 19 (15.4 per cent) below 18 years. A very small proportion belonged to the 24–26 years (2.4 per cent) and above 26 years (0.8 per cent) categories.

Table 3: Academic Stream Distribution of Respondents

Academic Stream Distribution of Respondents					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Commerce	60	48.8	48.8	48.8
	Management	63	51.2	51.2	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

Figure 2: Academic Stream Distribution of Respondents

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

The Academic Stream Distribution of Respondents table shows that 63 respondents (51.2 per cent) belonged to the Management stream, while 60 respondents (48.8 per cent) were from the Commerce stream, indicating a nearly balanced representation of both streams.

Table 4: Level of Study Distribution of Respondents

Level of Study Distribution of Respondents					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undergraduate	116	94.3	94.3	94.3
	Postgraduate	7	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

The Level of Study Distribution of Respondents table shows that 116 respondents (94.3 per cent) were undergraduate students, whereas 7 respondents (5.7 per cent) were postgraduate students, indicating that the sample was predominantly composed of undergraduate students.

Table 5: Year of Study Distribution of Respondents

Year of study of the respondent					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	First Year	63	51.2	51.2	51.2
	Second Year	22	17.9	17.9	69.1
	Final Year	38	30.9	30.9	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

The Year of Study Distribution of Respondents table shows that 63 respondents (51.2 per cent) were in the first year, 22 respondents (17.9 per cent) were in the second year, and 38 respondents (30.9 per cent) were in the final year.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIVE 1: Factors Influencing Social Media Posting Behaviour

Table 6: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.875
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	759.176
	df	66
	Sig.	.000

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming that sufficient correlations existed among the variables.

Table 7: Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix ^a		
	Component	
	1	2
Difficulty controlling posting frequency	.831	
Posting to remain visible online	.808	
Posting as part of daily routine	.747	
Posting triggered by others' activity	.723	

Excessive time spent on posting	.647	
Comparison of own posts with others	.607	
Fear of missing out when inactive	.594	
Improving posts after comparison	.570	
Lifestyle comparison through social media	.552	
Posting for likes and positive comments		.840
Importance of likes and comments		.803
Attention to engagement on posts		.705
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a		
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.		

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

Table 7 presents the results of the exploratory factor analysis using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation. The analysis extracted two distinct factors influencing social media posting behaviour among college students. The first factor, labelled "Posting Habit and Comparison," includes items related to habitual posting, fear of missing out, social comparison, and excessive posting behaviour. The second factor, labelled "Social Approval Seeking," comprises items related to posting for likes, the importance of comments, and attention to engagement. All factor loadings were above the acceptable threshold, indicating a clear and meaningful factor structure. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, confirming that significant factors influence social media posting behaviour among college students.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIVE 2: To examine the impact of social media posting behaviour on the mental health of college students.

Table 8: Reliability Statistics for Social Media Posting Scale

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.910	12

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

Table 9: Reliability Statistics for Mental Health Scale

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.946	12

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

Tables 8 and 9 present the reliability statistics for the social media Posting and Mental Health scales. The Cronbach's Alpha values of **0.910** and **0.946** respectively indicate excellent internal consistency for both constructs, confirming that the measurement scales are reliable for further analysis.

Table 10: Correlation between Social Media Posting Behaviour and Mental Health Impact

Correlations				
			Mean_SMP	Mean_MH
Spearman's rho	Mean_SMP	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.514**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	123	123
	Mean_MH	Correlation Coefficient	.514**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	123	123

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

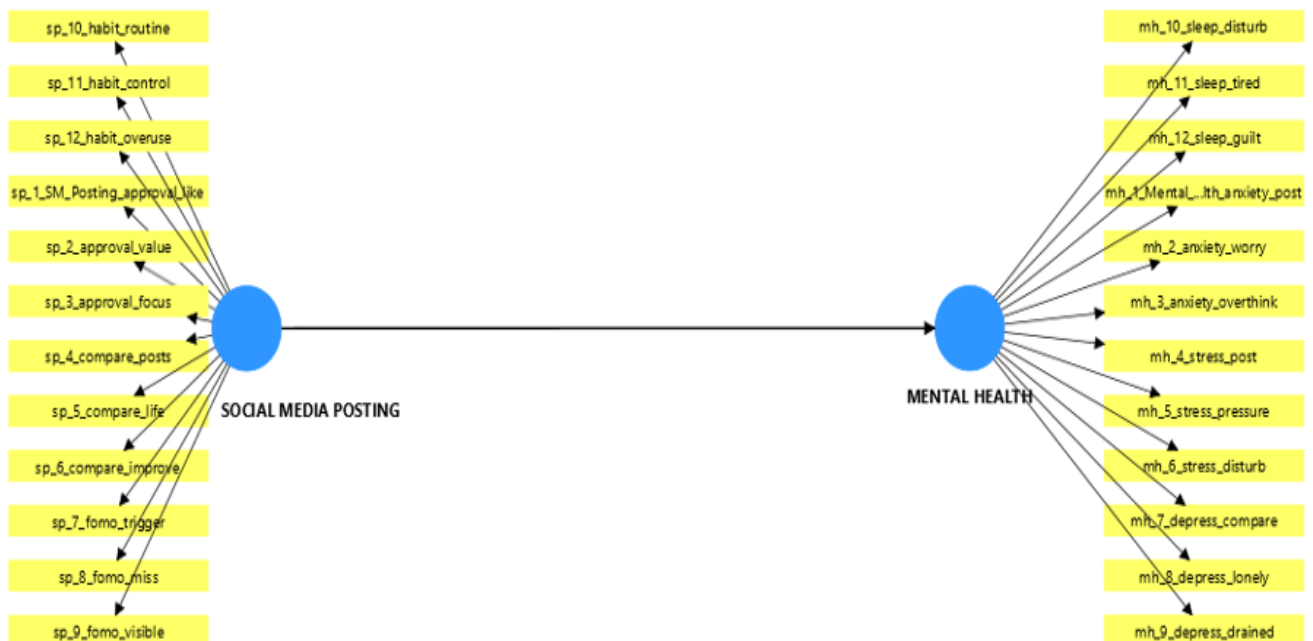


Table 11: Results of Structural Model (PLS-SEM Analysis)

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values
SMP -> MH	0.641	0.656	0.062	10.407	0.000

Source: SmartPLS Output

Figure 3: Structural Model of Social Media Posting and Mental Health

Source: SmartPLS Output

The structural model results reveal that social media posting behaviour has a significant positive effect on mental health ($\beta = 0.641$, $t = 10.407$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that higher levels of posting behaviour are associated with increased mental health concerns among college students.

Table 12: Model Summary of Regression Analysis

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.595 ^a	.355	.349	.71910	1.737
a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_SMP					
b. Dependent Variable: Mean_MH					

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

Table 13: ANOVA of Regression Model

ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	34.365	1	34.365	66.456	.000 ^b
	Residual	62.570	121	.517		
	Total	96.935	122			
a. Dependent Variable: Mean_MH						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_SMP						

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

Table 14: Regression Coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.860	.245		3.503	.001
	Mean_SMP	.678	.083	.595	8.152	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Mean_MH						

Source: Author's calculation using SPSS

From Table 8 to Table 14, it can be observed that social media posting behaviour has a statistically significant impact on the mental health of college students. The reliability analysis confirms strong internal consistency of the measurement scales. The correlation results indicate a moderate positive association between social media posting behaviour and mental health impact. The structural model analysis (Table 11) further confirms a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.641$, $p < 0.001$). The regression results (Tables 12–14) demonstrate that social media posting behaviour significantly predicts mental health outcomes, explaining 35.5 per cent of the variance ($R^2 = 0.355$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that social media posting behaviour significantly influences the mental health of college students.

V DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings indicate that social media posting behaviour among college students is primarily influenced by habitual engagement, social comparison, and approval-seeking tendencies. These behavioural

dimensions suggest that posting is not merely a routine activity but is shaped by the need for visibility and validation within online social environments.

Further analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between social media posting behaviour and mental health. The results demonstrate that increased posting behaviour is associated with higher levels of psychological distress, including anxiety, stress, depressive mood, and sleep disturbance. This suggests that excessive or comparison-driven posting may contribute to a deterioration in students' mental well-being.

Overall, this study highlights that social media posting behaviour plays a meaningful role in shaping mental health outcomes among college students in Surat City.

VI CONCLUSION

The present study investigates the factors influencing social media posting behaviour and its impact on the mental health of college students in Surat City. Exploratory factor analysis identified two significant behavioural dimensions underlying posting practices: **Posting Habit and Comparison and Social Approval Seeking**. Further statistical analysis revealed a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship between social media posting behaviour and mental health outcomes. The regression results indicated that posting behaviour accounts for approximately **35.5 per cent** of the variance in mental health indicators, suggesting a meaningful impact.

These findings demonstrate that increased posting behaviour is associated with heightened psychological distress among college students. The study concludes that although social media posting is an integral part of digital interaction among students, excessive and validation-driven engagement may adversely affect their mental well-being. These results underscore the importance of promoting balanced and mindful social media usage to safeguard the psychological health of college students.

VII LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This study focused exclusively on college students in Surat City, which may limit the applicability of its findings to other regions.
2. The data were based on self-reported responses, which may be subject to bias.
3. The research primarily focuses on students from the Commerce and Management fields, which means the results might not be entirely applicable to those studying in other academic areas.

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