



## Social media's effect on today's teenagers' mental and physical health.

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### Abstract

The impact of social media on teenagers was explored through a comprehensive survey-based research initiative. Employing a well-organized electronic survey method, our study was conducted at major university colleges in Panvel and various other locations, focusing on individuals aged 15-20. The research delves into students' daily interactions with social media, marking the publication of a longitudinal study investigating the influence of social media on the health of today's teenagers. This investigation unveils the multifaceted effects of social media on teens, shedding light on its potential negative consequences such as distraction, sleep disruption, exposure to bullying, rumor spreading, unrealistic perceptions of others' lives, and peer pressure. The extent of these risks appears to be correlated with the frequency of social media use among teenagers.

Through the survey, we meticulously analyzed the initial plans of recent graduates during the COVID-19 pandemic. We compared them to their actual decisions, providing valuable insights into the dynamic nature of their post-graduation choices.

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**Keywords: Social media, Health, Teenagers**

### Introduction:

The impact of social media on teenagers' mental health is a topic of growing concern.

According to a licensed clinical social worker at Huntsman Mental Health Institute, Jessica Holzbauer, "Social media can have negative consequences for our mental health".

The survey has shown that young adults who use social media are three times as likely to suffer from depression, putting a large portion of the population at risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Social media can also lead to addiction, which can cause distractions, disturbed sleep, and other effects on a child's social and mental health. However, social media can also develop social entities in the child.

It is important to be aware of the negative consequences of social media and to use it in moderation. Please let me know if you want more information on this topic.

According to a survey by the UK's Royal Society for Public Health, the top 5 social media platforms have been ranked according to their impact on mental health.

Available online at: <https://jazindia.com>

It emerges that Instagram is the social media platform with the most negative effect on the psychological state of young people. On the other side, YouTube is considered the most positive network in this area and the only one in the research considered to have a 'net positive' influence 1.

Spending more than 3 hours on social media per day puts adolescents at a higher risk for mental health problems. 13% of kids ages 12-17 report depression 32% report anxiety 25% of 18 to 25-year-olds report mental illness. As per Dr. Tribhushan V. Rambhatla, "Social media can have both sides as it can develop social entity in the child but can also affect them negatively by making them addicted which can cause distractions, disturbed sleep and other effects on the child's social and mental health".

### **Following are the impact of social media on today's teenager's health.**

- **Connection and Community:** social media allows teens to connect with friends and family instantly, regardless of distance. It fosters communities based on shared interests, hobbies, and identities, providing a sense of belonging and support.
- **Self-Expression and Identity Exploration:** Platforms provide teens with avenues to express themselves creatively, share their passions, and explore their evolving identities. This can be empowering and boost self-confidence.
- **Access to Information and Learning:** social media can be a gateway to diverse knowledge and learning opportunities. Educational content, news, and current affairs discussions expose teens to different perspectives and broaden their understanding of the world.
- **Social Change and Activism:** Social media empowers teens to raise awareness about important issues, mobilize support for causes they care about, and participate in social movements. It can be a powerful tool for positive change.
- **Career Development and Networking:** Platforms can connect teens with mentors, professionals, and potential employers in their fields of interest. Networking opportunities and online portfolios can showcase skills and pave the way for future career paths.
- **Cyberbullying and Online Harassment:** Social media anonymity can embolden bullies, leading to harmful cyberbullying and online harassment. This can have devastating impacts on teens' mental health and well-being.
- **Body Image Issues and Unrealistic Standards:** Constant exposure to curated and edited online images can fuel body image dissatisfaction and unrealistic beauty standards. This can lead to eating disorders, low self-esteem, and negative self-perception.
- **Addiction and Screen Time:** Social media's addictive nature and endless scrolling can lead to excessive screen time, neglecting real-life interactions, hobbies, and responsibilities. This can disrupt sleep patterns, affect academic performance, and hinder social skills development.
- **FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) and Social Comparison:** The curated highlight reels of others' lives on social media can trigger FOMO and constant comparison. This can lead to anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy.
- **Misinformation and Fake News:** The rapid spread of misinformation and fake news on social media can be misleading and harmful. Teens may struggle to discern reliable sources, leading to confusion, distrust, and negative societal impacts.

### **The "Scroll-Gen": Navigating the Social Media Maze:**

**Today's teenagers, dubbed the "Scroll-Gen,"** face a unique set of challenges and opportunities shaped by the omnipresent force of social media. While platforms offer connection, self-expression, and access to information, they also present a labyrinth of pitfalls and unforeseen consequences.

### **Missed Opportunities and Lost Confidence:**

"Not Eligible" Stigma: Just like the "COVID Batch" faced discrimination, many teens encounter age-related

restrictions, platform algorithms limiting their reach, and unrealistic expectations set by influencers, leading to feelings of exclusion and missed opportunities.

**Comparison Trap:** The curated highlight reels of others' lives fuel constant comparisons, triggering anxiety and insecurity. Teens may struggle to recognize the carefully crafted online persona versus reality, leading to a decline in self-confidence and self-worth.

**Skill Gap and Disconnection:** The shift to online learning and limited real-world interactions can create a skills gap, leaving teens unprepared for practical aspects of life and careers. This disconnect from tangible experiences can further erode confidence and hinder their ability to navigate the complexities of the offline world.

### **Anxiety and Mental Health Concerns:**

#### **FOMO and the Pressure to Perform: The constant barrage of perfect lives**

**and achievements online triggers FOMO (Fear of Missing Out),** pushing teens to overshare, overachieve, and constantly seek validation. This relentless pressure can lead to anxiety, depression, and a distorted sense of identity.

**Cyberbullying and Online Harassment:** The anonymity and reach of social media embolden bullies, making teens vulnerable to cyberbullying and online harassment. These experiences can have devastating impacts on mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being.

**Overstimulation and Digital Detox Dilemma:** The endless scrolling and notifications create a constant state of overstimulation, making it difficult for teens to focus, relax, or disconnect. This can disrupt sleep patterns, fuel anxiety, and hinder their ability to engage in healthy offline activities.

### **Information Overload and Misinformation Maze:**

Social media acts as a double-edged sword. While offering access to information, it also thrives on misinformation and clickbait. Teens lacking critical thinking skills can easily fall prey to biased narratives and fake news, impacting their understanding of the world and potentially leading to harmful real-world consequences.

### **Addiction and the "Scroll-Zombie" Syndrome:**

The addictive nature of social media platforms and the constant dopamine rush from likes and comments can lead to excessive screen time and neglecting real-life responsibilities, relationships, and hobbies. This "Scroll-Zombie" syndrome can hinder personal growth and social development.

### **Loss of Creativity and "Thinking Out of the Box":**

The curated content and algorithms can limit exposure to diverse perspectives and stifle originality. Teens relying solely on online trends and challenges may lose their ability to think critically and creatively, hindering their problem-solving skills and hindering their ability to contribute meaningfully to the offline world.

### **Navigating the Maze:**

Just like the "COVID Batch" had to adapt and carve their paths, today's "Scroll-Gen" needs to navigate the social media maze with critical awareness and a healthy dose of skepticism. Cultivating digital literacy, prioritizing mental health, and striking a balance between online and offline experiences are crucial steps toward harnessing the positive potential of social media while minimizing its pitfalls. Parents, educators, and society as a whole have a role to play in providing guidance and support, fostering responsible online behavior, and ensuring that the "Scroll-Gen" can not only survive but thrive in the digital age.

**Remember, social media is a tool, not a destination. By using it mindfully and consciously, today's teenagers can turn the "Scroll-Gen" label into a badge of resilience, adaptability, and digital savvy, ready to shape their futures in a world increasingly defined by the online landscape.**

### **Literature review:**

The effects of social media on teenagers' health have been the focus of many research papers. We have selected some recent research papers to study their methodologies and findings.

According to a study by the American Psychological Association, social media brings both benefits and risks to teens. The study found that while social media can provide benefits such as connection and communication, it also poses risks such as exposure to harmful content and increased feelings of anxiety and depression.

Another researcher, Karima Lajnef, conducted an empirical study on the effect of social media influencers on teenagers' behavior. The study revealed that influencers' distinctive features are interconnected and confirmed to influence teenagers' behavior.

In addition to the above studies, a research paper published in *Current Psychology* examined the potential beneficial and harmful effects of social media use on adolescents' social, educational, psychological, and neurological development.

Furthermore, a study published in *Atlantis Press* examined the reason behind teenagers' anxiety and depression and found that spending time on social media limited their time to engage in face-to-face interactions.

In addition to the above, other research papers were also studied which helped us in our survey. The list of the research papers is given in the references.

### Objectives:

- To find out the effects of social media on today's teenager's health.
- To find the reasons for addiction to social media.
- To look after the effects of social media on teenager's daily life.
- To find out how our future generation will not be affected by the same kind of adversity.

### Methodology:

For our research, we have used a survey-based methodology. We have prepared a set of questions in a Google form and have circulated it among various college and high school chat groups. The survey questions are based on all the social effects of social media affecting their daily life flow, how it creates a social status among them, and what are experience on today's social media platforms.

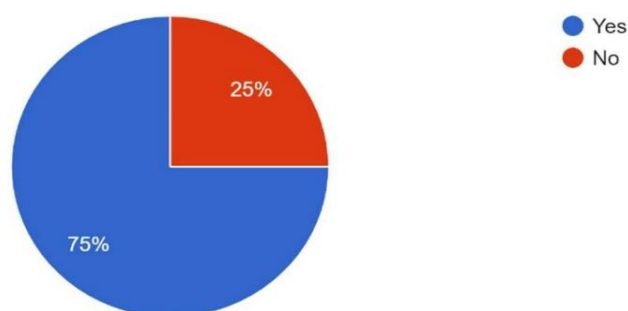
### Sampling:

A sample of 100 students from various colleges and high schools has filled out the Google form.

### Data Analysis:

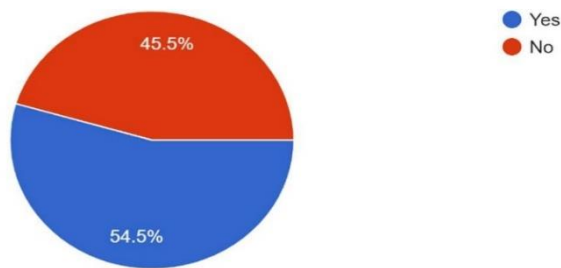
The study area of this research includes teenagers from colleges and high schools.

Have you noticed changes in your sleep patterns due to social media use?



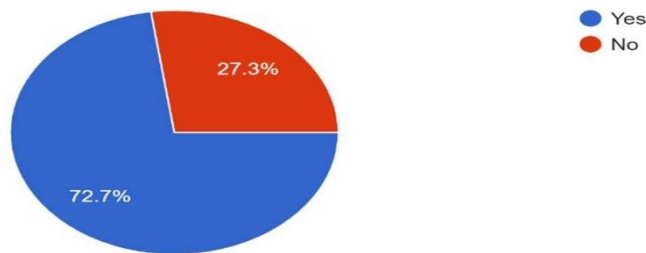
*According to the above statistics, 75% of teenagers have experienced a change in their sleep patterns.*

Do you feel increased stress or anxiety related to your social media activity?



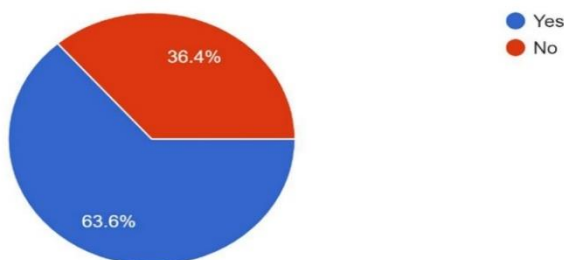
According to the above statistics, 54.5% of teenagers feel anxiety due to the usage of social media.

Have you ever experienced cyberbullying on social media platforms?



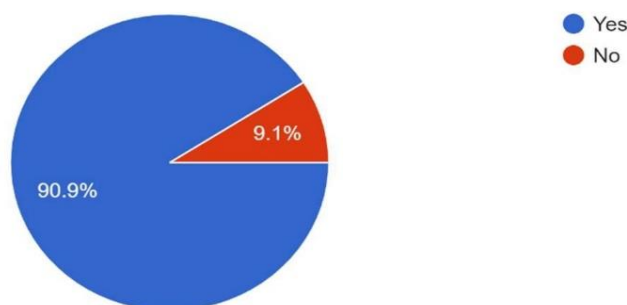
According to the above statistics, 72.7% of teenagers experience cyberbullying on social media.

Have you ever felt pressured to conform to certain standards based on social media content?



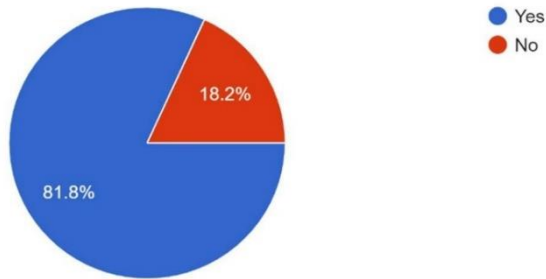
According to the above statistics, 63.6% of teenagers experience the pressure of maintaining standards for media content.

Do you believe that social media contributes to a negative body image for teenagers?



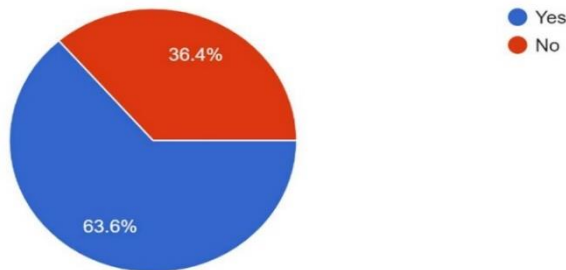
According to the above statistics, 90.9% of teenagers feel that social media contributes to negative body image.

Have you witnessed or experienced a decline in face-to-face social interactions due to social media?



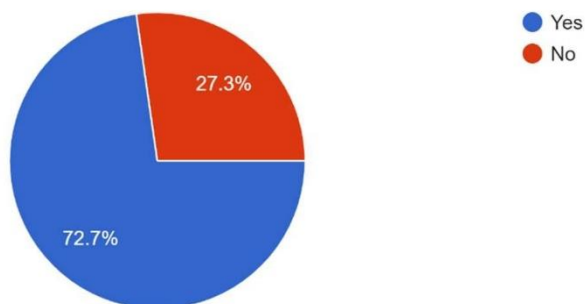
*According to the above statistics, 81.8 % of people have lost face-to-face social interaction to some extent due to social media.*

Have you ever skipped meals or neglected physical activities because of social media engagement?



*About 63.6 % of people skipped their meals and avoided physical activities due to social media.*

Have you ever been concerned about the privacy of your personal information on social media?

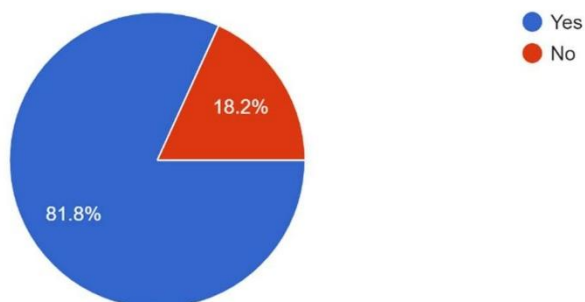


*72.7 % of people feel concerned for their privacy of personal info as nowadays there are data breaches everywhere where one's data is not safe even in big organizations.*

### **Results:**

The questionnaires prepared for the survey are meticulously designed to delve into the impact of social media on both physical and mental health. With the proliferation of social media usage, there has been a significant surge in digital crime. Many fraudulent activities are being perpetrated through these platforms, posing a serious threat to unsuspecting users.

Do you think the social media effects the mental as well as physical health of todays teenagers?



About 81.8% of teenagers think social media is affecting their physical as well as their mental health.

Today's teenagers, in particular, are increasingly engrossed in social media, often striving to emulate the standards set by their peers. This trend has led to a concerning phenomenon where teenagers are losing sight of their unique identities in the pursuit of online validation.

The effects of social media are not confined to the psychological realm but extend to physical health as well. The sedentary lifestyle promoted by excessive screen time has led to a decrease in physical activity among teenagers, contributing to various health issues. Moreover, the mental health of teenagers is also at risk due to the pervasive 'Fear of Missing Out' (FOMO), which can lead to anxiety and feelings of inadequacy.

### Conclusion:

In conclusion, the advent of social media has undeniably revolutionized the way we communicate and access information. It has broken down geographical barriers, enabling individuals to connect with others across the globe, fostering a sense of community and shared understanding. The wealth of information and resources available on these platforms has democratized learning, providing users with the opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge at no cost.

However, the pervasive use of social media, particularly among teenagers, has raised serious concerns. The sedentary lifestyle promoted by excessive screen time has led to a decrease in physical activity, contributing to various health issues. The mental health of teenagers is also at risk due to the pervasive 'Fear of Missing Out' (FOMO), which can lead to anxiety and feelings of inadequacy.

Moreover, the rise in digital crime associated with social media usage poses a significant threat to unsuspecting users. It's therefore crucial to promote awareness about digital crimes and encourage responsible online behavior among teenagers.

While social media can be a valuable tool for learning and connection, it's essential to navigate these platforms mindfully to safeguard one's physical and mental health. As we continue to embrace the digital age, fostering a balanced and responsible approach to social media usage is of paramount importance. This will ensure that we harness the benefits of these platforms while mitigating their potential risks.

### References:

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