



## Effect Of Social Media Use on Mental, Physical And Social Status Among College Students

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### ARTICLE INFO

### ABSTRACT

Social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, etc have woven themselves into the fabric of college life. From connecting with their classmates to sharing class notes, social media serves as an important virtual media among students. It provides a platform to express themselves and stay updated on the current updates globally.

Social media affects the mental health of students as using them excessively can lead to stress and depression. As social media triggers students to compare themselves with their peers can result in having low self-esteem and depression.

**Key-Words:** - SMUS, SMUQ, MHI, PUC.

### Introduction: -

Mental health is not simply the absence of diagnosable mental health problems. It is characterized by a person's ability to fulfill a number of key functions and activities like, the ability to learn, the ability to feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions, the ability to form and maintain good relationships with others, the ability to cope with and manage change and uncertainty.

**Factors Affecting Mental Health:** Similar to other aspects of health, mental health is influenced by a range of factors. Mental health problems are broadly recognized as the interaction effect of biological with psychosocial factors (Huang et al., 2009). The biological factors include the abnormal genes or brain chemistry, life experiences such as trauma or abuse and family history of mental health problems. These factors can affect the mental health of any individual at any stage of life. Hence, knowledge of the prevalence of mental health problems at the earliest can be helpful in adopting suitable interventions to address and resolve any mental health problems effectively.

The positive effect of social support on psychological health has emphasized the role of perceived support with a specific source, but there is still limited research about how social support from multiple sources such as parents, peers, and community, differentially predict adolescents' mental health outcomes. Such an understanding is crucial to make an informed decision regarding the focus on prevention and intervention efforts by the practitioners.

There has been various overview and opinions, which recognized four major advantages of social media applications in higher education. These include enhancing relationships with peer group and teachers, improving learning motivation, offering personalized course material, and developing collaborative abilities. This depicts the positive effect of social media on students' academic achievement.

A well-integrated state of mind in adolescents is the key to success in academics as well as various other aspects of their life. In this regard, there is a need for identification of the psychosocial assets of a mind to foster it further and hence build a strong mind among adolescents. In addition, such efforts will contribute to the fine-tuning of young minds that are inclined towards embracing the rapidly changing technology for everything in their life-particularly that of the college students of Agra District' personal, social and academic life.

Individuals with self-acceptance, self-regulation and autonomy possess integrated personality. Every society demands certain qualities such as social acceptance, societal concerns and social capital among its members along with qualities of environmental mastery and feeling of well-being. All such positive assets in an individual prepare oneself to face the realities of life especially in this digital era where it is inevitable for all to keep switching between real life and virtual life.

**Effect of social media on Mental Health:** In order to understand how the usage of social media affects students, we must first understand why it is so popular among them. Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012) reviewed the literature and proposed that people use them for two basic reasons, a need of belongingness and need for self-presentation. In another research it is found that generally, people seem to be using Facebook to maintain existing social connections and get others information. (Ross et al., 2009) Acceptance by and contact with peers is an important element of adolescent life.

#### **Need for and importance of the study: -**

Children in their mid-adolescent period undergo a lot of stress due to their changing role in the society. This period is the crucial years that form strong foundation to various aspects of an individual's future. In this regard, it is essential to provide proper guidance based on objective observations of their lifestyle in the era of social media usage. This is possible only when there is equal effort put by parents, college authorities and along with appropriate community involvement.

#### **Review of Literature: -**

**Vate-U-Lan (2021)** reports on the findings of a study titled, "Psychological impact of e-learning on social network sites: online students' attitudes and their satisfaction with life". It was based on an online survey of 607 valid responses with e-learning experiences gathered from 896 online respondents. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation ( $\rho$ ) analysis found that students who had experience of e-learning on social network sites also had a positive score on the Satisfaction with Life Scale. The attitudes towards e-learning were also positive. The research data shows a significant positive association between attitudes towards e-learning and satisfaction with life by females and males.

**Sinha and Jaiswal (2020)** investigated the social relationship variables and SNS use among 150 undergraduate medical students and 150 postgraduate resident doctors randomly chosen from a medical college in Mumbai. Regular SNS users were included and those suffering from any psychiatric or chronic medical condition were excluded from the study. Of all the invited individuals, 104 undergraduates (56 females and 48 males) and 103 postgraduates (50 females and 53 males) consented for study. The findings revealed that Facebook was the most commonly and regularly used SNS among the study sample. The daily average time spent by participants on SNS was 40 minutes. The mean number of SNS friends of undergraduates was 150 and that of postgraduates was 143.

Overall, a detailed review of related literature depicts that the current research trend is to explore the various ways of social media usage and mostly their detrimental effects on the users. In addition, the research findings are not consistent. That is, there are mixed effects of social media use on the psychological constructs studied so far. Even its effects on the student users' academic achievement have shown varying results. All these suggest the need of further research to arrive at the causes and to find out suitable solutions for the ill effects of social media usage.

Thus, the inclination towards the study of critical issues in Social Media Usage by Adolescents, observed in the emerging research trend enabled the researcher to plan the present study with a focus on the objective to study the effect of social media usage on the mental health dimensions that are based on positive principles of psychology.

#### **Objectives of the Study: -**

The following research objectives are formulated to study the effect of social media usage on mental health and academic achievement of college students in Agra District.

1. To develop Social Media Usage Scale for knowing the social media usage among college students in Agra District.
2. To develop Mental Health Inventory for identifying mental health status among college students in Agra District.
3. To construct Social Media Usage Questionnaire for knowing the social media usage status of college students and time spent on social media usage by them.
4. To examine the association between mental health of college students with regard to their gender, type of management, stream, residential type, mother's occupation, family size, social media usage status, time spent on social media usage and social media usage.
5. To study the association between academic achievement of college students with regard to their gender,

type of management, stream, residential type, mother's occupation, family size, social media usage status, time spent on social media usage and social media usage.

### **Research Methodology: -**

#### **VARIABLES OF THE STUDY**

In the present study, the researcher has selected the following variables-

#### **A. Dependent Variable:**

- i) Mental Health
- ii) Academic Achievement

#### **B. Independent Variable:**

Social Media Usage

#### **C. Background Variables:**

- i) Sex
- ii) Stream
- iii) Type of Management
- iv) Residential Type
- v) Mothers' Employment Status
- vi) Family Size

### **SAMPLING DESIGN: -**

The College students from Arts, Science and Commerce streams of government, aided and private unaided colleges form the population of this study. "Two Stage Stratified Proportionate Random Sampling" technique is used for drawing the sample. The first level of the study is to stratify the sample as government, private aided and private unaided colleges. The second level of stratification is done in to arts, science and commerce streams of PU College. Then a sample of 1052 students is been selected randomly from Agra District.

### **RESEARCH TOOLS USED**

The researcher has employed the following tools for the study:

- Student Background Information
- Social Media Usage Questionnaire (SMUQ) by Devaki. T. C. & UmmeKulsum, 2017
- Social Media Usage Scale (SMUS) by Devaki. T. C. & Umme Kulsum, 2017
- Mental Health Inventory (MHI) by Devaki. T. C. & Umme Kulsum, 2017
- Total marks obtained in the achievement test of optional subjects conducted in the college are taken as academic achievement scores

#### **Social Media Usage Questionnaire (SMUQ)**

Social Media Usage Questionnaire (SMUQ) that is designed for this study, sought responses from only the participants using any form of social media at the time of responding to the researcher.

The questionnaire comprises of those questions intended to get the information about the membership held on various forms of social media, purpose of usage, accessibility to social media use, frequency of usage in terms of the time spent on social media usage and the duration of membership held by the research participants. So special cases where the students were earlier users and current non-users were instructed not to fill this questionnaire. Expert opinions were also gathered on this and no changes were suggested. Based on experts' opinions, two items were deleted, and six items were retained.

#### **Social Media Usage Scale (SMUS)**

Perception is the awareness of something through one's senses. It influences the understanding and interpretation of anything happening around the individual. It defines the character, attitude, behavior of a person and in turn initiates an individual to find purpose towards a particular action. Hence, the college students perception on social media usage, irrespective of their usage status becomes a crucial factor in determining the ways they use social media and in turn the effect of social media usage. Hence, here after in this study, data pertaining to this scale is referred to as „social media usage“.

**Table-1: „t“ Values of the Statements of the perceived effects of SMU.**

Sl. No. of the statements in the tried-out form	„t“ values	Significant level
1	6.12	p< 0.0005
2	5.12	p< 0.0005
3	4.79	p< 0.0005
4	5.07	p< 0.0005
5	9.12	p< 0.0005
6	7.15	p< 0.0005
7	5.12	p< 0.0005
8	6.47	p< 0.0005
9	4.02	p< 0.0005
10	1.14	NS
11	6.12	p< 0.0005
12	9.12	p< 0.0005
13	4.52	p< 0.0005
14	6.96	p< 0.0005
15	5.12	p< 0.0005
16	8.14	p< 0.0005
17	6.23	p< 0.0005
18	4.56	p< 0.0005
19	1.45	NS
20	6.12	p< 0.0005
21	8.23	p< 0.0005
22	7.19	p< 0.0005
23	4.75	p< 0.0005
24	7.49	p< 0.0005
25	5.52	p< 0.0005
26	5.02	p< 0.0005

NS= Not significant

Note: Table Values of „t“ (one-tailed)

df	0.025	0.01	0.005	0.001	0.0005
	1.968	2.339	2.592	3.118	3.323

**Content Validity:** The scale has face validity as all the items are closely related to the covered areas. The items were judged by the experts, so it is beyond doubt possess content validity.

**Item Validity:** To establish the item validity the obtained data is been subjected to the Goodness of Fit Test, that is also called the one sample test of chi square (Cohen Louis, 1976). It is done by testing the null hypothesis that the responses obtained aren't by choice. Table-2 furnishes the Goodness of Fit value for each of the 24 items in selected in the social media usage scale. The table shows that all 24 items are retained because the stated null hypotheses for these statements are rejected at 0.01 level and the alternate hypothesis is accepted (table value-11.34 at 0.01; 7.815 at 0.05).

**Table-2: Goodness of Fit Value of Items of Social Media Usage Scale.**

Item No.	Goodness of Fit Value	Remark on H <sub>0</sub>	Item No.	Goodness of Fit Value	Remark on H <sub>0</sub>
IR- 1	50.143	Rejected	H-13	37.357	Rejected
A-2	73.224	Rejected	SD-14	23.433	Rejected
IR-3	31.639	Rejected	SD-15	91.709	Rejected
A-4	29.523	Rejected	A-16	15.034	Rejected
H-5	94.735	Rejected	IR-17	62.891	Rejected
SD-6	22.198	Rejected	IA-18	17.944	Rejected
A-7	48.147	Rejected	IA-19	83.444	Rejected
A-8	63.668	Rejected	H-20	24.745	Rejected
SD-9	41.097	Rejected	IR-21	54.381	Rejected
A-10	90.231	Rejected	IA-22	97.927	Rejected
IA-11	74.247	Rejected	H-23	35.814	Rejected
A-12	96.818	Rejected	IR-24	77.405	Rejected

**Construct Validity:** The Item-Dimension total correlation was computed for each item to establish the construct validity of this inventory. Table-3 furnishes the Item- Dimension total correlation for each of the 24 items selected after computing goodness of fit test on the 24 items of the SMU-Scale. The table shows that all



Skewness						
Kurtosis	0.144	0.936	1.021	0.317	-0.314	0.649
Standard Error of Kurtosis	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.151
Range	15	21	12	12	12	57
Minimum	5	7	4	4	4	39
Maximum	20	28	16	16	16	96
Sum	12769	20038	12637	11912	9232	66588
Number	1052	1052	1052	1052	1052	1052

### Educational implications:-

Based on the research findings on mental health and academic achievement of college students with respect to the influence of independent variable and background variables the following recommendations are given.

1. Now that the society is using social media extensively for various purposes, there is no point in avoiding or keeping students away from social media usage forcefully as it is a myth. This is because it is proved in several other researches as indicated in the discussion of findings along with the findings of this study, that the students are benefitted more by using social media wisely than the harmful effects of it.
2. Parents, teachers and elders in the society should encourage wise and mindful usage of social media by the students. This can be achieved with a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset.
3. When the academic activities are discussed extensively on social media the students' attention can be drawn towards academics and avoid distractions as they start enjoying academic related activities. In this context, the negative mindset towards social media usage has to be changed.
4. Parents should be vigilant regarding their ward's activities and behavior that will be useful in early detection of problems related to students' mental health and academic achievement.
5. Parents should ensure that they themselves become role models for their children by using social media wisely. This includes their social media usage timings balanced with other day-to-day activities along with providing quality time for their children to speak to them face to face regarding their life.
6. If children are found using social media extensively that is disturbing their daily routine then, it is essential to inculcate in them some healthy practices that can divert their attention gradually from their mobile phones rather than imposing rules upon them.
7. Parents of adolescents should display democratic parenting style that includes taking into account of their wards' opinions, likes, dislikes and put forward suggestions in a friendly way.
8. Peers play a significant role in the lives of adolescents and therefore parents and teachers should carefully watch the activities of adolescent groups to guide them appropriately.
9. Students need to be educated to have a strong purpose that is appropriate for them to productively spent time while using social media.
10. Adolescents must also be enlightened about appropriate ways of social media usage along with their consequences to reap its benefits.
11. Social media usage by adolescents can be directed towards exploring career opportunities to choose the one that match with their interest and aptitude and help them to soar towards the feeling of fulfillment early in their life.
12. Self regulation needs to be imbibed among the digital natives as it is not practical to keep observing their online activities and offline behavior always.
13. It is important to notice the subtle symptoms and extend support such as, timely intervention from trained professionals to avoid serious consequences such as suicidal attempts or criminal activities. The present MHI helps to identify such cases if administered when in need like- few weeks before the exams, during preparations for competitive exams or when some undesired changes are noticed in their daily activities for more than two weeks or so.
14. It is necessary to have counselors in every school, college, and university to cater to the mental health needs of students on regular intervals. This will also help to identify those affected at the earliest and avoid further damage to our young minds.
15. It is important to consider mental health problem as any other normal problem that one faces in life than treating it as a taboo.
16. Instances of people who have overcome mental health problems in their life may boost the mental health and motivate an individual to overcome their problems.
17. Educate to empower, empowerment that enables a person to handle his/her life with peace of mind.
18. Educate to think positively, have faith in one's own ability, if not at least on time, as time heals everything.
19. Problem solving ability is built by inculcating hopes that every problem has a solution if not from within, from others at least. So, when a person goes in search of a solution to the problem, he/she is facing will

- find creative solution. Hence, it is important to foster creative thinking ability among youngsters.
20. Self-realization helps a student to accept the weakness and build upon his/her strength, rather than blindly try to follow others and finally land up in trouble. This also enhances one's self esteem.
  21. As, it is evident that social media usage has both advantages and limitations, there should be cyber awareness programs that ensure appropriate use of social media and internet by students so that these are used with much care and caution.
  22. It is essential to extend support in schools, colleges, universities, families and neighborhoods in order to foster hope.
  23. Social media usage must be scheduled appropriately in order to ensure its utility and productivity to the extent it must be as per the need of an individual.
  24. By prioritizing the necessities, students can use social media in the best possible way. Here, prioritizing refers to their personal needs (recreation, relaxation, etc.), academic requirements (projects, assignments, sharing academic accomplishments, etc.), social responsibility (convey right message to their youngsters and being sensitive towards others feelings, etc.).
  25. Academic benefits such as peer review, group learning, publication of articles, compositions and other genres in the blogs posting comments and feedbacks in blogs, youtube, facebook, whatsapp, twitter etc., would definitely enrich students' intellectual abilities.
  26. Online bullying which is a threat of social media usage can be avoided by timely observations and guidance from elders.
  27. As there is a wide scope for connectivity, sharing, teamwork, group discussion, through social media it can lead to strong bondage among peers and bridge the gap between the academic institutions across the globe. However, appropriate knowledge about the person in contact, subjects under discussion and consequences of social media usage should be imparted in every schools and colleges.
  28. Utilization of social media in the process of teaching-learning exemplifies through better usage of social media. Thus, teacher can be the induction to use social media for educational purpose.
  29. There are many platforms for recreation that lead an individual towards mental stability for instance: students coming out of stress by watching inspirational videos, motivating quotes that boost up their confidence and in turn mental health.
  30. Balancing the practical life and the online life on social media that is far to reality or only one facet of life, demands more efforts on the part of every individual. This need has to be addressed with appropriate strategies in order to lead a peaceful life.
  31. As college students at this stage are more inclined towards peer group, it is the college lecturers who can notice many early signs of changes in their behavior, attitude and hence their mental health condition.
  32. The mental health inventory (MHI) developed and validated by the authors can be used to assess the mental health status of college students and screen them for providing further assistance in enhancing their mental health as early as possible as its items are found consistent and reasonably dependable for the purpose for which it is used.

#### **Implications for College Teachers:**

1. Possess knowledge of adolescent psychology.
2. Never compare one with other, instead encourage competing with oneself.
3. Keep in contact with the parents to cater to both academic and psychological needs of the student both online and offline.
4. Create class groups on appropriate SM platform for discussing academic needs.
5. Guide students to use SM for exploring their interests that contribute in shaping their future.
6. Use various SM platforms to update themselves and be par with the other educators using technology effectively in and out of their classes.
7. Adopt flip C-R model by integrating SM in the instructional process to encourage them in academics.
8. Collaborate with others on SM for professional development.
9. Follow lecture videos to adopt suitable teaching ideas or new forms of instructional strategies that have benefitted other teachers.
10. Keep away from apprehensions on students' SMU, as they are digital natives and yet need guidance to use them appropriately.
11. Talk about various ways of using SM for their benefits along with the precautions to be taken for their online safety.
12. Teach students about Internet and Social Media Etiquettes by being a role model.
13. Be available to listen to students' problems so that they need not turn towards SM for help.
14. Talk about self-regulating on various media use.

#### **Implications for College Head:**

- \* Set up rules to restrict mobile use in college hours within the campus.
- \* Provide facilities to place their mobile phones in the college for students to keep them away during their

classes.

- \* Use SM for communication with college staff, teachers, students and parents.
- \* Organize workshops, seminars and conferences on parenting netizens.
- \* Organize national, international webinars to encourage students towards thoughtful usage of social media for academic and career related activities.
- \* Tap community resources through discussion forums on social media.
- \* Employ counselors in campus to cater to the students' psychological needs.

#### **Implications for Parents:**

- \* Provide a congenial learning environment at home to ensure good MH & scope for better academic achievement.
- \* Never impose your interest on your ward. Let them pursue their interest to flourish.
- \* As learning happens through observation also, parents need to display appropriate behavior both online and offline.
- \* Use SM at home only in inevitable circumstances, to portray that SM is just a tool to be used when needed and it should not control us.
- \* Try to be a part of their peer group without giving them the feeling of encroachment into their personal space.
- \* Encourage SMU for their academic needs by being a part of their academics also.
- \* Use SM to have contact with their teachers and friends to keep updated on college activities.
- \* Give equal importance to print media.
- \* Caution children about online predators and cyber-crimes.
- \* Encourage meeting people face to face more than on SM unless necessary.
- \* Adopt democratic parenting style during their adolescent period.
- \* Collaborate with other parents to know the friends circle well.
- \* Discuss about the benefits of mindful SMU over SMU for time pass or for relaxation.
- \* Organize family outing at regular intervals, cultivate few hobbies to divert from SM.

#### **Implications for Curriculum Makers, Policy Makers, Text Book Writers:**

- \* Formulate Framework and Guidelines for safe use of SM by parents, teachers, colleges, and students.
- \* Promote e-learning, MOOCs.
- \* Improve infrastructure in government colleges.
- \* Provide equal and quality digital access across the state.
- \* Involve advanced technology in the curriculum for effective teaching- learning outcome.
- \* Consider the needs and interests of all sections.
- \* Update curriculum regularly to suit the needs of the digital society and unseen future job perspectives.
- \* Adopt the technological assistance for effective curriculum transaction.
- \* Focus on Professional development, Personality development and Skill development of teachers using technology.
- \* Provide scope during training teachers to include technology in their daily C-R settings.
- \* Revise curriculum for developing ICT skills among teachers and students.
- \* Encourage technology use in classroom administration such as for maintaining attendance record, assessment, group discussion to stimulate senses for effective learning.
- \* Orient teachers to develop positive attitude towards technology use in the education system.
- \* Recognize and utilize the scope of social media to tap the community resources such as health care professionals, NGO's, Alumni, Cyber police and so on.

#### **Suggestions for further research: -**

- \* A longitudinal mixed method would be ideal for such studies. Due to the constraints of time and of the resources it could not be done.
- \* Collecting data through personal interviews of the sample or observing them would render some more details about the social media usage by students.
- \* A similar study can be extended to a larger group comprising adolescents aged 15 to 19 years of age group representing both rural and urban population.
- \* Similar study comparing the social media usage levels between students of different cities can give clarity on the existing digital divide.
- \* An experimental study on the impact of particular social media integration in engaging pedagogy can be undertaken.



- \* An experimental study to reduce the negative impact of social media on students' health through some intervention can be undertaken.
- \* This study has many implications in terms of creating awareness among the youth so that they limit the usage of social networking sites and a lot of research in the Indian context is yet to be done.
- \* Findings of the study also support the need to expand current knowledge on positive mental health for well-being promotion in adolescence.
- \* The study recommended a further study on the relationship between social anxiety and Internet use to be explored indicating the prevalence of SAD and its association with stronger FB usage attitudes and patterns, to study the possibility of Internet-based screening and intervention strategies having wider reach and appeal in socially anxious individuals.

### **Delimitations of the study**

As is the case in any research, the present study was also conducted with certain delimitations that are listed below:

- \* The present study is confined to the students of PUC (Arts, Science and Commerce) streams
- \* The study is confined to know the effect of social media usage on mental health and academic achievement only
- \* The other variables like home environment, locality, and medium of instruction are not taken into consideration
- \* The sample was restricted to only PU students of Agra District

### **CONCLUSION: -**

Social media users are found to be relatively high among the university students, although there are high users even among the college student community. Heavy users are usually called the gadget freak users as they are found relying on these social media for almost anything and everything. Social media is seen as a part of their existence and are found to be belonging to the high socio-economic group mostly. The users who are popular on this virtual world are also found to be popular in real life situations. These virtual social connections also act as academic boosters at times due to the scope of accessibility of academic related informations. They also are found to contribute to mental well-being due to the characteristic of gaining instant gratification by the user. The research hopes that social media usage by the millennial is directed towards the betterment of their future by fostering their own mental health and in turn the nation. In addition, it provides various avenues to cater to the diverse educational as well as the psychosocial needs of the learners in this technological era by removing any speculations.

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