

Social Media Use and Mental Health

1. Introduction:

Researchers are interested in investigating the effects of social media use on mental health as it continues to play a significant role in people's lives worldwide. Given the prevalence of mental health issues globally, the connection between social media use and mental health has become a subject of substantial concern. This literature review critically analyses five studies that examine the relationship between social media and mental health. While some studies have found a connection between social media use and positive mental health outcomes, others have shown that excessive social media use can have detrimental effects on mental health. Therefore, to better understand the implications for both individuals and society as a whole, it is crucial to consider the possible advantages and disadvantages of social media use on mental health.

2. Literature Review:

The study conducted by Lin et al. (2016) showed an association between social media use and depression among young adults in the United States. The researchers discovered that individuals who spent more time on social media had a higher risk of depression. The authors postulate that the negative effects of social media on mental health could be caused by social comparison, exposure to unfavorable events and news, or the pressure to maintain an ideal online persona (Lin et al., 2016). Despite providing evidence of the potential negative effects of social media use on mental health, the study is limited by the fact that the data was collected at a single point in time and relied on self-reported measures.

Braghieri et al. (2020) present an analysis of social media use in the United States. The authors conducted an analysis of data gathered from over 4,000 adults by the Pew Research Centre, revealing that most Americans use one or more social media platforms. The report also highlighted the differences in social media use across different demographic groups. Although the report provides valuable insights into social media use in the United States, it is limited by its focus on one country. Contrastingly, the research by Bashir and Bhat (2020) examined both potential negative and positive effects of social media use on mental health, including anxiety, stress, depression, loneliness, and self-esteem. Unlike the report by Braghieri et al. (2022) this research was not limited by a focus on only one country. The authors found that the more time individuals spent on social media, the more likely they were to experience potential negative effects. The article also highlights the rise of Phantom Vibration Syndrome, which is the

frequent checking of messages even though nobody texted you. However, this article is limited by its reliance on existing studies, without any original research. In their study, Hampton et al. (2015) investigated the role of social media in establishing and sustaining interpersonal connections. They found that using social media can support people in maintaining contact with distant friends and relatives. However, excessive social media use was also linked to feelings of social isolation and loneliness (Hampton et al., 2015).

Fardouly et al. (2015) conducted a study aiming to investigate the correlation between social media usage among young women and their body image concerns, as well as their tendency to compare themselves to other social media users. They found that women who spent more time on social media tended to have more negative perceptions of their bodies and were more likely to engage in comparisons with others. They concluded that social media provides a platform for constant self-comparison, leading to unrealistic beauty standards. Lastly a study by Huang (2017) looked at how social media use affected the self-esteem of college students in the US. According to the author, only individuals who used social media to communicate with close friends and family members showed a favourable relationship between their usage of social media and self-esteem. Huang (2017) suggests that social media can provide users a sense of acceptance and validation, which may increase self-esteem. However, the study's reliance on self-reported measures of social media usage and self-esteem places certain limitations on its findings.

3. Conclusion:

Overall, the studies reviewed in this literature suggest that social media use may have negative effects on mental health, particularly among young individuals. The potential negative effects identified include depression, anxiety, stress, and loneliness. While some studies have also highlighted potential positive effects, such as increased self-esteem and social support, further research is needed to better understand the complex relationship between social media use and mental health. Interventions aimed at reducing harmful social media use could potentially be beneficial for mental health.

4. Reference list

- Bashir, H., & Bhat, S. A. (2017). Effects of social media on mental health: A review. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 4(3), 125-131.
- Braghieri, L., Levy, R. E., & Makarin, A. (2022). Social media and mental health. *American Economic Review*, 112(11), 3660-3693.
- Fardouly, J., Diedrichs, P. C., Vartanian, L. R., & Halliwell, E. (2015). Social comparisons on social media: The impact of Facebook on young women's body image concerns and mood. *Body image*, 13, 38-45.
- Hampton, K., Rainie, L., Lu, W., Shin, I., & Purcell, K. (2015). Social media and the cost of caring.
- Huang, C. (2017). Time spent on social network sites and psychological well-being: A meta-analysis. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 20(6), 346-354.
- Lin, L. Y., Sidani, J. E., Shensa, A., Radovic, A., Miller, E., Colditz, J. B., ... & Primack, B. A. (2016). Association between social media use and depression among US young adults. *Depression and anxiety*, 33(4), 323-331.