

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS TRAP

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Social media has become an integral part of modern life, driven by increasing internet access and widespread use of digital devices. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp support communication, learning, and social engagement. In India, over 462 million people used social media in January 2024, indicating its broad societal impact. While it offers educational, professional, and social benefits, excessive use raises concerns such as addiction, distraction, and mental health issues. **Research Methodology:** This paper is based on a narrative review of existing literature, including peer-reviewed articles, reports, and statistics from 2007 to 2024. Sources were selected to explore both the positive and negative impacts of social media, particularly among students and professionals. **Discussion:** Studies reveal that excessive social media use may lead to reduced academic performance, lower workplace productivity, and increased psychological distress. Social media addiction mimics behavioral dependencies, reinforcing compulsive behaviors through constant feedback and reward mechanisms. **Conclusion:** While social media offers many advantages, its overuse can be harmful. Promoting digital awareness, setting healthy boundaries, and encouraging responsible use are essential. With mindful engagement, the benefits of social media can be harnessed while mitigating its adverse effects.

Keywords: Social Media, Addiction, Psychological, Mental Health.

ISSN: 2582-6891

INTRODUCTION

Social media refers to an online platform designed to facilitate the creation of social networks and relationships among individuals who share similar backgrounds, interests, activities, and connections. (Boyd & Ellison, 2007)

The increase in the number of accessible devices, including laptops, smartphones, and tablets, is driving the spread of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, WhatsApp, and so on). People have many options to communicate electronically thanks to these digital devices, regardless of time and location constraints (Junco, 2012; Nadkarni & Hoffman, 2012; Powell, 2009). In general, social media facilitates users to interact with people in their social network and exchange photos and videos. Thus, social media content is mostly based on relationships (Buettner, 2016; Haddud, Dugger, & Gill, 2016), user-generated (Soliman, 2012), and focused on professional and social communities (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

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How to cite: Kumar, S., Pandey, R. (2024). Social media and its trap. *Journal of Psychosocial Well-being*. 5(2):62-66.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55242/JPSW.2024.5208>

Received: 11.08.2024 **Revised:** 07.09.2024

Accepted: 14.10.2024 **Published:** 14.11.2024

Globally, people of all ages utilize social media to connect with others and take advantage of the opportunities it provides (Schulze, Schöler, & Skiera, 2015).

Due to increasing internet connection, social media usage among Indians has increased dramatically; in January 2024, 462 million users were reported, accounting for 32.2% of the Indian population (India Social Media Statistics, 2024). 5.52 billion

People used the internet globally as of October 2024, accounting for 67.5% of the world's population. 5.22 billion People, or 63.8% of the world's population, were active social media users, according to Petrosyan (2024).

While Social Media reaches every section of society increasing day by day, and its wide influence on our day-to-day life can't be denied. Social media as a medium nowadays is utilized by Business firms/organizations to market and promote their products, Social Media is also used by political parties to influence the masses with their opinions, Social Media applications such as Telegram, WhatsApp, and YouTube channels in education sector used by Teachers and Academicians for imparting knowledge, posting class notes and test/practice series materials which benefits also students living in far /flung area.

With passing of each day Social media is going through new advancement and exploring different means to benefit more and more needy. There are benefits to social media, but there are also drawbacks, such as privacy threats, the dissemination of misleading information, cyber bullying, social isolation, and negative effects on mental health.

SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

According to Zhou N. (2018), Internet addiction may be defined as prolonged, habitual Internet use, a strong psychological dependence, the desire to keep using the Internet, challenges with self-release behavior, and a chronic or sporadic mental addiction that is accompanied by tension, tolerance, and withdrawal restraint to extend Internet use. Hilliard et al. (2019), social networking sites like Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat create the same neural circuitry that encourages people to use more of the substances, just like gambling and recreational drugs do. Abrams (2021), the software exploits users' natural need for social connection and keeps them scrolling.

Using social media might have detrimental effects at work as well. For instance, academics have shown that excessive usage of social media at work may impede employee engagement and productivity (Clark & Roberts, 2010) and may make it harder to distinguish between personal and professional areas (Dutta, 2010). Additionally, researchers have claimed that spending more time on social media

can have negative effects on employees' physical and mental health in addition to wasting time, causing information overload, role conflict, privacy risks, and poor performance (D'Abate & Eddy 2007; Griffiths, Kuss, & Demetrovics, 2014; Moqbel, Nevo, & Kock, 2013; Nucleus 2009; O'Murchu, Breslin, & Decker, 2004; Rooksby, Kahn, Keen, & Sommerville, 2009; Ryan, Chester, Reece & Xenos, 2014; Shepherd, 2011).

Recent years have seen a negative impact on students' psycho-social behavioral features, mental health, interpersonal relationships, physical health, and academic achievement due to the careless and excessive usage of mobile phones (Achangwa et al., 2022).

Overuse of social media can have detrimental effects on education, such as decreased capacity for learning and research, distraction, decreased face-to-face interaction, time wastage, low academic performance, and low motivation. (Chandrasena, 2022)

CAUSES OF ADDICTION

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

The psychological factors that contribute to addiction to have been identified in certain studies. According to Bickham (2021), psychopathology including impulsivity, aggressive behavior, and neuroticism can lead to internet addiction. It has been discovered that internet addiction is influenced by both the frequency of short video usage and specific personality qualities, such as introversion and neuroticism (Zhang X. et al., 2019). This is in line with earlier studies by Kuss & Griffiths (2014), who found that neuroticism is a significant social and psychological component in the emergence of internet addiction. Furthermore, recent research on college students has brought attention to the part personality traits play in short video addiction, with a higher risk of short video addiction being linked to high levels of neuroticism and low levels of conscientiousness and agreeableness (Li X., et al., 2021).

BIOLOGICAL FACTORS

A number of research suggests that addictive behaviors may have a hereditary component (Eisen et al., 1998; Grant 2006). According to the idea,

people with this propensity either have too few dopamine receptors or too little serotonin/dopamine (Beard, 2005). Consequently, they are unable to enjoy things that most individuals would find fulfilling at normal levels. These people are more inclined to seek out more than normal participation in actions that cause dopamine levels to rise in order to boost their pleasure, which essentially gives them more reward but also puts them at risk for addiction.

MENTAL HEALTH FACTORS

Internet addiction Disorder has been found to co-occur with a number of mental diseases by numerous studies and physicians. The question of whether the addiction or the co-occurring disease occurred initially is up for debate (Kratzer, 2007; Dong, 2011). This concern could at least be clarified by the Dong et al. (2011) study, which found that IAD was associated with greater scores for depression, anxiety, anger, interpersonal sensitivity, and psychoticism. However, given the study's limitations, more research is required.

STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION ISSUE

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Individual strategies that improve self-awareness and self-control must be put into place in order to combat the problem of internet addiction among people. The encouragement of mindfulness and digital detox techniques is one such strategy. Particularly advantageous is the mental state of mindfulness, which is attained by concentrating one's attention on the present moment (Kabat – Zinn, 2003). Students can become more conscious of their digital habits by practicing techniques like mindfulness breathing and meditation, which will help them identify and control the need to obsessively watch short videos. Conversely, digital detox is removing oneself from electronic devices on a regular basis in order to lessen dependence and regain equilibrium (Roberts & David, 2020).

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Educational institutions and workplaces must implement comprehensive methods that address addiction at a systemic level in order to effectively combat it among people. The improvement of counseling services designed especially for digital addiction is one important strategy. Persons who are addicted to short videos should receive specific

support from universities and working groups, such as support groups and individual counseling sessions (Young, 2007). These services can help people understand the root causes of their addiction and form better digital habits by offering them individualized counseling and coping mechanisms. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) strategies, which have been demonstrated to be successful in treating addictive behaviors, can also be incorporated into counseling services (Beard, 2005). Campaigns to raise awareness of the risks of addiction and to encourage a balanced lifestyle are essential. Comprehensive awareness programs that emphasize the dangers of excessive time on digital world and the advantages of moderate, thoughtful digital consumption can be started by universities. (Livingstone & Smith, 2014).

SOCIETAL LEVEL

Advocacy and public awareness are essential elements of tactics at the societal level. This issue can be brought to the public's attention by starting nationwide campaigns to increase awareness of digital addiction and its effects on peoples. (Chassiakos et al., 2016). Governmental bodies, nonprofits, and academic institutions can lead these efforts, which use a variety of media platforms to reach a large audience. Social media campaigns, public service announcements, and community outreach initiatives can draw attention to the dangers of consuming too many internet materials and offer advice on how to maintain a good digital balance. Furthermore, the development of evidence-based policies and solutions depends on further study into digital addiction. Research into the origins, consequences, and efficacious therapies of digital addiction can be funded and supported by government and research funding agencies. (Montag & Wallia, 2016)

CONCLUSION

The widespread problem of social media addiction among people calls for a multifaceted strategy to lessen its detrimental effects. A blend of social, institutional, and individual tactics. Enhancing self-awareness, encouraging healthy hobbies, and offering instruction in digital literacy are crucial on an individual basis. Through the implementation of policies, awareness campaigns, and specialized counseling services, institutions play a critical role. These actions are further supported by societal initiatives such as public awareness campaigns, further support these measures.

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