

# The Impact of Social Media on Academic Performance and Well-being of High School Students in India

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**Abstract-** This study comprehensively examines the impact of social media on individuals' lives, addressing both its positive contributions and challenges. Through interviews with diverse participants, we explore social media's influence on daily routines, relationships, and mental well-being. Key objectives include understanding how social media fosters connections, the pressures young people face, its role in learning and personal growth, and efficacy as a platform for advocacy. We delve into social media pressures, including the pressure to portray a perfect life and the culture of comparison, which significantly impact mental health and self-esteem. Research indicates a strong correlation between excessive social media use and mental health issues. Additionally, individuals experience "impression management" and "FOMO," contributing to feelings of loneliness and anxiety. This study sheds light on the complexities of social media's influence, emphasizing the importance of fostering healthier online environments.

**Keywords:** Social media, mental health, pressures, comparison culture.

## INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of daily life for millions of people in India and abroad, especially among high-schoolers who are avid consumers of online content. In India, several social media platforms dominate the landscape, each catering to different demographics and preferences. Among the prevalent platforms, Facebook remains a staple, with its wide reach and diverse content offerings. About three quarters of Internet users report having a Facebook account, and 7 in 10 users report accessing the site daily, highlighting the habitual and ritualized nature of Facebook use (Duggan, 2015b). Earlier studies on Facebook showed that connecting and staying in touch with friends, family, and acquaintances; maintaining social ties; and keeping up with old friends, among other socially relevant motivations were the primary motives for using a platform like Facebook (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). However, younger generations are increasingly gravitating towards visually-driven platforms like Instagram and Snapchat. Instagram, in particular, has gained popularity among high-schoolers for its emphasis on visual storytelling through photos and short videos. Sheldon and Bryant (2016) found that Instagram users place less emphasis on connecting with other people and more on personal identity and self-promotion, in addition to other motives, including surveillance and knowledge gathering about others, documentation of life events and general coolness, which includes self-promotion and displaying creativity such as photography skills. Snapchat's ephemeral nature also appeals to this demographic, offering a sense of privacy and spontaneity in communication. With regard to Snapchat, Waddell (2016) indicated that Snapchat's recordability affordance feature provides gratification of maintaining privacy while the modality affordance feature offers users better opportunities for self-expression than text-based communication technologies. The photographs were also found to afford users capacity to establish and maintain connections with family members, friends, or significant others regardless of the geographical distance. Utz et al. (2015) found that participants were more inclined to send humorous snaps (photos or videos) as well as selfies (photos or videos of themselves). Another platform that has seen significant growth (particularly in India) is TikTok, which quickly became a sensation among teenagers for its short-form video content. TikTok was the most downloaded and implemented application in the globe in February 2020, with over 113 million downloads. The figure had increased by 96.5 percent as of February 2019. Furthermore, the COVID-19 outbreak had aided TikTok's globalization (Su et al., 2020). The facts support this conclusion, as TikTok is the first social media platform in history to experience considerable growth, with 315 million new installations across the App Store and Google Play in the first quarter of 2020. (Tower Sensor, 2020). The platform's emphasis on peer-to-peer interaction enables students to connect with like-minded individuals globally, fostering a sense of community and cultural exchange. Its user-friendly interface and algorithm-driven content discovery further differentiate it, making TikTok a preferred platform for entertainment, learning, and socializing among people especially high schoolers. TikTok transformed into a valuable educational resource, empowering high schoolers to enhance their knowledge and skills outside traditional classroom settings. Although TikTok faced challenges and even

a temporary ban in India, its influence on the social media landscape cannot be ignored, especially among high-schoolers who enjoyed creating and consuming entertaining content.

Apart from these mainstream platforms, regional social media networks like ShareChat and Helo are also gaining traction, providing content in local languages and catering to specific cultural nuances. These platforms offer a sense of belonging and connection to high-schoolers who prefer content in their native languages. In terms of content consumption, high-schoolers in India are drawn to a wide range of content, including entertainment, educational, and lifestyle content. Entertainment content such as memes, viral challenges, and celebrity gossip are particularly popular, offering a form of escapism and entertainment during leisure time. Educational content, including tutorials, exam preparation tips, and informational videos, also holds significant appeal, reflecting the importance placed on academic success in Indian society. Moreover, lifestyle content covering topics like fashion, beauty, travel, and food enjoys a dedicated following among high-schoolers, who are eager to explore new trends and experiences. Influencers play a significant role in shaping the content landscape, with many high-schoolers looking up to popular personalities for inspiration and guidance. As high school students immerse themselves in the captivating world of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, the allure of endless scrolling and constant connectivity poses significant challenges to effective time management. Time management is a critical skill for students, particularly in today's digital age where social media plays a significant role in their daily lives. The proliferation of Web 2.0 technologies has led to an increase in the time spent online by users, with social media platforms contributing to this trend (Malita, 2011). Social media offers numerous benefits, such as staying connected with friends, accessing information, and finding entertainment, but it also presents several challenges for students in managing their time effectively. One of the primary challenges is the addictive nature of social media platforms. With their endless scroll features, notifications, and personalized content feeds, social media apps are designed to keep users engaged for extended periods. As a result, students may find themselves spending excessive amounts of time on these platforms, often at the expense of more productive activities like studying or participating in extracurriculars. Moreover, social media can be a major source of distraction for students. The study utilized Tangney et al.'s (2004) 13-item measure of self-control, where participants rated statements such as "I am good at resisting temptation" on a scale from 1 ("not at all like me") to 5 ("just like me"). Internal reliability was .85. For guilt, participants rated statements including "I often feel guilty about the amount of television I watch" on the same scale, reflecting negative time management behaviors. Media guilt was computed by averaging these ratings, with an alpha of .73. Age of media technology adoption was used as a proxy for self-efficacy, and gender was assessed as well. Participants reported daily hours spent on schoolwork and rated their motivations for using the Internet, such as "To get information," on a scale from 1 to 5, reflecting potential distractions from social media. The constant urge to check notifications, respond to messages, or scroll through feeds can disrupt concentration and hinder academic performance. Another challenge is the phenomenon of "FOMO" or fear of missing out. Seeing their peers posting about social events, achievements, or experiences can create feelings of inadequacy or anxiety in students, prompting them to spend more time on social media to stay connected and avoid feeling left out. This fear of missing out can further exacerbate time management issues as students prioritize staying updated on social media over their academic responsibilities. Additionally, social media can impact students' sleep patterns and overall well-being. Late-night scrolling sessions can lead to reduced sleep duration and quality, affecting cognitive function, mood, and physical health. Poor sleep habits resulting from excessive social media use can contribute to fatigue, irritability, and decreased academic performance. In conclusion, while social media offers various benefits, students must navigate its challenges effectively to maintain proper time management and academic success. As students grapple with the challenges of managing their time effectively amidst the allure of social media platforms, the psychological impacts of excessive digital engagement come to the forefront, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to online interactions. Social media has become an integral aspect of contemporary life, offering a platform for connection, self-expression, and validation. During COVID-19 lockdowns, people used social media extensively to cope with stress. The more pressure people faced because of a lockdown, the more likely they were to use social media to relieve stress. Such findings were consistent with past research which suggest higher use of social media among those who were under lockdowns than those who were not (Yue et al., 2021). A positive relationship was found between perceived COVID-19 stress and social media use for socioemotional coping. Social media use played a connecting role to the outside world for individuals under lockdown. Especially during times of social isolation, using social media to maintain social relations was an effective way for individuals to accumulate social capital (Boursier et al., 2020). However, alongside its benefits, social media also presents significant psychological impacts, including heightened anxiety, stress, and fluctuations in self-esteem. The rise in internet accessibility, social networking, and online gaming has been linked to behavioral issues such as internet addiction, defined as excessive and poorly controlled internet use leading to psychological distress (Bharti et al., 2021). The curated nature of social media profiles often prompts individuals to compare themselves against unrealistic standards, fostering feelings of inadequacy and fear of missing out (FOMO). This constant exposure to idealized images and lifestyles can perpetuate validation-seeking behavior, fueling anxiety and self-doubt when expectations are not met. Moreover, the increased prevalence of internet addiction among students has been associated with various

psychological problems, including social isolation, anxiety, depression, and stress. These issues are closely intertwined with individuals' coping strategies, as those who struggle to cope with stress are more likely to experience heightened levels of perceived stress and internet addiction (Bharti et al., 2021).

A study of Internet Addiction, Perceived Stress, and Coping Skills among School and College going students by Juganu Bharti et al. highlights the prevalence of Internet Addiction (IA) among Indian students. The findings indicate that the prevalence of IA is about 1.8% to 8.5% at the global level, with potentially higher rates in developing countries like India. The study conducted in Varanasi district, Uttar Pradesh, India, found that the prevalence of IA ranged between 18.8% to 74.5% among students belonging to the adolescent and youth age group. The study also reveals a correlation between IA and perceived stress, with students facing high levels of stress showing higher rates of IA. Additionally, the study suggests that coping strategies play a crucial role in managing IA and perceived stress among students. To mitigate the negative psychological impacts of social media, individuals can take proactive steps to manage their usage and cultivate healthier online habits. This may include setting boundaries on social media use, engaging in activities that promote self-care and self-compassion, seeking support from trusted friends or mental health professionals, and practicing digital detoxes to disconnect and recharge. By prioritizing mental well-being and fostering a healthy relationship with social media, individuals can navigate its complexities more effectively and mitigate its negative psychological effects. Transitioning from the discussion on the psychological effects of social media, it becomes evident that parental involvement serves as a critical buffer against potential negative outcomes, emphasizing the significance of familial support in navigating the digital realm.

Parental involvement and guidance play crucial roles in shaping students' behaviors and experiences on social media platforms. With the pervasive influence of social media in modern society, parents must actively engage with their children to foster responsible digital citizenship and mitigate potential risks. It is important that parents practice what they preach and remember that young people have rights in this digital age just as in other spheres of life. STU, who heads an initiative for children's rights, reiterated, "Children need guidance regarding their online practices just as they need guidance in education, sports, career, and life; this is their right and digital citizenship is becoming an essential in our ever-changing world." (Sarwatay, Raman & Ramasubramanian, 2021). Parents need to establish open communication channels with their children regarding social media use. VYW recounted that ordinary people use media positively i.e., using media to enhance life, she added that parent-child communication can foster discipline and moderation in use, chalk up multiple options for activities, and ensure certain minimum hours of sleep for everyone as essential (Sarwatay, Raman & Ramasubramanian, 2021). By initiating conversations about online safety, privacy settings, and appropriate online behavior, parents can impart valuable knowledge and instill a sense of responsibility in their children.

In the realm of parenting, it was noticed that mothers were likely to give and receive support on social media and use it as a parenting tool (Duggan et al., 2015). Active parental involvement was detected when the child had experienced online harm (Kalmus et al., 2015). Parenting strategies reflected anxieties about online risks and inadvertently contributed to limiting children's opportunities (Tripp 2011).

Parents should actively monitor their children's online activities, not to invade their privacy, but to ensure their safety and well-being. This could involve periodically checking their social media profiles, discussing any concerns or questionable content, and setting reasonable boundaries and rules for usage.

Additionally, parents can serve as positive role models by demonstrating healthy social media habits themselves. By showcasing respectful communication, critical thinking, and discernment in their own online interactions, parents can influence their children to emulate similar behaviors. Moving from the discussion on parental involvement in navigating social media, we transition to explore the profound impact of these platforms on education, highlighting the myriad benefits they offer to both teachers and students. Social media has brought about a paradigm shift in the educational landscape of India, offering a plethora of benefits to both teachers and students. Firstly, it serves as a valuable repository of educational resources, encompassing teaching materials, lesson plans, and scholarly articles, thereby enriching teaching practices and expanding educators' knowledge base. As Voithofer (2007) notes, instructing teacher education students on social networks encourages them to consider (i) the technical and pedagogical characteristics of educational technology, (ii) the social aspects of educational technology, and (iii) how to think about emerging technologies in relation to teaching. Platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn also facilitate professional development opportunities, enabling teachers to participate in online workshops, webinars, and discussions with experts worldwide (Carter et al., 2008). This fosters continuous learning and enhances educators' expertise. Furthermore, social media platforms such as Edmodo and Google Classroom revolutionize student engagement and collaboration in Indian classrooms. By providing virtual learning environments, these platforms promote active participation, peer interaction, and personalized learning experiences, ultimately boosting student engagement and academic achievement. Hamann and Wilson (2002) found that students who participated in a web-enhanced class outperformed those students in a traditional lecture format. This suggests that Internet based learning modules actively engage students in a manner unique from the traditional class lecture. Referring to previous research findings, Yan (2008) confirms that online learning communities give teachers and students the ability to personalize and share their content. The researcher also found that teachers can learn how to

incorporate social networking sites into teaching. Additionally, social media transcends geographical barriers, fostering cultural exchange and global awareness among educators and students. Through virtual exchange programs and collaborative projects facilitated by platforms like Facebook, individuals gain valuable insights into diverse cultures and global issues, promoting empathy and tolerance. For example, within the Linking Latitudes program established by Tasmania's Sacred Heart School and Pularumpi School on Melville Island, learners from both schools use instant messaging and Skype to share information about their cultures and work collaboratively. Using Social Networking Sites, young people from the two schools interact with learners from over forty other schools (DEECD, 2010). Moreover, social media fuels creativity and innovation in education, empowering educators and students to showcase their work and collaborate on innovative projects. From creating educational videos to designing digital artworks, social media platforms provide avenues for exploration and expression, pushing the boundaries of traditional education. Overall, by harnessing the positive influences of social media, educators in India as well as other countries can enrich their teaching practices, inspire their students, and prepare them for success in the digital age. It not only enhances teaching practices but also fosters a culture of continuous learning and collaboration, ultimately benefiting the entire educational ecosystem.

## PROCEDURE

The aim of my study is to delve into the multifaceted dynamics of social media usage among high-schoolers in India. Through comprehensive research, we aim to understand prevalent platforms, content consumption patterns, and the psychological impacts on young users. Additionally, we seek to explore challenges faced by students in managing their time effectively amidst social media distractions. By examining both positive and negative aspects, our study aims to provide insights into fostering healthier online behaviors and enhancing overall well-being among high-schoolers. I chose to explore social media usage among high-schoolers because it's a topic close to my heart and resonates deeply with my own experiences and those of my friends. Witnessing the pervasive influence of social media on our lives and observing its various impacts, both positive and negative, sparked my curiosity to delve deeper. Moreover, discussing the topic with my friends highlighted the significance of understanding these dynamics to navigate the digital landscape more responsibly. This study isn't just academic; it's a personal journey to uncover insights that can positively impact our digital experiences and well-being.

## RESULTS

### A. RESULT TABLE

THEMES	EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE 1	EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE 2
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA PRESSURES</b>	Participants discussed the pressure to portray a perfect life on social media, the impact of unrealistic standards on self-esteem, and the constant comparison with others, citing personal experiences and observations.	Changes within social structures can impact the nature of experience and thus play a key role in shaping individuals' conceptions of self. The breakdown of traditional social institutions (e.g. family, community, and religion) and changing patterns of migration and mobility, for example, are each cited as reasons for contemporary social life now being less structured and predictable than in previous generations (Allan and Crow 2001; Office for National Statistics 2017).
<b>SAFE ONLINE PRACTICES</b>	Participants highlighted the importance of standing up against cyberbullying and advocating for a safer online community, sharing	Cyber security is important in the world of networks where people are always online doing work and it can

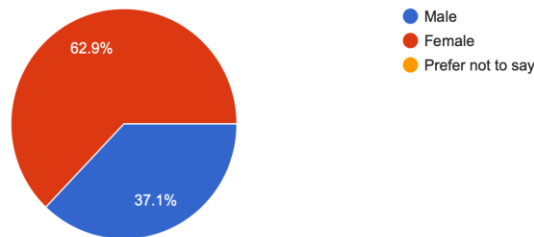
	personal experiences and views on creating a positive online environment.	provide opportunity for users to protect their personal information on the network or on device. Cyber security gives Right to know and Right to information. Computer is safe through cyber security in terms of all damages from virus, bacteria, online bugs etc. Cyber security also helps in monitoring the network and protects from various kinds of threats. Also it protects from all cybercrimes where attackers didn't get entrance on networks. It allows protecting computers security at a high level. (Tabassum, 2020)
<b>DISCOVERING NEW INTERESTS</b>	Participants shared examples of discovering new interests or hobbies through social media platforms like YouTube, citing personal experiences of learning calligraphy, cooking, or dance choreographies.	The increasing popularity of social media is shortening the distance between people. Social activities, e.g., tagging in Flickr, book marking in Delicious, twittering in Twitter, etc. are reshaping people's social life and redefining their social roles. People with shared interests tend to form their groups in social media, and users within the same community likely exhibit similar social behavior (e.g., going for the same movies, having similar political viewpoints), which in turn reinforces the community structure. (Wang, Tang et al., 2010)
<b>OVERCONSUMPTION</b>	Participants discussed the negative effects of overconsumption of information on social media, citing personal experiences and observations of disruptions in perception and mental well-being.	Social media is an online communication system which facilitates interaction among people in various strata and thus diminishes the whole world to the size of any device. The most prominent part about this is that it influences the society at large and has a paramount place in people's minds. (Neethu, Rock et al., 2018)
<b>DIGITAL DISTRACTION</b>	Participants highlighted social media's addictive nature and its impact on attention span, citing personal experiences and observations of excessive time spent on social media platforms.	It has been found that students use social media like WhatsApp, twitter & Facebook, play games and send text messages while the class is still in progress. (Akst, 2010). Cell phone use has increased in students, and this

		penetration is sometimes more than 100 %. (Lawton, 2010; Salisbury et al., 2015). The students themselves agree that they quite often use social media up to 32 times in a day. This use, they believe, does not help but actually leads to distraction. (Emerick et al.,2019).
<b>VULNERABILITY AND HARM</b>	Participants discussed the vulnerability to cyberbullying, addiction, and negative influence on social media, citing personal experiences and observations of its impact on mental health and well-being.	It is widely accepted that receiving hostile or nasty messages from peers, especially if sustained over time, constitutes a harm that merits institutional intervention (by the schools, regulators or industry expected to reduce cyberbullying). It is also generally held that parents are responsible for preventing young children From accessing pornography, even if it is less agreed whether such access is inherently damaging. (Livingstone, 2013).
<b>EFFICIENCY OF SOCIAL MEDIA</b>	Participants mentioned using social media platforms like YouTube for efficient learning and understanding of concepts, citing personal experiences of finding helpful educational resources online.	Social media tools have become ubiquitous. You can see our students use them all the time. Among them most popular tools are Facebook, Wiki, YouTube, bulletin board, LinkedIn, blogging, and twittering. The advancement of modern technologies tries its best to accommodate the needs from people, especially the younger generation. (Liu, 2010).
<b>AWARENESS OUTREACH</b>	Participants emphasized using social media to reach a wide audience and raise awareness about important issues, citing personal experiences of participating in online campaigns and advocacy efforts.	Students use digital platforms such as WordPress for blogging, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter for content marketing on social media, and Spotify for podcasting. Students act like content creators who learn by doing, sharing abilities and experiences with others. They gain awareness of the gatekeeper's role about news and social issues that they propose to a community of readers made up particularly by their peers. At the

		<p>same time, they have the role to build and reinforce the community's bonds. Creating digital contents allows them to develop skills such as sources searching, frame analysis and interpretation, web writing and search engine optimization (SEO). Using the social media and podcast in a professional way they learn to practice new forms of digital literacy. Overall, this learning experience in Laboratory allows students not only to get technical communication skills but also to develop a greater and mature awareness to cooperate effectively in a team, and an immediate portfolio for their future job. (Lalli &amp; Zingone, 2021).</p>
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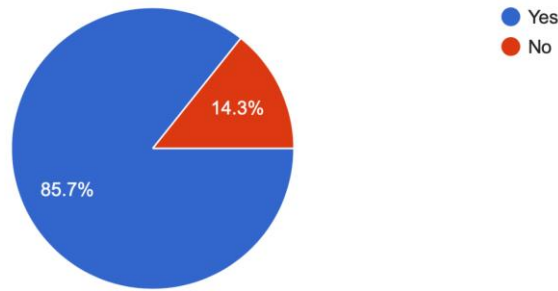
**B. RESULT GRAPHS**

Gender  
35 responses



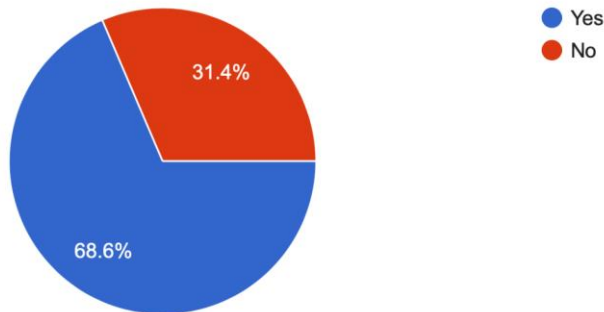
Do you spend more than two hours a day on social media?

35 responses



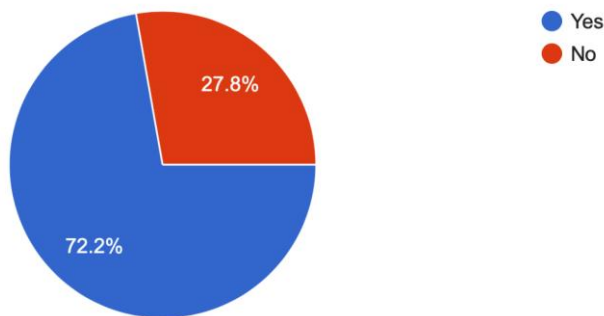
Have you ever felt stressed or anxious due to your social media activity?

35 responses



Do you feel that social media has improved your communication skills?

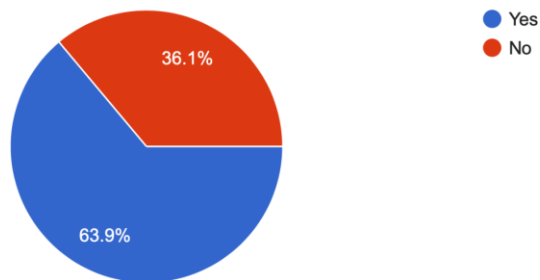
36 responses





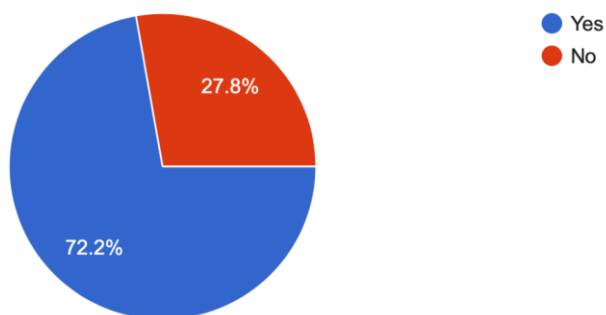
Have you ever had trouble sleeping because you were using social media late at night?

36 responses



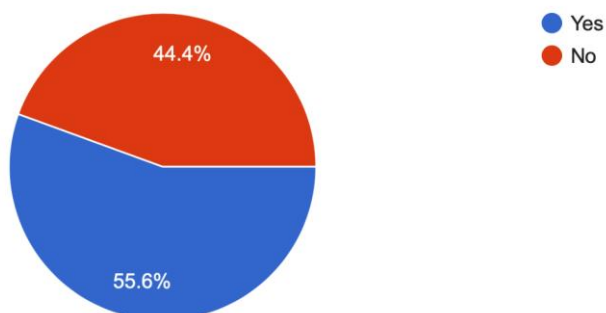
Do you feel addicted to checking your social media accounts, or neglected other responsibilities because of it?

36 responses



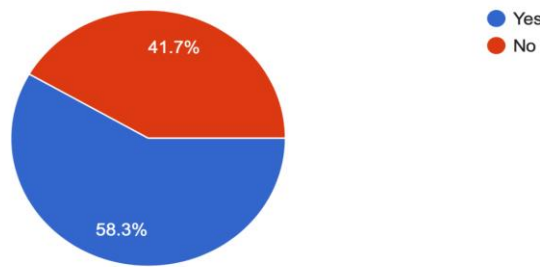
Do you regularly compare yourself to others on social media?

36 responses



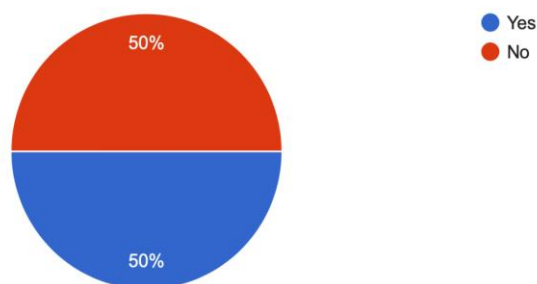
Do you think social media affects your self esteem?

36 responses



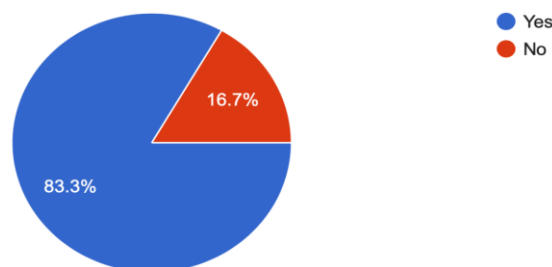
Do you feel pressured to maintain a certain image on social media?

36 responses



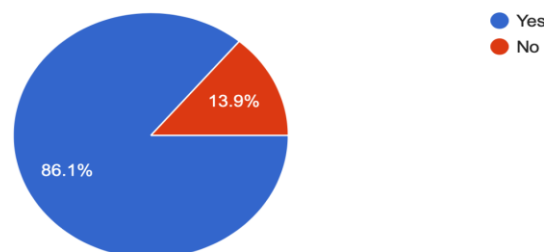
Have you ever faced difficulties concentrating on your studies due to social media distractions?

36 responses



Have you ever utilized social media to seek assistance with homework/ assignments?

36 responses



## DISCUSSION

This study aims to comprehensively examine the impact of social media on individuals' lives, focusing on both its positive contributions and challenges. Through interviews with participants from diverse backgrounds, we seek to explore various dimensions of social media usage and its influence on daily routines, relationships, and mental well-being. One primary objective is to investigate how social media fosters connections and friendships among individuals

with shared interests or hobbies. By exploring participants' experiences of joining online communities and groups, we aim to understand the role of social media in facilitating social interactions and the formation of new relationships. Furthermore, we aim to explore the pressures and challenges young people encounter on social media platforms, including the pressure to maintain a perfect image, constant comparison with others, and vulnerability to cyberbullying and negative influences. Understanding these challenges can provide valuable insights into the ways social media affects individuals' self-esteem, mental health, and overall well-being.

Additionally, we seek to examine the role of social media in facilitating learning, self-discovery, and personal growth. By investigating participants' experiences of discovering new interests, hobbies, or opportunities for skill development through social media platforms, we aim to explore the potential benefits of online learning and exploration.

Moreover, we aim to investigate the efficacy of social media as a platform for advocacy and awareness campaigns. Through participants' experiences of raising awareness about important issues and advocating for causes online, we aim to understand

In today's digitally connected world, social media platforms have become integral parts of our daily lives, influencing how we interact, communicate, and perceive ourselves and others. While social media offers numerous benefits, such as facilitating connections, providing access to information, and fostering communities, it also brings about various pressures and challenges, particularly for young people. In this discussion, we delve into the complexities of social media pressures, exploring their manifestations, impacts, and implications for individuals' well-being and mental health. Social media pressures manifest in various forms, imposing unrealistic standards and expectations on individuals. One prominent manifestation is the pressure to portray a perfect life. On platforms like Instagram and Facebook, users often curate their profiles to showcase only the highlights of their lives, presenting an idealized version of themselves characterized by success, happiness, and flawless appearance. This curated reality creates an illusion of perfection, leading others to compare their own lives unfavorably and experience feelings of inadequacy and discontentment.

Additionally, social media fosters a culture of comparison, where individuals constantly measure their achievements, appearance, and lifestyles against those of their peers. The abundance of carefully curated posts showcasing seemingly perfect lives exacerbates this comparison culture, fueling feelings of jealousy, envy, and insecurity among users. Moreover, social media platforms often prioritize metrics such as likes, comments, and followers, further perpetuating a competitive environment where individuals seek validation and approval through external measures of popularity and acceptance.

The pervasive nature of social media pressures has profound impacts on individuals' mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being. Research indicates a strong correlation between excessive social media use and mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Constant exposure to idealized images and lifestyles can lead to distorted perceptions of reality and heightened feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt.

Moreover, the pressure to maintain a perfect image online can result in individuals experiencing a phenomenon known as "impression management," where they carefully curate their online personas to conform to societal expectations. This constant performance of a curated self can be emotionally draining and psychologically exhausting, leading to a sense of disconnection from one's authentic self and fostering feelings of loneliness and isolation. Furthermore, social media pressures contribute to the phenomenon of "FOMO" or fear of missing out, where individuals experience anxiety and distress over not being included in social events or activities showcased on social media. This fear of missing out can lead to compulsive checking of social media feeds, exacerbating feelings of anxiety.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this comprehensive examination of social media's impact on individuals' lives highlights a nuanced landscape of both positive contributions and formidable challenges. While social media platforms serve as powerful tools for connection, learning, and advocacy, they also harbor pressures that can profoundly affect mental health and well-being, particularly among young users. The pervasive culture of perfectionism and comparison fostered by social media exacerbates feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, and anxiety. As we navigate the digital realm, it becomes imperative to cultivate awareness and resilience against these pressures, promoting authentic self-expression and meaningful connections. By acknowledging the complexities of social media's influence, we can work towards fostering healthier online environments that prioritize authenticity, empathy, and well-being, ultimately striving for a digital landscape that enhances rather than diminishes our collective mental and emotional health.

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