

# Emotional Impact of Social Media in Higher Education at Present World

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**Abstract-** Though social media has created tremendous chances for participating ideas and feelings, the kind of social support it provides might fail to meet scholars' emotional requirements, or the contended positive goods might be short-lasting. In recent times, several studies have been conducted to explore the implicit goods of social media on scholars' affective traits, similar as stress, anxiety, depression, and so on. The present paper reviews the findings of the exemplary published workshop of exploration to exfoliate light on the positive and negative implicit goods of the massive use of social media on scholars' emotional well-being. This review can be perceptive for preceptors who tend to take the implicit cerebral goods of social media for granted. They may want to know further about the factual goods of the over-reliance on and the inordinate (and actually compulsive) use of social media on scholars' developing certain images of tone and certain feelings which aren't inescapably positive. There will be counteraccusations for pre-and in-service schoolteacher training and professional development programs and all those involved in pupil affairs. College and university scholars have been observed adding their operation of social media operations as it has come central to everyday life. scholars can use different forms of social media to connect, partake, and view a myriad of content. When told by posts, social media can have a significant impact on their lives. Social media can be a form of social support, but it can also have a negative effect on internal health. With the increase in use, social media can provoke individualities to begin tone-comparing or gain unrealistic prospects of themselves and other individualities. This can lead to lower tone-regard, tone-confidence, and tone-worth. This exploratory study attempts to determine the relationship between social media use and its impact on depression, anxiety, and stress among scholars in advanced education.

**Keywords:** social media, stress, anxiety, depression, higher education, social connectedness

## INTRODUCTION

Social media has turned into an essential element of individuals' lives including students in today's world of communication. Its use is growing significantly more than ever before especially in the post-pandemic era, marked by a great revolution happening to the educational systems. Recent investigations of using social media show that approximately 3 billion individuals worldwide are now communicating via social media (Iwamoto and Chun, 2020). This growing population of social media users is spending more and more time on social network groupings, as facts and figures show that individuals spend 2 h a day, on average, on a variety of social media applications, exchanging pictures and messages, updating status, tweeting, favoring, and commenting on many updated socially shared information (Abbott, 2017).

Researchers have begun to investigate the psychological effects of using social media on students' lives. Chukwuere and Chukwuere (2017) maintained that social media platforms can be considered the most important source of changing individuals' mood, because when someone is passively using a social media platform seemingly with no special purpose, s/he can finally feel that his/her mood has changed as a function of the nature of content overviewed. Therefore, positive and negative moods can easily be transferred among the population using social media networks. This may become increasingly important as students are seen to be using social media platforms more than before and social networking is becoming an integral aspect of their lives. As described by Iwamoto and Chun (2020), when students are affected by social media posts, especially due to the increasing reliance on social media use in life, they may be encouraged to begin comparing themselves to others or develop great unrealistic expectations of themselves or others, which can have several affective consequences.

Considering the increasing influence of social media on education, the present paper aims to focus on the affective variables such as depression, stress, and anxiety, and how social media can possibly increase or decrease these emotions in student life. The exemplary works of research on this topic in recent years will be reviewed here, hoping to shed light on the positive and negative effects of these ever-growing influential platforms on the psychology of students.

## Implications of the study

The use of social media is ever increasing among students, both at school and university, which is partly because of the promises of technological advances in communication services and partly because of the increased use of social networks for educational purposes in recent years after the pandemic. This consistent use of social media is not expected to leave students' psychological, affective and emotional states untouched. Thus, it is necessary to know how the growing usage of social networks is associated with students' affective health on different aspects. Therefore, we found it useful to summarize the research findings in recent years in this respect. If those somehow in charge of student affairs in educational settings are aware of the potential positive or negative effects of social media usage on students, they can better understand the complexities of students' needs and are better capable of meeting them.

Psychological counseling programs can be initiated at schools or universities to check upon the latest state of students' mental and emotional health influenced by the pervasive use of social media. The counselors can be made aware of the potential adverse effects of social networking and can adapt the content of their inquiries accordingly. Knowledge of the potential reasons for student anxiety, depression, and stress can help school or university counselors to find individualized coping strategies when they diagnose any symptom of distress in students influenced by an excessive use of social networking.

Admittedly, it is neither possible to discard the use of social media in today's academic life, nor to keep students' use of social networks fully controlled. Certainly, the educational space in today's world cannot do without the social media, which has turned into an integral part of everybody's life. Yet, probably students need to be instructed on how to take advantage of the media and to be the least affected negatively by its occasional superficial and unrepresentative content. Compensatory programs might be needed at schools or universities to encourage students to avoid making unrealistic and impartial comparisons of themselves and the flamboyant images of others displayed on social media. Students can be taught to develop self-appreciation and self-care while continuing to use the media to their benefit.

The teachers' role as well as the curriculum developers' role are becoming more important than ever, as they can significantly help to moderate the adverse effects of the pervasive social media use on students' mental and emotional health. The kind of groupings formed for instructional purposes, for example, in social media can be done with greater care by teachers to make sure that the members of the groups are homogeneous and the tasks and activities shared in the groups are quite relevant and realistic. The teachers cannot always be in a full control of students' use of social media, and the other fact is that students do not always and only use social media for educational purposes. They spend more time on social media for communicating with friends or strangers or possibly they just passively receive the content produced out of any educational scope just for entertainment. This uncontrolled and unrealistic content may give them a false image of life events and can threaten their mental and emotional health. Thus, teachers can try to make students aware of the potential hazards of investing too much of their time on following pages or people that publish false and misleading information about their personal or social identities. As students, logically expected, spend more time with their teachers than counselors, they may be better and more receptive to the advice given by the former than the latter.

Teachers may not be in full control of their students' use of social media, but they have always played an active role in motivating or demotivating students to take particular measures in their academic lives. If teachers are informed of the recent research findings about the potential effects of massively using social media on students, they may find ways to reduce students' distraction or confusion in class due to the excessive or over-reliant use of these networks. Educators may more often be mesmerized by the promises of technology-, computer- and mobile-assisted learning. They may tend to encourage the use of social media hoping to benefit students' social and interpersonal skills, self-confidence, stress-managing and the like. Yet, they may be unaware of the potential adverse effects on students' emotional well-being and, thus, may find the review of the recent relevant research findings insightful. Also, teachers can mediate between learners and social media to manipulate the time learners spend on social media. Research has mainly indicated that students' emotional experiences are mainly dependent on teachers' pedagogical approach. They should refrain learners from excessive use of, or overreliance on, social media. Raising learners' awareness of this fact that individuals should develop their own path of development for learning, and not build their development based on unrealistic comparison of their competences with those of others, can help them consider positive values for their activities on social media and, thus, experience positive emotions.

At higher education, students' needs are more life-like. For example, their employment-seeking spirits might lead them to create accounts in many social networks, hoping for a better future. However, membership in many of these networks may end in the mere waste of the time that could otherwise be spent on actual on-campus cooperative projects. Universities can provide more on-campus resources both for research and work experience purposes from which the students can benefit more than the cyberspace that can be tricky on many occasions. Two main theories underlying some negative emotions like boredom and anxiety are over-stimulation and under-stimulation. Thus, what learners feel out of their involvement in social media might be directed toward negative emotions due to the stimulating environment of social media. This stimulating environment makes learners rely too much, and spend too much time, on social media or use them obsessively. As a result, they might feel anxious or depressed. Given the ubiquity of social media, these negative emotions can be replaced with positive emotions if learners become aware of the psychological effects of social media. Regarding the affordances of social media for learners, they can take advantage of the potential affordances of these media such as improving their literacy, broadening their communication skills, or enhancing their distance learning opportunities.

### **The role social media plays in mental health**

Human beings are social creatures. We need the companionship of others to thrive in life, and the strength of our connections has a huge impact on our mental health and happiness. Being socially connected to others can ease stress, anxiety, and depression, boost self-worth, provide comfort and joy, prevent loneliness, and even add years to your life. On the flip side, lacking strong social connections can pose a serious risk to your mental and emotional health.

In today's world, many of us rely on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, and Instagram to find and connect with each other. While each has its benefits, it's important to remember that social media can never be a replacement for real-world human connection. It requires in-person contact with others to trigger the hormones that alleviate stress and make you feel happier, healthier, and more positive. Ironically for a technology that's designed to bring people closer together, spending too much time engaging with social media can actually make you feel more lonely and isolated—and exacerbate mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

If you're spending an excessive amount of time on social media and feelings of sadness, dissatisfaction, frustration, or loneliness are impacting your life, it may be time to re-examine your online habits and find a healthier balance.

### Positive aspects of social media

While virtual interaction on social media doesn't have the same psychological benefits as face-to-face contact, there are still many positive ways in which it can help you stay connected and support your wellbeing.

#### Social media enables you to:

- Communicate and stay up to date with family and friends around the world.
- Find new friends and communities; network with other people who share similar interests or ambitions.
- Join or promote worthwhile causes; raise awareness on important issues.
- Seek or offer emotional support during tough times.
- Find vital social connection if you live in a remote area, for example, or have limited independence, social anxiety, or are part of a marginalized group.
- Find an outlet for your creativity and self-expression.
- Discover (with care) sources of valuable information and learning.

### Fear of missing out (FOMO) and social media addiction.

While FOMO has been around far longer than social media, sites such as Facebook and Instagram seem to exacerbate feelings that others are having more fun or living better lives than you are. The idea that you're missing out on certain things can impact your self-esteem, trigger anxiety, and fuel even greater social media use, much like an addiction. FOMO can compel you to pick up your phone every few minutes to check for updates, or compulsively respond to each and every alert—even if that means taking risks while you're driving, missing out on sleep at night, or prioritizing social media interaction over real world relationships.

#### Isolation.

A study at the University of Pennsylvania found that high usage of Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram *increases* rather than decreases feelings of loneliness. Conversely, the study found that reducing social media usage can actually make you feel *less* lonely and isolated and improve your overall wellbeing.

#### Depression and anxiety.

Human beings need face-to-face contact to be mentally healthy. Nothing reduces stress and boosts your mood faster or more effectively than eye-to-eye contact with someone who cares about you. The more you prioritize social media interaction over in-person relationships, the more you're at risk for developing or exacerbating mood disorders such as anxiety and depression.

#### Cyberbullying.

About 10 percent of teens report being bullied on social media and many other users are subjected to offensive comments. Social media platforms such as Twitter can be hotspots for spreading hurtful rumors, lies, and abuse that can leave lasting emotional scars.

**Self-absorption.** Sharing endless selfies and all your innermost thoughts on social media can create an unhealthy self-centeredness and distance you from real-life connections.

#### What's driving your social media use?

These days, most of us access social media via our smart phones or tablets. While this makes it very convenient to keep in touch, it also means that social media is always accessible. This round-the-clock, hyper connectivity can trigger impulse control problems, the constant alerts and notifications affecting your concentration and focus, disturbing your sleep, and making you a slave to your phone.

Social media platforms are designed to snare your attention, keep you online, and have you repeatedly checking your screen for updates. It's how the companies make money. But, much like a gambling compulsion or an addiction to nicotine, alcohol, or drugs, social media use can create psychological cravings. When you receive a like, a share, or a favorable reaction to a post, it can trigger the release of dopamine in the brain, the same "reward" chemical that follows winning on a slot machine, taking a bite of chocolate, or lighting up a cigarette, for example. The more you're rewarded, the more time you want to spend on social media, even if it becomes detrimental to other aspects of your life.

### CONCLUSION

A review of the research findings on the relationship between social media and students' affective traits revealed both positive and negative findings. Yet, the instances of the latter were more salient and the negative psychological symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and stress have been far from negligible. These findings were discussed in relation to some more relevant theories such as the social comparison theory, which predicted that most of the potential issues with the young generation's excessive use of social media were induced by the unfair comparisons they made between their own lives and the unrealistic portrayal of others' on social media. Teachers, education policymakers, curriculum developers, and all those in charge of the student affairs at schools and universities should be made aware of the psychological effects of the pervasive use of social media on students, and the potential threats.

It should be reminded that the alleged socially supportive and communicative promises of the prevalent use of social networking in student life might not be fully realized in practice. Students may lose self-appreciation and gratitude when they compare their current state of life with the snapshots of others' or peers'. A depressed or stressed-out mood can follow. Students at schools or universities need to learn self-worth to resist the adverse effects of the superficial support they receive from social media. Along this way, they should be assisted by the family and those in charge at schools or universities, most importantly the teachers. As already suggested, counseling programs might help with raising students' awareness of the potential psychological threats of social media to their health. Considering the ubiquity of social media in everybody's life including student life worldwide, it seems that more coping and compensatory strategies should be contrived to moderate the adverse psychological effects of the pervasive use of social media on students. Also, the affective influences of social media should not be generalized but they need to be interpreted from an ecological or contextual perspective. This means that learners might have different emotions at different times

or different contexts while being involved in social media. More specifically, given the stative approach to learners' emotions, what learners emotionally experience in their application of social media can be bound to their intra-personal and interpersonal experiences. This means that the same learner at different time points might go through different emotions. Also, learners' emotional states as a result of their engagement in social media cannot be necessarily generalized to all learners in a class.

As the majority of studies on the psychological effects of social media on student life have been conducted on school students than in higher education, it seems it is too soon to make any conclusive remark on this population exclusively. Probably, in future, further studies of the psychological complexities of students at higher education and a better knowledge of their needs can pave the way for making more insightful conclusions about the effects of social media on their affective states.

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