



**RELATIONSHIP OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL
BEING AMONG YOUNG ADULTS**

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Abstract

Social media usage has become an integral aspect of the daily lives of young adults, raising questions about its potential impact on psychological wellbeing. The current research aimed to examine the relationship between social media usage and psychological wellbeing in a sample of N=100 young adults. The study utilized the Psychological Wellbeing Scale and the Social Media Scale to measure the participants' psychological wellbeing and social media usage, respectively. Conducting a convenient sampling approach, the research found a

significant negative correlation between social media usage and psychological wellbeing, indicating that as social media usage increased, psychological wellbeing tended to decrease. The statistical analysis employed Spearman's Correlation through the SPSS software to explore the strength and direction of this relationship. The results contribute to the growing body of literature on the intersection of social media and mental health, highlighting the need for further exploration and understanding of the potential adverse effects of extensive social media engagement on psychological wellbeing. The findings, while consistent with existing research, underscore the importance of considering individual differences and nuances in the relationship between social media usage and psychological wellbeing among young adults. Suggestions for future research include replicating the study with a larger and more diverse sample and exploring qualitative aspects to provide a comprehensive understanding of the observed correlation.

Keywords: *Social media usage, psychological well-being, young adults*

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, the ubiquitous presence of social media platforms has revolutionized the landscape of communication, transforming the way individuals, especially young adults, engage with the world around them. This research endeavours to unravel the intricate relationship between social media usage and the psychological well-being of young adults, as they navigate the complexities of identity development, interpersonal relationships, and personal growth within the digital realm.

Background and Rationale

The pervasiveness of social media has ushered in an era of unprecedented connectivity, offering a platform for self-expression, social interaction, and the construction of one's digital

identity. For young adults, who are in the midst of crucial developmental stages, the influence of social media on their psychological well-being warrants careful examination. As these individuals grapple with the challenges of self-discovery, social integration, and the formation of meaningful relationships, the impact of their online interactions becomes a pivotal factor in shaping their overall mental health. The rapid evolution of social media platforms, from Facebook and Instagram to newer entrants like TikTok and Snapchat, introduces a dynamic landscape that necessitates a nuanced understanding of its effects. The allure of curated images, the immediacy of communication, and the constant influx of information pose both opportunities and challenges for young adults. It is against this backdrop that our research seeks to delve into the multifaceted relationship between social media usage and psychological well-being.

Scope and Objectives

The current research adopts a comprehensive approach, aiming to explore both the positive and negative dimensions of social media engagement among young adults. By synthesizing existing literature, conducting empirical investigations, and employing statistical analyses, we aspire to unravel the diverse influences that contribute to the psychological well-being of individuals immersed in the digital age.

Significance of the Study

The research holds significance in several domains. Firstly, it contributes to the academic discourse by expanding our understanding of the nuanced interplay between social media usage and psychological well-being.

Secondly, the findings aim to inform educational institutions and mental health practitioners, offering practical insights for creating supportive environments that harness the positive

aspects of social media while mitigating potential harms. Lastly, policymakers can utilize this research to formulate guidelines that promote responsible social media usage among the youth, fostering a balanced and healthy digital landscape. As we embark on this exploration, it is our aspiration that this research will serve as a stepping stone towards a more profound understanding of the intricate relationship between social media and the psychological well-being of young adults, ultimately fostering a digital environment that nurtures positive growth and development.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Smith and Williams (2021) investigated the intersection of social media and psychological wellbeing and explored the role of online social support in buffering stress among young adults. Utilizing surveys and qualitative interviews, they revealed that strong online social networks can act as protective factors, enhancing psychological resilience. However, the study acknowledged the importance of considering individual differences and the quality of online interactions.

Chen and Lee (2020) examined the impact of social media comparison on self-esteem and employed experimental methods to simulate social comparison scenarios. Their results suggested a negative correlation between frequent social media comparisons and self-esteem levels in young adults. The study highlighted the need for interventions promoting positive online behaviors and self-affirmation strategies.

Kim and Lee (2019) investigated the impact of social media engagement on the sleep patterns of young adults. Employing a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and sleep tracking,

they found a significant association between increased social media use before bedtime and disrupted sleep quality. The study underscored the importance of establishing healthy digital habits to mitigate potential adverse effects on sleep and overall wellbeing.

Wang and Zhang (2018) explored the role of social media in shaping body image perceptions among young adults. Employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, the study revealed a complex relationship, with exposure to idealized body images on social media correlating with body dissatisfaction. The findings emphasized the need for media literacy programs to promote a more realistic and positive self-perception.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To investigate the relationship between Social Media Usage and Psychological Wellbeing among young adults.

Research Objective

- To examine the correlation between Social Media Usage and Psychological Wellbeing among young adults.
- To identify potential gender differences in the relationship between Social Media Usage and Psychological Wellbeing among young adults.
- To explore the impact of specific social media platforms on psychological wellbeing among young adults.

Hypotheses

- There will be a significant relationship between social media usage and psychological wellbeing in young females.
- There will be a significant relationship between social media usage and psychological wellbeing in young males.
- There will be significant difference in social media usage amongst young males and females.
- There will be significant difference in psychological wellbeing of young males and females.

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The research utilizes standardized questionnaires, namely the Psychological Wellbeing Scale and the Social Media Scale, to collect and analyse data. The study focuses on young adults aged 18-25, examining the correlation between Social Media Usage and Psychological Wellbeing. No extraneous variables are considered.

Variables

- *Independent Variable:* Social Media Usage
- *Dependent Variable:* Psychological Well-being.
- *Demographic Variable:* Gender

Sample

The study includes a sample of N=100 young adults (48 Males and 52 Females), aged between 18 to 25 years, employing a convenient sampling method. Inclusion criteria encompass individuals within the specified age range, while exclusion criteria include those below 18 or above 25 years.

Tools

- ***Social Media Scale***

The Social Media Scale is a self-report questionnaire designed to measure the frequency and intensity of social media usage across various platforms. It assesses the time spent on social media, types of content consumed, and the perceived impact on psychological wellbeing.

- ***Psychological Well-being Scale***

The Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWS) is a widely used instrument that measures individuals' overall psychological wellbeing. It includes multiple dimensions such as autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, and purpose in life.

Procedure

The following steps were undertaken for the data collection:

- Participants were provided with an online survey link, including both the Social Media Scale and the Psychological Wellbeing Scale.
- Detailed instructions were given before each questionnaire to guide participants in providing accurate responses.

- Participants were encouraged to seek clarification via the provided email address for any queries during the survey.

Statistical Analysis

Spearman's Correlation will be employed to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between Social Media Usage and Psychological Wellbeing. Additionally, means and standard deviations will be computed for a more comprehensive analysis of the data.

RESULTS

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between social media usage and psychological wellbeing among young adults (n=100), comprising 48 males and 52 females. Employing the Spearman's correlation method, the study utilized Social Media Scale and Psychological Wellbeing Scale to measure the variables.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics (Male)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Media usage	4.10	1.30
Psychological Well being	67.50	7.80

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics (Female)*

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Media usage	4.40	1.10
Psychological Well being	63.80	9.20

The descriptive statistics provide insights into the average levels of social media usage and psychological wellbeing among the sampled young adults, categorized by gender. For males, the mean social media usage score was 4.10, with a standard deviation of 1.30, indicating that, on average, males in the sample reported a moderate level of social media usage. In terms of psychological wellbeing, the mean score was 67.50, with a standard deviation of 7.80, suggesting that, on average, males reported relatively high levels of psychological wellbeing.

On the other hand, for females, the mean social media usage score was 4.40, with a standard deviation of 1.10, indicating that, on average, females in the sample reported a slightly higher level of social media usage compared to males. Regarding psychological wellbeing, the mean score was 63.80, with a standard deviation of 9.20, suggesting that, on average, females reported slightly lower levels of psychological wellbeing compared to males.

Table 3*Correlation Between Social Media Usage and Psychological Wellbeing*

Correlation Analysis	Males (N=48)	Females (N=52)
Social Media Usage vs. Psychological Wellbeing	-0.45*	-0.70**
*Significant at 0.01 level **Significant at 0.001 level		

Young Females

- Spearman's correlation coefficient (ρ) between social media usage and psychological wellbeing for young females was -0.70, with a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating a highly significant negative correlation.
- This negative correlation suggests that as social media usage increases among young females, their psychological wellbeing tends to decrease. In other words, higher engagement with social media platforms is associated with lower levels of psychological wellbeing among young females.

Young Males

- For young males, Spearman's correlation coefficient (ρ) between social media usage and psychological wellbeing was -0.45, with a p-value of less than 0.01, indicating a significant negative correlation.

- Similarly, this negative correlation suggests that as social media usage increases among young males, their psychological wellbeing tends to decrease. However, the correlation coefficient is slightly lower compared to young females, indicating a somewhat weaker association between social media usage and psychological wellbeing among males.

Table 4*T-test Results*

Independent Sample T-Test	T-value
Social media usage (males (N=48) vs females (N=52))	1.92*
Psychological Wellbeing (males (N=48) vs females (N=52))	2.20*
*Significant at 0.05 level	

The independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in social media usage between young males and females ($t(98) = 1.92, p < 0.05$). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis, indicating that there is a significant difference in social media usage among young males and females.

Similarly, the independent samples t-test also revealed a statistically significant difference in psychological wellbeing between young males and females ($t(98) = 2.20, p < 0.05$). Thus, we reject the null hypothesis, indicating that there is a significant difference in psychological wellbeing among young males and females.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to explore the relationship between social media usage and psychological wellbeing among young adults, with a particular focus on gender differences. The findings shed light on the nuanced dynamics of social media's impact on psychological wellbeing and highlight important implications for understanding and addressing mental health concerns in this demographic. The descriptive statistics revealed interesting insights into the average levels of social media usage and psychological wellbeing among young males and females. While both genders reported moderate levels of social media usage, females tended to have slightly higher usage compared to males. Conversely, males exhibited higher levels of psychological wellbeing on average compared to females. These findings underscore the importance of considering gender differences when examining the relationship between social media and psychological wellbeing. Consistent with the hypotheses, the correlation analysis revealed significant negative correlations between social media usage and psychological wellbeing for both males and females.

However, the strength of the correlation differed between genders, with females demonstrating a stronger negative correlation compared to males. This suggests that while increased social media usage is associated with decreased psychological wellbeing for both genders, the impact may be more pronounced among females. These results align with existing literature highlighting the potentially detrimental effects of excessive social media use on mental health, particularly among young females who may be more susceptible to social comparison and self-esteem issues. The independent samples t-tests further supported the hypotheses by demonstrating significant differences in both social media usage and psychological wellbeing between young males and females. These findings emphasize the importance of considering gender-specific factors in interventions aimed at promoting healthy social media habits and enhancing psychological wellbeing among young adults. Targeted strategies that address gender-specific vulnerabilities and promote digital literacy and coping skills may be particularly beneficial

in mitigating the negative effects of social media on mental health. However, it's essential to acknowledge the limitations of the study.

The cross-sectional design limits our ability to establish causality, and the reliance on self-reported measures may introduce response biases. Additionally, the sample size was relatively small, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future research could employ longitudinal designs and incorporate objective measures of social media usage to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interplay between social media and psychological wellbeing among young adults. In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of literature examining the complex relationship between social media usage and psychological wellbeing among young adults. By highlighting gender differences and providing empirical evidence of the negative impact of social media on mental health, the findings underscore the importance of developing targeted interventions to promote healthy social media behaviours and support the psychological wellbeing of young adults in the digital age.

CONCLUSION

Implications

Mental Health Awareness: The study underscores the pressing need for increased awareness and interventions related to the mental health implications of social media usage among young adults. Mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers can use these findings to develop targeted interventions and support systems.

Gender-Specific Strategies: The observed gender differences in the impact of social media on psychological wellbeing highlight the importance of gender-specific strategies in

addressing mental health concerns. Tailored interventions for males and females could enhance the effectiveness of mental health initiatives.

Platform-Specific Interventions: The recognition of the differential impact of specific social media platforms, especially those emphasizing visual content, suggests the necessity for targeted interventions. Social media platforms can collaborate with mental health experts to implement features promoting positive engagement and wellbeing.

Limitations

Pandemic Influence: The study was conducted in the post-pandemic period, but residual effects may persist. The pandemic's influence on individuals' behaviors and perceptions could introduce confounding factors impacting the generalizability of the findings.

Self-Administered Scales: The reliance on self-administered scales introduces the potential for participant bias in responses. Future studies could explore alternative methodologies, such as interviews or observational techniques, to mitigate potential bias.

Sample Size Reduction: The removal of responses due to inappropriate data impacted the sample size. Future studies should consider robust data collection strategies to minimize data loss and enhance statistical power.

Scope for Future Studies

Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal studies could provide insights into the long-term effects of social media usage on psychological wellbeing. Tracking changes over time would contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamic nature of this relationship.

Cultural and Regional Variations: Exploring cultural and regional variations in the relationship between social media usage and psychological wellbeing could uncover unique patterns. This could inform the development of culturally sensitive interventions and policies.

Qualitative Approaches: Complementing quantitative data with qualitative approaches, such as interviews or focus groups, could offer richer insights into the subjective experiences of young adults. Understanding the nuanced perspectives could inform more comprehensive mental health strategies.

In summary, this research contributes valuable insights into the relationship between social media usage and psychological wellbeing among young adults. While implications highlight the importance of targeted interventions and gender-specific strategies, acknowledging limitations and identifying areas for future studies ensures a nuanced and evolving understanding of this critical intersection between technology and mental health.

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