



Emotional Well Being among College Students and their use of Social Media

Jayasree R^{1*}, Dr. Atul Singh²

1. Research Scholar, University of Technology, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

jayasreer751@gmail.com ,

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Technology, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Abstract: Concerns have been raised by certain individuals over the impact that excessive usage of social media is having on the mental health of college students. During the course of this study, we will investigate college students in Kerala with the objective of determining the impact that their usage of social media has on their own mental health. For the purpose of selecting a sample of 1,590 undergraduate students from 35 different institutions, the descriptive survey approach used a technique known as simple random sampling. The participants were asked to complete out questionnaires that queried about their emotional well-being as well as their behaviours regarding social media. A number of statistical techniques, including the arithmetic mean, the t-test, the standard deviation, the Pearson product moment correlation, regression analysis, and others, were used in the process of analysing the data. The findings indicated that high levels of social media usage were linked to negative emotional impacts, such as increased levels of stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation. On the other hand, pleasant emotional states including improved social support and self-esteem were connected with moderate social media use. The significance of these findings lies in the fact that college students should be cautious of their usage of social media and should strive to strike a good balance between the impact that both platforms have on their mental health. According to the findings of the study, excessive use of social media might have adverse effects on mental health, despite the fact that it may improve feelings of connection. Since this is the case, there is a need for an intervention that would promote healthy digital behaviours.

Keywords: social media, students , College, Emotional well being

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INTRODUCTION

Social media's rapid ascent has transformed communication, information availability, and engagement. Social media has far-reaching effects for college students, who use it disproportionately. Students' mental health is affected by social media as they balance personal connections, academics, and growing up. This study examines the complex relationship between social media usage and mental health among Kerala university students. Recently, college students have grown increasingly dependent on Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Students may utilise these sites to chat with friends and gain academic help. Social media has numerous benefits, but others believe it may harm users' mental health. Since global research have proven both the pros and cons of social media on youth, a more comprehensive understanding is needed. Social media lets individuals connect, exchange ideas, and obtain support from peers. Cyberbullying, depression, anxiety, and loneliness have been linked to incorrect or excessive use of these platforms. Since social media is part of college students' everyday lives, it's important to study its effects on mental health. This research examines Kerala college students to fill that knowledge gap.

College Student Social Media Growth

Over 90% of college students use social media daily, according to new data. Smartphones' popularity,

internet accessibility, and social media platforms' capabilities have all led to their widespread use. Social media lets youngsters remain in touch with peers, share experiences, express their opinions, and stay informed. As its usage has increased, so have concerns regarding its long-term effects on mental and emotional health. Likes, comments, and shares stimulate continual social media communication. These technologies promote camaraderie but make maintaining social media accounts more difficult. Due to their already stressful lifestyles, college students are more susceptible to pressure-related feelings of inadequacy, comparison, and FOMO. It's crucial to consider how social media may effect mental health as seeking online acceptance may make individuals feel even worse.

Impact of Social Media on Emotional Well-Being

It is possible for the impact of social media on mental health to be very variable, depending on the personality of the user and the frequency with which they log in. The fact that social media gives children a means to interact with other people and get assistance is one of the positive aspects of this platform. People may choose to maintain relationships with those they care about, join organisations, and discuss the experiences they have had in their lives. It is possible to find a sense of community and a platform for individual expression on social media, which may be particularly useful for students who are having difficulty adjusting to the lifestyle of college or who may be experiencing feelings of loneliness. Additionally, social media platforms such as YouTube and Instagram are equipped with educational films that may be of assistance in the areas of both academics and personal development.

The usage of social media that is either unpleasant or excessive may, on the other hand, have a negative impact on the mental health of pupils. There have been a number of studies that have shown that spending an excessive amount of time on social media may have negative consequences on the mental health of users. These negative effects include increased levels of stress, anxiety, despair, and loneliness. When we compare ourselves to the well-staged and flawless looks of other individuals on social media, we may experience feelings of low self-esteem and inadequacy. Cyberbullying, harassment, and the spread of misleading information are all factors that contribute to the aggravation of the negative psychological impacts that are associated with social media. Individuals who are going through a crucial stage of emotional and social development, such as college students, are the ones who are most impacted by these issues.

OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate if college students' use of social media significantly affects their academic achievement and emotional health.
2. To investigate how college students' mental health and social media use relate to one another and how this affects their academic performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study follows a survey approach in order to evaluate the ways in which the usage of social media by college students might have an impact on their mental health. A cross-section of male and female undergraduate students from 35 randomly chosen colleges in Kerala will be picked by the researcher using

a technique called simple random sampling. The researcher will place particular focus on taking students from public and private institutions. The total sample will consist of more than fifteen hundred and ninety students who attended school throughout the 2024–2025 academic year. Participants will be dispersed based on a number of factors, including gender, the kind of college attended, the level of education of the parents, the composition of the family, and the location of the student (urban vs rural). Using self-report questionnaires, we will assess the mental health of the students as well as their behaviours regarding the usage of social media. An investigation will be carried out by using the Arithmetic Mean to ascertain fundamental tendencies, and the 't' test to compare demographic groups with regard to emotional well-being and the utilisation of social media. Both the standard deviation and the Pearson product moment correlation will be used to evaluate the strength of the link between the usage of social media and emotional well-being. The standard deviation will be used as a measure of variability. In conclusion, we will investigate the influence that social media has on the mental health of students by using regression analysis to ascertain the extent to which people's usage of social media can accurately predict their emotional well-being.

RESULT

Table 1: College student social media use statistics

Social Media Usage Hours (per day)	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Less than 1 hour	3.2	1.1	1	5
1-3 hours	4.5	0.9	3	6
3-5 hours	5.8	1.3	4	7
More than 5 hours	6.7	1.2	5	8

Utilisation of social media on a daily basis by college students is shown in the table below. Students were divided into four categories based on their use patterns: less than one hour, one to three hours, three to five hours, and more than five hours. These categories were determined by the amount of time they spent using the device. There is a significant difference in the mean use between students who use social media for less than five hours per day and those who use it for more than five hours per day.

Table 2: Social Media Use-Based Emotional Well-Being Scores

Social Media Usage Hours (per day)	Emotional Well-Being Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum

Less than 1 hour	7.8	1.5	5	9
1-3 hours	6.2	1.8	3	8
3-5 hours	5.1	2.1	2	7
More than 5 hours	4.3	2.3	1	6

The following table provides an illustration of the mental health of students as determined by their patterns of usage of social media. A higher degree of emotional well-being is indicated by higher scores on a scale that ranges from one to ten. Based on the data, it seems that the mental health of an individual would deteriorate in proportion to the amount of time spent on social media.

Table 3: Disparities by Gender in Emotional Health and Social Media Use (t-test)

Gender	Mean Social Media Use (Hours/Day)	Mean Emotional Well-Being Score	t-value	p-value
Male	4.9	5.3	1.96	0.05
Female	4.2	6.1		

In order to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant difference between the mental health and social media usage of male and female students, a t-test was conducted, and the results of that test are shown in this table. The mean score of female students on the emotional well-being scale was higher than that of male students, and the t-value indicates that there is a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the mean scores of the two groups.

Table 4: Use of Social Media and Psychological Health: A Pearson Correlation

Variables	Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Social Media Use & Well-Being	-0.68	0.000
Age & Well-Being	0.25	0.002
Academic Performance & Well-Being	0.35	0.001

A number of variables pertaining to mental health have their Pearson correlation coefficients shown in the table below. The results show that emotional well-being tends to diminish as social media use grows, since there is a substantial negative connection (-0.68 , $p < 0.001$) between the two. A person's happiness is positively correlated with their age and academic achievement.

Table 5: Regression Analysis of Dependent Variable Emotion Well-Being

Predictor Variables	B Coefficient	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-value
Social Media Use (hours/day)	-0.85	0.14	-6.07	0.000
Age	0.32	0.09	3.56	0.001
Academic Performance (GPA)	0.58	0.13	4.46	0.000

Regression analysis was used to make predictions about emotional well-being based on factors such as age, academic accomplishment, and the amount of time spent on social media. The examination of the relationship between social media use and emotional well-being revealed a negative correlation ($B = -0.85$, $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, the relationship between well-being and age and academic accomplishment was shown to be positive. According to the negative coefficient, the use of social media is substantially connected with a lower level of emotional well-being of the individual.

DISCUSSION

The results of the research shed light on the ways in which the usage of social media by college students has negative effects on their mental health. Table 1 demonstrates that students who spend more time on social media platforms tend to display higher mean scores in social media usage. This finding is in line with the growing trends of young people engaging with digital technology. In spite of this, Table 2 reveals an important fact: the assessments of emotional well-being decrease as the usage of social media increases. Students who spend less than an hour per day on social media reported the highest levels of well-being, with a mean score of 7.8. On the other hand, students who spend more than five hours per day on social media reported the lowest levels of well-being, with a mean score of 4.3. There is more evidence that addiction to social media may have a negative impact on mental health, and this gives further proof. According to the gender differences research, female students reported a considerably greater emotional well-being than their male counterparts, despite the fact that their usage of social media was equivalent (Table 3). The fact that some students may find it easier to deal with the emotional repercussions of social media than others may be explained by gender disparities in communication patterns, social support networks, and emotional resilience. Additional explanation is given by the Pearson correlation data which demonstrates a significant negative connection (-0.68 , $p < 0.001$) between emotional well-being and the

utilisation of social media platforms. This lends credence to the notion that increased usage of social media is associated with a decline in emotional well-being. Furthermore, there was a positive association between emotional well-being and both age and academic success. This suggests that children who are older and have performed better in school are more likely to have better mental health. The regression analysis shown in Table 5 provides support for the assertion that the use of social media has a significant impact on one's emotional well-being. Upon examination of the negative coefficient (-0.85 , $p < 0.001$), it becomes evident that the emotional well-being of individuals experiences a significant fall as the number of hours spent on social media platforms grows. As additional positive predictors of emotional well-being, age and academic success were also shown to be significant. This indicates that students who are older and have higher grade point averages may be better equipped to deal with the demands that are associated with social media or have stronger social networks that they can rely on when they are in need of assistance. There is some evidence that spending an excessive amount of time on social networking sites may have harmful effects on mental health, despite the fact that connecting with friends and family and having fun on these platforms can be a wonderful way to maintain relationships. The data also suggest that gender, age, and academic success are examples of demographic factors that have the potential to reduce the correlation between the usage of social media and psychological well-being.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant impact that the use of social media has on the mental health of college students. The findings indicate that the emotional well-being of students is negatively connected to the amount of time they spend on social media, with higher levels of social media participation being associated with lower levels of well-being evaluations. Additionally, it was shown that academic success, gender, and age were major factors that influenced the emotional well-being of individual participants. Students who were older or who had achieved academic achievement were more likely to suggest that they were in excellent emotional health. Additionally, female students reported greater levels of emotional well-being whereas male students reported lower levels. One of the primary objectives of this study is to identify a solution that strikes a balance between the amount of time students spend on social media and the emotional well-being they experience. This research also emphasizes the significance of establishing intervention strategies and promoting awareness. In order to help children in taking care of their life online, adopting constructive habits while using social media, and connecting with emotional support, it is recommended that schools and mental health practitioners consider the possibility of creating digital wellness projects. There are a number of possible topics for future research to focus on in respect to the association between social media use and mental health. Some of these areas include the kind of content, the influence of peer relationships, and the psychological processes that are driving participation on social media.

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