

# Social Media Use, Anxiety and Depression among Adolescents

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**Abstract – In the changed scenario, increase in the level of anxiety and depressive symptoms in adolescents may be due to social media use. In this background researcher intended to study that how social media use could cause in increasing anxiety and depressive symptoms in adolescents by using Descriptive survey research design. In this study, included 70 participants (late adolescents) residing in urban Bangalore set up, consisting of 35 boys and 35 girls. The required systematic data was gathered by using semi structured interview, anxiety scale (self-analysis form), Beck's depression inventory and social networking status scale. From the results, it is found that there is no significant influence of social media use on the level of on anxiety and depressive symptoms among adolescents.**

**Keywords: Social Media, Anxiety, Depression, Internet, Young Adult, Social Network Addiction, Social Networking Sites.**

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## INTRODUCTION

The term social media is usually used to describe social networking sites such as: Facebook, twitter – online social networking sites that enable people to have contact with others through these media networks

Now a day the most common activity of children and adolescents is to use social media network sites for various reasons. Websites that allow social interactions is considered as social media site, including social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Myspace; virtual worlds and gaming sites such as Second life, Club Penguin, and the Sims; video sites such as Netflix, amazon prime and YouTube; and blogs. In recent years, these sites have been potentially growing as they offer today's youth a portal for entertainment and communication. It is important for parents to become more conscious of the nature of social media sites that their children use as not all of them provide healthy environment.

The explosion in social networking sites such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat are widely regarded as an exciting opportunity, especially for youth to express themselves. Researches have shown that engaging in various forms of social media as a routine activity has benefited children and adolescents by enhancing their communication, social connection, and even technical skills. Multiple opportunities are offered

daily on social media sites and also to connect with friends, classmates, and people with shared interests.

The use of technology by many parents is incredibly well and they feel comfortable and capable with many applications, programs and online venues that their children and adolescents are using. Nevertheless, some parents still find it difficult to relate to their digitally savvy youngsters. Such parents may lack a basic understanding of these new forms of socialization, which are integral to their children's lives as they do not have the time needed or technical abilities to keep pace with their children in the everyday changing Internet world. To add on, these parents often lack a basic understanding that kids' online lives are an extension of their offline lives. As a result, knowledge and technical skill gap between parents and youth creates an disconnect in their world together. Hence, the objective of this study is to determine the influence of social media use on the level of anxiety and depression among adolescents.

## STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

To study the influence of social media network sites use on anxiety and depression among adolescents.

## OBJECTIVES

- To assess the level of anxiety among adolescents those who use social media network sites.
- To assess the level of depression among adolescents those who use social media network sites.
- To examine the influence of social media network use on anxiety and depression among adolescents.

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION:

- Anxiety is an emotion characterized by an unpleasant state of inner turmoil, often accompanied by nervous behaviour, such as somatic complaints, pacing back and forth, and rumination as measured by IPAT anxiety scale (Self Analysis form)
- Depression is a state of low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person's behaviour, feelings, thoughts and sense of well-being as measured by Beck depression inventory.

## HYPOTHESES

- Social media use increases anxiety symptoms among adolescents.
- Social media use increases the depressive symptoms among adolescents.

## METHOD

Methodology includes the research design, participants, inclusion and exclusion criteria, sampling, measures and the statistical procedure used.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

Descriptive survey research design was used to examine the influence of social media network sites use on the level of anxiety and depression among adolescents. To depict the participants in an accurate way, descriptive research study is designed. It is all about describing the behavioural phenomena of people who take part in the study.

## SAMPLING DESIGN

Cluster sampling design was used to select and classify the participants. A total of 70 participants were included in the present study. Cluster sampling is a technique in which a cluster of participants are identified and included in the sample that represent the population. In this sampling plan, the total

population is divided into groups (known as clusters) and a simple random sample of the groups is selected.

**Participant details:** A total of 70 participants (late adolescents) residing in urban Bangalore set up, consisting of 35 boys and 35 girls aged between 16 to 21yrs.

### ▪ Inclusion criteria:

- **Age**—late adolescents aged between 16-21yrs.
- **Area**— urban Bangalore population was sampled.
- Adolescents using social media for at least 1 year.

### ▪ Exclusion criteria:

- New social media users were not included
- Population aged below 16yrs and above 21yrs (i.e. early adolescents) are excluded.
- Other areas apart from urban Bangalore.
- Adolescents suffering Psychotic symptoms.

### • Measures:

- **Semi-structured Interview:** Developed by the researcher to elicit the information on demographic details such as name, age, number of social media profiles, etc. and other relevant information in neutralizing several confounding variables.

- **Anxiety Scale (Self Analysis Form):** Developed by Cattell R.B.; Krug, S.E.; Scheier, I.H in 1976. The IPAT is a brief and valid questionnaire scale, measuring anxiety levels in adults and young adults. The test is in questionnaire form, and can be self-administered and it takes only five-to-ten minutes. It gives an accurate appraisal of anxiety levels, supplementing clinical diagnosis, and also facilitating all kinds of research or mass screening operations where very little diagnostic or assessment time can be spent with each examinee. The Ages ranges from 14 and over (Both Children and Adults). It can be administered Individually or in Group. It is a Non-Projective Personality test.

- **Beck's depression inventory:** Developed by Beck A, Beck J, Jolly J, & Steer R in 2005. The **Beck Youth Inventories 2nd**

**Edition** has five self-report scales that may be used separately or in combination to assess a child's experience of depression, anger, anxiety, behaviour, disruptive and self-concept. The inventories are intended to be used with children and adolescents between the ages of 7 and 18. The inventory possess an adequate psychometric properties to use in researches.

- **Social Networking Status Scale:** Developed by Arslan and Kırık in 2013, is used to measure social media addiction of the young people. The reliability and validity tests of the scale has been conducted besides it has also ethics and convergence factors. The scale is used as the data collection tool in this study consisting of 25 items. Confirmatory factor analysis and exploratory factor analysis are conducted, and item-total correlations, item-remainder correlations and item-distinctiveness values are calculated separately.

- **Statistical analysis:**

To verify the hypotheses of the present study, an independent sample t-test was calculated along with simple descriptive statistics. The mean of the two independent groups have been compared to see whether both the variables are significant or not as influenced by the independent variable.

### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to study the influence of social media use on anxiety and depression among adolescents. The research was conducted on a group of 70 adolescents aged 16 to 21yrs in urban Bangalore. It was hypothesized that the Social media use increases the level of anxiety among adolescents and the Social media use increases the level of depression among adolescents. To verify the hypotheses of the present study, an independent sample t-test was calculated along with simple descriptive statistics. The mean of the two independent groups have been compared to see whether both the variables are significant or not as influenced by the independent variable. The results were analysed as follows

**Table 1 shows the mean score, SD and t statistic on the level of anxiety of two groups' i.e. Low social media users and high social media users.**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	T-test	Significance
Low Social media users	36	7.583	1.1802	68	.952	.34
High social media users	34	7.824	.9035			

Table 1, shows the number, mean, SD, df and t-test in anxiety. The anxiety results indicate that the mean score of high social media users is high (Mean =7.82, SD =0.90) when compared to low social media users (Mean =7.58, SD =1.18). The results of the t statistics indicate that there is no difference in the level of anxiety as influenced by the social media use (t = -.95), therefore there is no significant difference on the level of anxiety as influenced by their social media use among adolescents. Hence the hypothesis which states Social media use increases the level of anxiety among adolescents is not accepted.

**Table 2 shows the mean score, SD and t statistic on the level of depression of two groups i.e. Low social media users and high social media users.**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	T-test	Significance
Low Social media users	36	20.92	12.385	68	.663	.50
High social media users	34	19.06	10.960			

Table 2, shows the number, mean, SD, df and t-test in depression. The depression results indicate that the mean score of high social media users is low (Mean =19.06, SD =10.96) when compared to low social media users (Mean=20.92, SD=12.38). The results of the t statistics indicate that there is no difference in the level of anxiety as influenced by the social media use (t = .66), therefore there is no significant difference on the level of depression as influenced by their social media use among adolescents. Hence the hypothesis which states Social media use increases the level of depression among adolescents is not accepted.

According to a study conducted by the University of Melbourne, it was seen that social media can help people who suffer from anxiety and depression as they felt socially disconnected. It was found that social media could also be used to identify those with mental health issues. Both in terms of

identifying people who might be struggling with depression and anxiety and things like that, and using some of the same tools (i.e. social media) that are there to change some of those behaviours.

There was another interesting finding that those with social anxiety seemed to benefit from being able to connect with other people in a way that is less anxiety-provoking. At the University of Illinois in the US, researchers found that undergraduate students with high levels of test anxiety that sought support from their online friends prior to a simulated exam and read their messages resulted in reduced anxiety levels by 21 percent. A new study has found that reading supportive comments, likes and private messages from Facebook friends just before taking an exam may help anxious students reduce their nervousness and improve test scores. It was found that for some people, social media was actually very beneficial as they reported feeling socially connected to others.

In reference to table 3, shows the number, mean, SD, df and t-test in depression. The depression results indicate that the mean score of high social media users is low ( $Mean=19.06$ ,  $SD=10.96$  &  $df = 67.72$ ) when compared to low social media users ( $Mean= 20.92$ ,  $SD=12.38$  &  $df= 68$ )

The results of the t statistics indicate that there is no difference in the level of depression as influenced by the social media use ( $t = .66$ ), therefore it is not significant.

Founder Jayne Hardy of depression support organisation The Blurt Foundation through a campaign found that social media use can play a useful role in a person's wider support network and can help them feel better and less isolated - especially for those who struggle to make and maintain any kind of relationships or who find it difficult to leave their homes.

Hence, the group disapproves both the hypotheses since they are not significantly different. Therefore, social media use doesn't not increase the level of anxiety or depression among adolescents.

Several factors might be the reason for the research to not be significant. Such as;

- The sample size being small.
- It focused on urban population.
- Gender differences were not considered and so on.

It is found that as with most things, social media too can have both positive and negative impact on our wellbeing. It can make people pressured or harassed and on some occasions it helps share their

experiences in a helpful way with others who do not have or who understand depression and anxiety.

## CONCLUSIONS:

- There is no significant difference on the level of anxiety as influenced by social media use among adolescents
- There is no significant difference on the level of depression as influenced by social media use among adolescents

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