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Effect of Social Media Use on Learning and well-Being of Secondary School Students: A descriptive Survey Research

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Abstract: Social media has been an integral part of the daily life of school going students. It can facilitate communication, access to educational content, collaboration with peers and a voice for self-expression. On the contrary, excessive unregulated use can also interfere with study time, disturb sleep, increase distraction and affect well-being emotionally along with physical and social. The current study explored the association of social media uses with learning and well-being in secondary school students. It was a descriptive survey design. A semi-structured questionnaire administered to 100 respondents provided the data. Data were analyzed by using frequency and percentage. The findings showed that 40% of respondents used social media for 3-5 hours per day and 25% used it for more than five hours. 35% of respondents agreed that entertainment was the most common purpose of use and 25% respondents used it for communication. While 65% of respondents agreed that social media helped them in learning, others reported that it distracted them from studies. Half of the respondents perceived a positive influence on well-being, whereas 30% perceived a negative influence. The findings suggest that social media should not be treated as either wholly beneficial or wholly harmful. Its educational and psychological value varies/determines how long, how often, what content and student self-regulation. The article recommends healthy digital consumption with balanced digital habits; school-based digital well-being programmes; parental and teacher guidance and purposeful use of social media as a learning tool.

Keywords: Secondary school students, social media use, learning, wellbeing, adolescents, digital habits, academic engagement.

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a stage of development characterized by significant changes in cognition, emotions, social interactions, and academics that young people may often encounter. Secondary school is the time when students are required to maintain growing academic expectations, fulfil a personal identity, interact with peers and determine future educational and occupational pathways.

During this time frame, students have come to rely on digital technology and social media as a mainstay part of their daily life. Applications like WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and some more are becoming a mode to communicate with others, entertain ourselves through various channels of art streaming within the platform, meet new people for holding meaningful conversations or information seeking; you name it from creativity-building activities to academic performance booster. For a lot of students, those platforms fall within their academic environment as well, they are part of how students receive information, talk to friends and occupy their leisure time. The increasing use of social media has raised an extremely complicated educational question. At the one end, students will have tools for writing code 24x7, instructional videos during lessons, learning resources to locate, selecting topics to discuss about assignments among classmates and sharing notes and

online sessions and new skills. Social media aids rapid access to information and learning beyond classroom situations. It can also encourage quiet student engagement in class discussions, foster collaboration among peers and offer more independence for learning. Alternatively, social media behaviors can disrupt our attention, shorten study duration, plunge us into multitasking mode, and subject students to distracting or emotionally draining content. Things such as notifications, scrolling for hours, comparison with other people, online fights, and using phones at night can influence focus, sleep patterns and mood while children arrive to study in time. The effect of social media can thus not be measured in the hours online alone. What you want to do and how you use it also becomes important. The learning experience of a student who may watch a mathematics tutorial short, be in a class group or consume current affairs content for the same amount of time as another student scrolling through entertainment content will differ. Likewise, engaging by talking or generating a utility might yield a totally different result from passive consumption. Moreover, the literature reviewed in the primary study suggested both beneficial and harmful associations between social media use and wellbeing of school students. Although, it can provide social support and expression, therefore abusive utilization would be associated with stress, anxiety, sleep disturbance, low self-esteem and social comparison (Keles, B.,

McCrae, N., & Grealish, A. (2020) & O’Keeffe, G. S., & Clarke-Pearson, K. (2011)).

In the Indian context, the matter is more crucial because access to smart phones and low-cost internet have become widely available. Students could use the very same device for school work, entertainment, communication with family members, gaming and social networking. Unfortunately, these converge in a way that is confusing to students and families alike about the nature of productive vs. distracting by screen time; this paper used descriptive survey method. This study reports findings drawn from a large sample of secondary school students examining the relationships between social media use, learning and student wellbeing. The research article does not establish the study’s conclusions as direct outcomes of social media based solely on students’ self-reported patterns and perceptions. This is a crucial distinction because learning and well-being are shaped by multiple factors - including family environment, school climate, academic pressure, personality traits e.g., optimism, sleep habits, peer relationships and access to support.

2. Theoretical Background

This study is informed by Social Learning Theory and its Uses, and Gratifications Theory. Social Learning Theory explains that young people may learn behaviours, attitudes, communication styles, and problem-solving approaches by observing others. On social media, students can observe peers, teachers, experts, influencers, and online communities. Such observation may support learning when students engage with educational role models and reliable content. However, it may also encourage unhelpful comparisons, imitation of risky online behaviour, or unrealistic expectations when students repeatedly view idealised images and performances. Gratifications Theory helps in explaining why students choose to use social media. Adolescents may use it for information, entertainment, social interaction, emotional expression, belongingness, relaxation, or identity development. These different motives can lead to different outcomes. Information seeking and academic interaction may support learning, whereas excessive entertainment use during study hours may interfere with academic tasks. The theory therefore supports the idea that social media effects are not uniform. The meaning of use, rather than use alone, should be considered while interpreting students’ learning experiences and well-being.

This article also highlights the concept of digital self-regulation. Digital self-regulation consists of a student having the capabilities to manage notifications, set time limits, choose suitable content, abstain from unnecessary multitasking and protect sleep/study routines. Students who can manage their usage might be better able to use online resources without letting social media take over their focus. This means that schools and

families should stop worrying about how to limit screen time but rather how to create educated, well-rounded and responsible digital life habits.

3. Review of Related Literature

Sharma and Gera (2025), “The study was regarding Socialmedia and Adolescent Development. The study showed that social media influences adolescents’ emotions, identity, and relationships in both positive and challenging ways.”

Maurya, Dhillon, Sharma, and Kumar (2024), “The study was about Social Media Use and Psychological Well-Being. Excessive social media use was found to be associated with depressive symptoms and lower psychological well-being among adolescents.”

Suryadatta Institute Survey (2024), “The research was about Screen Use, Learning, and Well-Being. Digital platforms supported access to learning material, but prolonged screen time affected concentration and well-being.”

Dharejo et al. (2023), “The study was about Social Media and Adolescent Well-Being.

The review found that social media aids learning and communication, while overuse may increase stress, loneliness, and low self-esteem.”

Keles, McCrae, and Grealish (2020), “The research was conducted on Social media and Mental Health. Problematic or frequent social media use was commonly related to depression, anxiety, and psychological distress among adolescents.”

Otchie and Pedaste (2020), “Social Media and Psychological Well-Being

The study highlighted social support and self-expression as benefits, but linked uncontrolled use with anxiety, stress, and emotional concerns.”

O’Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011), “The study was conducted on Social media and Adolescent Health. Social media supported learning and connection, but also created risks such as cyberbullying, privacy issues, and unhealthy online behavior”

The reviewed studies highlighted both positive and negative side of social media for adolescents. It is useful for learning, communication, self-expression and social connection on the other hand high usage impacts on students’ concentration, distraction from studies, and mental health etc. Overall conclusion of literature suggests that students should use social media in a meaningful way with a clear purpose.

4. Objectives and Hypotheses of the study

4.1 Objectives

1. To examine the pattern and extent of social media use among secondary school students.

- To identify the major purposes for which students use social media.
- To study students' perceptions of the role of social media in learning and access to educational information.
- To examine students' perception of social media as a source of distraction from studies.
- To assess the perceived influence of social media on students' well-being.
- To suggest educational measures for promoting healthy, balanced and purposeful use of social media.

4.2 Research Questions

- What are the patterns and extent of social media use among secondary school students?
- For what major purposes do secondary school students use social media?
- How do secondary school students perceive the role of social media in learning and accessing educational information?
- To what extent do secondary school students perceive social media as a distraction from their studies?
- How do secondary school students perceive the influence of social media on their well-being?
- What educational measures can help secondary school students use social media in a healthy, balanced and purposeful way?

4.3 Hypotheses

Because the available data were analysed through frequencies and percentages, the hypotheses below are stated as guiding hypotheses for future inferential testing. The present descriptive analysis does not include group-wise mean scores, standard deviations, or tests of significance; therefore, these hypotheses are discussed conceptually rather than accepted or rejected statistically.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the extent of social media use and students' perceived learning outcomes.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the extent of social media use and students' perceived academic distraction.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between social media use and students' perceived well-being.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in perceived learning and well-being between students who use social media primarily for educational purposes and students who use it primarily for entertainment.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

This study is conducted through descriptive survey. Self made quantitative tool was used for data collection. This design was selected by the investigator as per the objectives of the study, main aim was to describe existing patterns of usage of social

media and perceptions of secondary school students and its relations with learning and well-being.

5.2 Sampling

The present study included 100 respondents selected through convenience sampling. The source document also reported an equal male-female distribution across the two groups. Participants were contacted through online networks, including WhatsApp, Instagram, and personal contacts. The respondent age range was reported as 15-22 years. Although the article is framed around secondary school students, this age range includes adolescents. This should be kept in mind when generalizing the findings specifically to secondary school students and this is the most crucial phase i.e. adolescence phase.

5.3 Tool and Data Collection

Data was collected by using a self-made structured quantitative questionnaire with multiple choice options. Investigator collected the data via online Google Form. The questionnaire assessed social media use, learning habits, academic engagement, distraction and social connection, sleep, stress self-confidence and wellbeing. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were aware that the information shared by them, would be kept confidential and would be utilized only for academic purpose. Characteristics data were extracted and organized in Microsoft Excel and analyzed through frequencies and percentages. The questionnaire, which relied on self-reported insights, did not contain confirmed academic grades, specialty mental health assessments or device screen-time records.

5.4 Data Analysis

The analysis was based on frequency and percentage distributions. The analysis focused on five key indicators that are present in the dataset (i.e. (i) frequency of use, (ii) main purpose of using social media, (iii) perceived help with learning, (iv) distraction from studying and (v) perceived effect on well-being). This method presents a snapshot of the opinions expressed by respondents. However, it does not measure the strength of association among variables or test for statistical significance in those observed differences.

6. Results and Analysis

Results displayed in tables and graphs, based on frequency and percentage. . Interpretation of any conclusions drawn from these responses must be viewed with caution, as they are self-reported outcomes in a participating sample.

Table1: Daily Social Media Use

Daily Social Media Use	Frequency	Percentage
< 1 hours	10	10%
1-3 hours	25	25%
3-5 hours	40	40%

Daily Social Media Use	Frequency	Percentage
> 5 hours	25	25%
Total	100	100%

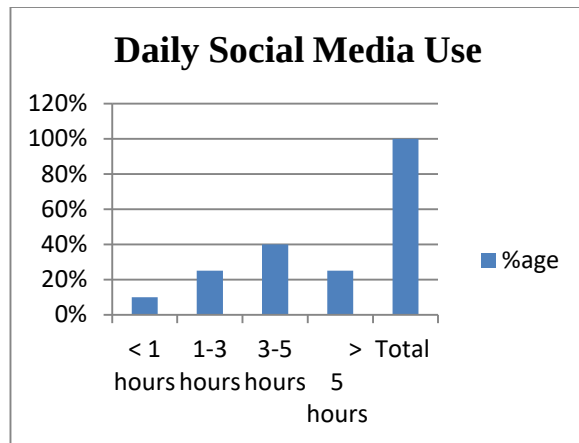


Figure: 1 Daily Social Media Use

As presented in Table 1, 40% of the respondents were on social media for at least 3–5 hours a day. Another 25% said they spent more than 5 hours in a day on social media. According to this, 65% of the respondents used more than 3 hours daily on social media. 10 % respondents responded that they used it for less than 1 hour. This shows that for large number of students social media is a big part of their routine life. This big number does not explain that they are using it as productive or destructive, it means that nobody knows that they are using social media for learning, academic purpose, entertainment, communication or combinations of both. Overall, students have to control on their digital habits so that social media can be utilized in positive way, otherwise high daily exposure may lead to increased levels of distraction, broken study hours and late-night use.

Table 2: Primary Purpose of Social Media Use

Primary purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Educational activities	20	20%
Entertainment	35	35%
Communication with friends and family	25	25%
Both education and entertainment	20	20%
Total	100	100%

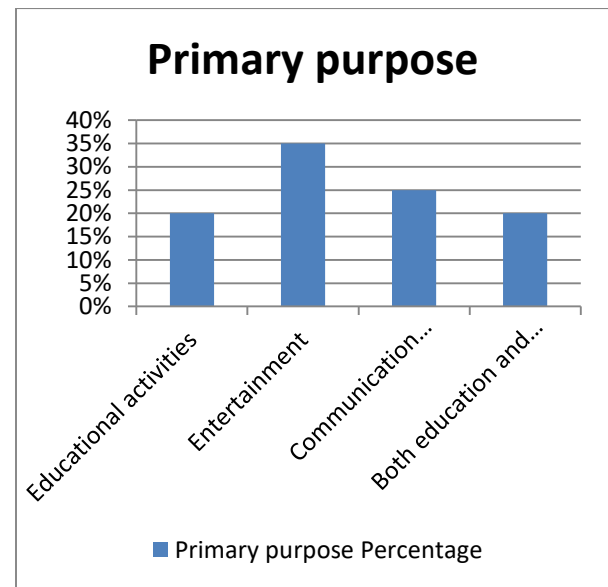


Figure 2: Primary Purpose of Social Media Use

As presented in Table 2, entertainment was the most common reason for using social media i.e. 35%, 25% reported communication with friends and family, 20% were for educational purposes only, and 20% reported a mixed use of education and entertainment. Social media is not mainly used as a formal learning platform by most respondents, these findings indicate On the other hand, 40% indicated that what they streamed was educational-based or a combination of both. This indicates that schools can direct students to utilize in a more intentional manner by, or instance, sharing educational channels that have been curated, prompts for discussion, study resources and collaboration opportunities.

Table 3: Perceived Contribution to Learning

Response	Frequency	%age
Strongly Agree (SA)	25	25%
Agree(A)	40	40%
Neutral(N)	15	15%
Disagree(D)	15	15%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	5	5%
Total	100	100%

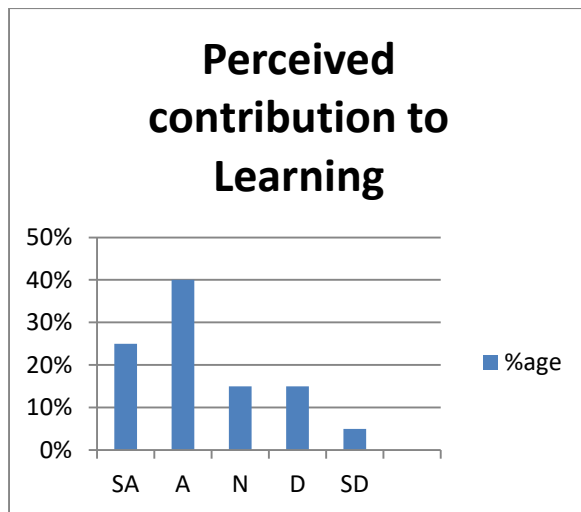


Figure 3: Perceived Contribution to Learning

As presented in Table 3, 65% of respondents agree or strongly agree social media helps them in learning. This result suggests that many students see value in the online learning materials and interaction with peers. Students also use social media to watch explanatory videos, clarify their doubts, find out information about knowledge, stay updated with educational pages and skill development or search for common friends. This finding aligns with the perspective that social media may facilitate a shift in learning beyond school hours, provided students are using high-quality content and do so with an explicit academic purpose. Meanwhile, 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 15% took a neutral stance. Such responses remind us that not all students experience educational usefulness equally. Many students will not know where to look for trustable learning material (as an example Engage Learning), or may find it difficult to access, or may have only ever used social media in an entertainment capacity. And some of the shift will depend on the subject area, quality of content, digital literacy skills among participants and access to fast speed internet — not all educators or students know how to avoid rechecking posts or what constitutes distracted behaviour. So, providing access does not equate to producing meaningful learning; it's something schools should keep in mind.

Table 4 Perceived Distraction from Studies

Response	Frequency	%age
Strongly Agree(SA)	30	30%
Agree(A)	35	35%
Neutral(N)	10	10%
Disagree(D)	20	20%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	5	5%
Total	100	100%

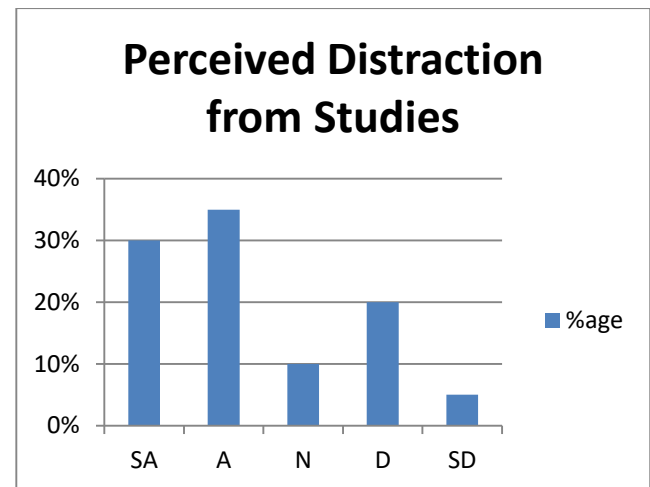


Figure 4: Perceived Distraction from Studies

As presented in Table 4, 65% of students strongly agreed or agreed that social media distracts them from studies. This percentage is the same as the percentage who found social media useful for learning. The two results should not be seen as contradictory. The same platforms can provide academic support and create distraction, depending on the timing, content, and manner of use. The findings also show a clear concern about academic distraction. A student may use YouTube to understand a topic but may also be diverted by recommended entertainment videos. Similarly, a class group may be useful for announcements but may become a source of non-academic messages and interruptions. The result demonstrates the need to manage attention. Frequent notifications, message-attending during homework time, switching from one app to another, scrolling between break can interrupt the continuity required for deep learning. Secondary school students often require prolonged periods of concentration for reading, solving problems, and writing which means that repeated interruption of study time may compromise the quality of study even when total hours allocated to studying are reasonable. Families and schools could support students by promoting designated times for study free from social media, the control of notifications, a device-free bedtime routine, and limits that can realistically be established.

Table 5: Perceived Influence on Well-Being

Perceived impact on well-being	Frequency	Percentage
Very positive	15	15%
Positive	35	35%
Neutral	20	20%
Negative	20	20%
Very negative	10	10%
Total	100	100%

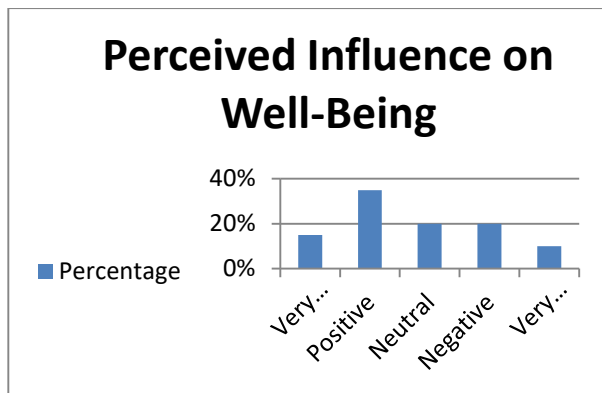


Figure 5: Perceived Influence on Well-Being

As presented in Table 5, 50% of the respondents perceived an overall positive or very positive impact of social media on their well being. This might indicate the positive function of social media in maintain friendships, family communication, sense of sharing experiences, and including gaining social support and emotionally expressing themselves. For a sizable proportion of the student body, especially those at home alone with limited social support networks, online connection can help to diminish isolation and offer the opportunity for social belonging. Meanwhile, 30% described the impact on well-being as negative or very negative; and a fifth describe it as neutral. This suggests that a significant proportion of students are likely to be emotionally burdened by social media use. Things such as social comparison, fear of missing out, online pressure, cyberbullying (give and receive), hateful / negative comments being part of the game that makes you more exposed to verbal attack and harassment, less sleep or the inability to disconnect. These results align with source literature, which indicates mixed effects and highlights that excessive or uncontrolled use is associated more closely with lower well-being (Keles et al., 2020; Twenge & Campbell, 2018).

7. Discussion

Objective 1: To identify the pattern and extent of social media usage among secondary school students, the study describes how students experience social media as a learning tool as well as a distraction. These mixed patterns are really important for both teachers and parents. Instructing students social media is a boon or bane, leave it to the concluding few lively sentences in exit paragraphs of a blog page — sinks their chances. Instead, they must have an awareness of how their choices produce outcomes. Focusing them to get tutorials, join academic groups, follow quality educational channels and discuss over assignments can enhance learning. However, uncontrolled and un-calculated usage at the time of online classes or on the verge of going to sleep will disturb concentration levels, hinder emotional equilibrium etc.

Objective 2: To identify the major purposes for which students use social media, the daily use split is also worth mentioning here. As 65% of respondents said that they spent > 3 hours a day on social media platform the environment it creates will undoubtedly influence student lives in dramatic ways. It can influence what time they go to bed and how frequently they shift responsibilities or how much they are in contact with others, plus the free time left for reading, exercising, engaging with family and real-life friends. In this paper we stop short of confirming direct causation between hours' use and adverse effects. But given that so many young people are online every day, this provides a genuine societal reason for schools to hold conversations with students about time management and digital well-being.

Objective 3: To study the perception of students regarding learning and access of educational information through social media. 65% respondents responded that social media was useful and we know that students already utilize digital practices outside of school, which means schools can use these perspectives to enhance pedagogies. Rather than staying away from the social media, teachers might be looking at it with caution as one other means of communication and learning. You could use a social media more productively by sharing mini concept videos and quick revision notes; announcing competitions/scholarships, starting groups that allow common conversations, posting links to the veritable sources. Such practices ought to be curated, defined and with limits. Groups do not replace classroom teaching, and students should not be online all of the time. Digital literacy is not limited to news consumption, but also includes source evaluation discussions as well as misinformation, copyright and privacy issues — and even tone in how people communicate online.

Objective 4: To examine the perception of students' for social media as a source of distraction from studies. The observation regarding distractions was similarly mentioned by 65% of respondents and indicates that the problem of self-regulation difficulties is recognized by learners in an environment well-known for being extremely engaging. Self awareness is a double-edged sword, and so it could be wielded for good. Learners can create independent digital study plans, stow phones during focused work, maybe using timers or app settings designed to prevent screen usage at certain times of night and exclude less than essential notifications on devices or social media minutes before bed. Workshops on Attention, Being Habitual, Cyber Safety and Sleep hygiene can be organized in schools. Parents can facilitate these habits by modeling healthy phone use themselves and upon open dialogue to create rules together instead of solely through punishment or monitoring.

Objective 5: To assess the perceived influence of social media on students' well-being. The wellbeing outcomes highlight the importance of a balanced approach. For many people under the age of 20, social media provides a means of keeping in touch with friends and also getting emotional support from peers. Thus, fully blocking access is either not possible or even welcome. Equally those students who experience stress, anxiety, depression, sleep problems or feel pressurised to present a 'perfect' image of themselves online also require support.

Objective 6: To suggest educational measures for promoting healthy, balanced, and purposeful use of social media. Counsellors and teachers need to be prepared to talk about online experiences objectively. Students should learn where to go for help in cases of cyberbullying, harassment, harmful content or problem use. It is possible to include topics like social comparison, privacy and boundaries in mental health awareness programmes and make a distinction between online popularity and individual worth.

8. Educational Implications

- Schools should integrate digital literacy and digital well-being into the regular school days as a part of educational activities, rather than addressing the issue when a problem arises.
- Teachers can suggest credible educational channels, websites, and online resources will help students learn to use social media with a purpose.
- It also argues for real-world skills, shown to help students manage attention such as controlling notifications, having breaks when they are studying through short bursts of block time, and limiting screen time prior to going to bed.
- Parents need to be in the position to talk openly about use of social media with their kids, set sensible routines and demonstrate moderate digital behaviour themselves.
- All schools need to have services that address issues of cyberbullying, comparison, competition and associated emotional strain, privacy and help seeking.
- Policies need to encourage the right use of class groups, and discourage unnecessary messaging during study hours or at night.
- Future school interventions need to assess not only screen time, but also purpose of use, type of content, sleep and degree of academic engagement as well as the emotional experiences students reported.

9. Limitations: The study has following limitations:

- First limitation is small sample size of 100 respondents and the use of convenience sampling. The findings

cannot therefore be generalised to all secondary school students.

- Second, in this study information was self-reported meaning that answers might have been influenced by memory and social desirability or the difference in understanding of the questions.
- Third, only descriptive statistics is used in this study. It did not use validated psychiatric scales, academic grades, screen-time logs or regressions for aggregation in association analysis.
- Fourth, the reported respondent age range of 15-22 years secondary school age and extends beyond the usual secondary school age range.

This means the findings should be interpreted as reference point only with respect to secondary school students that may be near to adolescents.

10. Suggestions for further Research

Same type of study may be conducted by using a larger sample and more representative school based sample. Researchers can compare rural and urban students, government and private schools, gender groups, and different age levels. They can use validated instruments for social media addiction, sleep quality, self esteem, anxiety, depression, academic engagement, and life satisfaction. In such type of researches, longitudinal research would be valuable as it could analyse whether fluctuations in social media are subsequently followed by fluctuations in learning and wellbeing over time. There may also be studies that will deal with these specific platforms in isolation, as the educational and psychological experience of WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube and short-video platforms can vary dramatically.

11. Conclusion

The study concludes that social media has a significant and continually increasing role in the lives of secondary school students. In this phase of adolescence, students are learning to study well, building social connections, growing emotionally mature, coming into their own identity and exercising independent decision-making. Hence, the use of media may significantly impact their academic involvement and wellness.

The findings point to social media being a double edged sword. At the one side, it will provide secondary school students with access to educational content and information communication platforms, availability of peer collaboration, and independent learning opportunities. That only a 65% of respondents who thought that social media is a helpful tool for study. While on the other side, this same proportion said it distracts them from their studies, indicating social media could be an ever-declining educational benefit in being used too frequently to access spontaneous entertainment-aimed content. In line with that,

while most of the participants had a positive impact in their well being and half of students with adverse outcomes even focused on dimensions like mental pressure, decreased ability to concentrate, disturbed sleep, and comparisons etc.

The study, therefore, notes that it is less about the amount of time secondary school pupils spend on social media but rather the reasons why they are using social media and their method for so doing. Beyond self-regulation: Digital discipline, or how to give students the tools to critically engage with the world and act judiciously on their devices. It is important to motivate them to use the social media for meaningful learning, creation, communication and providing access to reliable educational resources while discarding topics which cause scrolling, online engagement without a strong rationale and surface social media contents that negatively affect their attention or well being.

Secondary social media education should be a co-operative responsibility of schools, parents and teachers. Schools might conduct digital literacy programmes, awareness sessions, counselling and classroom discussions on the correct online behaviour. Parents can urge students to limit their screen time, they should fit this around studies, sleep and physical activity and family, but easier said than done.

So, social media cannot only be vilified as the great distraction or embraced without scrutiny. This can be an effective tool for learning among high school students but with the right oversight, understanding and self-regulation. The need to be a good digital citizen should therefore be regarded as an integral part of the personal development of teenagers, and should take place in school.

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