

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Dissertation submitted to



The IIHMR University, Jaipur

for the partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

in

Hospital and Health Management

by

Dhriti Paresh Karia

Under the Supervision and Guidance of

Dr. Kajal Sitlani

2023

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled “**Impact of social media on mental and physical health.**” is the bonafide record of my original research work. I declare that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been duly acknowledged in the text.

(Signature)

Name of Student- Dhriti Karia

Date

COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Dhriti Paresh Karia in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA (Hospital and Health Management) from the IIHMR University, Jaipur has successfully completed her internship at Indian Institute of Health Management and Research during February 20th - May 19th, 2023.

Place:

Preceptor/Head of the Organization

Date:

Name of the organization

CERTIFICATE FROM FACULTY GUIDE AND SCHOOL DEAN

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled “**Impact of social media on mental and physical health.**” is a record of the research work undertaken by **Dhriti Karia** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA Hospital and Health Management from the IIHMR University, Jaipur under my guidance and supervision and her approach to the research study has been sincere, scientific, and analytical.

Faculty Guide
IIHMR University, Jaipur

Date

School Dean
IIHMR University, Jaipur

Date

Abstract

The globe has undergone several evolutions over the years. Of course, every advancement has had a distinct impact on how the world has continued to evolve after that time. Today, almost every aspect of life as we know has undergone a good change as a result of the recognition that modernization is not only desirable but also essential. Social networking is without a doubt one of the best and most amazing inventions to date.

This dissertation explores the negative effects of social media on mental and physical health. Social media platforms have become an integral part of modern life. The most popular and commonly used social media platform in the present time are, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, etc. Social media has the potential to have both positive and negative effects on them. While, social media offers numerous benefits and opportunities, there is growing concern about the potential negative impact on mental and physical health. Deterioration in mental health as well as physical health is the side effects stemming from social media overuse. This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the detrimental impact of social media, focusing on its effects on mental health, including loneliness, social comparison, addiction, and cyberbullying, as well as its influence on physical health, such as sedentary behaviour, body image issues, and sleep disturbances.

This abstract provides a comprehensive review of the literature on the detrimental effects of social media use on individuals' well-being, encompassing both mental and physical health domains. The research question that will be addressed in the study are: the relationship between social media usage and mental health. It examines how excessive reliance on virtual interactions can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation, despite being more connected than ever before. Furthermore, the addictive nature of social media platforms is explored, highlighting the potential risks of internet, addiction disorder and its association with anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances. The section concludes with an analysis of cyberbullying and its psychological consequences, emphasizing the need to address this growing concern.

The study also focuses on the impact of social media on physical health". It discusses how excessive screen time and sedentary behaviour contribute to a decline in physical activity levels, leading to a more sedentary lifestyle and increased risk of obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes.

Throughout the dissertation, various research studies, surveys, and academic literature are analysed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the negative effects of social media on mental and physical health.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have supported and guided me throughout my dissertation journey.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the faculty members of **Indian Institute of Healthcare Management and Research, Jaipur** for their valuable inputs and contributions. Their extensive knowledge and intellectual guidance have significantly enriched my understanding of the subject matter.

I'd like to thank **Dr P.R. Sodani** (President, IIHMR University, Jaipur) and **Dr (Col) Mahendra Kumar** (Professor, Proctor and Dean, IIHMR University, Jaipur) for the opportunity he gave me to pursue this research.

I am deeply grateful to my faculty guide and mentor, **Dr Kajal Sitlani** for their unwavering support, invaluable guidance, and constant encouragement. Their expertise, patience, and insightful feedback have been instrumental in shaping the direction and quality of this research. I am truly fortunate to have had such a dedicated mentor.

I am also grateful to my colleagues and fellow researchers who have provided me with valuable insights and fruitful discussions. Their diverse perspectives have helped shape the development of my ideas and arguments.

I would also, like to acknowledge the participants who took part in this study, as their willingness to share their experiences and perspectives has been crucial to the success of this research. Their contributions have lent authenticity and depth to the findings presented in this dissertation.

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1. Introduction

The field of digital technology has undergone many remarkable changes and innovation creating a development in this modern period, transforming the way the users communicate, interact, and pass on the information. At the core of this change lies the social media platforms with dynamic and rigorously changing environment that has enormous impacts on various aspects of our personal, professional, and social lives. As stated in the world dictionary of Merriam-Webster social media is defined as “forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.”

Within a few years, social media platforms have become an essential and integral part of our day-to-day life, as it connects and unites people across the globe providing a feeling of online community. Additionally, one of the most challenging aspects of social media is its ability to connect people across boundaries, allowing the users from different backgrounds to connect in online discussion. Social media also gives people the chance to express their idea, their opinion as well as their creativity on a global level.

Social media's rapid growth has been through many difficulties. Privacy, cyber-security and spread of false information are some of the major concerns that are growing due to the vast information available on these social media platforms. Excessive usage of social media has been not only been associated with mental health but also with physical health, with its addictive nature and harmful effect on physical health and mental health, social media has received a lot of attention these days.

Social media has the ability to deteriorate the feelings of loneliness isolation. People who excessively use social media might feel disconnected from the real world .

Additionally, many mental health problems can be worsened due to the addictive nature of social networking sites. The endless scrolling, notifications, and the constant need for validation through likes and comments can result in compulsive behaviours and an increased risk of developing internet addiction disorder. Cyberbullying has emerged as a significant concern, with individuals being subjected to online harassment, humiliation, and abuse. Victims of cyberbullying often experience heightened levels of stress, anxiety, depression.

In addition to the mental health implications, social media usage has also been linked to various physical health concerns. The sedentary nature of spending long hours glued to

screens leads to a decline in physical activity levels, contributing to a more sedentary lifestyle. Reduced physical activity, due to constant interaction with social media sites have increased exposure to advertising for unhealthy foods and drinks, which has led to a rise in obesity rates and associated health conditions such as cardiovascular diseases and diabetes. Furthermore, excessive screen time has been linked to sleep disturbances, as the blue light emitted by screens disrupts the natural sleep-wake cycle, leading to poor quality sleep and daytime fatigue. Increase in the time spent on social media affects the body posture leading to neck and cervical and wrist pain, back issues etc.

In conclusion, social media has emerged as a defining characteristic of the modern era, revolutionizing the way we communicate, connect, and share information. Its ability to transcend physical boundaries, amplify voices, and facilitate global conversations has reshaped our personal relationships, professional endeavours, and social activism. As we continue to navigate the digital landscape, it is crucial to approach social media with awareness, responsibility, and a commitment to fostering meaningful connections in this interconnected world by also acknowledging the harmful effects related to physical and mental health.

2. Literature Review

Studies suggest that social media usage has a significant impact on mental as well as on physical health. Following are the studies that have been performed on the similar topic and has been used as literature review-

Title	Author(s)	Year	Journal/Book	Location
Adolescent social media addiction	Mark D Griffiths and Daria J Kuss	2017	U.S. National Library of Medicine	United States of America
Study of Social Media Users' Behaviour and Its Impact on Mental and Physical Health in the Future	Lydia Irene Siahaan Magdalena Hanoum Muhammad Syukur	2023	International Journal of Future Studies	Indonesia

Effects of human versus virtual human influencers on the appearance anxiety of social media users	Fengyi Deng Xia Jiang	2022	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	China
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3. Research Methodology –

Rapid expansion and widespread use of social media platforms have transformed the way people interact and communicate. While social media offers numerous benefits, there is a growing concern about its negative impacts on physical and mental health. This research aims to explore and analyse the adverse effects of social media on individuals' physical and mental well-being. The following methodology outlines the steps and procedures for conducting this study-

Study Design- Quantitative & Analytical

Study Population - Survey Population

Open survey across India, aged above 13years.

Inclusion Criteria

- adolescent (aged from 13-19yrs)
- adults (aged 20-30 years)
- working age group (aged30-58yrs)
- senior citizens (58 and above)

Exclusion Criteria

- children aged below 13 years

Research Objectives - (a) To identify some negative impacts of social media usage on physical health.
b) To identify the negative impacts of social media usage on mental health.
c) To propose recommendations for mitigating the negative effects of social media on physical and mental health.

Research Questions-	The primary questions in the questionnaire are as follows- Section 1 – Demographics of the respondents Section 2 – Questions related to social media and mental health. Section 3 – Questions related to social media and physical health.
Duration of Study-	2 months, April 2023- May 2023
Sample Size-	An approximate sample size of 102 respondents is taken.
Data Collection-	• A google survey form will be created with questions relevant to the study topic. • The form will be open for a set period and the responses recorded. • Once the form is closed, the recorded responses will be retrieved and analysed using various tools such as - Microsoft Excel. • Conclusions will be drawn on the basis of these analyses.

3.1 Research Design Study Type: This research will adopt a quantitative approach to collect and analyse numerical data related to the negative impacts of social media on physical and mental health.

Sampling: A random sampling technique will be employed to select a representative sample from the target population of social media users.

Data Collection: The data will be collected through structured questionnaires, which will include both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions. The questionnaires will be designed based on existing literature and validated measurement scales.

Data Analysis – Data will be analysed using statistical techniques, such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis

3.2 Ethical Considerations Informed Consent: Participants will be provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits. They will be required to provide informed consent before participating.

Confidentiality: Participant confidentiality will be ensured by anonymizing the collected data. Only aggregated data will be reported to maintain the anonymity of the participants.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study will be entirely voluntary, and participants will have the right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences.

3.3 Sample Survey- Questionnaire

Demographics -

Name

Gender

Age

Occupation

Q1-Do you have access to any social media platform?

Q2-How many hours in a day do you spend on social media?

Social Media and Mental Health

Q1-Have you ever felt anxious or stressed after spending a significant amount of time on social media?

Q2-Have you been cyberbullied or witnessed cyberbullying on social media platforms?

Q3-Do you think social media addiction is a real issue?

Q4-Do you find yourself comparing your life curated versions of other people's lives on social media platforms?

Q5-In what ways do you think social media affects mental health?

Social Media and Physical Health

Q1-Have you ever experienced back or neck pain due to poor posture while using social media?

Q2-Have you experienced sleep deprivation after being on social media for long hours at night?

Q3-Have you ever experienced a decrease in overall physical health due to spending too much time on social media?

Q4-Have you experienced any of these health issues due to excessive usage of social media and decrease in physical /outdoor activities?

4. Results

It's widely known that social media has a huge impact on the physical as well as mental health. Excessive use of social media can deteriorate both mental and physical health. To get a better clarity on the subject, a Google Form questionnaire consisting of some questions regarding the social media usage and its effects, was floated to people across the country, to which the results are as follows-

4.1 Section 1 – Demographics

1.1 Total no. of participants who filled up the survey form were 102. Out of which 72 were female respondents whereas 28 were male respondents i.e., 73% of the total respondents were female and 27% were males.

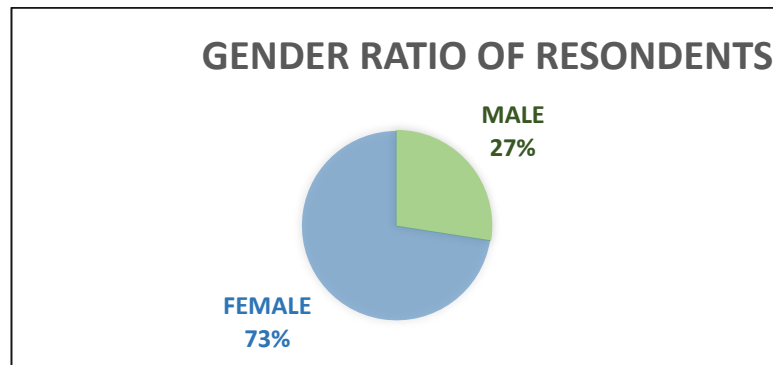


Fig- 4.1.1

1.2 Out of total 102 respondents 71 belonged to the working age group (i.e., 69% of total respondents), whereas 6 of them were homemakers (i.e., 6% of total respondents). 17 Students responded to the questionnaire (which is 17% of total respondents) and out of 102 respondents 8 were retired (i.e., 8% of the total respondents).

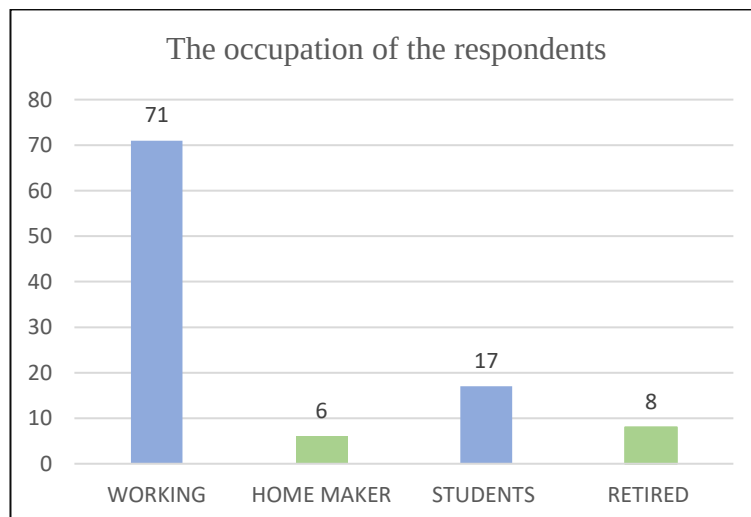


Fig- 4.1.2

1.3 When the respondents were asked if they had access to social media ,90% of the respondents, responded that they have access to social media, whereas 10% of respondents, dint have social media access.

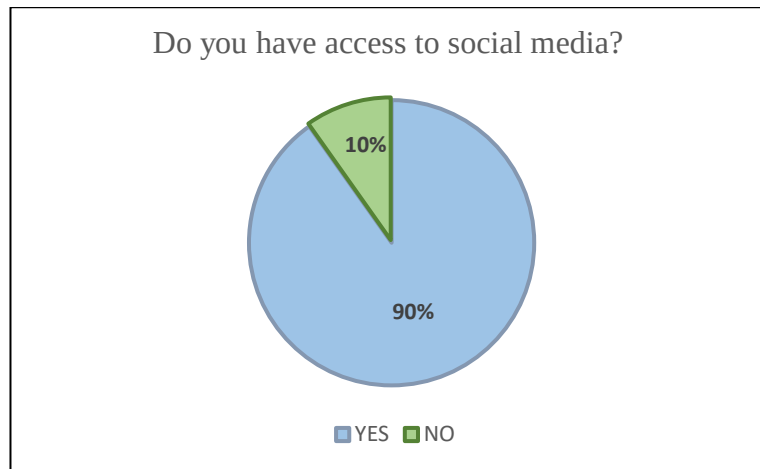


Fig- 4.1.3

1.4 When asked about the average time spent on social media in a day. Out of 102 respondents, 68 respondents on an average spend 1-2 hrs on social media per day, whereas 26 respondents spend 3-5 hrs on social media every day. Respondents who spend more than 5 hours on social media are 8 out of 102.

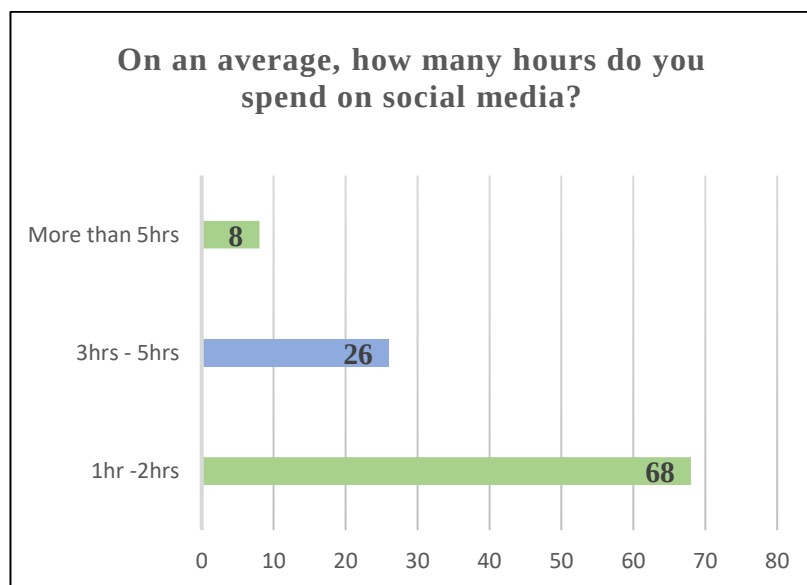


Fig- 4.1.4

4. 2. Section 2- social media and mental Health-

2.1 This section opens with questioning the respondents if they have ever felt anxious after using social media for a long time, to which 5% respondents say that they always have felt anxious post using social media, whereas 10% respondents often feel anxious and 44% responds sometimes feel anxious post using social media for long hours. 36% and 2% respondents rarely and never feel anxious after using social media.

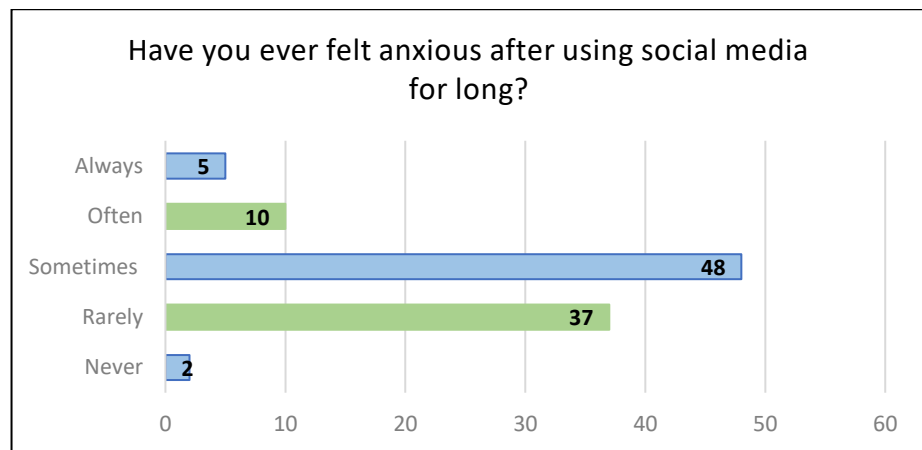


Fig-4. 2.1

2.2 Cyberbullying is a serious issue related to social media which has a great impact on mental health. 10 respondents out of 102 respondents (i.e., 9.8%) have always witnessed cyberbullying on social media. 17 responds and 29 responds had often and sometimes witnessed cyberbullying on social media respectively. 30 people have never witnessed cyberbullying on social media.

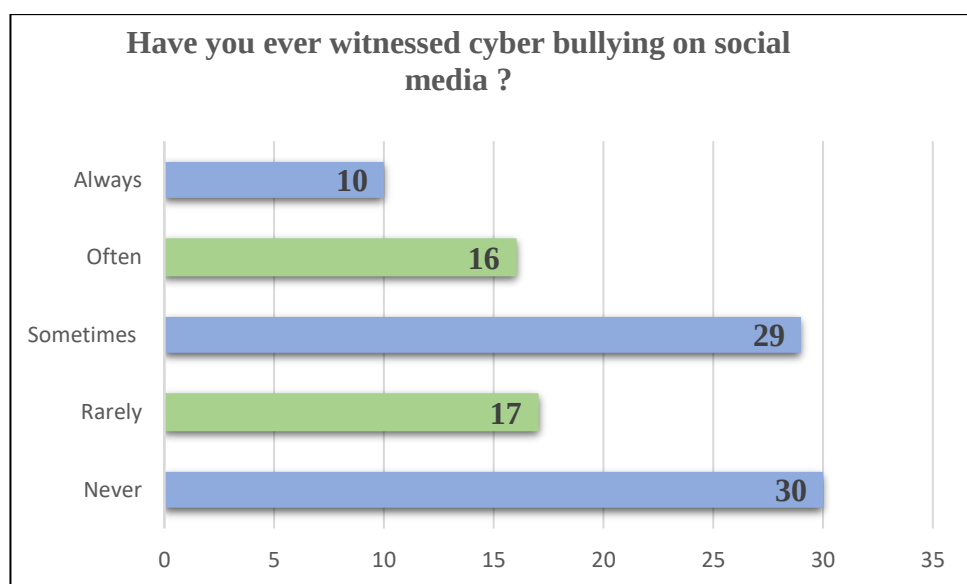


Fig- 4.2.2

2.3 Using social media causes the brain's reward system to release the "feel-good" chemical dopamine, which can result in physical and psychological addiction. When asked through the survey, 86% respondents feel that social media is a real addiction, whereas 10% formants believe that social media can be an addiction whereas 10% say that it's not a real addiction.

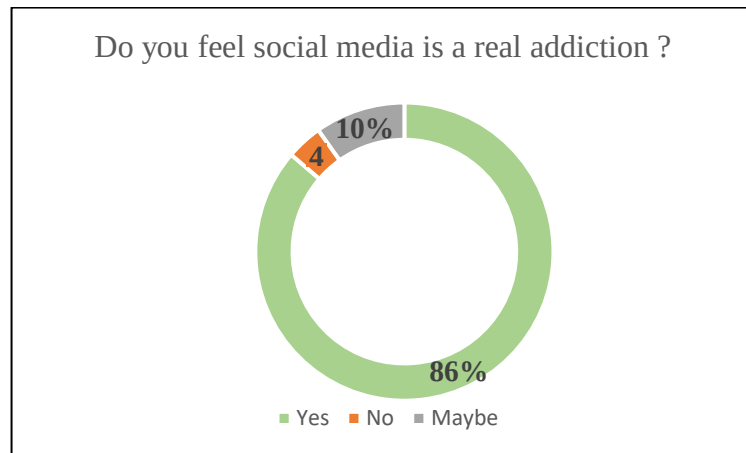


Fig-4.2.3

2.4 social media and lifestyle comparison is another issue that many people face when they excessively use social media. To this issue, large no of people responded that they do not compare their lifestyles with the social media influencers, whereas a total of 51 percent (when bifurcated, 34% sometime, 11% often and 6% always) compare themselves/ their life style with others on social media.

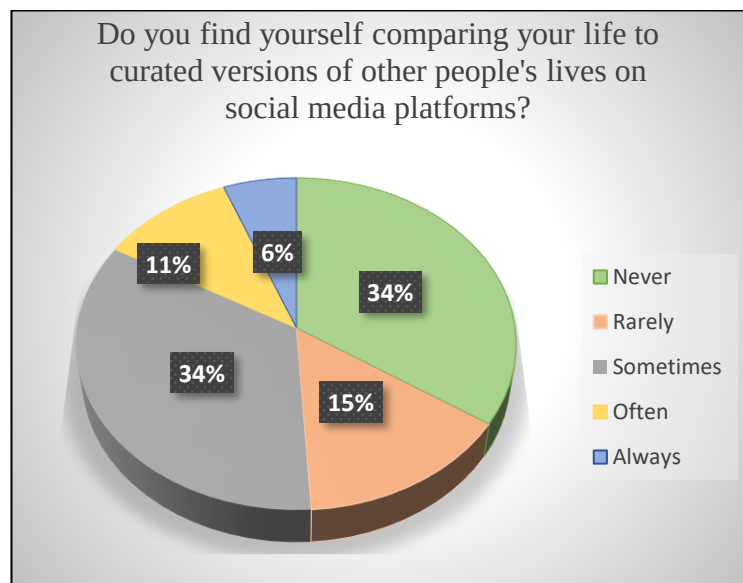


Fig- 4.2.4

2.5 when analysing the in what ways does social media effects one's life, the respondents had multiple answers to the question and with the help of that response the flowing data was collected through 102 respondents.

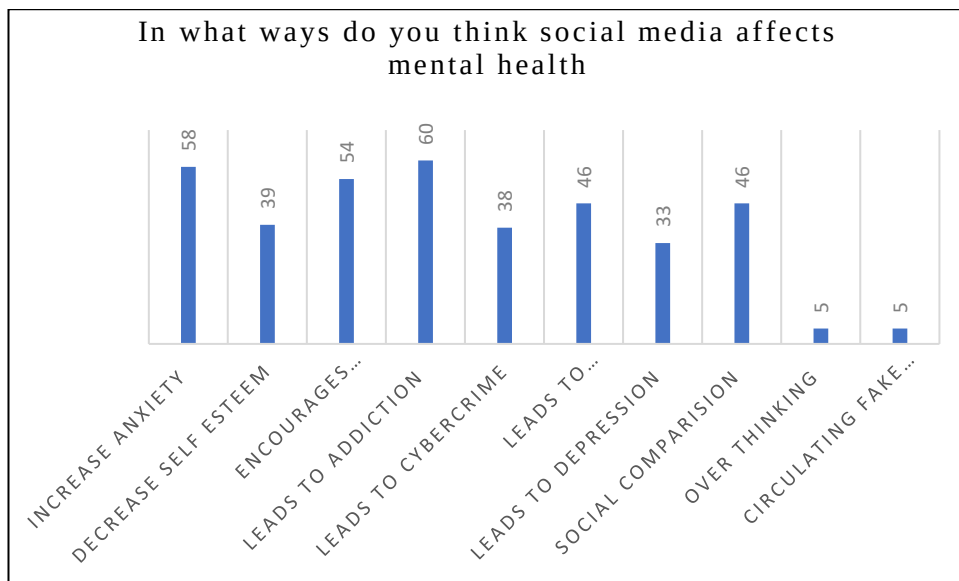


Fig- 4.2.5

Many of the respondents have suggested more than one negative impact that social media has on one's life, this can be simplified in the following manner –

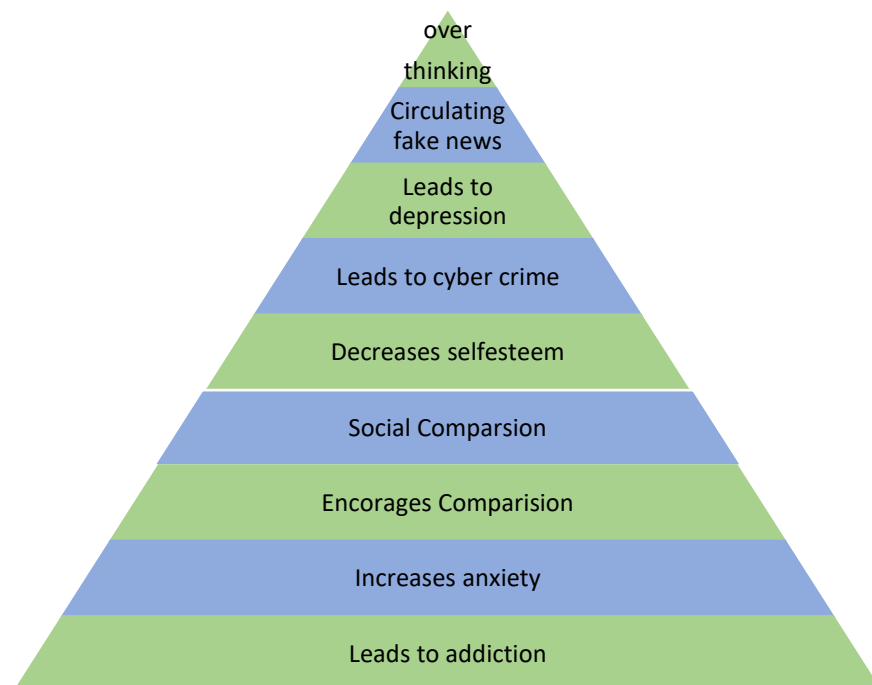


Fig- 4.2.6

4.3. Section -3 social media and physical health

3.1 Excessive use of social media not only deteriorates our mental health but also effects our physical health significantly.

To understand the effects of social media on our physical health, with the help of questionnaire, following question were asked-

When asked if the participants had experienced neck pain or back pain dure to in appropriate posture while using social media on their smart phones or laptops, the following data was analysed.

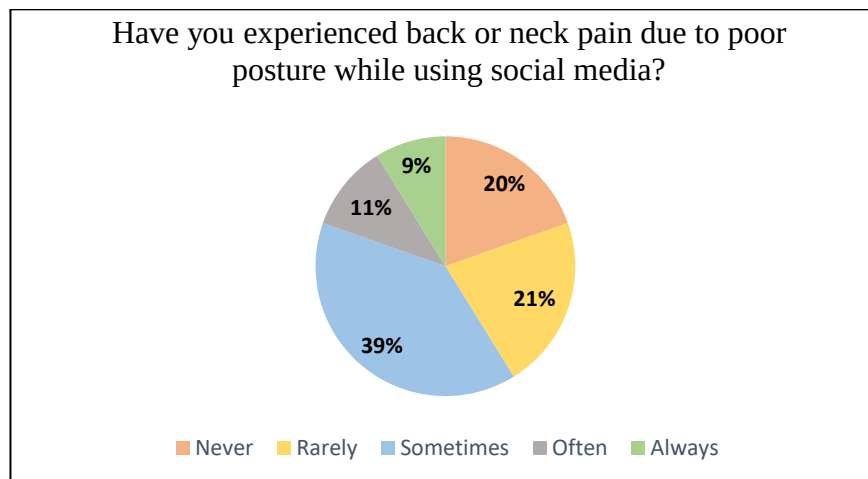


Fig- 4.3.1

From this pie chart we can understand that 39% people sometimes feel pain in their back or in their neck. While as 11% and 9% people often and always feel pain in their back or in their neck. Whereas only 20% people never have posture problems.

3.2 Reduction in sleep hours as well as deterioration in the quality of sleep is another issue caused by social media which can be shown through this data analysis.

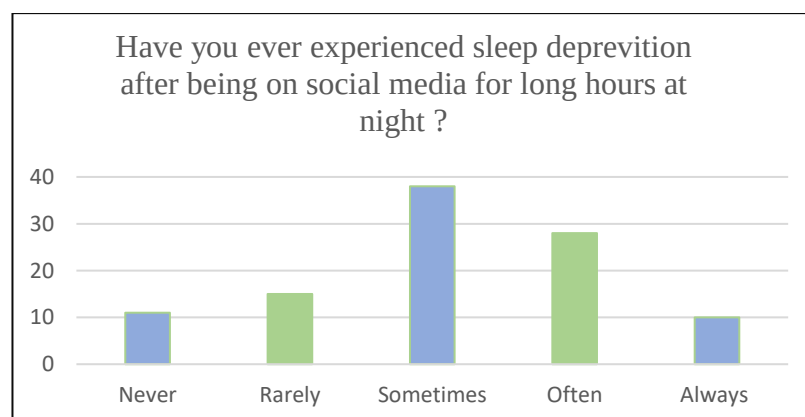


Fig- 4.3.2

Most of the respondents i.e., 38 people (i.e., approximately 37%) have voted that they sometimes face sleeplessness after spending long hours on social media, whereas 28% and 10% people often and always face difficulty in sleeping after spending long hours on the phone watching social media. Rarely i.e., around 14% people have sleeping issues after watching social media for long hours.

3.3 When asked if ever experienced about the decrease in overall physical health due to spending too much time on social media, the following response was recorded. 47% have experienced a decrease in their overall health due to spending too much time on social, whereas 22% people feel that social media might be the reason for the decrease in overall physical health.

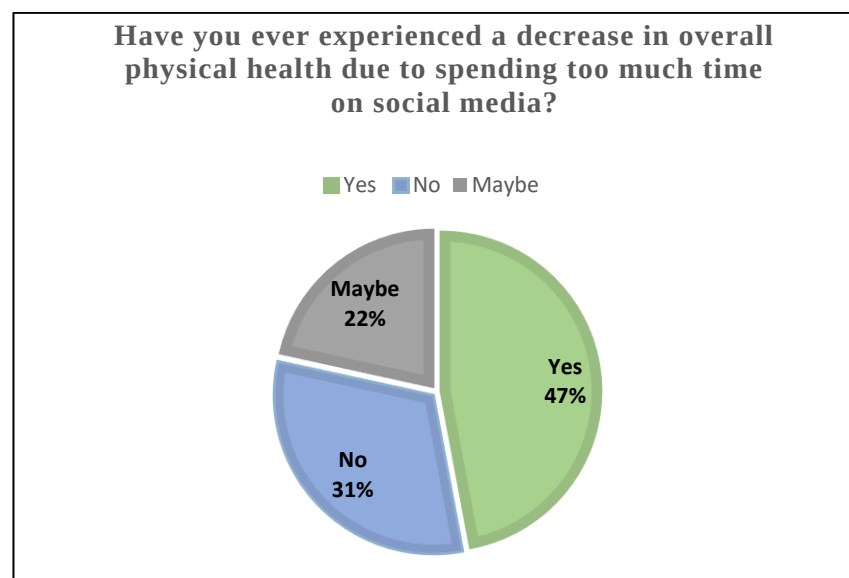


Fig- 4.3.3

Decrease in physical health can be due to sedentary behaviour (excessive sitting, excessive screen time), spending more hours on social media rather than performing physical exercise leading to obesity and CVD.

The pain of eyes and continuous headaches are concerning physical symptoms of excessive social media usage.

Posture and body pain such as (neck pain, wrist pain and back pains) are some physical issues caused by excessive usage of social media.

3.4 When asked about the physical health issues faced by respondents due to excessive usage of social media, the respondents answered in many ways that have or had effected them.

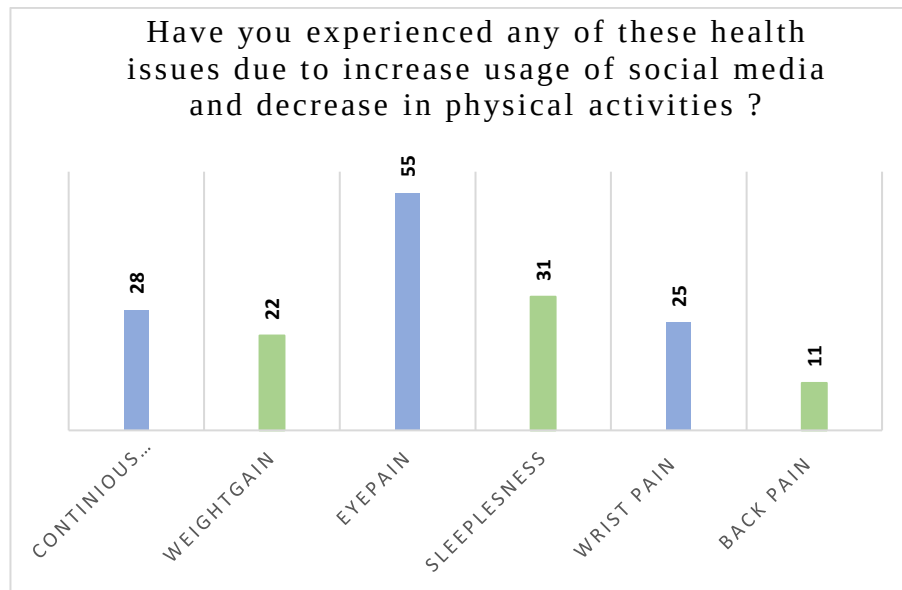


Fig- 4.3.4

Many of the respondents had common answers to the physical issues or health problem they face due to excessive usage of social media.

The pyramid shown below, represents the hierarchy of the most mentioned and lest mentioned physical health issue.

Here, the most mentioned physical issue is mentioned at the bottom and as we go towards the head of the pyramid and the pyramid starts tapering the less voted health issues are mentioned.

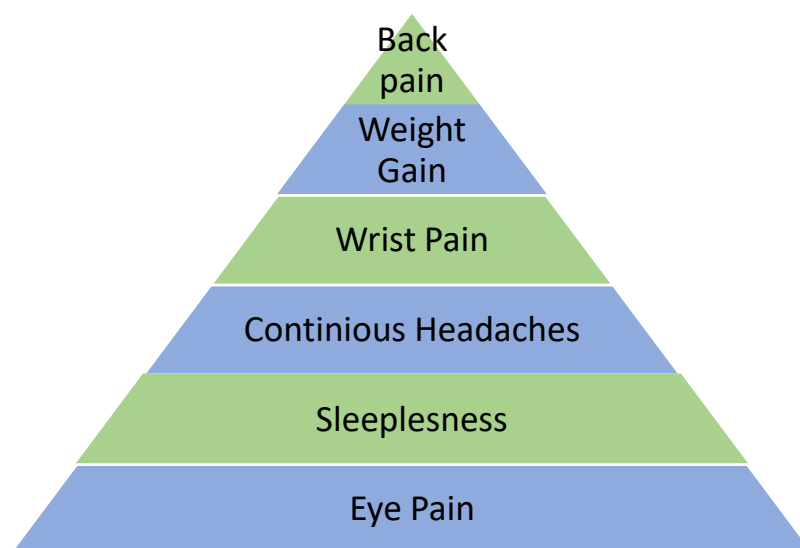


Fig- 4.3.5

5. Discussion

Social media is now an inevitable part of our lives. Many young individuals now live their lives exclusively on social media, even those in our nation. Social media has many advantages, it has made communication much easier also, it has brought entertainment on our fingertips. Social media has as easy as access to smart phone. Social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc are some of the common social media platforms which can be easily downloaded and used, one can easily find these social media platforms in the smartphones of youngsters and the working age group, which consist of the maximum population of our country. Social media has many advantages, but also has significant disadvantages and risks. Therefore, very crucial to recognise and manage these risks to mitigate mishappening on social media.

Social media is said to be a real addiction, it is also confirmed from the results that the survey showed. Maximum respondents feel that social media creates and addiction when used excessively. Also, studies have shown that social media has a powerful effect on the brain, and it can create stimulating effects like addiction. “Social media platforms drive surges of dopamine to the brain to keep consumers coming back repeatedly.

Social media platforms have people and users of from all over the world. Not every user is a well-wisher or of help. Social media is said to be the breeding ground for misinformation, cybercrime, and false news. Many scams through email or messages offering jobs etc are mushrooming on these social platforms, which grab our attention very quickly. People who don't know about online cyber phishing get trapped and are financially and mentally drained due to these scams. Recently cybercrime cell along with police in the state of Gujarat released a press note for social media users to be cautious of cyber mis happenings.

Social media platforms not only have users from all over the world, but also has content from all over the globe too. Not all content is suitable for all. This leads to anxiety, stress even depression to some people who get affected by these posts and even experience FOMO (Fear of missing out) which can again cause mental health to deteriorate.

The platforms now-a-days have celebrities who post their pictures and video depicting their lifestyle, social media influencers who make content which attracts people to adapt

fancy lifestyle, which in directly leads to one comparing their life with people on social media. This kind of comparison is unhealthy and can lead to mental health issues.

Social media does not only have negative impact on mental health, but it is slowly has started affecting our physical health too. Physical health in today's date is everything to a person, for which one earns, eats, and lives. Without a good physical health nothing can be considered important in this date. Slowly and Steadily over the years social media has intruded and has now become an integral part of our daily lives.

Social media as earlier stated, is an addiction, it creates a chemical named dopamine, which is considered to be a feel-good hormone, this hormone compels the user to visit this site repetitively or stay on this site for long hours.

Social media has such a tight grip on its content that users cannot take their eye off them. Several hours pass by scrolling and swiping the content one after the other. This causes the user to sit in one place in one position continuously. Sitting in one position with your smartphone in hand might cause one, neck pain and wrist pain and second back issues. The body posture issues due to excessive use social media are concerning at multiple level.

Sedentary behaviour is another issue caused by excessive use of online entertainment, sitting in one place for hours, scrolling on the phone for content has decreased the amount physical exercise, one needs to perform on the daily basis. Lack of physical exercise leads to many disorders such as CVD, diabetes, obesity etc.

Excessive use of social media can damage one's eyesight. Continuous usage of phone or increase in the hours of screen time can damage the eyesight cause eye and increase the power of specs. It is said that one tends to blink less when watching anything that emits blue light, the moving object on the screen makes it difficult for the eyes to focus which causes the strain on the eyes. In short, the increase in screen time can cause deterioration in the normal functioning of eyes.

Sleeplessness is another upcoming issue caused due to excessive social media usage. Social media i.e., sending mails, sending texts, looking at news or feed on social media at night can cause sleeping disorder or insomnia. In a study it is found that, social media and sleep don't mix well. Excessive use of social media close to bedtime can reduce sleep quality and increase the risk of a multitude of sleep issues.

Maintaining a good physical health is an important aspect, Social media might have new news, new feed, new content everyday but our health, both mental and physical are received and attained once, one should not let social media ruin our health in anyways.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, social media, undeniably has had a negative impact on both mental as well as physical health. It has undoubtedly transformed the way people connect and communicate with each other. Since the introduction of social media in this new modern era, it has exhibited numerous advantages, but along with that, it has introduced enormous challenges and risks that affect our overall wellbeing.

The constant exposure to social media content on these platforms, the pressure to conform to societal standards and the compulsion to browse social media cause detrimental effects such as, stress, low self-esteem, depression etc.

One of the major issues that social media presents is its ability to distort reality. Users often showcase only the high points of their lives (such as achievements, beauty, travelling etc) this creates a false perception of everyday life. This phenomenon is known as social media envy.

Another area of concern is the addictive nature of social media. Social media algorithms are carefully crafted to engage the users for as long as possible. This can result in disturbance in the sleep cycle, reduce productivity and increase isolation.

Moreover, a constant exposure to online harassment and cyberbullying on social media platforms has severe consequences for mental health. The fear of negative judgement and public shaming might increase the level of stress and anxiety.

Additionally, extreme cyberbullying can result in cyber-crimes.

Detrimental effects of social media on physical health are a major cause of concern, spending excessive hours on social media cause sedentary behaviour which in turn cause the decrease in the level of physical activities. Decrease in physical activities can cause health conditions such as CVD, type 2 diabetes, obesity, etc. Along with these physical ailments various body aches can be attributed excessive social media usage.

7. Suggestion

While social media has its own advantages, it is important to recognize and address its negative impact on mental and physical health. By implementing the suggestions outlined below, we can strive for a healthier relationship with social media, creating a more positive online environment.

1. To encourage awareness on digital wellbeing:

There is a need to educate and aware individuals about the evident risks associated with excessive social media use. By promoting digital well-being programs in schools and at workplaces can create awareness about the negative impact of social media on mental and physical health.

These initiatives should focus on teaching users how to balance their online and offline lives, manage screen time effectively.

2. Encourage conscious use of social media:

To encourage people to utilise social media in a careful and purposeful way.

Encourage users to review their social media consumption, set strict limits, and take frequent breaks from their electronic gadgets.

3. Creating healthy Online Communities:

Social media platforms should actively encourage the development of healthy online communities and set policies in place to prevent cyberbullying, hate speech, and other negative activity. Promoting meaningful and respectful discussion among users can improve mental health and foster a healthier online community.

4. Prioritize Physical health and selfcare over social media:

Encourage individuals to set a higher priority on their offline relationships and self-care routines than on excessive social media usage. Maintaining mental and physical wellbeing requires engaging in activities which encourage physical activity, outdoor games and participating in hobbies. Social media's negative effects may be significantly mitigated by counselling the users to maintain a balance between their online and offline lives.

5. Set Limits:

It is essential to set limits on your social media use, both in terms of time and content. Set specific times of day to check social media, and avoid using it before bed, as it can interfere with your sleep.

6. Be Selective:

Be selective about the content you engage with on social media. Avoid negative or harmful content, and seek out content that is uplifting, informative, and positive.

7. Monitor Your Mental Health:

Pay attention to your mental health and seek help if needed. If you find that social media is negatively impacting your mental health, take a break or consider seeking professional help.

8. Use Privacy Settings:

Be mindful of your privacy settings and adjust them to protect your personal information. This includes limiting who can see your posts, disabling location services, and avoiding sharing personal details online.

9. Engage in Real-Life Activities & Practice Self-Care:

Take care of your physical and mental health by incorporating healthy habits into your routine. Spend time engaging in real-life activities, such as socializing with friends and family, pursuing hobbies, and exploring your local community. This can help you disconnect from social media and connect with the world around you

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