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How Active Use of Social Media Is Linked to Mental Illness

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How Active Use of Social Media Is Linked to Mental Illness

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1. Introduction

In our time, the world has become much more integrated with the help of the Internet, a global network that has spread throughout all countries. It significantly affects the sphere of people's communication, creating a virtual reality where geographical distances and time stop having meaning. Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are not only websites and applications but a vast space where tens and hundreds of millions of network members place almost everything for audio clips: text and graphic information, photos, and videos (Thorisdottir et al., (2020). This manifestation of constant sharing of anything at any time is unprecedented in the history of mankind and serves as a typical sign of today's social reality.

Additionally, social networking sites are now just a part of our daily routine. We use them for communication with our friends, to join public events, and of course, to participate in communities that exist online and support our interests. Since the emergence of social media platforms in the early 2000, the means of communication have been transformed to unprecedented levels, providing more channels of social interaction and connection. The recent pieces of research (Zubair et al., 2021) show that the individuals on average spend 2.3 hours a day on these platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat which a big portion of these platforms are the most appealing for the young people in 2022. Although the apps are the best of all the social media platforms; still, people feel that they are spending too much time on the apps and scrolling through the feeds and watching videos.

The reach of social networks is incredibly broad; almost anyone with an internet connection can dive into the sea of digital content and encounter a myriad of messages from across the globe. This new level of exposure brings unique features to our social environment,

previously unseen. Among these, the concept of social inclusion is particularly notable. Social networks make it easier for individuals to connect, find like-minded communities, and communicate effortlessly, highlighting a positive side of digital interconnectivity (Ulvi et al., 2022). It's often said that these platforms nurture an atmosphere where trust and contentment in social interactions grow, as digital connections demand far less physical effort than meeting face-to-face. Following this line of thought, it's hypothesized that increased communication via these networks could strengthen social ties and boost mental health.

The accessibility of social networks is even more significant; it is difficult to imagine that the whole world is now accessible through Internet connections, and there are thousands of messages from users around the globe. The abundance of new social relationships that people have had in the last few years may be the cause of their social nature being different from previous one. We can certainly single out the idea of social inclusion being most distinct among them. Social networks are known to enable individuals to connect with each other and find communities of like-minded peers, all this without any hassle. This offers the first positive aspect of digital interconnectedness. It is suggested that apps of that kind create a situation in which the trust appears, and the social contacts are more satisfying because they are much easier and require less effort from a person than the real-life meetings do (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). Accordingly, it can be said that the communication enhanced by these platforms would become a means of reinforcing social bonds that will then lead to positive mental health.

In spite of the favorable notion of virtual socialization, the shadow of an increasing mental health crisis haunts as it challenges the overly optimistic theorizing. Last year's studies, including those conducted by the World Health Organization, have established a troubling trend of increased anxiety and depression across the globe. The figures are alarming: the COVID-19

pandemic alone may have contributed to a 25% increase in 2020, with these mental health issues being the primary culprits. Nevertheless, we need to acknowledge that the pandemic has only shone a light on this profoundly alarming mental health trend which has been in existence for a while, pointing to a much systemic problem. This conflict between massive social media use and a mental health problem that is rising exponentially implies that there is a complex relationship between the two elements, and, thus, the hypothesis arises that the tools that are meant to bring us closer together may also be the cause of the sense of isolation and dissatisfaction that we experience.

The internet and social media have become integral to our everyday life, and this process is a permanent trend, with its presence in our lives only likely to increase. In fact, the solution to the deterioration of mental health should not be the indiscriminate rejection or removal of digital communication as an option. However, we should rather explore in greater depth this question of more social connectivity with a rise in mental health problems. The significance of the intricacy in which social media can affect mental health is seen as the prime point of focus. The range of negative consequences is broad, including not only cases of anxiety and depression but also phone addiction caused by the fear of missing out (FOMO), loss of personal relationships, body image distortion, cyberbullying, social isolation, and others (Gupta & Sharma, 2021).

The fact that social media usage entails undesirable consequences such as emotional instability and identity crisis is not a mere abstract issue but shows in the real life of people in a concrete way. The FOMO phenomenon often is an indicator of anxiety and dissatisfaction, which can come from the habit of comparing one's own life with the planned ones presented by others on social media platforms (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). The constant display of perfect body types also distorts our body perception and causes extreme self-esteem issues which play a role

in a scale of mental health problems that varies from eating disorders to depression. Furthermore, the anonymity and detachment conferred by the online media can sometimes be a haven where cyberbullying and harassment exist, and it is another instance which can make the mental stress of vulnerable people worse.

The fact that a significant number of people spend their time on social media has motivated researchers to give a comprehensive analysis of the benefits and the negative impacts of social media. On the one hand, it has been discovered that the regular practice of social media is often associated with a decline in psychological well-being, but there are some studies that suggest that the way these platforms are used is of greater significance than the duration of usage; it is the manner of use that determines whether they are helpful or not (Hussain & Griffiths, 2020). This clear distinction suggests that not only the number of interactions but also the quality should be analyzed. The series tries to clarify this matter by investigating social media's advantages and drawbacks from different points of view. Through the investigation of multiple facets of this connection we hope to bring to attention the complicated interaction of internet usage and psychological health.

Considering the complex nature of the correlation between social media utilization and mental health, it becomes necessary to embrace a multifaceted approach to tackle this challenge. Firstly, unveiling the sources of negativity and pathogenic states that are the outcomes of social media usage is the base that the actions and methods to mitigate and if possible prevent the emergence of mental health disorders associated with digital socialization are developed. Then it will be possible to develop strategies that may be able to prevent or at least minimize the mental-health issues that come from digital socialization. This includes a thorough analysis of a single person's experience, the psychological impact of different digital content, and the online

community's social dynamics. Knowing these factors will enable us to see the lanes to interventions and solutions that will ensure that social media cannot be a barrier to mental well-being but a platform to address the mental health issues in the digital age.

2. Statement of the Problem

The negative influence of social media on mental health is a crucial topic for research as it is a pervasive phenomenon which has a powerful impact on daily living. This research purport to examine the complicated relationship between social media use and mental health issues including self-harm, anxiety, FOMO (fear of missing out), low self-esteem, anxiety addiction, cyberbullying, isolation, body image distortion, cyberstalking and harassment. It tries to ascertain whether the negative consequences are a result of characteristics inherent in internet-based communication itself or our attitudes and perceptions about it. Studies reveal that some of the present-day lifestyles, that involve hours of sitting and excessive screen viewing, can have negative influence on mental health. Nevertheless, it is of utmost importance to distinguish whether these changes are purely physiological or if the psychological factors hold a significant capacity. Comprehending these intricacies are of utmost importance for designing integrated measures to neutralize the negative influence of social media on mental health.

Key questions that this research seeks to address include: Is there a tangible link between social media use and the rise in mental health problems? What drives the sense of inadequacy and the onset of psychiatric disorders in individuals engaging with social media? The study aims to uncover the detrimental impacts of social media on mental well-being and to identify actions that users can take to lessen the likelihood of mental health issues stemming from their online activities. Through investigating these concerns, the research seeks to shed light on how social media influences mental health and to recommend ways to cultivate healthier digital habits.

3. Research Methods

There is a lot of study already done on the topic, and thus sorting criteria must be used. The problem's scale makes it possible for material pertinent to research topics to come from a wide range of sources. The investigation of social media is a common subject in scholarly research as well as news pieces (The Data Team, 2020). The relationship between social media and mental health is the subject of hundreds of publications. In summary, the notion that an excessive amount of time spent on popular platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others may contribute to depression in individuals is not new.

The primary research method in this study is secondary data analysis, capitalizing on the vast array of existing studies encompassing various countries and age groups. If there's any causality to be found between social media use and mental health problems, previous research has likely already highlighted it. Thus, gathering new primary data might only echo already established conclusions. A more prudent approach would be to explore the existing literature, seeking out prevailing patterns that reveal the true dynamics of this relationship. Choosing the right research approach is crucial to comprehensively understanding these patterns.

The primary criterion for selecting journal articles was their engagement in longitudinal research. The preference for this research model is due to its chronological analysis capability (Hopwood et al., 2022). While many studies offer correlational insights, suggesting potential cause-and-effect links among phenomena, they fall short in pinpointing exact causes, merely indicating concurrent trends. For example, a correlational study might illustrate a parallel rise in depression rates and new Reddit user numbers, yet this observation could imply reciprocal causation. Longitudinal studies, by contrast, provide precise insights by tracking specific events or individuals over time, enhancing the reliability of their findings.

The next criterion of the social media intervention should be focused on communities that have been exposed to social media for a long time. The rationale of this is that the subjects from the countries where the Internet is new will not be able to give the results that can address the issues of the entire population. Look at the case of Cuba, the country that only started using web platforms in 2018, which was when its citizens first got a glimpse of social media. It is a valid point that emotional distress may be caused by a vast amount of content that subsequently makes it even more complex to determine the origin of the mental health issues. While in the meantime most of the population has already been familiar with such platforms, the exploration of their responses is more accessible.

The third one is the limitation of publication date for three years. The key factor in this situation is that the research which was done some years ago cannot be applicable to the current year. Although the top media channels are still the same, the ways we use them have changed considerably, making the findings from the past outdated. Analyzing the long-term data, it is extremely difficult to judge the success of a program for a decade is not practical. For instance, ten years ago a blogger would not have YouTube as a source of income but now one can consider it as a mainstream source. It is a vital aspect because the incorporation of financial element could be a trigger for feelings of jealousy, destructively affecting mental health, which would not be observed in a researched that started in 2012.

The other criteria are not very specific and are usually utilized in the research. The articles of all of them should be subjected to peer-review and apply proper citation, something which would make them credible. They are to be written from the perspective of sociology or medical sciences that will help to avoid any other biases. The papers will be made easily available to students through the popular search engines like Google Scholar and the university's

library. They should also react to some fundamental search terms like “social media”, “mental health”, “impact”, “longitudinal”, and others that would provide search results sorted by this criterion. Therefore, the authors of the studies should be cognizant of the wide range of limitations of the current correlational studies and choose such a longitudinal design that could, to a great extent, compensate for its shortcomings.

4. Literature Review

The first publication is “Social media insights into US mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: Evaluation of Twitter data via time series by Valdez, Ten Thij, Bathina, Rutter, and Bollen (2020). Authors of the study indicated the decline in mental health during the pandemic. The research team aimed to explore the public agenda of social media usage. Twitter was selected primarily because it was most suitable platform that can be used to screen the attitudes and behaviors of people. Study design was a longitudinal one which included analyses of tweets published from January 22 through April 9, 2020. The researchers conducted the study after collecting the data; they (Valdez et al., 2020, p. 2) then used the sentiment analysis technique to determine the changes in people’s mental health. The set timeframe from the beginning of the period when the lockdowns had not been widely implemented yet to the period when the quarantine measures were in full swing is the one that I chose to follow.

The study's most important result was that the pandemic was the primary driver of the public's mood turning for the worse even though social media coverage may be one of the reasons that made things worse. However, the authors also mentioned that “for some, social media is a way to overcome feelings of loneliness that are associated with the long and social distancing period” but the effect of social media is majorly negative (Valdez et al., 2020, p. 1). The predominant sociological angle that could be used to justify the scientific approach of this

research is symbolic interaction theory. It is clear that the authors elucidate the reason behind the omission of the search terms such as ‘coronaviruses and ‘pandemic’ from the data collection process – these words became the words signifying negativity.

The second publication is “Does time spent using social media impact mental health?: One of the studies is a longitudinal study conducted for eight years titled “An eight-year longitudinal study” by Coyne, Rogers, Zurcher, Stockdale, & Booth. (Dorlin et al., 2020). The authors of this study categorized the previously conducted cross-sectional research and its main limitation – the lack of time-based observations. This article is a follow-up to this incongruence of 500 adolescents, eight year-long longitudinal study. Once every year, the organizer checked all the participants to fill in the questionnaire and the data would be used for research afterward.

The major proportion of the study group participants was teenagers aged 13 when the study started. Along with the growing age, the teenagers were becoming a huge part of the social media. It was even more stunning that the study’s main result was that “increased time spent on social media was not associated with increased mental health issues across development among individuals when examined on an individual level” (Coyne et al., 2020, p. 1). The authors of the research took two theories as the theoretical frame of the whole paper: the displacement hypothesis and the usage and gratification theory. Firstly, it states that “using social media for extended periods of time would probably replace some of our more important activities that we believe may be beneficial to our mental health” (Coyne et al., 2020, p. 3). This one argues that social media overuse can be one of the causes of mental health issues. But regardless of these two theories being inaccurate, this research has undoubtedly shown their inability to explain the true nature of the phenomenon.

Another study is “Social Media usage and Development of Psychiatric Disorders in Childhood and Adolescence” by Cataldo et al. (2021). This article aims to bring up the cognitive, emotional, and social consequences for young people between the ages of 10 and 19 who are problematic social media users in connection with mental health concerns such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and neurodevelopmental issues. It is an attempt to provide a thorough examination of the studies that are exploring the role played by the social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram which have become an inseparable part of the lives of the children and the teenagers, in the increased cases of the psychic and psychological challenges (Cataldo et al., 2021). Methodology is based on a thorough examination of research that investigate the link between social media overuse or addiction during formative years and a range of negative mental health outcomes including genetic and neurobiological aspects which may increase the likelihood of being affected by these issues.

This review's findings illustrate the intricate connection between social media usage and mental health issues, showing that chronic use and engagement of such sites might end up with unfavorable psychological outcomes. The part that stands out in literature review is the evidence of genetic and neurobiological factors that could lead the development of such disorders; thus, the role of social media is not the same for all the users but can be more severe among those with certain inclinations. However, the article also recommends more studies that incorporate biological, psychological, and environmental investigations to comprehend the whole spectrum of mental health disorders that come from social media use (Cataldo et al., 2021). The emphasis is made on this research as the tool in guiding clinical practices and creating preventive measures, encouraging the multidisciplinary approach to deal with the pervasive effect of social media on the adolescents' mental health.

Another paper is, “Problematic social networking site use and comorbid psychiatric disorders” by Zaheer Hussain and Mark Griffiths, (2023). The main article of this review is the systematic review in which the researchers try to find the link between problematic social networking site (SNS) use and psychiatric disorders. The main goal was to pick out and examine empirical studies which consider problematic social network services use (PSNSU) as a comorbid condition with ADHD, OCD, depression, stress, anxiety, and so on (Hussain & Griffiths, 2020). To accomplish this, the authors conducted a thorough literature search across several databases, for instance, Psych Info, PsycArticles, Medline, Web of Science, and Google Scholar using the key words like "population-based samples", "psychometric scales", "English language", "over 500 participants", and "the period of January 2014-June 2019". These criteria rejected other nine studies and only the last nine were included in the review (Hussain & Griffiths, 2020).

The results demonstrate that there is a strong relationship between the unhealthy use of SNS and the symptoms of psychiatric disorders with a large part of the research being carried out in Europe and being based on cross-sectional surveys. Among the nine studies reviewed, eight of which presented the association between PSNSU and psychiatric disorder symptoms. What is particularly striking is the fact that PSNSU was strongly associated with depression in seven studies, anxiety in six studies, stress in two studies and ADHD in one study, and OCD in one study (Hussain & Griffiths, 2020). This finding emphasized the widespread and mostly negative influence of social media on mental health, in particular on teenagers, with depression and anxiety leading in terms of correlation. The systematic review thus adds to the evidence that the use of social networking sites for problematic reasons is likely linked to different psychiatric

difficulties, which stresses the significance of further research and the development of the intervention strategies targeted especially for this issue.

Another study is “The longitudinal impact of social media use on UK adolescents' mental health” by Plackett et al. (2023). They attempt to investigate the case of social media use and its longitudinal impacts on the mental health of adolescents. They try to establish a relationship between self-esteem and social connectedness as possible mediators. With the use of data from 3,228 individuals aged 10-15 years extracted from the UK longitudinal household survey Understanding Society (2009-2019), researchers screened the number of hours spent on social media, self-esteem, social connectedness (number of friends and happiness with friendships), and mental health problems (Plackett et al., 2023). The methodological approach includes both unadjusted and adjusted multilevel linear regression models to calculate the relationship between social media use and mental state indicators, as well as path analysis with structural equation modeling to explain the possible mediation paths.

The result showed that there was a nonlinear trend which implied that the social media use may be the risk factor for mental health disorders after two years, but this association was not statistically significant. The unadjusted direct effect model suggested that self-esteem accounted for 68% of the overall effect of social media use on mental health, but this mediating effect was not significant in the adjusted analysis, possibly because self-esteem is not a significant mediator in the relationship between social media use and mental health (Plackett et al., 2023). The results of this research improve our insights into the complex relationships between social media use and mental health in young people. They stress the need for additional studies that explore these issues in depth and the specific mechanisms through which social media affects mental wellbeing.

Another research paper is “Interplay between social media use, sleep quality, and mental health in youth” by Alonzo et al., (2021). The authors analyze research articles on the possible influence of social media usage on sleep quality and psychological well-being among young people aged 16-25, including depression, anxiety and psychological disorders. The review examined different databases like MEDLINE, PsychINFO, EMBASE, and Scopus in depth to find the studies that looked at the relationship between social media use and mental health and sleep well-being of youth (Alonzo et al., 2021). Finally, a total of thirty-six cross-sectional studies and six prospective cohort studies were identified as being eligible for our study, which provided us with a good evidence base to draw from.

This review's results stress a rather alarming connection that exist between excessive use of social media and the unfavorable outcomes of mental health and sleep quality among the youth. To be more precise, among the cross-sectional studies examined, a considerable number of them suggest strong links between heavy social media involvement and poor mental health outcomes also, as well as the association between social media usage and poor sleep quality. Also, long term studies indicated that the consistent use of social media might be a risk factor for developing mental health problems and poor sleep patterns in the long term (Alonzo et al., 2021). What is worth mentioning is that a number of studies within the review showed that sleep quality can act as the mediator for the association between social media use and bad mental health outcomes. This group of studies have established a strong case for further research to help unravel the causal associations and mechanisms underlying the links between social media use and sleep disruption and other adverse mental health conditions in the youth, which raises public health concerns and calls for addressing excessive social media use.

Another study that is “Social media use and mental health” by Ulvi et al., (2022). The main purpose of this study was to carry out the systematic review and meta-analysis of the current research on the social media use and mental health problems connection (in particular, depression and anxiety) and the major networks, for example, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The PRISMA guidelines were employed in the study to search for articles on PubMed and Google Scholar databases, covering a period of 10 years starting from January 2010 till June 2020 (Ulvi et al., 2022). This search was meant to identify quantitative research articles that studied the relationship between the use of social media sites and mental health. Following the inclusion criteria, 20 out of the 39 intercepted studies were selected for the meta-analysis, thus creating an insightful picture of the current state of knowledge concerning the connections between social media use and mental health problems.

The findings from the meta-analysis reveal a dual-sided nature of social media: from the one side, it can evoke a feeling of community among users; but, on the other, it can become a health issue, especially when it is used a lot or misused among vulnerable people, who are then at a higher risk of developing depression and many other mental health disorders (Ulvi et al., 2022). The existence of such a correlation implies that, although social media can be a beneficial means of fulfilling social functions, a considerable risk for mental health is posed by excessive use of the platforms, stressing the necessity of users, mental health specialists and policy makers to be cautious about use of social media. The work underscores the need for a more refined examination of the impact of social media on mental health and proposes more research to discover the possible mechanisms which may help to reduce these negative consequences, which show very complex interaction between online social networking and psychological well-being (Ulvi et al., 2022).

Also, in another research “Social Media Use and Mood, Suicidal Ideation and Self-Harm in Adolescents” by Pastorino et al., (2020). The main purpose of the study was to examine the levels of depressive symptoms among adolescents and identify the suicidal ideation and intentionality as the main aspects. The investigation aimed to discover a link between the development of depressive symptoms, incidences of self-harm, and the duration which adolescents spend on social networking sites. The primal investigative question was the relationship between the mental health of adolescents and social media usage. Particularly, the study sought to establish whether there is an association between increased social media engagement and the risk of suffering from depression and suicidal thoughts and behaviors. The methodology of this study was a cross-sectional observational design, including a sample of 1,365 students aged 11 to 19 from the middle schools and high schools of Campania, Italy. The study obtained a high return rate that is 95%. The participants were asked to complete three self-report questionnaires anonymously, and the teacher had to supervise them so that the students could be fully informed about the purpose and validity of these questionnaires.

The findings showed that the depressive symptoms were widespread in 23% of the female students and 18% of the male students, with the prevalence of the depressive symptoms being slightly higher among the high school students than the middle school students. It is also striking that the survey revealed that 4% of the participants intended to take their own lives, with no statistically significant gender differences, while 14% of the participants had suicidal thoughts, with females (17%) being more prevalent than males (10%) (Pastorino et al., 2020). Proportional link was present between the time spent on social media and the level of depressive symptoms of both genders and between the social media usage and suicidal ideation/intentionality. Such findings also emphasize the immediate need for more

comprehensive research on the mental health impact of social media, especially in terms of depression and suicidal thoughts, to guide evidence-based preventive and intervention measures.

The other study, “Digital self-harm and suicidality among adolescents” by Patchin, Hinduja and Meldrum, (2023) also focuses on the connection between digital self-harm and suicidal thoughts among adolescents. This article deals with the digital self-harm, which is a new and not so well-studied phenomenon, that means making humiliation, abuse, or other hurtful content about oneself online by using anonymity. The growing dominance of digital platforms with their tremendous influence on the youth calls for scrutiny as to how these behaviors impact mental health. The main goal of this article is to establish whether there is a link between digital self-injury and more concerning manifestations of mental anguish, which come in the form of suicidal thoughts and attempts. This will be the focal point of our research, which is especially relevant in light of the current status of research in this area and the growing issue of psychological health in adolescents who are constantly exposed to digital media.

In order to achieve this goal, the study applied a methodological approach that included a national sample of 4,972 middle and high school students from the United States in 2019 based on the survey data. The participants, the average age is 14.5 years and there is a balance by gender, gives the participants' perspectives on digital self-harm and its potential consequences on their mental health. The primary statistical tool used was logistic regression analysis to determine the association of such digital self-harm with suicidal thoughts or attempts within the past one year. The result of this analysis was profound, indicating that persons who committed self-harm in the digital space were more likely to report suicidal thoughts and behaviors, with the chances ranging from five to fifteen times for different behaviors that were studied. In fact, such data stress the strong correlation between cyber self-injury and suicide, so the medical workers should

include screening for such behavior to their general procedures of identification and treatment of mental disorders among young people. In this regard, the study highlights the crucial role of parents and caregivers in creating a safe environment where young people feel free to share their concerns and receive the appropriate support to address the circumstances that may lead to digital self-harm, as such measures can help in reducing the risk that their psychological distress will go beyond the digital realm.

Another research is the “Assessing the effect of Instagram use and deliberate self-harm in adolescents” by Moss et al. (2023). The research paper was a comprehensive review that looked into the influence of Instagram in adolescent mental health especially the promotion of suicidal behavior among users aged 10-19. The aim of this study is to present data that show the existence of a significant relationship between the number of hours that adolescents spend on Instagram and the extent to which they engage in self-harm activities. The authors aimed to do this by reviewing literature from multiple sources including PubMed, Web of Science, Google Scholar, APA PsycInfo, CINAHL, and development and adolescent studies databases (Moss et al. 2023). Through adhering to a rigorous procedure of inclusion and exclusion criteria, 15 papers were picked for thematic analysis.

This study showed specific relationship between the length of time an adolescent used an Instagram and the probability of self-harm. The review also highlights three critical issues: the numbness to and the normalization of self-harm behaviors as a result of exposure on the platform, the social contagion which enables such activities to spread among communities, and the role that the platform plays in offering a sense of belonging for users that are engaging in self-harm (Moss et al., 2023). The study also makes mention of its own limitations, such as the speed with which social media platforms evolve, making the data collected too soon to be of

much help, and the use of self-reported data that may influence the reliability of the results. This research highlights the negative effects of social media on adolescent's mental health therefore it places the need for intervention and policies to tackle harmful content, which could be more detrimental to the vulnerable users.

The other article is “Fear of missing out: A brief overview of origin, theoretical underpinnings and relationship with mental health” by Mayank Gupta and Aditya Sharma (2021). The authors seek to explain the psychological trait of FOMO, a term created in 2004, which describes a state of uneasiness and insecurity that is experienced by many people because they may be missing out on enriching experiences while others get to enjoy them, especially as they can see these happenings on social networking sites. This phenomenon is characterized by two main processes: the concept of fear of missing out and the induced behaviors in response to sensation of losing social connections. The principal objective is to investigate into the complex nature of FoMO, focusing on its link to the fundamental human need to fit in and get on with others. The study aims to identify the correlation between FOMO, which is mostly viewed as an unhealthy attachment to social media, and mental health consequences, social dysfunction, sleep inconsistency, academic underperformance, reduced productivity, neuro-developmental disorders and physical well-being.

To arrive at this goal, the authors undertook a comprehensive review of the literature on FoMO, summarizing in detail the findings across different domains of well-being and functioning. This approach has proved to be very effective when it comes to outlining the present state of affairs with regard to the different facets of FoMO which affect individuals. The results of the review show that the FoMO is linked to a wide array of the negative outcomes. It decreases the level of mental health, disrupts the social functioning, affects the sleep, leads to the

lower academic performance and productivity, has a potential to aggravate the neuro-developmental disorders, and has a negative effect on the physical health (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). Additionally, the article provides a treatment approach for FoMO with a focus on cognitive-behavioral therapy. It stresses how the clinical settings should be a part of the solution to this problem. The results display the diagnostic implications of FoMO, which also suggest that it may be a confounding variable in individuals who do not respond well to traditional treatment interventions. The article shows the multifaceted nature of FoMO and its adverse effects on people around the world. This highlights the need for medical health professionals to be aware of the novelty of this subject so that they can provide essential understanding and management of this modern psychological condition.

There is another article as “Social Media and Fear of Missing Out in Adolescents” by Noor Bloemen and David De Coninck, (2020). Through the research, the article explores the problem of the fear of missing out (FoMO) that is commonly faced among the adolescents, and how it is influenced by family dynamics, such as family structure, quality of the parental relationship, and parenting style, which are the contexts of social media use. Seeing that teenagers are the most vulnerable to the FoMO that is a very close relative of social media addiction, the study will try to find out just how many family-related factors are included in this issue. This study aims to identify specific family traits that could either make the likelihood of adolescents having a FoMO an aggravating or mitigating factor because of their social media platform. In order to answer this research question, the researchers use a structural equation modeling approach, analyzing online survey data of 831 adolescents (ages 13 to 18) living in Flemish and Brussels regions.

The results demonstrate a positive connection between social media usage and FoMO, which suggest the great influence of online behaviors on the mental life of adolescents. Notably, the study identifies several family-related factors that influence the development of FoMO: people raised in non-intact families, those faced with a particular type of fathering, and those who have high-quality relationships with their parents have lower rates of FoMO. On the other hand, the strong parent-to-child relationship has been shown to be a risk to the occurrence of FOMO in adolescents. This demonstrates the complexity of family background in the FOMO phenomenon in the adolescents, which underscores the role of family environment in the young people's social media interactions. These results point to the possibility for more extensive research into the role of the family in FOMO development and developing more specific interventions to support teenagers in the regulation of their social media use, which will, in turn, reduce the likelihood of the negative outcomes that are associated with FOMO.

Another publication is “Social media use and social anxiety among college students: the relationship” by Lai et al., (2021). The authors pay attention to investigate the complex interplay between social media usage patterns and social anxiety among college students, which is situated within the general social media all-pervasiveness. It claims that different social media interactions produce different effects on student's levels of social anxiety, a field which is relatively understudied despite the wide acknowledgement of social media's powerful impact on mental health. The main research question that is explored is through the investigation of how social media engagement through varying mediums is linked to college students' social anxiety, and communication capacity acts as a moderator in this connection. To answer these questions the study utilizes a comprehensive methodology including exploring data from 1,740 college

students in China, which are part of seven institutions using bivariate correlation analysis and structural equation model.

The findings show that the use of social media passively is positively related with the heightened social anxiety but the active use of social media, like posting and direct messaging, is negatively associated with the social anxiety that could eventually reduce it. Specifically, the research reveals that the communication space is a part of the mechanism which connects social media use to social anxiety. This, consequently, means that the communication skills are the potential remedies to the effects of passive social media use on social anxiety, and they are also the methods to accentuating the positives of active use. The above-mentioned research results imply a more differentiated opinion about the role of social media in mental health, with the goal to introduce educational interventions that help college students to build better social skills as a way to defend them from the social anxiety in the digital age.

The other article is "Strong Correlations between Social Appearance Anxiety, Social Media Use, and Loneliness in Adolescents and Young Adults" written by Papapanou et al., (2023). This investigation focuses on the link between social appearance anxiety and its intensification when social media is used, then augmenting the observed loneliness levels among young Greeks and students. The first goal is to identify the linkages between social appearance anxiety, social media usage, and the prevailing sensation of loneliness among this social group. With the aim of identifying the psychological effects of social media on youth, the study focuses on analyzing these relationships. In so doing, it seeks to shine a light on the social self-perception and isolation aspects, which are of pivotal importance in the context of young individuals. The central research question is directed on how social appearance anxiety predicts social media

utilization and how the relationship between these two factors may bring about loneliness in the participants.

By using a cross-sectional methodology, the researcher analyzed the answers of 632 participants out of which 25% were women and 75% men, aged between 18 to 35 years. Online Survey was the method of data collection through Google Forms. The main tools of assessment were the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS), the Social Media Disorder Scale (SMDS), and the UCLA Loneliness Scale. The results of the multiple regression analysis showed a significant positive relationship between Social Appearance Anxiety Scale scores (SAAS) and scores on UCLA Loneliness Scale, thus revealing that greater levels of social appearance anxiety are associated with more loneliness feelings. Also, a significant negative co-relation was identified between Social Appearance Anxiety Scale and Social Media Disorder Scale scores, pointing out that increased social media use is associated with higher appearance anxiety which, in turn, leads to the aggravation of loneliness. This research suggests that a possibly interconnected relationship potentially exists between social appearance anxiety and social media use, which in turn, leads to enhanced loneliness in the young people. Digital social engagement's cycle points out the complicated relationship between it and psychological well-being as a result which shows the necessity and development of directed interventions that will help to minimize the negative issues related to social media and youth mental health.

Another article is “Self-esteem and social media addiction level in adolescents” written by Mehmet Colak, Özlem Sireli Bingöl and Ali Dayi (2023). The authors concentrated on the link between the self-esteem, social media addiction, and the way the body image among adolescents evolve, which aimed to provide a clear understanding of how the variables interact and influence each other. To be precise, the study attempts to clear the picture between the

adolescent's self-esteem and the level of their social media addiction, while it also explores whether the role of body image is a mediator in this context. Through the study of these factors, the study attempts to add to the existing pool of knowledge on the effect of social media use on the psychological state of youths, with particular emphasis on their ways of seeing themselves and their bodies. The sample of 204 high school students was obtained, of whom 67 were girls, and 137 boys were included in the sample, with the average age of 15.90 ± 1.20 years. The study employed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Social Media Use Disorder Scale, and the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire to determine

The result demonstrated no meaningful correlation between the self-esteem of the participants and either their age or their parents' education level. But, a moderate negative correlation was found between the social media addiction and self-esteem, which means that the teenagers with the higher level of social media addiction have lower self-esteem (Colak et al., 2023). On a different note, a moderate positive link was found between self-esteem and body image, so that a better body image is associated with a higher self-esteem. Moreover, the research concluded that the social media addiction is associated with the worsening of one's self-esteem as well as body image with the body image serving as a partial mediator between the social media addiction and self-esteem. The outcomes of this research reiterate the intricate correlation between social media use, self-esteem, and body image perceptions among adolescents, which emphasizes the need for strategies that would reduce the negative impact of social media addiction on the psychological health of teenagers.

The results hint at the possibility that social media can both be a platform for social connection and support, and a stimulus for anxiety and depression in excess, and especially of the passive kind. Although some researchers found no link between social media and mental

health functioning, other studies reported more symptoms of depression and anxiety linked with the increased frequency of social media use. The previous findings also confirmed that the passive activity like scrolling from post to post on social media might cause depression and this particular need further research about the risks that the social media can entail. Also, more studies were needed to investigate the qualitative measurement and cohorts in vertical position for the structure of social media effects on mental health.

Another paper, "Social media usage and depression" by Jeri-Yabar et al., (2020) is also one of my sources. The aim of this study is to analyze the link between social media addiction and depressive symptoms among university students with a focus on the role played by the dependency level of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter as platforms in the development of mental health issues. The study by employing the cross-sectional, analytical methodology involved the stratified sample of 212 students from the private university, all of them being users of the above-mentioned social media sites. The approach utilizes the Beck Depression Inventory Beck Depression Inventory as a tool for assessing depressive symptoms and the Social Media Addiction Test adapted from Echeburúa's Internet Addiction Test (Jeri-Yabar et al., 2020) as a means for measuring social media dependence. Analysis of data was done using descriptive statistics assisted with Stata 12 software, hence a quality assessment of the relationship between social media use and mental health indicators.

The other publication is "General and alcohol-related social media use and mental health: A longitudinal study with a large sample" by Erevik et al., (2021). Apart from this, researchers engaged in this research looked into the possibility of the predictive link between general and alcohol-related social media usage, and the future depression and anxiety symptom formation in students. The investigation was carried out in Bergen, Norway, using a longitudinal research

design, which acquired data from two web-based questionnaires conducted at two points: one at T1 (the fall of 2015) and the other at T2 (a follow-up survey in the fall of 2016). Having worked with a cohort of 5217 students that were present in both surveys, the study continued to investigate whether the relationship patterns observed at the start of the study could reflect the mental health outcomes, namely depression and anxiety, at the end of the study period. The research question centers on the influence of the frequency and nature of social media usage on mental health issues of student population.

Through the process of crude and adjusted linear regression analysis, the study attempted to determine how much the use of social media at T1 was a predictor for depression and anxiety at T2. The first results indicated a correlation between the social network activity, including Instagram, and the rising rates of depression and anxiety over a timeframe. Nevertheless, these correlations were no longer associated when the impact of these covariates was accounted for. What caught attention is that the number of online friends had an inverse relationship to depression at T1, meaning that online friends might be a protective factor, and Twitter usage was positively related to anxiety at T2, even while controlling for the covariates. Although these findings are insightful, they demonstrate that the size of the effect of social media on mental health is very slight, which suggests that the overall impact of social media use on mental health may be insignificant. This conclusion highlights the complexity of the relationship between social media and mental health, as it challenges the dominant assumption that social media use may cause more harm to psychological wellbeing; rather, different external factors may be at play.

The next paper is “From a fear of missing out (FoMO) to social media addiction” written by Julia Brailovskaia and Jürgen Margraf in 2024. In the article, the researcher aimed to explore

the association between fear of missing out (FoMO), social media use (SMU), social media flow, and mindfulness, with a particular interest in the addictive nature of SMU that results from FoMO. The major aim is to evaluate the effect of social media immersion on the interplay of FoMO with addictive behavior of SMU and mindfulness practices. The methodology is based on getting data from 905 participants based in Germany through the online surveys between the winter of 2022 and 2023, and then examining the relationships between FoMO, SM flow, mindfulness, and addictive SMU (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2024).

The findings of the study demonstrate a direct positive connection between FoMO and SMU, which is also mediated by the experience of SM flow. It turns out that a stronger wish for missing out leads to more involvement in SM flow, which in turn increases the likelihood of addictive SMU (Brailovskaia, & Margraf, 2024). In addition to that, mindfulness appears as a protective factor that makes the link between SM flows and addictive SMU weaker; therefore, people with higher mindfulness levels can engage in SM flow without addicted behavior. The act of mindfulness here serves to reveal the protective role, and thus demonstrates the need for mindfulness training as a preventive measure against the harmful effects of social media towards mental health, especially among young individuals prone to high FoMO. The study contributes to the understanding of the multifaceted nature of psychological impacts of social media as well as stresses the vitality of mindfulness as a tool for combating the negative effects from excessive SMU (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2024).

Besides that, is a study of “Longitudinal association between social media use and psychological distress among adolescents” by Thorisdottir et al, (2020). The authors of this study were also skeptical whether it is possible to identify a causal relationship between social media and mental health. The authors looked into the ongoing teenagers' problem, which is that social

media usage, paying the attention to both active and passive modes of engagement, can affect their emotional state. The birth of Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat among other social media platforms have forged this social media into a vital part of the lives of young people, thus demanding a more in-depth analysis on its influence on their mental well-being. This research seeks to lay bare the intricacies of this connection by studying the data from a 10,563-strong cohort of Icelandic teenagers (Thorisdottir et al., 2020), trying to ascertain the extent of social media usage and its link to self-reported cases of anxiety and depressed spirit. The primary research question aims to establish the degree to which the active and passive use of social media sites lead to emotional disturbances among adolescents, which area is still little researched in spite of the fact that the youths spend more time on social media. Utilizing the hierarchical linear regression model, the research accurately evaluates the relationship between active and passive social media use and the incidence of emotional distress symptoms; and also include the overall time spent on these platforms as a factor.

The study revealed that usage without any kind of interaction, referred to as passive usage, is linked to feelings of anxiety and depressed mood even after controlling for variables such as low self-esteem, lack of offline peer support, poor body image, and tendency for social comparison (Thorisdottir et al., 2020). On the other hand, active participation in social media including comments and sharing content initially provides some protection against symptoms of mental health issues, but the beneficial effect of this engagement is limited when other risk and protective factors come into play. Also, the study shows that there is another dimension in which social media has different effects on emotional distress between genders. Girls show a stronger association between social media time and emotional distress, particularly in the passive usage and depressed mood. These findings show the multifaceted interaction between youth social

media usage and mental health, which casts doubt on the current body of knowledge and calls for additional research that could explain the mediating influence of various risk and protective factors in this dynamic (Thorisdottir et al., 2020).

The other article is “The Impact of Social Media on the Mental Health of Adolescents and Young Adults” by Khalaf et al., (2023). The primary aim of the piece is to reveal the ramifications social media holds on the mental health of the youth. The study puts the responsibility on the practitioners’ shoulders to understand and evaluate teenagers' social media risks. We have employed a methodology which includes reviewing existing literature and empirical research on this topic plus consultations of teenagers and professionals. This research discloses that social media may provide individuals with an outlet for communication and lend a platform for self-expression, thus helping individuals with their wellness. On the other hand, social media use may have some risks as well, including the issues of privacy infringement, cyberbullying, and schooling and mental health decline.

The study shows that clinicians should be involved in collaborative programs with young people and families to lower the risks associated with the use of social media and smartphones. This might be accomplished through open, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate strategies like education and practical problem-solving. The study highlights, therefore, the necessity of research in this area so as to better comprehend the way teenagers perceive and make use of social media and provide effective solutions to the mental health problems that are affecting young people in this era.

Another publication is “Impact of Facebook on young women's body image concerns and mood” by Fardouly et al., 2020. The author is looking into how women feel about their mood and body image after using Facebook, a fashion magazine online or a neutral appearance

website. Moreover, the research sought to identify if any variations in the degree of appearance comparison tendency among people would moderately impact Facebook usage and consequently on body image concerns. The methods were comprised of randomly dividing female participants (N = 112) into three groups which were required to spend 10 minutes browsing their Facebook accounts, a beauty magazine website, or an appearance-neutral control website. Having been done the browsing session, participants filled the state inventories of mood, body dissatisfaction, and appearance discrepancies related to the weight, face, hair and skin. They also did a trait test that measured the tendency to compare oneself to others (Fardouly et al., 2020).

The study results demonstrated that the participants, who were on Facebook, reported being in a worse mood compared to the people who browsed the control site. Similarly, women ranked high in appearance comparison had increased amounts of discrepancies related to their face, hair, and skin following Facebook exposure, compared to those who saw a control website (Fardouly et al., 2020). These results show that Facebook usage may be a reason of women's feeling sadder and having more complexes about their appearance, especially for those women who are more likely to compare their looks with others. The data points out the demand for more studies to further understand the exact role of such social media platforms as Facebook in the development of body image issues and mental health problems.

The other publication is “The Relationship of Cellphone Utilization on the Physical and Mental Health of University Students” by Daniyal et al., (2022). The research focused on the influence of cell phone use on the general health condition of college students, their personality, and mental status as well. The survey was cross-sectional, and data was collected by means of a semi-structured questionnaire with 400 respondents. The survey had questions related to physical health factors including eye strain, neck pain, back pain and weight gain as well mental health

variables like depression, loneliness, and mood disorders. The statisticians performed the data interpretation with the help of Pearson's correlation and χ^2 -test for the purpose of establishing the association between mental and physical health variables and demographic factors (Daniyal et al., 2022). They additionally applied binary logistic regression to find out the possibility of negative impacts on personality to be associated with dependency on cell phones.

The results of the study showed that a number of cell phone usage related issues led to negative health effects in physical and mental areas. It was noticed that the HCPU group gave higher scores to eye strain, neck pain, back problems and weight gain than the LCPU group did. LCPU, on the other hand, reported more changes in mood as well as loneliness, while HCPU reported being in a low mood (Daniyal et al., 2022). The results mean that the use of mobile phones in excess is linked to a variety of adverse impacts on the physical and mental health of college students. Finally, the study suggests that public health policymakers and stakeholders should establish new policies and alternatives to limit students' cell phone use excessive and encourage more physical activities and in other ways to minimize their cell phone reliance.

The other contribution is “The link between excessive social media use and psychiatric disorders” by Zubair et al. (2021). The authors are offering an in-depth assessment of the emerging crisis of mental health problems caused by the increasing reliance on social media platforms. It is aimed at summarizing the existing literature to put forth the main psychiatric disorders related to social media exposure and as a result the evidence-based approach to prevention and treatment would be more holistic and scientifically valid. Technically, the method will consist of reading and analyzing numerous research and articles that tackle the way social media usage influences mental health, by which social media exposure can be linked to some

psychological issues like anxiety, depression, insomnia, stress, lessened subjective happiness, and emotions of mental deprivation (Zubair et al., 2021).

The research results in the article reveal a profound link between the social media use and the generation of anxiety and other psychological disorders. The problem is usually worsened by some aspects like the extreme time spent on social media, the continuous usage, and engagement on various platforms (Zubair et al., 2021). As the literature available reveals, there are several possible causes to these negative effects, including unhealthy comparisons resulting in lowered self-esteem, social media burnout, excessive stress, inability to emotion regulation due to excessive social media use, as well as diminished real-life social interactions contributing to the development of social anxiety disorder. Also, they maintained that the social media use maybe be a result of the pre-existing anxiety and it might be used as coping mechanism (Zubair et al., 2021). This article stresses that now more than ever, mental health care should be given the appropriately high attention due to the fact that digitalization is a rising issue and online social interactions almost always have an impact on us.

Another article is Jacob et al., (2020), “The effect of online images on self-harm”. The major goal of the article is to study how young people see and use the self-harm images, which gives us an important glimpse on how the internet helps to normalize and facilitate self-harm behaviors among the youth. The study utilizes qualitative approach involving 21 semi-structured interviews of a community sample of individuals in the age range of 16-24 years in Wales, UK who have had a history of self-harm (Jacob et al., 2020). By doing these interviews, the researchers will find out what causes photographing self-harming, and what platforms these people prefer to use for such activities.

The study shows that for numerous adolescents, the pictures of self-harming on the web act as a substantial factor in the process of normalizing and perpetrating self-harm behaviors. The participants argued that rather than the text-based interactions, the images dominated them as the reason for getting attached to the self-harm contents online (Jacob et al., 2020). The Tumblrs, which enabled the sharing of images by anonymous users, were particularly appreciated due to their ability to access certain content. Moreover, the research suggests that seeing images online of the self-harm can trigger physical effects and may even lead to imitation in individuals, which may be why this practice becomes ritualistic. The implication of these discoveries drives the need to confront the influence of online images on self-harm prevention and intervention measures as well as the need for online platforms and mental health professionals to recognize and alleviate the negative influence of such content on vulnerable individuals (Jacob et al., 2020).

The last article is "Exploratory Study of Online Harassment and Hate Messages Faced by Social Media Influencers" by Valenzuela-García et al., (2023). Authors unveil the new patterns of interactions on the internet, which include the power play in the online communication between public figures, such as social media influencers, and public. The digital era has opened the floodgates of opportunities for celebrities to be easily accessible and meets the fans' demands in an unprecedented level. To further study the vulnerable side of that accessibility, this study will focus on the issue of cyber victimization, which refers to harassment and toxic criticism, experienced by influencers. The main research question is to determine what nature and consequences of the phenomenon of online victimization are for influencers, and to explore varying reactions to it. What has been revealed is that this issue has grown in parallel with the popularity of social networking platforms. Through their emphasis on this aspect, the authors

aspire to join the wider discussion on the psychological and social consequences of cyberbullying and harassment, especially as it relates to prominent figures in the digital space (Valenzuela-García et al., 2023).

The methodology employed in this investigation comprises two distinct approaches: a self-report questionnaire will be given to the Spanish influencers to give the percentage and type of cyberbullying incidents they encounter, and an online ethnography to uncover the root issues of the influencers' experiences. The results from a survey show a sad fact that more than 70% of influencers have been the victims of some cyberbullying, which testifies to the extent of the problem (Valenzuela-García et al., 2023). The research also points out that the responses to and the feelings about the cyber victimization are not the same for everyone, but this varies depending on their social-demographic location and influencers type, which make the environment for online harassment more complex. Ethnographic research component adds up quantitative insights which categorize influencers as "non-ideal victims" because of the way they are viewed in public and the pressure they are under (Valenzuela-García et al., 2023). This categorization accentuates the fact that public exposure and personal sensitivity become affected by community beliefs about the victims. The results show not only how many social media influencers have cyber victimization but also the discussion in academics that is going on regarding this, implying ways of further exploration and potential interventions for cyber victimization.

5. Findings and Discussion

The purpose of this study is to identify the link between social media and mental health and put forth possible strategies for reducing the adverse effects. On a positive note, the first result suggests that social media itself cannot be labeled as detrimental to mental health. The last

sentence is also backed by a universal opinion across all the articles reviewed, which all in all, agree that the impact of social media usage is determined by how it is used. However, contrary to the popular belief, social media can also contribute to a positive aspect of mental health, as discovered in Thorisdottir et al. (2020), where less loneliness is reported among social media users. Nonetheless, this point highlights the importance of thinking more intricately about social media usage. It is important to decipher the various modes in which people interact with social platforms because this helps us to identify the social media impact on mental health. Through the split of social media use into its different parts and contexts, researchers can get some knowledge about the interactions between mental well-being and online interactions, which can finally lead to interventions and strategies that are more targeted.

One of the key discoveries that many users of social media platforms experience self-doubt and develop mental health issues owing to some factors that scholars have identified. First of all, social media networks frequently show an idealized version of what's happening around, which are carefully selected and edited images from others' lives. This, in turn, leads to social comparison and feelings of not being enough. Research evidence, as presented in Colak, Bingol and Dayi's (2023) and Lai et al. (2023) studies, reveals how social media worsens body image issues and perpetuates unrealistic beauty standards. As a result, self-esteem and mental health issues may develop. Also, the never-ending need for social media updates or curated content can make one develop a sense of anxiety of missing out (FOMO) that can, in turn, cause depression and anxiety. According to the research works of Agarwal and Mewafarosh (2021) and Hunt et al (2018), excessive use of social media in most cases, has been seen to cause depression and loneliness among its users.

Moreover, social media sites can function as a place where cyberbullying and harassment occur, which by extension tends to worsen mental health. Works by Patchin et al., (2023) and Valenzuela-García et al. (2023) demonstrate the pervasiveness of the digital self-harm and the online harassment among teenagers and young adults. Consequently, the prevalence of such behavior leads to more anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation among teenagers and young adults. Not only that but also, the addictive nature of the social media platforms, which is manifested by continuous swiping and gaining approval through likes and comments can cause obsessive-compulsive behaviors and addiction, thereby, having an adverse effect on mental health. Interestingly, psychological adverse effects of social network site use are multidimensional and encompass problems such as unhealthy social comparison, cyberbullying, addiction, and psychological conditions worsening, emphasizing the significance of preventive measures and proper attitudes towards social media to protect our psychological well-being.

Moreover, the study reveals an association between social media use and social anxiety of college students, implying different ways of using social media can bring a change in mental health (Colak, Bingol & Dayi, 2023). The research has shown that the mere act of being online, even in a passive manner, increases social anxiety. Therefore, a lack of active engagement in social media might enhance negative emotions like social anxiety by comparisons with others, looking at the perfect versions of life, and the sensation of being alone while being connected. Another point to note is that the social media is interconnected with social anxiety level and the more active one is, the more it is associated to social anxiety. Moreover, it is revealed that the active application of the social media could have some advantages as well. One good example of such association was illustrated by Thorisdottir et al. (2020) who emphasized that the loneliness is reduced when social media is actively put to use. However, Course-Choi & Hammond (2021)

report that the process is not for everyone, it can also help alleviate depression and anxiety for many others. However, the evidence that the effects of mental health problems on social media are not confined to social media is not enough to say that they are independent. This being said, it is equally important to remember about limitations of its use so that it does not occupy the whole day.

Furthermore, the research shows that social media usage leads to gender disparity in terms of how it impacts mental health, with girls having a stronger correlation between time spent on social media and emotional distress, particularly in relation to passive use and depressed mood symptoms (Thorisdottir et al., 2020). This result emphasizes the necessity of taking into account gender disparities in social media research and mental health, because girls may require a special attention to mitigate the negative psychological effects of some social media behaviors. These conclusions are extremely relevant for understanding the intricate relationship between social media application and social anxiety. By this, it is meant that the use of social media may not always be harmful, and it is the kind of involvement that matters most in the psychological effects it produces.

Another finding is that the most concerning parts of social media use is the connection that it has to body image dissatisfaction. According to Prichard et al. (2020), users often develop the distorted view of their bodies just because of the constant bombing from the pictures of bodies that are considered to be ideal. This is not merely the symptom of one specific group, over all age and gender groups have been affected. Incessant exposure to perfect pictures of bodies that do not really exist cannot help but lead to a pervasive sensation of inadequacy and dissatisfaction with one's own body. This, on the other side, however, could bring about many negative psychological outcomes such as low self-esteem, eating disorders, and depression.

Moreover, as Prichard et al. (2020) pointed out, the societal threat of social media addiction is a growing concern as well. The platforms' design, which is focused on an endless scroll that gives instant feedback loops, are crafted to encourage compulsive use of the internet. People experience the same situation when they constantly search for their validation through likes, comments, and shares thus leading to the only addiction. The connection between this addictive nature of social media and cyberbullying is as strong as a two-way road; victims and perpetrators are both at greater risk of being involved in cyberbullying. The screen anonymity and screen detachment which comes along with the digital screen can give individuals the confidence to execute harmful behaviors which they might not in reality. Cyberbullying victims also show an increased vulnerability to anxiety, stress and depression. Another finding of the study which is coined as phubbing, or phone snubbing, by Prichard et al. (2020) is also an indication of the social implications of heavy social media use. Phubbing is the word used to describe the behavior of individuals who choose to pay more attention to their mobile phones as opposed to the people next to them on social media sites. Such a kind of behavior may cause the decrease of the quality of face-to-face interactions, that, in turn, results in the lack of communication and intimacy in relations. It embodies a profound movement in sociological dimension where virtual interactions are soaring over the physical ones, bringing forth a lonesomeness and isolation among the users.

Another major finding is that there is a considerable and alarming correlation between digital self-harm and the growth in risks of suicidal thoughts and behaviors among American middle and high school students. Cyber-bullying, a form of self-harm through the act of anonymously spreading and sharing harmful content related to oneself online is a major consequence of social media on the mental health (Patchin, Hinduja & Meldrum, 2023). Study's

logistic regression shows that the engagement in digital self-harm is significantly related to the higher possibility to experience suicidal ideation and such thoughts become for individuals with five to seven times greater chance. Worse still are the nine- to fifteenfold increase in the probability of developing a serious suicidal behavior for those who involved in such self-abusive activities.

An additional important finding is the strong positive relationship between the duration of media usage and the rate of depressive symptoms in male and female adolescents. This association suggests that the further social media platforms are used by this age group, the more the chance of such individuals experiencing or worsening depression symptoms (Pastorino et al., 2020). Besides that, the study shows a strong connection between the length of time that was spent on social media and the existence of suicidal ideation which was also determined by the level of its intentionality among the participants. This is evidence that not only does social media use is co-related with depression symptoms, but it can also cause more serious mental health issues like suicidal thoughts and behaviors (Pastorino et al., 2020). The results of the research highlight the significance of this phenomenon in the frame of the discussion of the mental health consequences of social media. These findings are indicating the fact that the excessive social media use is associated with the negative impact on the psychological health of the adolescents, and such effect can be seen as depression or suicidal tendencies. The findings therefore stress the urgency of supervising and moderating social media use among young people to minimize the negative effects of social media use on their mental health.

Another serious issue that arises from the social media usage is the changes in an individual's mood that is evidenced in (Pastorino et al., 2020). The ever lasting comparing with others, receiving negative news, and simply the fact that social media deals with superficiality

can cause a serious impact on users' moods. The disclosure may infuse such emotions as sadness, anxiety, and even depression in the most unfortunate cases. The essence of social media is that it presents the hoax of the connection, and the excessive involvement can make one feel being lonesome and isolated. Researchers, in [8], have repeatedly demonstrated that an above-average use of social media and a decline in life satisfaction and subjective well-being go hand in hand.

Another finding is the association between social media addiction, self-esteem and body image among teenagers, which discloses the negative psychological consequences of social media use. Moderate negative correlation is found between self-esteem and the level of addiction, and it is observed that the self-esteem of adolescents decreases as they become more addicted to social media (Colak, Bingol & Dayi, 2023). This relationship in particular is key to bringing out the negative impact of over-engagement with social media platforms that can threaten a person's self-worth which is among the most important factors of mental health. In addition, Colak, Bingol and Dayi (2023) propose that there exists a positive correlation of moderate degree between self-esteem and body image, which means that adolescent with high self-esteem is likely to have high body image. This is a significant finding as it shows that body image, a phenomenon which social media controls and shapes in the community through the exposure to the idealized and often unattainable body aesthetic, is one of the crucial elements in determining the formation of teens' self-worth. Social media addiction has another negative effect on body image which in turn further contributes to self-image decline. This negative effect of social media is twofold. It is both direct and indirect, since it not only lowers self-esteem but also deteriorates body image perceptions. Additionally, the platforms are addictive and can take up large amounts of time online which in turn affect the real-life conversations and activities and are more beneficial for mental health. This consequently leads to a collapse of one's worth in

relation to the validation they get from their social media activities. Depression may be the result of this series of events, which is caused by a feeling of worthlessness, loneliness, and isolation.

Another important factor is the moderating role of body image in social media addiction and self-esteem. This means that one of the causes behind the negative impact of social media addiction on self-esteem is how it can influence a young person's body image. This mediating effect thus shows the interrelatedness of these factors and suggests that intervention programs which target both social media addiction and body image issues together are needed to significantly reduce the negative mental health consequences of these two factors among adolescents (Colak et al., 2023). These findings support the argument that social media is a part of the increasing evidence base that such media can have a negative influence on mental health, especially among the young and vulnerable like adolescents.

Another significant finding is the widespread online hazing and negative criticism experienced by social media influencers, a segment of individuals that has become quite available to the public via digital platforms (Valenzuela- García et al., 2022). The rise of social media has led to the breakdown of the barriers that previously existed between celebrities and their fans, as a result of which the audience-celebrity interaction has become direct and continuous; they can comment, make polls, send emails, and even send private messages. Although this engagement is a tremendous supporting factor for influencers, it is also where they might get assaulted by cyber victimization which is the most substantial risk for them. The study is made up of a survey of self-reported victims and an online ethnography, and it shows that more than 70% of influencers have been through some type of online harassment or offensive criticism (Valenzuela-García et al., 2023).

In addition, the FOMO (fear of missing out) is another concept that the social media is closely linked with, which worsens the feeling of being left behind and loneliness (Bloemen & de Coninck, 2020). People receive notifications and pictures that portray a picture of perfect life, so being excluded makes them feel the anxiety of having missed out on something that looks so appealing. Sometimes, this fear can force users to reach out even more to these platforms, thus, setting up a vicious cycle which could potentially harm mental health and well-being.

Additionally, family dynamics is another notable issue that influences the teenagers' susceptibility to the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), a phenomenon that is closely related to social media use. Bloemen and de Coninck (2020) highlight the role that some aspects of the family environment such as family structure, parenting style, and the nature of relationship between family members can either hinder or intensify the development of FoMO in adolescents. While the exact pathways linking FoMO to family structure are not yet fully understood, it is clear that teens from non-intact families, and those who experience particular parenting styles from fathers, and those who perceive high-quality relationships with their parents tend to exhibit lower levels of FoMO. In addition, it is argued that a high quality of parental relationship as a risk factor for Fear of Missing Out is identified. Such discoveries provide an inherent link to the wider discussion around the controversial impact of social media on mental health. The FOMO situation, caused by the constant use of social media, can result in a lot of bad mental health conditions like anxiety, depression and low self-esteem, as individuals are always trying to compare their lives to the perfect life showcased by their friends online. This study draws an illustration on how the family setting can play either the role of a protection barrier or an aggravator factor to mental health problems (Bloemen & De Coninck, 2020).

The last point is that there are two theories which are better than the rest at interpreting the link between mental health and social media; displacement behavior theory and the gratifications theory. The displacement hypothesis suggests that the time spent on social media leads to the reduction or outright displacement of the time allocated to activities that are directly valuable for the well-being of a person, such as face-to-face social interactions, physical exercises and other forms of personal or professional development (Karim et al. 2020). This theory really points out how the intensive use of social media platforms can lead to a diminishing involvement in activities that as known to be the ones that improve the mental health condition and overall life satisfaction.

In contrast, the gratification theory let us know the psychological reasons why people join social networks. The self-presentation theory proposes a possible explanation of why some people use the social media as their source of comfort in times of loneliness and depression. They might be in a need of social connections and acceptance from the online community. When it comes to social media, one can only experience some degree of happiness and a momentary sense of togetherness, but it can also cause problems such as social comparison, cyberbullying, and even more isolation, which could eventually aggravate mental health conditions instead of relieving them (Olpin et al., 2023).

6. Recommendations

The first suggestion is getting people to be more aware of their emotional status. With the realization that criticizing the social media use alone is ineffective, it is important to teach people the way to recognize the sources of bad feelings. It is worth noting that users are accustomed to advertising and thus it is possible to utilize the opportunities presented by social networks to broadcast social advertisements that provoke people to question their sources of anxiety. It is the

families, as a primary objective, to which such advertising is directed because trustworthiness is very effective in identifying emotions. The basis of this action is the research of García et al. (2023) who showed that the emotional awareness increase leads people to manage their anxiety. It is the same technique to apply to social media tool.

The other suggestion is to promote responsible and thoughtful use of social media is also another recommendation. The majority of the researchers believe that the social connections still matter, and the most important activities are to chat with friends and post, in that case, the platforms help people to socialize and to overcome the negative emotions. The most effective implementation of this idea is the way of popularizing the use of restricted apps. These programs are responsible for keeping tabs on how much time a person spends on certain applications and restricting access to them after the predefined time limit has passed, which then forces users to have a mindful attitude towards social media. Contribution to this idea is made by Thorisdottir et al. (2020), who in their paper recommend taking an active part. But any excess of its use is bad and, ultimately, the risk exceeds the reward.

Moreover, there is a need to improve adolescents and young people's digital literacy and critical thinking skills. We can help people to know the risks and consequences of online behaviors so that they can develop a better knowledge of the impact of social media platforms on their emotions and self-perception. It is worth noting that this strategy is in accordance with the research by Pastorino et al. (2020) and they found that enhancing digital literacy can to some extent decrease the negative effects of social networking on the mental health of the individual.

In addition to that, developing a safe and friendly atmosphere for the online environment is crucial for prevention of self-harm and instilling emotional health. Patchin, Hinduja, and Meldrum (2023) is the one that stresses the need to create safe spaces where people feel free to

openly demonstrate their emotions and seek assistance when the need arises. A practical approach to the problem of self-harm can be implementing peer support programs and online counseling services, which can be effective tools for those who suffer from this destructive behavior. Similarly, collaboration among social media companies, mental health experts, and community groups is a key factor in the effective implementation of measures that give a top priority to people's well-being and security. Social media platforms can tackle the root causes of self-harm and promote the positive interactions between people so as to minimize the negative effects and create a safer digital world for all the users.

As another recommendation, it would be ideal to advise people to define their limits and avoid using social media for a long period of time. Allocating a time for social media use and enforcing technology-free periods, people can take up the control, and it leads to a decrease of the feelings of FOMO. In addition, establishing a supportive real-world community where people can pursue meaningful activities and interactions without the fear of missing out on social media can also lessen the pressure to constantly browse your social media accounts. Alongside this, Bloemen and de Coninck (2020) underscore family characteristics that shape FOMO among adolescent, mainly the role of a supportive family environment which shields the negative influence related to social media.

In addition, practicing mindfulness allows people to develop sensitivity of their thoughts and feelings. This means that they can identify when they experience FOMO and learn ways of dealing with it. Various mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and grounding can be utilized in order to not only help the person stay present but also curb the urge of comparing themselves with others on social media. Another way to help people with FOMO is by offering resources and support network for those who are struggling with it by allowing them

to socialize with others who are in the same position and get tips on how to cope. Engaging in digital literacy education, creating supportive offline environments, and practicing mindfulness techniques are among the most efficient ways in which people can handle FOMO associated with social media use and guarantee a good well-being.

The other suggestion is to promote people to be as critical as possible while examining the content they view on social media platforms, and this will help reduce feelings of anxiety and depression. Informing users about how to identify and avoid harmful content, for example cyberbullying or fake beauty standards, can help people to manage social media in a way that increases their mental health. Besides that, the offline activities and the face-to-face interactions can compensate the imbalance between online and offline lives. Therefore, it will result in the reduction of the negative consequences of too much social media use on mental health.

According to the study by Papapanou et al. (2023), the social appearance anxiety is closely connected with the social networking sites and the feelings of loneliness in the adolescents and young adults. The study, therefore, stresses the need to address these issues in a comprehensive way.

Also, it is crucial to incorporate direct resources and support systems for those battling anxiety and depression to expedite early intervention and treatment. Developing online communities where individuals can be together with others who are experiencing the same thing may provide a feeling of being at home and support. Lai et al. (2023) found that social media use among college students is related with social anxiety, and therefore programs that cover communication skills should be developed to address this issue. Through the digital literacy enrichment, healthy online habits and the provision of support for the individuals who are

experiencing anxiety and depression, we are able to limit the impact of social media use on the mental health and instead advocate for overall well-being.

Besides, we need to limit the amount of exposure to negativity on the web. If we figure out why mental health got worse during the Covid-related lockdowns, we come to the conclusion that people would bump into the coronavirus-related content. As in the case of cyberbullying – the negative vibes are due to the fact that the person would not be in that state had they never experienced cyberbullying. García et al. (2023), thus, propose that policy makers control the negative news coverage and balance it with a positive one. In addition, these measures should be accompanied with a motivational campaign targeted at reducing the continuous use of remote control. Briefly, a person who spent a lot of time on their newsfeed would be more likely to come across such negative content. Social media is essentially the communication tool that may further the occurrence of mental health issues but does not necessarily have to.

Another recommendation is to motivate people to build a positive self-image and to be resilient to any kind of negative social comparisons which are facilitated by the social media channels. Colak, Bingol, and Dayi (2023) point out the mediating effect of body image in peer-relationship between self-esteem, social media addiction and psychological health of adolescents by stating that self-acceptance and body-positivity decreases negative consequences of excessive social media use. This could involve encouraging media to present the real picture of beauty and diversity in their representations, and also delivery of resource and support for those who are struggling with body image problem.

Beyond this, developing a supporting online community as well as digital citizenship tools can help avert feelings of loneliness and promote mental health among social media users. It is important to promote positive online interactions, empathy and kindness because that way

the Internet will become a more tolerant and accepting place where humans feel appreciated. Moreover, this can be accomplished by offering resources and access to mental health services within the social media platforms. This will help those who have low self-esteem or are depressed to find help and communicate with others who might have the same challenges. The chance to fashion a digital society comprised of empathy, authenticity and a sense of self-care can be an effective strategy in fighting the low self-esteem and depression caused by social media and in improving how we interact with online platforms.

To tackle social media's contribution to the body image concerns of young women, one has to implement media literacy and critical thinking curricula. Training people about alteration of images and the dominance of unnatural beauty standards on social media can be helpful for individuals to understand the facts correctly. Additionally, to the growth of the self-confidence among the young women encouraging them to manage their social media feeds in a way that it includes various types of bodies and promote the body positivity is also helpful to get rid of the negative effects of comparison and self-objectification. The researchers Colak et al. (2023) point out the mediating role of body image between self-esteem, social media addiction, and adolescents, emphasizing the need to focus on tackling body image concerns in the process of developing interventions for self-esteem improvement.

Moreover, the creation of spaces offline that welcome young women and allow them to feel accepted for themselves, and not just for their physical appearance, can serve as a protection against the influence of social media on the development of body image issues (Colak et al., 2023). The open and frank dialogues about body image and self-value with trusted friends, family and mentors can be a great source of support for young women that are in need of approval and recognition from others. Moreover, giving place for activities and hobbies that

highlight the uniqueness of individuals rather than their looks might be an effective way to change the attention from physical attributes. Through teaching young women media literacy skills, advocating for body positivity, and creating encouraging offline spaces, we can help tackle the concerns around body image and provide a healthy alternative.

Moreover, mechanisms that emphasize user safety and fight cyberbullying should be included in the policies. Social media platforms need to invest in robust moderation mechanisms and hire trained moderators who can quickly and effectively react to reports of harassment and hate speech. Moreover, equipping users with the ability to block, mute, or report any abusive content will boost the individual capacity to defend themselves against online abuse. Valenzuela-García et al. (2023) performed research on the harassment that the influencers of social media experience, which further emphasized the importance of taking preventive steps to deal with the issue.

Finally, providing education on digital literacy and online behavior can assist in preventing online harassment cases. Educating users about the consequences of their online behavior and creating an atmosphere of respect and empathy can serve as a means to make the internet a friendlier and more tolerant place. Schools and educational institutions are positioned well to teach students how to behave responsibly in the digital age and how to utilize social media ethically. By raising awareness about the negative impacts of online harassment and providing people with the instruments and skills to handle it, we can work towards developing a more positive and supportive community for all users in the online world.

7. Conclusion

The influence of social media on the state of mental health is unquestionable, with the mental health both on the positive and negative side. This work illustrated that there is no direct

correlation between social use and poor mental health. Consequently, the more people are exposed to negative content, the more likely they are to feel anxious. On the one hand, social media platforms present unrivaled possibilities for bonding and information sharing, and, on the other hand, they pose serious problems to people's mental health, for instance, anxiety, depression, self-esteem issues. By growing emotional awareness, boosting active usage of social platforms and reducing passively use, people will be able to secure their mental health by social media. Therefore, the mental health issues related to social media should not be seen solely as a personal matter but as an issue which requires joint effort from individuals, communities, policymakers and social media platforms and social media platforms.

As we have seen there is a pressing need for cooperative efforts to encourage responsible social media use and to reduce the mental health effect. Primarily, education greatly contributes to the equipping of individuals with skills to use the Internet safely and thoughtfully. Schools, parents, and mental health experts need to work together to form whole digital literacy programs where the participants are taught how to critically analyze information they find online, identify harmful behaviors, and seek help if they are in trouble. Besides these, the social networks platforms themselves are a big part of the responsibility in the creation of safer online areas. The quest for the safety of the users will be made by moderation systems development, enforcement of the community norms, and investing in resources for mental health for them. Additionally, they have to pass laws in order to make sure that platforms are liable to the problem of cyberbullying and to protect users' mental health from cyberbullying.

In addition to education and accountability of the platform, cultivating empathy, support, and inclusion in the online culture is imperative. Encouraging positive things in social media by organizing kindness campaigns, building a sense of community, and combating the negative

effects of social media on mental health is important. Aside from that, people need to practice self-care and be aware of boundaries with social media. They need to know when it is time to log out and have a healthy connection away from social media. Through the united adoption of the strategies outlined above, we can develop a more pleasant and supportive online atmosphere that supports the mental health of everyone.

Additionally, building a responsible social media use and maintaining health online are the responsibilities of all of those involved is the challenge. It is also requiring collaborative work and proactive steps. The way forward is to give education a higher priority and make platform accountability and the creation of a supportive online culture the top consideration. This will help harness the power of social media to build positive relationships, empower individuals and promote mental health in the digital era. It is crucial that we keep on promoting the laws and practices which give a priority to mental health. Such laws and practices should also produce the virtual environments which are safe, sound, and capable of giving a chance for every person to thrive.

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