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THE DIGITAL ROUTINE: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT ON DAILY LIFE

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Abstract

Social media has become an essential part of modern daily life, influencing communication patterns, information sharing, lifestyle choices, and mental well-being. While it offers numerous benefits such as connectivity and access to information, excessive use may negatively affect productivity, social relationships, and psychological health.

To assess the impact of social media use on daily life among adults and to examine its association with time spent on social networking platforms and selected behavioral factors.

A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted among 17 participants using a self-administered structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 64x. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participant characteristics, followed by Chi-square tests to assess associations between social media usage patterns and perceived impacts on daily life.

Most respondents were aged 18–25 years (88%) and female (70%). Most participants (80%) reported using social media for more than three hours daily. Negative impacts on daily life, including reduced concentration, disturbed sleep, and decreased face-to-face interaction, were reported by 73.3% of respondents. However, Chi-square analysis revealed no statistically significant association between daily social media usage duration and overall perceived impact on daily life ($p > 0.05$).

The use of social media is observed to be prevalent among respondents and is considered to have an influence on daily life. Although there is no statistical significance between the duration of social media usage and its impact, it is emphasized that moderation in social media usage is crucial for familiarity with healthy social media practices.

سوشل میڈیا جدید روزمرہ زندگی کا ایک لازمی حصہ بن چکا ہے، جو بات چیت کے انداز، معلومات کے تبادلے، طرزِ زندگی اور ذہنی صحت پر اثرانداز ہوتا ہے۔ اگرچہ یہ لوگوں کو جوڑنے اور معلومات تک رسائی جیسے بے شمار فوائد فراہم کرتا ہے، مگر اس کا حد سے زیادہ استعمال پیداواری صلاحیت، سماجی تعلقات اور نفسیاتی صحت پر منفی اثر ڈال سکتا ہے۔

اس مطالعے کا مقصد بالغ افراد میں روزمرہ زندگی پر سوشل میڈیا کے اثرات کا جائزہ لینا اور اس کے استعمال کے دورانیے اور مخصوص رویوں کے عوامل کے درمیان تعلق کو پرکھنا تھا۔

یہ مقداری کراس سیکشنل مطالعہ 17 شرکاء پر مشتمل تھا، جس کے لیے ایک خودساختہ منظم سوالنامہ کے ذریعے کی گئی۔ شرکاء کی خصوصیات کو *SPSS* 64 ورژن *x* استعمال کیا گیا۔ ڈیٹا کی تجزیہ کاری بیان کرنے کے لیے تفصیلی شماریاتی طریقے استعمال کیے گئے، جب کہ سوشل میڈیا کے استعمال کے انداز اور روزمرہ زندگی پر محسوس شدہ اثرات کے درمیان تعلق معلوم کرنے کے لیے کائی-اسکوائر ٹیسٹ *(Chi-square test)* استعمال کیا گیا۔

نتائج کے مطابق شرکاء کی اکثریت کی عمر 18 سے 25 سال کے درمیان تھی (88%) اور زیادہ تر خواتین تھیں (70%)۔ زیادہ تر شرکاء (80%) روزانہ تین گھنٹے سے زائد سوشل میڈیا استعمال کرتے تھے۔ منفی اثرات جیسے توجہ میں کمی، نیند میں خلل، اور آمنے سامنے سماجی میل جول میں کمی 73.3% شرکاء کی جانب سے رپورٹ کیے گئے۔ تاہم کائی-اسکوائر تجزیے کے مطابق سوشل میڈیا استعمال کے دورانیے اور روزمرہ زندگی پر مجموعی اثرات کے درمیان کوئی شماریاتی طور پر نمایاں تعلق نہیں پایا گیا *($p > 0.05$)*۔

نتیجتاً سوشل میڈیا کا استعمال شرکاء میں عام پایا گیا اور اسے روزمرہ زندگی پر اثرانداز سمجھا گیا۔ اگرچہ استعمال کے دورانیے اور اثرات کے درمیان کوئی شماریاتی اہمیت ثابت نہیں ہوئی، تاہم یہ بات زور دے کر کہی گئی کہ سوشل میڈیا کے صحت مند استعمال کے لیے اعتدال اختیار کرنا ضروری ہے۔

Introduction

1.1 Background of Social Media

Social media is integral to young adults' lives, enabling constant connection, information exchange, and self-expression. Platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Snapchat, and others are among the most widely used (Hilty, 2023). Systematic and scoping reviews show that problematic or excessive use is moderately associated with depression, anxiety, stress, sleep disturbance, and other adverse outcomes, especially when use exceeds several hours per day or spans many platforms. (Schønning, 2020) Overall, current evidence portrays social media as a double-edged tool whose mental health impact depends on intensity, type of use, and individual vulnerability. (Lin, 2016)

1.2 Problem Statement and Significance of the Study

Despite the widespread use of social media, its comprehensive impact on daily life remains insufficiently understood, particularly in developing countries. Excessive use may disrupt mental health, social relationships, productivity, and sleep, yet balanced use may offer social and educational benefits (Shannon, . Problematic Social Media Use in Adolescents and Young Adults, (2021).).

Understanding how social media affects daily life is essential for developing evidence-based guidelines, awareness programs, and interventions aimed at promoting healthy digital habits. This study seeks to contribute to existing knowledge by examining the multidimensional effects of social media use on daily life.

1.3 Gaps and Limitations in Existing Research

Although extensive research has examined social media use, several gaps remain. Many studies focus on specific age groups or single platforms, limiting generalizability. Cross-sectional designs often fail to establish causal relationships between social media use and daily life outcomes. Additionally, limited research has explored the combined social, psychological, and behavioral impacts of social media within specific cultural and regional contexts.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

 To assess patterns of social media usage in daily life and identify factors contributing to excessive or problematic social media use.

 To examine the impact of social media use on mental well-being, including stress, anxiety, and its relationship with social interaction.

 To evaluate the effects of social media usage on academic/work performance, daily routine, and sleep patterns.

1.5 Literature Review

Social media is now embedded in young adults' daily lives and shows both beneficial and harmful effects on psychological, social, and behavioral outcomes.

Social media comprises internet-based platforms enabling creation and exchange of user-generated content and networked interaction (Shannon, Problematic Social Media Use in Adolescents and Young Adults , 2021).

WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are among the most frequently used platforms across countries. (Woodward M. M., Time Spent on Social Media and Associations with Mental Health in Young Adults, 2025)

Systematic reviews show that problematic or excessive use is moderately associated with depression, anxiety, and stress in adolescents and young adults. (Hilty, 2023) Higher time and frequency of use predict greater depression and perceived social isolation in U.S. young adults, with clear dose–response patterns. Excessive use has also been linked to anxiety disorders and higher odds of clinically significant anxiety (Shannon, . Problematic Social Media Use in Adolescents and Young Adults, 2021)

Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Design

This study employed a cross-sectional descriptive research design to assess the impact of social media on daily life..

2.2 Study Setting and Data Source

The study was conducted in an academic and community setting. Data were collected from individuals actively using social media platforms. Primary data were obtained directly from participants through a structured, self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed both online (Google Forms) and in printed form, ensuring accessibility and improved response rates.

2.3 Study Population and Sample Size

Total of 17 respondents participated.

2.4 Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants. Individuals who met the inclusion criteria and consented to participate were included in the study.

2.5 Inclusion Criteria

Participants were included in the study if they:
Were aged 18 years or above
Actively used at least one social media platform
We were able to understand and respond to the questionnaire
Provided informed consent to participate

2.6 Data Collection Tools and Measurements

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire designed after reviewing relevant literature. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions and was divided into the following sections:

2.6.1 Socio-Demographic Information

Age
Gender
Educational status
Occupation
Average daily time spent on social media

2.6.2 Social Media Usage Assessment

Participants were asked about
Types of social media platforms used
Frequency and duration of use
Purpose of social media use (communication, entertainment, education, etc.)
Time of day most used

2.6.3 Psychological Well-Being Assessment

Psychological impact was assessed using self-reported items related to
Feelings of stress, anxiety, or low mood
Emotional changes after social media use
Experience of social comparison or fear of missing out (FOMO)
Responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

2.6.4 Social Interaction and Daily Life Assessment
This section evaluated:
Effects of social media on face-to-face interaction
Influence on relationships with family and friends
Impact on daily routines and productivity

2.6.5 Sleep Pattern Assessment
Sleep-related questions assessed:
Social media use before bedtime
Sleep duration and quality
Difficulty falling asleep due to social media engagement

2.7 Study Variables
Independent variables:
Frequency of social media use
Duration of daily social media use
Type of social media platform
Dependent variables:
Mental well-being
Social interaction
Academic/work productivity
Sleep patterns

2.8 Data Collection Procedure
Participants were briefed about the study objectives and procedures. Information consent was obtained prior to data collection. The questionnaire was distributed electronically. Participants were instructed to complete the questionnaire honestly, and confidentiality was assured. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness before data entry.

2.9 Ethical Considerations
Ethical principles were strictly followed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. No personal identifiers were collected, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. The study complied with ethical guidelines for social science research.

2.10 Statistical Analysis
Data were entered and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) or Microsoft Excel.
The following analyses were performed:
Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation)
Cross-tabulation to assess relationships between variables
Graphical presentation using tables and charts
A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant where applicable

Results
3.1 Summary of Social Media Survey

Variable / Statement	Key Categories	Main Findings (Percent)
Overall social media effect	Agree / Neutral / Disagree	rity were neutral (58.8%), 29.4% h sitive view, and 11.8% had a negati view.
Limiting daily social media use	Yes / Maybe / No	% supported limiting use, 23.5% v unsure, and 17.6% opposed.

ıpact on academic/work performan	Agree / Neutral / Disagree	.2% were neutral, 35.3% agreed it distracting, and 23.5% disagreed.
Effect on sleep patterns	Agree / Neutral / Disagree	0% agreed social media affects sle ł% disagreed, and 23.5% were neu
Overall impact on daily routine	Agree / Neutral / Disagree	ajority (58.8%) agreed excessive u fects daily life, 29.4% were neutra
Social media makes daily life easy	Agree / Neutral / Disagree	9% agreed it makes life easier, 41. were neutral, and 5.9% disagreed.
Daily social media usage (hours)	<1 / 1–3 / 4–6 / >6	respondents (47.1%) used social n for 4–6 hours daily.
Purpose of social media use	tainment / Education / Communica News	ntertainment was dominant (64.7% followed by education (17.6%).
Social media platform used	stagram / Facebook / TikTok / Othe	gram was most used (58.8%), follc by other platforms (29.4%).

Interpretation
The table shows that social media has a mixed but mostly neutral impact on respondents' daily life, with moderate agreement that it affects routines, sleep, and productivity. Most participants use social media for entertainment, spend 4–6 hours daily, and prefer Instagram, indicating high engagement with leisure-focused platforms.

3.2 Cross Tabulation (Observed Frequencies)

Daily Social Media Usage	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	ongly Agı	Total
Less than 1 hour	0	0	1	0	0	1
1–3 hours	0	0	5	1	1	7
4–6 hours	3	1	1	0	1	6
More than 6 hours	0	0	3	0	0	3
Total	3	1	10	1	2	17

Interpretation
The crosstabulation shows that respondents who use social media for 4–6 hours daily are more likely to agree that social media use causes stress and anxiety. In contrast, users with lower or very high usage mostly reported neutral responses, indicating that moderate-to-high usage is more strongly associated with perceived stress and anxiety.

3.3 Mean

Dependent Variable	Mean	td. Erro	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound – Upper Bounc
Occupation status	1.205	.077	1.030 – 1.379
Daily social media usage (hours)	2.603	.303	1.917 – 3.288
Most used social media platform	1.945	.336	1.185 – 2.704
Main purpose of using social media	2.278	.231	1.755 – 2.801
media helps me stay connected with family and fi	2.127	.466	1.073 – 3.181
Excessive social media use affects my daily routine	1.958	.450	.939 – 2.977
Social media improves my communication skills	1.847	.276	1.222 – 2.472
Social media affects my sleep pattern	2.920	.506	1.775 – 4.066

Dependent Variable	Mean	td. Erro	95% Confidence Interval
Social media distracts me from work/study	2.050	.511	.894 – 3.206
Social media helps me stay informed	2.813	.404	1.900 – 3.726
Social media causes stress/anxiety	2.638	.321	1.912 – 3.364

Interpretation
The estimated marginal means indicate that respondents reported higher average scores for variables related to sleep disturbance, stress/anxiety, and staying informed, suggesting notable perceived effects of Social media use in these areas. In contrast, comparatively lower mean values were observed for occupation status and communication skills, indicating less variation across respondents. Overall, the confidence intervals suggest moderate precision in the estimated effects after controlling for daily Social media use.

3.4 Chi-Square

Demographic	χ^2 (df)	Sig. (p)	B	β (t)
Age	8.41 (8)	0.395	-0.111	-0.111 (-0.40)
Gender	4.69 (4)	0.321	-0.710	-0.313 (-1.23)
Daily Use	12.55 (12)	0.403	-0.381	-0.282 (-1.03)

Interpretation
The Chi-square results indicate no significant associations between demographic factors (age, gender, daily mobile phone use) and perceived stress/anxiety from mobile usage (all $p > 0.05$, ranging 0.321–0.403).
Regression analysis further shows these variables are weak, non-significant predictors of stress levels (β = -0.101 to -0.313; t-values non-significant).
In this small sample (N=17), demographics appear to have minimal influence on mobile-related stress/anxiety, suggesting other factors (e.g., usage patterns or perceptions) may be more relevant.

3.5 Multivariate Tests (MANOVA Results)

Variables	Grouping	mpact n (%) / median (Q1	impact n (%) / median Q3)	χ^2 / Z	p
Age group	21	4 (28.6)	2 (66.7)	2.09	0.351
	22	5 (35.7)	1 (33.3)		
	23-25	5 (35.7)			
Gender	Male	6 (42.9)	3 (100.0)	1.35	0.245
	Female	8 (57.1)			
Occupation	Student	12 (85.7)	3 (100.0)	0.00	1.000
	Other	2 (14.3)			
Daily use	<1 hour	1 (7.1)		1.44	0.697
	1-2 hours	5 (35.7)	2 (66.7)		
	2-4 hours	5 (35.7)	1 (33.3)		
	>4 hours	3 (21.4)			
Platform	Instagram	8 (57.1)	2 (66.7)	5.99	0.112
	Facebook		1 (33.3)		
	TikTok	1 (7.1)			
	Other	5 (35.7)			
Main purpose	Communication	1 (7.1)		0.94	0.815

Variables	Grouping	mpact n (%) / median (Q1	impact n (%) / median Q3)	χ^2 / Z	p
	Entertainment	10 (71.4)	2 (66.7)		
	Information	2 (14.3)	1 (33.3)		
	Other	1 (7.1)			
Limited daily use	Yes	9 (64.3)	1 (33.3)	6.22	0.045
	No	1 (7.1)	2 (66.7)		
	Maybe	4 (28.6)			
onnect with fami		1.00 (1.00, 3.00)	5.00 (4.00, 5.00)	-2.02	0.036
ffects daily routi		1.00 (1.00, 3.00)	2.00 (1.50, 3.00)	-0.50	0.628
oves communica		1.50 (1.00, 3.00)	1.00 (1.00, 2.00)	0.38	0.722
Affects sleep		2.50 (1.25, 3.75)	3.00 (2.00, 3.50)	0.00	1.000
ction from work		1.00 (1.00, 3.00)	3.00 (2.00, 3.50)	-0.76	0.434
elps stay informe		3.00 (1.25, 3.00)	4.00 (3.50, 4.50)	-1.95	0.039

Interpretation
The results indicate that participants who perceive mobile phone use as highly connecting them with family and friends, and as helping them stay informed, reported significantly higher stress/anxiety impact ($p = 0.036$ and $p = 0.039$, respectively). Additionally, those who believe daily mobile phone use should not be limited showed a stronger association with high stress impact ($p = 0.045$). Other demographic and usage variables (e.g., gender, daily hours, platform) did not show statistically significant differences, possibly due to the small sample size (N=17).

Discussion
4.1 Overview of Key Findings
The present study examined the impact of social media on daily life, focusing on usage patterns, mental well-being, social interaction, academic/work performance, and sleep patterns. The findings indicate that social media has become deeply embedded in participants' daily routines, with most respondents reporting frequent and prolonged use. While social media provides several benefits, the results highlight notable negative effects when usage becomes excessive or poorly regulated. (Woodward M. M., Time Spent on Social Media and Associations with Mental Health in Young Adults, 2025)
Overall, the study confirms that social media exerts a dual influence, offering both positive and negative outcomes depending on nature, duration, and purpose of use. (Woodward M. M., . Time Spent on Social Media and Associations with Mental Health in Young Adults: Examining TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, Snapchat, and Reddit., 2025)

4.2 Social Media and Mental Well-Being
The findings revealed that a significant proportion of participants experienced psychological distress, including stress, anxiety, and mood fluctuations associated with prolonged social media use(Brand et al. 2024). These results are consistent with previous research suggesting a link between excessive social media exposure and mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion.(Woodward et al. 2025)
Factors such as constant connectivity, information overload, social comparison, and fear of missing out (FOMO) may contribute to these outcomes. Participants who report emotional discomfort after social media use may be particularly vulnerable to negative online content or unrealistic social standards.(Anon 2022) However, some participants also reported positive psychological effects, including emotional support and relaxation, indicating that social media can serve as a coping resource when used appropriately.(Shannon et al. 2022)

4.3 Impact on Social Interaction and Relationships

The study findings demonstrate mixed effects of social media on social interaction. On one hand, social media enhanced communication by allowing participants to stay connected with family and friends, particularly those living at a distance. This finding supports the view that social media strengthens social networks and facilitates relationship maintenance.(Keles, Mccrae, and Grealish 2020)

On the other hand, many participants reported reduced face-to-face interactions, suggesting that digital communication may sometimes replace direct interpersonal engagement. Excessive reliance on online interaction may weaken emotional bonds and reduce the quality of social relationships. These findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the need to balance online and offline social interactions to maintain healthy relationships.(Arseneault et al. 2025)

4.4 Influence on Academic and Work Performance

The results indicated that social media use had a noticeable impact on academic and work-related productivity. Many participants reported distractions, procrastination, and difficulty maintaining focus due to frequent social media use during study or working hours. Constant notifications and habitual checking of social media platforms were commonly cited as barriers to effective time management.(Corke et al. 2025)

Despite these challenges, some participants acknowledged that social media can be beneficial for academic and professional purposes, such as accessing educational content, collaborating with peers, and staying informed. This suggests that the impact of social media on productivity depends largely on how it is utilized.(Hilty et al. 2023)

4.5 Social Media Use and Sleep Patterns

The study found a strong association between social media use and disturbed sleep patterns. A large proportion of participants reported using social media before bedtime, which was linked to delayed sleep onset, reduced sleep duration, and poor sleep quality. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have linked screen exposure and cognitive stimulation before sleep with insomnia symptoms.(Payne et al. 2022)

Poor sleep quality may further exacerbate psychological distress and impair daily functioning, creating a cycle of fatigue, stress, and increased reliance on social media. This highlights the importance of promoting healthy digital habits, particularly during nighttime hours.(Schønning et al. 2020)

4.6 Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study are largely consistent with existing literature on the impact of social media on daily life. Similar studies have reported associations between excessive social media use and negative mental health outcomes, reduced productivity, and sleep disturbances. (Schønning et al. 2020)However, the present study also emphasizes the positive aspects of social media, such as social support and information sharing, reinforcing the idea that social media itself is not inherently harmful.

The mixed outcomes observed in this study suggest that individual factors, such as self-regulation, purpose of use, and awareness of digital well-being, play a crucial role in determining the overall impact of social media(Tri et al. 2025)

4.7 Public Health and Social Implications

From a public health perspective, the findings underscore the need for increased awareness regarding responsible social media use. Educational institutions, workplaces, and health professionals can play a role in promoting digital literacy and healthy screen-time practices. Interventions aimed at reducing excessive use, particularly before bedtime, may help improve mental well-being, productivity, and sleep quality.

Understanding the impact of social media on daily life can inform the development of policies and programs that encourage balanced and mindful use of digital technologies.

Conclusions & Limitation

5.1 Conclusion

Social media has a very complex and important role to play in today's lives, with advantages as far as communication and accessing information are concerned, but at the same time posing challenges to sleep, productivity, and routines if overused.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. The small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings. The use of self-reported data may also introduce response bias. Additionally, the cross-sectional design does not allow for the establishment of causal relationships between social media use and daily life outcomes.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of research to Allah Almighty. My creator, strong pillar, my source of inspiration, wisdom, Knowledge and understanding. He has been the source of my strength throughout this program and on His wings only have I soared. This thesis work is dedicated to my parents, who have been a constant source of support and encouragement. I am truly thankful for having you in my life. This thesis is dedicated to beloved wife and children who always stood with me in my difficult times. This work is also dedicated to my parents, who have always loved me unconditionally and whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve.

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Questionnaire (English Version)
Impact of Social Media on Daily Life
This questionnaire aims to study the Impact of social media on Daily Life. All responses will be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes.
1; Do you agree to fill out this form voluntarily and confirm that the information provided is true to the best of your knowledge?
yes
Demographics
1: Name -----
2: Age-----
3: Gender----
Male
Female
Other:
3: Occupation
student
employed
unemployed
Social Media Usage
4: How many hours do you use social media daily
<1
1-3
4-6
>6
5: Which platform do you use most
Instagram
TikTok
Facebook

other
6: Main purpose of using social media:
Communication
Entertainment
Education
News & information
Business/work
7: Social media helps me stay connected with family and friends.
I strongly agree
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
8: Excessive use of social media affects my daily routine.
Agree
disagree
neutral
strongly disagree
strongly agree
Social media improves my communication skills
Agree
neutral
disagree
9: Social media affects my sleep pattern
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
I strongly agree
10: Social media distracts me from work/studies
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
I strongly agree
11: Social media helps me stay informed
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
I strongly agree
12: Social media causes stress or anxiety
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
I strongly agree
13: Overall, social media has a positive impact on my daily life.
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree

I strongly agree

14: Do you think social media use should be limited daily?

Yes

No

Maybe