

# Impact of Social Media on Social Behaviour among Young Adults



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*The Study carried out by the researchers is aimed at exploring the impact of social media on the social behaviour of the young adults in the age between 18-30 years. Employing descriptive research design the data was collected from 121 respondents residing in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Statistical tools such as correlation, regression, t-test are employed to assess the relationships between socio-demographics, duration of social media usage, nature of social media usage towards alterations in social behaviour if any. The findings of the research indicate significant relationship between social media usage and various behavioural outcomes.*

## 1. Introduction

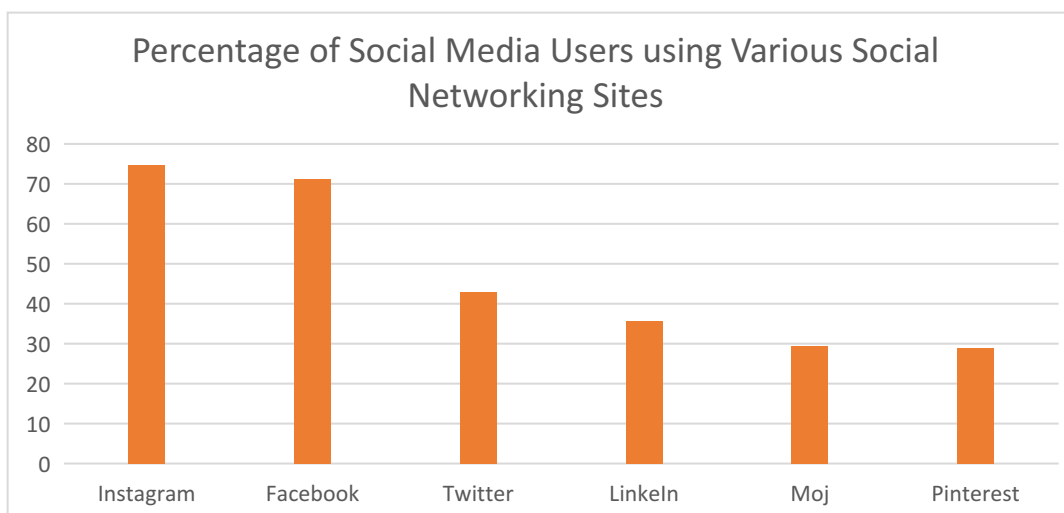
Social Media refers to the applications and websites that enable the users to build their social networking by connecting with others. They aid in creating social networks which refer to relationships that are established through the social media applications and websites. The word social refers to enabling people to connect with people at different stages ranging from acquaintances to strangers. Social media usage witnessed a significant increase in usage during the Covid era, which continued even after that.

“Social media have radically transformed and are continuously transforming the way we, as individuals and professionals, communicate, collaborate, consume and create” (Aral et al., 2013). Before these platforms came into existence, the communication used happen through direct contact or by the usage of means like telephone. There also existed mass media to address large number of people. Social media has transformed the way in which both private and public communication happens.

Social networks removed the barriers like distance, time etc. that existed in the communication. The usage of social networks helps to maintain regular communication with family, relatives and friends. It enhances their ability to collaborate with people and participate in social activities.

Social networking sites such as Classmate, Live Journal, Google+ provide people from academia for organizing discussions for sharing knowledge, support creativity and innovation and the like. They offered the platforms through which one can share his/her thoughts over a wide variety of topics which provides to unite people for the achievement of a specific objective. Students, researchers and experts can interact with people on areas of interest and seek advice to achieve positive outcomes.

The first professional social media platform was launched in 1997 followed by Facebook in 2004, Twitter in 2006, Instagram in 2010 followed by innumerable platforms that are launched after. Currently 4.9 billion people across the world use social media which is estimated to grow to 5.85 billion by 2027. 40.2 percent of India's population, which is approximately 398 million users in figures use social networking platforms. Indians, on average, are estimated spend about 141.6 minutes on social networking sites per day.



**Figure 1** App wise Distribution of Users of Social Media Networks in Percentages

According to the statistics published by Forbes Advisor, 74.70% of the users of social networking sites in India use Instagram making it the most used social media platform in the country. The user percentages for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Moj and Pinterest are 71.20%, 42.90%, 35.70%, 29.50% and 29.00% respectively.

Behaviour refers to the way in which one acts or reacts to the people or events happening in his/her environment. Behaviour can be classified into overt – observable actions or activities which are directly seen and measured such as gestures, physical movements etc., covert – mental processes which are not directly observable like perception, thinking, decision making, etc. and social behaviour – relationships and interactions between individuals and groups.

Behaviour pattern refers to a relatively constant manner of reacting to similar stimuli exhibited by an individual. The behavior pattern undergoes continuous development throughout the course of lifetime.

The patterns of behavior of the people reflecting their true self also act as indicators of their growth and development. The behavioural pattern of a person gets influenced by varied factors such as physical health, family members, peers, socio-economic status etc. The behavior patterns include exhibiting behaviours such as quick temperament, hostility, aggressive behavior etc.

The social media has a profound influence on the behavior of youngsters. The social media networks provide support to its users in their positive emotions and feelings. It helps the users to connect with people with similar interests and hobbies across the world.

In addition to the benefits, it also has been found to have adverse impacts such as decreased interpersonal skills in face-to-face communication, increased anxiety, depression, reduced academic performance, lower self-esteem, etc.

Social media usage reduces the amount of time that will be spent of things like hobbies, exercise, social media and is also taking away attention from important tasks such as work, family time etc. with a large amount of time going into these tasks, juggling with the obligations causes a rise in stress levels due to inefficient management of time.

These effects on behavior can be due to increased exposure to cyber bullying, creating unrealistic about body image and beauty standards, excessive addiction to digital communication, reduced number of real-life interactions, public posting of information making oneself vulnerable to predators easing identify theft, exposure to inappropriate or harmful content such as violence, extremist thoughts, sexual/abusive content, etc. Cyber bullying is found to lead to suicidal thoughts.

By providing access to valuable information social media enhances societal and personal growth. However, with decline in the time they spend with their parents, they lack the privilege of learning social behaviour from their parents. Instead, they are learning social behaviour through social media such as facebook and whatsapp. This has serious influence on their respect towards elders, value attributed to the cultural heritage. The increased use of social media also led to serious implications such as increased sexual harassment against women, increased fraud among both the sexes and also a negative relationship with parents.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

A thorough review of related to the area of research provides a comprehensive view of the existing body of knowledge in the area, as well it also helps to identify the gaps that need to be addressed, contextualize the research and avoid redundancy.

In the research carried out to identify the impact of social media platforms' usage on the youth of Pakistan, Hinna Rustam, et. al., (2023), established that 8 out of 10 respondents uses social media platforms and almost 60% of the respondents stated that they would spend 1-3 hours per day on social media platforms. 62% of the respondents accepted that face-to-face communication has been replaced by social media networks reducing the social interaction developing the fear of Missing Out. The Cyberbullying experienced by the youth resulted in fear, anxiety, depression, low self-confidence and other behavioural issues. They suggested, to overcome these, social gatherings that emphasize effective communication and interaction should be facilitated along with alerting the parents and youth towards the negative impacts of cellphone on behavior.

Lateef Omotosho Adegboyega (2020) in an attempt to explore the influence of social media on social behaviour of students in Nigeria, surveyed 200 primary school teachers and made the following revelations: (a) the social media usage of the students had negative influence on their social behaviour and (b) there were no differences in the respondents' perceptions of the impact of social media on social conduct across age, gender and education level.

Aalbers, et. al., (2019) expressed that continuous exposure to social media is found to have linked with symptoms of depression. The issues like interest loss, exhaustion, lack of attention, loneliness, fatigue, feeling inferior were also found to have positive correlation with usage of social media in a study conducted on 125 students.

The study conducted on 874 students from 270 high schools by Vernon et. al., (2017) emphasized the raising concerns towards social networking with its connection with sleep disruption, depressed mood and externalizing behavior. They suggested it is imperative for parents, educators and psychologists to mitigate the usage of social media and reschedule the usage to avoid it for atleast two hours before bedtime.

In the study conducted to investigate the relationship between envy among the teenagers and their propensity to compare, on 250 teenagers revealed a significantly strong positive relationship between social media usage intensity and envy among the teens whose parents compare their kids with others in their peer group Charoensukmongkol, P. (2017).

Looking into the relationship between psychosocial adjustment and social media usage among teenagers in the age group between 14-17, Barry et.al., (2017), reported a moderate correlation of number of social media accounts held by teenagers with symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity/impulsivity, ODD, anxiety, and depression. Both parents of the teenagers and the teenagers themselves reported loneliness and Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) as well.

Weng and Menczer (2015) argued sharing of stories, posts and comments on social media on varied topics, has become a major source of stress, among the users of social media.

Tsitsika et. al., (2014) in a study conducted on 10,930 adolescents in the countries of Greece, Spain, Poland, Netherlands, Romania and Iceland found that heavy use of social networking sites was associated with more internalizing problems. Heavy use of social networking sites is also found to be negatively associated with academic performance and lower activities scores and positively associated with offline social competence.

### 3. Need for the Research

The connections that are developing through social media, developed to keep the people stay connected with each other are mostly surface-level connections and are insufficiently profound to foster strong bonds with emotional attachments among the people.

Having turned into an essential element of everyday life, social media platforms started to show a significant impact on the mood. Both positive and negative moods get transferred easily through social media. The young adults, especially the students getting continuously exposed to social media posts, started to develop unrealistic expectations in life. These unreal expectations based on excessive reliance on social media are having detrimental effects on lives of the people.

Physical consequences like weariness, headaches, visual impairment, etc. can result from excessive usage of social media networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Sanapchat, etc. In addition, it can also result in people less interactive and less social.

Through this study, the researchers try to identify the possible impact the social media can have and analyze the positive and negative effects of social media on social behaviour among the youth.

### 4. Objectives

- To study the impact of duration of usage on social behaviour of youth
- To find out the influence of nature of social media usage on social behaviour of youth
- To find out the influence of social media usage on time management

### 5. Research Methodology

Research methodology is the systematic and scientific process adopted to carry out the research to achieve the established objectives. This study focuses on collecting data on socio-demographics of the respondents, level of usage, nature of social media usage and time management. The data were collected using questionnaires from 121 respondents through convenience sampling technique. Descriptive research design is adopted for the study.

The questionnaire has been divided into four sections the socio-demographics section, the section consisting of statements related to time management, nature of usage and behaviour. The sections of time management, nature of usage has 10 questions each, while the section on behaviour has 20 questions accounting to a total of 40 questions. The questionnaire framed was tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha with an average of 8.42 for all the three sections.

The descriptive statistics of the study are depicted using frequencies and percentages. The analysis for dependent and independent variables is carried out by the use of mean scores and standard deviations. Correlation analysis is used to understand the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Multiple regression analysis is used to predict the variables for social media usage and student wellbeing. The impact of demographics of the respondents on dependent as well as independent variables is analyzed using t-test and F-test.

### 6. Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the duration of usage of social media on social behaviour of youth

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant influence of nature of social media usage on social behaviour of youth

**H<sub>03</sub>:** The usage of social media does not have influence on time management

### 7. Findings and Interpretation

This section of the paper provides analysis of the data collected and interpretation.

#### 7.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

**Table 1** Demographic Profile of Respondents

Category	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	64	52.50
	Female	57	47.50
Place of Residence	Rural	54	45.00
	Urban	67	55.00
Type of Family	Nuclear	73	60.53
	Joint	48	39.47
Total Monthly Income of Family	< Rs. 5,00,000	47	39.17
	Rs. 5,00,000 – Rs. 10,00,000	31	25.00

	Rs. 10,00,000 – Rs. 15,00,000	25	20.00
	>Rs.15,00,000	18	15.00
<b>Profession</b>	Student	37	30.58
	Job	34	28.09
	Self employed	29	23.97
	Unemployed	21	17.36

### Interpretation

- **Gender Distribution:** The number of male respondents (64) are slightly greater than the number of female respondents (57) in the collected sample. Their respective percentages in the sample are 52.50% and 47.50% which shows a relatively balanced distribution of genders.
- **Place of Residence:** The respondents living in urban areas (67) constitute 55.00% of the sample whereas the respondents living in the rural areas (54) constitute 45.00% of the sample. This shows the urban population use more of social media than the rural people.
- **Family Structure:** The constitution of respondents in the collected sample shows an increasing trend towards nuclear families (60.53%) over the joint families (39.47%). 73 respondents of the total 121 respondents belong to nuclear families and 48 respondents belong to joint families.
- **Monthly Income:** The income distribution of the respondents shows that 39.17% (47) of the families considered in the sample have an annual income less than Rs. 5,00,000, 25.00% (31) earn in the range of Rs. 5,00,000 and Rs. 10,00,000, while 20.00% (25) make between Rs. 10,00,000 and Rs. 15,00,000. 15.00% (18) of the families of the respondents earn more than Rs. 15,00,000.
- **Profession:** A significant portion of the respondents (30.58) are students with 37 in number. The next major group of respondents are those who are employed in various organizations and industries amounting to 34 in number and 28.09 in percentage. The other two groups are self-employed and unemployed contributing to 23.97% and 17.36% of the sample with a frequency of 29 and 21 respectively.

### 7.2 Major Findings of the Study

- The average mean of statements examining the collaborative skills of the respondents using social media was 3.98 greater than the average of the scale 3.
- The average mean of the statements related to enhancement of relationships was 3.83 indicating significant influence of social media usage on enhancement of relationships.
- The statements showing the relationship between self-esteem and positive attitude with the Social Networking Sites has significantly positive relationship with an average mean of 4.07.
- The average mean value (4.02) for influence of usage of Social Networking Sites on interpersonal behaviour indicates the existence of positive relationship between both the variables.
- The social media usage is found to have significant influence on psychological aspects of the respondents with an average mean of 3.94 greater than the mean of 3.
- The statements examining the individual performance of the respondents engaged in social network usage were found to have higher means of 4.26 which shows very significant influence of social media usage on individual performance.
- The usage of social media had a negative influence on time management. The average means for the

### 7.3 Hypotheses Testing

Independent variable	Dependent variable	t-value	r value
Duration of usage of social media	Social behaviour of young adults	6.394	0.648

**Interpretation:** The above table examines the impact or duration of usage of social media on social behaviour of young adults. The t-value 6.394 shows significant impact on social behaviour of young adults. The r-value standing 0.648 depicts a positive linear relationship between both the variables. The value being 0.648 indicates that there are other factors too impacting the relationship.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	t-value	r value
Nature of social media usage	Social behaviour of young adults	2.45	0.740

**Interpretation:** The t-value at 2.45 indicates a significant relationship between the nature of social media and social behaviour of young adults. The correlation coefficient being 0.740 also suggests a strong correlation between both the variables.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	t-value	r value
Social media usage	Time Management	3.181	0.543

**Interpretation:** The t-value 3.181 suggests that the relationship between social media usage and time management is statistically significant. The correlation coefficient of 0.543 depicts the impact of social media usage with time management.

## 8. Discussion

The sample depicts balanced gender distribution and higher engagement of urban respondents than their rural counterparts. Social media usage has been found to be more among the respondents belonging to nuclear families. The lower-income families exhibited less usage of the social networking sites.

From the above findings it can be deduced that the respondents who communicate regularly through Social Media Networks (SNS) have higher levels of collaborative skills. By sending and multiple friend requests, people are able to improve their networks and also improve the relationships with the existing people. The significant t-value for interpersonal relationships indicate that respondents approach their friends and family members to seek support to handle the situations they are not able handle on their own. The respondents using social networking sites were more matured and were also able offer guidance and support to others.

While the respondents who were limiting their usage and are conscious of the time they spend on social networking sites do not have their productivity influenced by social media usage, those involved in excessive usage of the same were not able to properly manage the time and are prone to delay the deadlines. They are not prioritizing the events and completing them on time.

The hypotheses testing carried out in the study reveal that the duration and nature of usage of social networking sites constitute important factors in influencing the social behaviour and productivity. The positive correlation confirms that the active usage of social media platforms promotes social interactions in a beneficial way, the excessive and/or passive usage can have negative results such as hindering the proper usage of time and overall productivity.

## 9. Implications of the Research

- The findings indicating positive impact of social media usage on collaborative skills, self-esteem, interpersonal behaviour and individual performance suggest despite the concerns of negative impact, the right usage of social media serves as a tool for enhanced inter-personal relationships and personal growth.
- The usage of social media has positive psychological benefits such as improved self-esteem and potential drawbacks such as despaired time management.
- As the people in the age group of adolescents and youth are more vulnerable to the pressures of online approval and comparisons, the focus on positive online behaviour and healthy engagement should be encouraged.
- Companies and educational institutions should undertake programs to create and enhance awareness about the psychological effects of social media usage by including the aspects like work-life balance, stress management etc.
- Policies and frameworks for mindful usage of social media for balancing the screen time to not effect the productivity, family time, hobbies, etc. should be in place.
- The interventions to streamline the social media usage should consider the demographic profiles such as gender, age, education, profession, etc, to best meet the needs of different categories of the population.

## 10. Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited by geographical boundaries as it is carried out on the youth in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
- The respondents belong to the age group of 18-30.
- The study makes no distinction between different types of social media platforms or specific methods in which users utilize them.
- The consideration of psychological factors is limited in the study.
- The findings of the study might have been influenced by cultural, regional and religious factors of the sample members.

## 11. Conclusion

The users who are able to limit their usage of social media usage are found to get benefitted from the advantages of effective internet use. However the users who view, respond or follow different sites and posts have to face issues like unwanted comments, reviews and the like leading to lowered self-esteem, anxiety related problems, increased thoughts of self-harm, etc. The findings of the study provide insights into the positive and negative effects of social media in the light of factors such as gender, family structure, income level, professional status and the like. The research established social media as a powerful tool to enhance collaborative skills, build relationships, boost self-esteem, etc. among the young adults. Yet, the usage of the same brings about challenges in terms of managing the time. This research highlights the significance of balanced approach towards the usage of social media, thus creating the need to investigate the strategies for fostering responsible and balanced usage across the people belonging to various demographic groups.

The platforms of social media offer a wide variety of opportunities for personal as well as professional development. But at the same time proper management of the same should be in place to mitigate the distractions and avoid the negative effects to ensure the holistic well-being of the users.

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