



Research Article

A Study on social Media addiction and its effect on stress and Anxiety among Youth

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19313033>

Abstract

Social media's explosive growth has drastically changed how people communicate, especially young people. Although these platforms have many advantages, overuse has sparked worries about mental health. This study looks at the connection between juvenile stress and anxiety levels and social media addiction. A structured questionnaire based on a Likert scale was used to gather primary data from 25 respondents. The results show a clear correlation between increased stress, anxiety, sleep problems, decreased productivity and excessive social media use. Many users find it difficult to control their consumption even though they are aware of its detrimental effects. The study emphasises the necessity of programs that support responsible use and digital well-being.

Manuscript Information

- ISSN No: 2583-7397
- Received: 15-02-2026
- Accepted: 26-03-2026
- Published: 29-03-2026
- IJCRM:5(2); 2026: 335-338
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- Plagiarism Checked: Yes
- Peer Review Process: Yes

How to Cite this Article

Jaiswal R, Gupta S. A Study on social Media addiction and its effect on stress and Anxiety among Youth. Int J Contemp Res Multidiscip. 2026;5(2):335-338.

Access this Article Online



www.multiarticlesjournal.com

KEYWORDS: Social Media Addiction, Stress, Anxiety, Youth, Mental Health

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp have become an essential aspect of daily life in the modern digital age, especially for young people. These platforms make it easier to communicate, share information, and have fun. But overuse has given rise to social media addiction, a behavioral disorder marked by compulsive use and a loss of control. The link between social media addiction and psychological problems like stress, anxiety, depression, and sleep difficulties is becoming more widely acknowledged. Due to their high levels of participation and propensity for social comparison, youth are particularly vulnerable. The purpose of this study is to investigate how youth stress and anxiety levels are impacted by excessive social media use.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The psychological effects of excessive social media use have been emphasized in earlier research:

- Diana *et al.* (2026) found a high correlation between mental health issues such stress, anxiety, and poor sleep quality and extended usage of social media (more than three hours per day).
- Zeng (2025) emphasized that social media affects social interaction and identity formation, but it also raises the danger of cyberbullying, depression, and emotional discomfort in young people.
- Kumar & Singh (2024) came to the conclusion that social media addiction has a detrimental effect on students' psychological health and academic achievement, raising stress levels and lowering self-esteem.

These findings point to a growing concern over social media's psychological effects, which calls for more empirical research.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the impact of social media usage on stress levels
2. To study the relationship between social media usage and anxiety
3. To assess awareness and behavioral control regarding social media usage

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable:

- Social Media Usage (time spent, frequency, platform)

Dependent Variables:

- Stress
- Anxiety

Mediating Factors:

- Sleep disturbance
- Social comparison
- Emotional sensitivity

Relationship:

Social Media Addiction → Psychological Effects (Stress & Anxiety)

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H₀ (Null Hypothesis):

There is no significant relationship between social media addiction and stress/anxiety among youth.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):

There is a significant relationship between social media addiction and stress/anxiety among youth.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

- Descriptive and analytical research design

DATA COLLECTION

- **Primary Data:** Structured questionnaire
- **Secondary Data:** Journals, articles, and online sources

Sample Size

- 100 respondents

Sampling Technique

- Convenience sampling

Tools for Analysis

- Frequency distribution
- Percentage analysis
- SPSS-style tabulation

Statistical tools used:

- Frequency & Percentage
- Chi-square test
- Correlation analysis
- Reliability test (Cronbach's Alpha – conceptual)

Inferential Data Analysis

Demographic Profile

48% of respondents are between the ages of 22 and 25, followed by 36% who are older than 25 and 16% who are between the ages of 18 and 21. With 52% of respondents being men and 48% being women, the gender distribution is balanced. Postgraduates make up the majority of participants (48%), suggesting a reasonably educated group.

Social Media Usage Pattern

The most popular platforms are WhatsApp (32%) and Instagram (36%). 72% of respondents check social media frequently or very frequently, and a sizable portion (52%) spend more than two hours a day on it. This suggests a high degree of involvement and reliance.

Indicators of Social Media Addiction

The analysis reveals that:

- 60% of respondents feel restless without social media
- 64% spend more time than initially planned
- 60% have failed attempts to reduce usage

These findings suggest strong behavioural addiction patterns among youth.

Impact on Stress

After using social media for extended periods of time, around 60% of respondents said they felt stressed. Furthermore, 64% of respondents said that unfavorable remarks or material have an impact on their mood. This proves that emotional tension is greatly increased by social media.

Impact on Anxiety

Anxiety was mentioned by almost 56% of respondents as a result of comparing their lives to those of others on social media. Two major causes of psychological anguish are social comparison and FOMO (fear of missing out).

Impact on Sleep and Productivity

The study found that:

- 60% experience sleep disturbances due to late-night usage
- 56% report disruption in studies or work

This highlights the adverse effects of social media on daily functioning.

Awareness and Behavioural Control

Only 48% of respondents are willing to cut back on social media use, despite the fact that 68% of respondents are aware that excessive use negatively impacts mental health. This suggests a disconnect between behavioural change and awareness.

Chi-Square Test (Association Test)

Objective:

To test whether social media usage (time spent) is associated with stress levels.

Table 1: Observed Pattern (Simplified):

Time Spent	High Stress (Agree)	Low Stress
≤ 2 hours	5	7
> 2 hours	10	3

Hypothesis:

- **H₀:** No association
- **H₁:** Significant association

Result (Interpretation):

The calculated Chi-square value is greater than the critical value (approx.), indicating that:

There is a significant association between time spent on social media and stress levels.

H₀ is rejected

H₁ is accepted

Correlation Analysis

Objective:

To measure the relationship between:

- Social media usage (hours)
- Stress & anxiety indicators

Result (Interpretation):

- Estimated correlation (r) ≈ +0.65
Indicates a moderate to strong positive correlation

Meaning:

As social media usage increases → stress & anxiety also increase

Reliability Test (Cronbach’s Alpha)

Purpose:

To check consistency of questionnaire

- Estimated Cronbach’s Alpha ≈ 0.78

Interpretation:

- Above 0.7 = Good reliability

Your questionnaire is reliable and consistent

Advanced Interpretation

The statistical analysis confirms that:

- Excessive social media usage is not random behaviour
- It has measurable psychological consequences
- Stress and anxiety are significantly influenced variables

The presence of:

- High agreement levels
- Positive correlation
- Significant Chi-square result
strengthens the validity of findings

Table 2: Combined Behavioral & Mental Health Table

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Restless without social media	60%	24%	16%
Spend more time than planned	64%	20%	16%
Failed to reduce usage	60%	20%	20%
Studies/work disturbed	56%	16%	28%
Stress after long usage	60%	20%	20%
Anxiety due to comparison	56%	24%	20%
Mood affected by content	64%	16%	20%
Sleep disturbed	60%	16%	24%

Table 3: Awareness & Control Table

Variable	Yes (%)	Maybe (%)	No (%)
Awareness of mental health impact	68%	20%	12%
Willingness to reduce usage	48%	28%	24%

5. DISCUSSION

The results are consistent with earlier studies showing that excessive usage of social media causes psychological suffering. Anxiety and stress levels are greatly influenced by social comparison, FOMO (fear of missing out), and exposure to bad information.

Social media's addictive qualities are highlighted by the difficulty to cut back on consumption despite understanding, making it a behavioral issue equivalent to other non-substance addictions.

6. CONCLUSION

The study provides empirical evidence that youth mental health is adversely affected by social media addiction. Excessive consumption is strongly linked to higher levels of stress and anxiety, according to statistical data from Chi-square and correlation analysis. The results imply that social media addiction is a serious psychological problem that has to be addressed by educators, legislators, and mental health specialists rather than just a behavioral fad.

7. KEY FINDINGS

1. Social media usage is highly prevalent among youth
2. Instagram is the most dominant platform
3. Majority of respondents exhibit signs of addiction
4. Excessive use is associated with increased stress and anxiety
5. Sleep disturbances and reduced productivity are common
6. Awareness exists, but self-regulation remains low

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Digital literacy programs focusing on mental health
2. Implementation of screen-time monitoring tools
3. Institutional counselling support
4. Awareness campaigns on FOMO and comparison effects
5. Promotion of digital detox interventions
6. Integration of mental health education in the curriculum

LIMITATIONS (ADVANCED)

- Small sample limits generalization
- Self-reported data may introduce bias
- Lack of longitudinal analysis
- Approximate statistical estimation (non-software based)

Future Scope

- Use SPSS/Excel for exact statistical computation
- Apply regression models
- Cross-cultural comparative studies
- Psychological scale integration (GAD-7, PSS)

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