Perceived Impact of Social Media among School Students

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Abstract: Teenagers' lives have undergone significant change as a result of the widespread use of social media, which has both expanded their social networks and presented them with new difficulties. The purpose of this study was to give a descriptive account of how schoolchildren in Rewari, India, saw the effects of social media on important facets of their lives. The study used a convenience sampling technique and a descriptive research design to survey 100 schoolchildren using the "Perceived Impact of Social Media Scale (PISMSS)," a self-administered questionnaire. Self-reported social media use and perceived effects on academic attention, sleep habits, in-person interactions, perceptions of one's body, and leisure activities were assessed by the PISMSS. A considerable majority of students (51%) spent more than three hours a day on social media, according to data analysis done with descriptive statistics and Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient. The correlation analysis revealed persistent weak to strong positive associations between increased social media usage and perceived negative impacts, despite the fact that students' self-reported views of impact were generally neutral across the categories. In particular, there was a weak to moderate correlation between increased social media use and experiencing distraction from academic tasks ($\rho \approx 0.31$), staying up late ($\rho \approx 0.35$), missing out on real-life moments ($\rho \approx 0.30$), feeling less satisfied with one's natural appearance ($\rho \approx 0.28$), and interfering with physical activities ($\rho \approx 0.33$). The apparent relationship hypothesis of the investigation was not disproved. To support teenage well-being in a hyperconnected environment, the findings highlight the need for focused interventions to foster healthy digital behaviors, such as media literacy instruction, "digital detox" periods, and the promotion of non-screen-based activities.

Keywords: Social Media, Perceived Impact, Adolescents, Academic Focus, Sleep Patterns, Body Image.

Introduction

Human communication underwent a significant shift during the start of the twenty-first century, primarily due to the widespread use and globalization of social media. What started out as simple online discussion boards and forums quickly developed into a sophisticated, networked system of platforms that currently influence the lives of billions of people worldwide. It is imperative to comprehend this phenomenon, especially when considering its effects on susceptible groups like schoolchildren. It is not just an intellectual endeavor. With forerunners like Usenet (1979) and
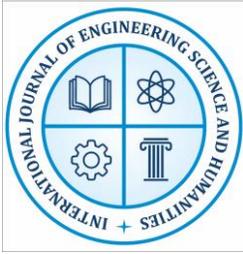
Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs) in the 1980s, social media's roots may be found in the early years of the internet. However, platforms like SixDegrees.com (1997), which introduced numerous features that would later become commonplace, were the actual forerunners of social media as we know it today in the late 1990s. More sophisticated social networking sites, such as Friendster (2002) and MySpace (2003), began to appear in the early 2000s. Facebook's 2004 introduction, followed by niche websites like YouTube (2005) and Twitter (2006), permanently altered the environment. Platforms like Instagram (2010), Snapchat (2011), and more recently, TikTok (2016), capitalized on a mobile-first paradigm, further speeding up this widespread reach with the introduction of smartphones.

This extraordinary pervasiveness is clearly demonstrated by the numbers. Approximately 62.3% of the world's population, or over 5 billion people, were active social media users as of early 2024. The average amount of time spent on social media each day is significant; it is approximately 2 hours and 21 minutes (141 minutes) worldwide. Adolescents in particular are leading this digital revolution among younger groups. Nearly half (46%) of teenagers in the United States reported using the internet "almost constantly" in 2024, with 96% of them reporting everyday internet use. Teenagers are huge users of platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat, and they use them frequently. This high degree of participation highlights how deeply social media is woven into teenage life on a daily basis, making its effects an important topic for research. India is a major and quickly growing social media frontier because of its large and young population. Internet and social media penetration have skyrocketed as a result of the nation's digital revolution, which has been driven by reasonably priced smartphones and inexpensive data plans. India is currently one of the biggest and fastest-growing digital markets in the world, while historically trailing behind Western countries. Indian users are quite active on YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and many more platforms. Social media is an essential component of schoolchildren's social lives, information access, and even learning, rather than merely a recreational tool. Because social media is so widely utilized, students are acutely aware of its effects, both good and bad, which calls for a thorough examination of how they are perceived.

Overview of Literature

A review of related literature is an academic discussion with earlier studies that offers a thorough rundown of a certain subject. Since it aids in setting the scene, preventing repetition, identifying information gaps, and guiding the study approach, it is a crucial part of any research effort. The complex effects of social media on teenagers have been well studied in earlier studies. The connection between social media use and academic achievement has been the subject of numerous research. According to an Indian study by Ramesh and Mohan (2015), students' academic performance was significantly correlated with the amount of time they spent on social media, with Facebook and WhatsApp being identified as the most distracting sites. Additionally, Bansal and

Kumar (2021) discovered a negative association between grades and excessive, non-academic use of social media, highlighting the necessity for a balanced approach. The widespread nature of social media's distraction is still a concern, even though some studies, like the one by Kollock (2000), have emphasized the potential of social media for constructive use in educational settings for peer-to-peer learning and collaboration. Another significant area of worry has been the effect of social media on wellbeing and mental health. According to a longitudinal study by Primack et al. (2017), using social media more frequently was substantially linked to a higher chance of getting depression. In a setting similar to India, Farooq, Faridi, and Ashraf (2022) discovered a robust link between high daily social media use and elevated anxiety and depressive symptoms in young people. One common explanation for these detrimental impacts is the "comparison culture" fostered by carefully chosen information on websites such as Instagram. According to Fardouly and Vartanian (2016), young women who were exposed to Instagram's idealized photographs experienced higher levels of body dissatisfaction and depressed moods. The literature also raises a lot of concerns regarding sleep disruption. Chen and Wang (2023) discovered a strong negative relationship between young adults' frequent late-night social media use and poor sleep quality, with "Fear of Missing Out" (FOMO) and incessant alerts playing a major role. The literature offers conflicting opinions about in-person interactions. While some research indicates that relying too much on online communication may impede the development of important nonverbal social skills, other studies, such as Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) and Wellman et al. (2001), have demonstrated that online interactions can enhance and even fortify preexisting social bonds. Social media's anonymity and reach have also made cyberbullying more prevalent, which is a serious problem associated with detrimental effects on mental health.

Lastly, it has been noted that conventional leisure activities are being replaced, which is concerning. The enormous amount of time spent on social media may replace participation in other healthy pursuits like sports, reading, and outdoor play. However, other studies have shown that social media may also be a tool for finding new interests and hobbies. By offering a localized perspective of these perceived affects among schoolchildren in Rewari, a semi-urban area of India, and by employing a holistic method to investigate a wide range of impacts concurrently, the current study expanded on the body of existing literature.

Objectives of the Study

The study, titled "Perceived Impact of Social Media among School Students," had the following objectives:

 i. To describe the current patterns of social media usage among school students in Rewari, Haryana, India.

 ii. To describe school students' self-perceived impact of social media on their academic focus and study habits.
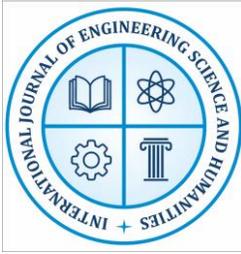
iii. To describe school students' self-perceived impact of social media on their sleep patterns.

iv. To describe school students' self-perceived impact of social media on their face-to-face communication.

v. To describe school students' self-perceived impact of social media on their body image perception.

vi. To describe school students' self-perceived impact of social media on their engagement in leisure activities.

Hypothesis of the Study

The central hypothesis of the study was:

1. There is a perceived relationship between social media usage and various aspects of daily life, including academic focus, sleep patterns, face-to-face communication, body image perception, and leisure activities, among school students.

Research Methodology

The study used a descriptive research design, which was suitable for giving a thorough, precise, and methodical account of the perceived effects of social media on Rewari schoolchildren. The objective of this strategy was to measure and observe the variables as they naturally happened within the chosen population, rather than to create cause-and-effect linkages. The survey method was the main technique utilized to gather data since it made it possible to get a lot of self-reported information from a big number of participants in a consistent way.

Sampling

All schoolchildren living and attending classes in the Rewari district of Haryana, India, were the study's target demographic. A significant delimitation used in the study limited the population to 100 schoolchildren. Nevertheless, the data analysis chapter only included findings from a 100-student sample. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling strategy used in this study that entails choosing individuals who are easily reachable and available to the researcher. Although useful, this approach restricted the findings' applicability to the larger student population in other areas.

Tool Used

A self-administered questionnaire called the "Perceived Impact of Social Media Scale (PISMSS)" served as the main research instrument. The questionnaire was designed to cover the six main study factors. In order to gauge the perceived effects on the other five domains, it featured direct questions about social media use as well as 5-point Likert scale items (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). Items that had a positive impact were reverse-scored to maintain consistency; therefore, a higher total score would suggest a greater perceived negative impact of social media.
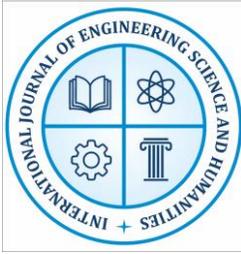
Objective-wise Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Discussion of Results

Each of the study's goals was addressed through the analysis of the data gathered from the 100 student participants. The data was summarized using descriptive statistics, such as mean scores, percentages, and frequencies. To examine the perceived connections between social media use and the other factors, the Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (ρ) was computed.

1. **Social Media Usage Patterns**

Table 1: Daily Social Media Hours

Daily Hours	Frequency	Percentage
1 hour	15	15%
2 hours	34	34%
3 hours	51	51%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Table 2: Notification Check Frequency

Frequency	Number of Students	Percentage
1	14	14%
2	27	27%
3	36	36%
4	7	7%
5	16	16%
Total	**100**	**100%**

The study of the data showed that 51% of the students reported using social media for three hours per day. A sizable percentage (34%) said they used social media for two hours every day, with an average of almost 2.36 hours each day. Additionally, the majority of students (36%) indicated that they checked their notifications three times a day, which suggests that they were constantly and habitually connected to their devices. For the student body, this extensive, high-level involvement created a setting of substantial digital immersion.

2. **Perceived Impact on Academic Focus**

Table 3: Academic Focus and Social Media Statements

| Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation
Q1: Social media distracts me...	3.84	Tends to Agree
Q2: I find it hard to concentrate...	3.42	Neutral to Agree
Q4: My grades have suffered...	2.53	Neutral to Disagree
Q8: I prioritize social media over academics...	2.91	Neutral
Q12: My ability to focus during classes is reduced...	2.82	Neutral
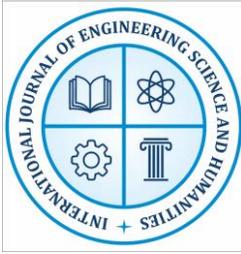
The majority of students believed that social media made it difficult to focus (mean score of 3.42) and was a distraction during studying (mean score of 3.84). On the other hand, their self-reported opinions regarding a direct detrimental effect on their grades ranged from neutral to slightly disagreed (mean score of 2.53). This implied a discrepancy between their perception that distraction had a direct negative impact on their academic performance and their awareness of it. The correlation study revealed a weak to moderate positive connection ($\rho \approx 0.31$) between the self-reported level of distraction and the number of hours spent on social media each day. This result supported the idea that perceived barriers to academic focus grew somewhat in tandem with social media usage.

3. Perceived Impact on Sleep Patterns

Table 4: Sleep Patterns and Social Media Statements

Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation
Q13: Usage before bedtime makes it difficult to sleep.	3.03	Neutral
Q14: I often stay up late on social media.	3.19	Neutral to Agree
Q15: Sleep quality is negatively affected by social media.	3.22	Neutral to Agree
Q16: I wake up feeling tired...	2.98	Neutral
Q17: Checking social media is the last thing I do...	2.76	Neutral
Q18: I sometimes feel sleepy during school...	2.93	Neutral
Q21: My sleep schedule is irregular because of social media.	2.94	Neutral
Q22: I often check social media if I wake up in the night.	3.17	Neutral to Agree
Q23: My daily routine gets disrupted by the time I spend on social media.	2.81	Neutral
Q24: I find it hard to put my phone down because of social media.	2.99	Neutral

Though there was a minor tendency toward agreement that social media negatively affects sleep quality (mean score of 3.22) and that students frequently stay up late on social media (mean score of 3.19), the responses addressing sleep habits were generally neutral. The weak to moderate positive connection ($\rho \approx 0.35$) between daily social media hours and staying up late on platforms was the most illuminating discovery. This demonstrated a definite behavioral correlation in which spending more time on social media extends into the evening, which is thought to have an impact on sleep. Students may not have completely understood these downstream impacts or may have
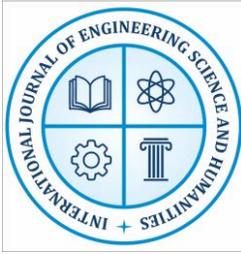
grown acclimated to a disrupted sleep pattern, as indicated by their neutral ratings on questions about feeling drowsy in class or having an erratic sleep schedule.

4. Perceived Impact on Face-to-Face Communication

**Table 5: Face-to-Face Communication and Social Media Statements**

Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation
Q25: Prefer personal communication.	2.62	Neutral
Q26: Social media helps me stay connected.	3.32	Neutral to Agree
Q27: Social bonds feel weaker because of social media.	2.92	Neutral
Q28: Harder to express myself in person.	2.87	Neutral
Q33: Avoid face-to-face contact due to social media.	2.96	Neutral
Q36: Missing out on real-life moments because of social media.	3.27	Neutral to Agree

Most students had a neutral opinion of the effect on in-person interactions. They did not firmly agree or dispute that social media makes it more difficult to express oneself in person or erodes social ties. The statements "I'm missing out on real-life moments" (mean of 3.27) and "social media helps me stay connected" (mean of 3.32), however, showed a minor tendency. Increased use of social media and the sense of losing out on in-person experiences were found to be weakly positively correlated ($\rho \approx 0.30$) in the correlation study. This result was a crucial sign of a latent knowledge that their offline experiences might have suffered as a result of their online activity.

5. Perceived Impact on Body Image Perception

Table 6: Body Image Perception and Social Media Statements

| Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation
Q37: Social media makes me compare my appearance negatively...	2.72	Neutral
Q38: I feel more critical of my own body...	2.86	Neutral
Q39: Social media helps me feel more confident...	2.92	Neutral
Q40: I often feel pressure to look a certain way...	3.19	Neutral to Agree
Q42: I feel self-conscious about my appearance...	2.87	Neutral
Q43: Social media highlights unrealistic beauty standards...	3.01	Neutral to Agree
Q45: I often edit my photos...	3.11	Neutral to Agree
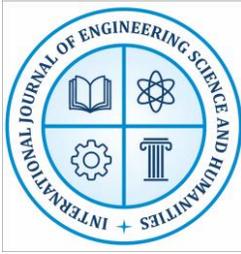
| Q46: Social media makes me feel less satisfied with my natural appearance... | 3.28 | Neutral to Agree |

The results on how people perceive their bodies revealed a worrying pattern. Students expressed a minor agreement that social media made them feel less content with their natural looks (mean of 3.28), that they felt pressured to look a specific way (mean of 3.19), and that it highlighted unattainable beauty standards (mean of 3.01). The discovery that students frequently made extensive edits to their images before sharing them (mean of 3.11) corroborated this. Higher social media use was found to be weakly positively correlated ($\rho \approx 0.28$) with lower levels of satisfaction with one's natural appearance. This suggested that pupils internalized and were influenced by the carefully chosen and frequently unrealistic images they saw more the more time they spent on these platforms.

6. Perceived Impact on Leisure Activities

Table 7: Leisure Activities and Social Media Statements

Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation
Q49: Spend less time on hobbies because of social media.	2.91	Neutral
Q50: Social media has replaced traditional leisure activities.	2.82	Neutral
Q51: I find it difficult to disconnect from social media to enjoy real-life activities.	2.83	Neutral
Q52: My social media use interferes with my engagement in physical activities.	3.01	Neutral to Agree
Q53: I prefer spending time with friends online rather than in person.	2.91	Neutral
Q54: I feel less motivated to pursue non-screen-based hobbies.	2.62	Neutral
Q55: Social media introduces me to new hobbies and interests.	3.09	Neutral to Agree
Q56: I feel anxious if I can't check social media during leisure time.	2.61	Neutral
Q57: My leisure time is mostly spent on social media.	2.89	Neutral
Q58: I prioritize social media over reading books.	2.89	Neutral
Q59: I feel social media takes away from my personal relationships.	2.83	Neutral
Q60: Social media helps me feel less bored during my free time.	3.19	Neutral to Agree
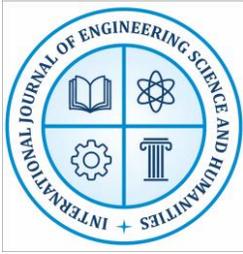
The majority of students' answers about their leisure activities were likewise neutral. They barely agreed that social media use interferes with physical activities (mean score of 3.01) and makes them feel less bored in their leisure time (mean score of 3.19), but they did not firmly believe that social media had supplanted conventional hobbies (mean score of 2.82). The correlation analysis revealed a modest to moderately positive link ($\rho \approx 0.33$) between the perceived interference with physical activities and the amount of time spent on social media each day. This implied that although social media might spark new interests, it also could have substituted or competed with time spent on non-screen-based or physical hobbies.

Conclusion

The hypothesis of the study, which proposed a perceived connection between social media use and many facets of everyday life, was accepted. Across all five study objectives, the analysis found consistent weak to moderate positive correlations, suggesting that students' self-perceptions of social media's effects on academic focus, sleep patterns, face-to-face communication, body image perception, and leisure activities tended to rise in tandem with its use. The correlation study showed that there was a perceived relationship between the variables being studied, even though the majority of mean scores fell into the neutral range. Simply put, this study discovered that students who spent more time on social media were more likely to believe that it was also affecting their academic performance, sleep patterns, interpersonal communication, body image, and hobbies.

Educational Implications

The study's findings have a number of ramifications for the classroom.

i. Include Media Literacy in the Curriculum: According to the study, social media distracted students. Thus, media literacy programs that educate children how to control digital temptations and utilize technology responsibly can be implemented in classrooms.

ii. Inform Students About the Effects of Social Media on Sleep: Students tended to concur that social media keeps them up late and has a detrimental impact on their sleep quality. Teachers should stress the value of good sleep hygiene and the harm that screen time before bed does to students' academic performance and general health.

iii. Make Use of Social Media as a Positive Tool: Although the survey pointed out drawbacks, students also thought that social media may help them keep up to date and discover new interests. Teachers can take advantage of this by teaching students how to utilize social media platforms in a positive and intentional way, whether they are being used for research and learning or for academic cooperation.

iv. Establish a Positive School Climate: According to the survey, children experienced pressure to meet predetermined appearance standards, and social media perpetuates unattainable beauty

ideals. Schools must to establish a safe space that encourages self-acceptance and offers tools to pupils who are having problems with their body image.

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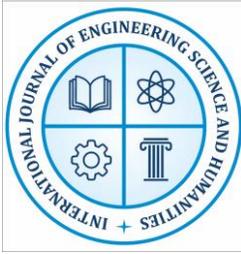
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