

Exploring the Patterns of Social Media Usage among Undergraduate Female Students

Author Details

Name: Utsa Bhattacharjee,

State Aided College Teacher,

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication,

Hiralal Mazumdar Memorial College for Women

Email ID: utsabhattacharjee3@gmail.com

Abstract

Social media is a powerful tool to disseminate information. There has been a significant difference in its usage before and after the pandemic. During the pandemic, people became highly dependent on social media platforms, and the effects of this increased usage continue to persist, with usage levels now even higher than during that period. In contrast, the scenario before the pandemic was much less intense. The growing use of social media has also highlighted the increasing importance of mental health. Mental health is as important as physical health. It encompasses psychological well-being, emotional well-being and social well-being. There is a relation between social media exposure and mental health. It has become an integral part of daily life, so it has impacted individuals positively and negatively. Social media has enabled different platforms to interact and participate in the communication process. The study shed light on the consequences of social media usage among undergraduate female students in the North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, India. The main objective of this study was to explore the patterns of social media usage among undergraduate female students. For conducting the study, a qualitative approach has followed. Focus group discussion was conducted in four state-aided undergraduate colleges. And later, students were selected for an unstructured interview based on their performance during the focus group discussion. After that, the data were analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006). Three main themes have derived from the data: **Infotainment and Edutainment**, **Psychological well-being** and **Digital Paranoid**. At the end, all themes along with sub-themes were analyzed and thematic map was established among the sub-themes. The study has shown how the selected group engaged with social media and examined the associated consequences.

Keywords: Social Media, Mental Health, Impact, Consequences .

Introduction

Social media is an interactive medium that enable active participation of mass. It has introduced and enhanced broad connectivity, new form of social relationships and employment. There is a complex relation between social media usage patterns and individuals' well-being. Social media offers platforms for connection, interaction, information sharing, expression sharing as well as sparking challenges to individuals' mental health. The only way to mitigate these difficulties, implementing evidence-based strategies and introducing a smart understanding of social media dynamics are necessary (Shubba et al.,2024). Besides several benefits social media promotes social comparison that can lead to feelings of inadequacy and lower self-esteem. Idealizing images and lifestyles can lead to a distortion of body image. Perceptions of anxiety, depression, cyber bullying are another concern (Oluwatosin et al.,2024). Using certain hash tags could connect people who are suffering from different issues and give them a needed virtual support group they likely would not have attended in person due to stigma. As an example, the royal society for mental health is recommending that social media platforms create a "heavy usage" notification to popup after too much time has been spent online. Establishing safe and

healthy relationships while engaging constructively with social media can help mitigate its adverse effects on individual well-being. Moreover, when used responsibly, social media has the potential to foster positive outcomes for mental and emotional health (Osman et al.,2022). According to Osman et al. (2022), increased use of social media is associated with lower levels of mental health. Social media use should be closely examined from a clinical and public health perspective. The impact of social media on mental health is a complex and nuanced issue that requires further research, awareness and action, while social media can provide benefits such as increased social connections and support, it can also negatively impact mental health by promoting social comparison, cyber bullying and increased feelings of anxiety and depression. Education on healthy social media habits and online safety is crucial for parents, educators, and mental health professionals. Social media platforms also have a responsibility to promote positive behavior, discourage cyber bullying and provide resources and support for those struggling with mental health (Yatesh.,2023). Social media exerts both detrimental and beneficial influences on mental health. On the negative side, its use has been linked to anxiety, depression, loneliness; poor sleep quality, heightened psychological distress, self-harm ideation, suicidal thoughts, cyber bullying, body image dissatisfaction, fear of missing out, and reduced life satisfaction. Conversely, social media can also provide positive outcomes, such as access to shared health experiences and expert information, support in managing depression, emotional encouragement, community building, opportunities for self-expression and identity formation, strengthening offline networks, and fostering meaningful relationships(Sadagheyani & Tatari,2021). The imbalance created by the excessive usage of social media is a great concern for parents, researchers and society regarding the mental health of individuals. One of the most common activities of the present generation is excessive use of social media web sites. Social media users have speedily adopted online social communication as an essential part of daily life, as evidenced by the increasing number of daily users. Social media has a substantial influence on different aspects of present digital life apart from online communication, from marketing to politics to education to health to basic human interaction. In many of these areas, social media presents clear benefits; however, the social media phenomenon is relatively new, number of empirical studies evaluated the overall influence of regular use of social media on the well-being and mental health of its users (Bashir et al.,2017). Participants discussed what might be thought of as the “good”, the “bad” and the “ugly” side of social media, navigating the benefits of social media to well-being against possible negative impacts on adolescents. Practitioners need to consider social media and its role in practice. When risk-assessing adolescents, it is arguably useful to include a social media dimension, without presuming the relationship will be negative (Reilly.,2020). In recent years many parents, advocates and policy makers have expressed concerns regarding the potential negative impact of social media use. Some studies have indicated that social media use may be tied to negative mental health outcomes, including suicidality, loneliness and decreased empathy. Other studies have not found evidence for harm, or have indicated that social media use may be beneficial for some individuals(Berrymanetal.,2017).Being socially connected to others can ease stress, anxiety, and depression, boost self-worth, provide comfort and joy, prevent loneliness, and even add years to your life. On the flip side, lacking strong social connections can pose a serious risk to your mental and emotional health (Robinson et al.,2020).

Objectives:

- To explore the patterns of social media usage among undergraduate female students.
- To examine the experiences of females students are getting over social media platforms.
- To understand their attitudes towards these experiences.
- To investigate social media usage and its relationship with the mental health and overall well-being of college-going female students.

Methodology:

A qualitative approach was followed to conduct the present study. For conducting the study, the researcher contacted the institutional heads (Principals) to seek permission for selecting students for interviews. The principals were requested to provide students from Multidisciplinary Courses (MDC), as these courses include both major and minor students from diverse academic disciplines. As per the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, MDC comprises students from various fields such as science, social science, and language and humanities. For the present study, students from MDC subjects including Journalism and Mass Communication,

Life Science, Economics were selected for conducting the interviews. Initially, several focus group discussions were conducted in four state-aided undergraduate colleges located in north 24 parganas, West Bengal, India. These colleges included Hiralal Mazumdar Memorial College for Women, Sarojini Naidu College for Women, East Calcutta Girls' College, and Barasat Sarada Ma Girls' College(A Unit of Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission). All of these institutions are affiliated under West Bengal State University. Women colleges were selected because the study is based on college going female students, as they are considered more vulnerable on social media. They are often subjected to gender-based violence. The forms of violence that females often face include the exposure of private data such as personal chats, photographs, contact numbers, and email addresses without their consent. Sharing such information without permission raises serious ethical concerns and is a major violation of privacy.

The present study explored the patterns of social media use and the overall well-being of female undergraduate students. The purposive sampling method has chosen for the present study. The sample included participants within the age range of 18 to 21 years, comprising students from semester I to semester V. A total of twelve participants were chosen for the study based on their performance and opinions during the focus group discussion, as well as their personal experiences on social media platforms. Later, further data were collected from them through unstructured interview and participant observation that was followed during focus group discussion and unstructured interview. After that, data were analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006). Here, ethical considerations were ensured through the confidentiality of participants. They were all previously informed about the interview; they were free to share their thoughts and experiences during the interviews. They were also free to quit the discussion anytime if they feel so.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Following Braun and Clarke (2006) and Kawulich and Garner (2009), data were transcribed, coded, and reviewed to identify major patterns and relationships. Themes were then developed to reflect the college student's responses to social media usage patterns, highlighting key Information and Edutainment, Psychological well-being, Digital Paranoid.

Theme 1: Infotainment and Edutainment

Infotainment refers to a combination of information and entertainment, involving content that presents informational material in an entertaining manner. It includes new formats such as stylized news presentation, use of dramatic visuals and new storytelling techniques.

Edutainment refers to a combination of education and entertainment, involving content designed to educate while simultaneously entertaining the audience. It includes educational videos, learning applications and interactive media.

Sub-Theme 1.1: Education and Motivation

Social media has become an important part of modern education. By maintaining connectivity and offering interactive paths, it has facilitated many perspectives of the learning process, making education more available and engaging for students and teachers alike.

Case 1: Srija, 19-year-old 3rd semester student, said, *"I mostly use X (formerly known as Twitter). It gives me information really fast without much hustle. From social media I get to know many new things"*.

Among several social media platforms, she has chosen X as her favorite platform which is very significant. The pattern and news feed are different from other platforms as she has mentioned X is mainly deals with important issues and is very helpful to create public opinion. As a student, it is a smart choice for her. Her purpose for using social media is clear from her statement.

Case 2: 21-year-old Sumana Dutta, has said, *"Educational and motivational content influences me the most as it inspires positive habits and helps me grow personally and academically"*.

She has mentioned in her responses that she uses YouTube the most. From the platform she loved educational and motivational content for her growth. It has shown her use of social platforms for her education. In the realm of content and social comparisons it is normal to lose motivation. Here, she has mentioned that she gets motivations from social platforms. It is considered a positive use of social platforms.

Case 3: 20-year-old Soma has said, *“Educational content influenced and impacted me. I learn about so many things through these contents. I do not always prefer reading books out of my syllabus, but I love to watch different videos on different topics.”*

There are so many educational contents on social media platforms. These could be a better option for learning. Here participant’s statement is proof of that.

Sub-Theme 1.2: Awareness

Case 1: 19-year-old Srija said, *“My social media usage depends on the day. Typically, not more than one and a half hours. I know it kills time so I barely use social media during my exam time. Balanced social media usage is good but if someone spends too much time in the virtual world, it would create delusion”.*

Her statement clearly has shown her mood and her self-control. She can control herself with a time boundary which is an indication of a smart user. She is very careful about the time and situation. Here, she is considered as an active audience. She is using the media, not media is using her, which is a strong example of an active audience.

Case 2: 21-year-old Sumana has said, *“I typically spend around 20-30 minutes in one sitting on social media depending upon the content. During exam time, I significantly reduced my social media usage and only check it during breaks to stay focused”.* She has further said, *“I check social media frequently at specific times.”*

During exam time, she keeps up her focus by obeying a routine that includes taking short, regular breaks between study hours. These respites allow her to freshen up her mind, shorten fatigue, and return to her study with renewed concentration and force, ultimately helping her stay productive and fixed throughout the exam period. She checked social platforms during those breaks to stay focused. Here, her concentration breakage is prominent. At a time, she does not spend much screen time but if she got content according to her choice, then how much time she will spend on screen is not mentioned in her response. So, data regarding her screen time of her choice of content have not found.

Case 3: Soma has said, *“My usage time gets shorter when the exam is near, I limit scrolling time rather than totally stop as all of a sudden total absence scientifically not possible.”*

The data clearly indicates participant’s awareness regarding usage. If we practice some sort of activities that has become a part of our daily life, abruptly discontinuing social media use is neither scientifically considered healthy nor practically feasible. Participant has knowledge of how to control.

Sub-Theme 1.3: Entertainment

Case 1: Srija, a 19-year-old girl said, *“I enjoy novels, manga (Japanese comic and graphic novels), gossips and GA (General Awareness). My interest in social media is different from others. I get entertained by reading free novels available on social media”.*

Her choice of content is different from others. These are new form of content which she talks about. She knows how to use social media for overall development and all of her statements clearly indicate she is social media literate.

Case 2: 21-year-old Sumana using social media from last 4 years. She has said that she loves YouTube most because it blends entertainment, education and creativity in one powerful platform. She has further said, *“The main reason I love YouTube because it helps me to learn new things while keeping me entertained and informative content, especially topics that help me learn something new”.*

Videos regarding academics, creativity, lifestyle, news, entertainment everything are available on YouTube. It has short as well as long videos, posts and community posts. Sumana has taken its maximum benefit for her growth. As a mass media student, she needs to update herself and learn presentation skills.

Theme 2: Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being encompasses an individual's overall mental and emotional health. It includes the ability to manage stress, maintain positive relationships and function effectively in daily life. It also comprises dimensions such as self acceptance, personal growth, autonomy, life satisfaction.

Sub-Theme 2.1: Anxiety and Depression

Case 1: A 19-year-old undergraduate student Srija have said, *"As my social media interest is different from others, it does not impact me directly. I never feel anxious about using social media. If I got received some bad news, I felt depressed by the social media content. I face a genuine issue regarding my sleep. My sleep was affected by my screen time. As I love to read novels, I forget to sleep if the story is really interesting"*.

As Srija is social media literate girl and her choice of media contents are different from others, social media does not impact her directly. Social media never made her anxious as she knew the limitations of receiving information. There are several studies that have shown excessive screen time has a direct effect on human sleep because of digital screen that has blue rays. Blue ray is very harmful to our brain and eyes also. The affection of reading novels made her forget to sleep, indicating her screen addiction. It has an impact on her health. Sleep time is directly related to human's brain activity and overall energy level. As a student any sort of disruption is highly questionable. She has said that any type of bad news coming from social media made her sad and depressed clearly stating her emotional state. So, the study has found there is a reciprocal relationship between her emotional state and social media content. Though the study has found her social media literate, here her answer states a different angle. So, the findings have concluded that being social media literate is not enough to escape from the influence of these contents.

Case 2: 19-year-old Sumona Dutta has said, *"I genuinely feel guilty when I spend more time than planned instead of focusing on important tasks. And it resulted in delayed bedtime. It has made me feel low, de motivated sometimes and I got depressed. I also feel anxious due to constant comparisons and information overload. I usually avoid using social media during meals but if I have to be alone then I scroll through my phone (social platforms). It takes more time than I have my meals with family."*

Case 3: 20-year-old Soma has said, *"My screen time affects my sleep and when I am not getting proper sleep, my productivity slows down. I became anxious and got depressed. I do not know the actual reason."*

Sub-Theme 2.2: Low Concentration

Case 1: 19-year-old Srija has said, *"I never felt guilty about the time I have spent on social media because do not spend much time on social media. I generally use my social media time by reading novels"*.

She has mentioned her balanced use of time. She uses social media for reading novels; it helps her to save her concentration power intact. Where most of the contents are killing the concentration of users and everyone is losing it unconsciously, she is capable enough to save it.

Case 2: 21-year-old Sumana Dutta has said, *"Sometimes I feel less concentrated towards my studies. Later, I understand it happens due to my excessive screen time. After long hours of screen time, I feel less energetic to do my college assignments. There are days when I am busy with my college, practical classes, freelancing, then I am active on social media for a limited time, but I feel more active on those days."*

There is a relation between energy level and concentration. Physical and mental energy level has a direct relation. Physical energy consists of stamina, physical activity, and fitness while mental energy consists focus, concentration, motivation, thinking pattern. Physical energy has the power to control mental energy, which is why yoga and the mind have a straight connection. Social media content often creates unknown stress that is

not even identified. This unknown stress is responsible for low energy levels in individuals. It could be another reason for low concentration issues with social media content. Here in case2, the participant has clearly said that those days were better for her concentration while she used to be busy with her daily real-life activities, rather than spending hours on social platforms. It has justified the notion of the relations among energy level, concentration and cognition and stress in individuals.

In contrast with the case 2, case 1 is different because the using pattern, time, consuming contents and platforms were different.

Case 3: Neha has said, *“I set a timer on my phone to limit my screen time to save concentration.”*

Here, the participant was aware of it. She is social media literate.

Sub-Theme 2.3: Socialization

Case 1: Srija has said, *“I love to talk with my friends face to face.”*

Her statement clearly has shown her sense of the power of interpersonal communication and informal tone and non-verbal clues of communication that make any communication successful.

Case 2: 21-year-old Sumana Dutta has said, *“I have friends more than 600 on social media including my school friends and college friends. I am a member of face book group having my school friends, beauty groups, female groups and I am part of many WhatsApp groups but I love to talk face to face with my friends. Even with school friends I always try to meet them. I feel that when I meet them face to face, I can express myself more. On the other hand, on social platforms we friend often share emojis according to our chats and we also share reels with each other.”*

Here the participant has said the importance of both face to face and social media conversation. She has well known about the essence of interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication consists of interpersonal relationships, verbal and non-verbal clues. These are very important for interpersonal communication. The nature of interpersonal communication is informal. There is no fixed parole tone in interpersonal communication. Physical touch is a common element in this communication process. When someone needs mental support, comfort, heart to heart conversation they always go with interpersonal communication. In the next part, the participant said about the newly added social media elements. Emoji and reels are taking the place of physical presence. It is completely varying individuals to individuals how one could be satisfied with emotions. Sharing and expressing our feelings, thoughts are not always easy through social media but it is achievable through interpersonal communication. After a deep conversation, one feels better than chatting.

Theme 3: Digital Paranoid

Digital Paranoid refers to an intense sense of fear, mistrust and anxiety associated with digital world and online environments. It encompasses concerns related to privacy, surveillance, data misuse, cyber crime and unethical online monitoring.

Sub-Theme 3.1: Addiction

Case 1: Sumana has said, *“I love to be active on social media. As I said, I love social media content, but sometimes I do get bored with it as it feels repetitive or uninteresting. Since I have not faced major consequences, I do not know whether I am addicted or not. I have noticed reduced productivity, when I used it excessively.”*

Participant Sumana has expressed her love for social media at the same time, she said she got bored with the same content and she did not know whether she was addicted or not. This is the power of social media. It has generated a need for fast moving with new information every time. And if the need does not meet expectation, it creates disturbance in the mind. Users do not understand the process but brains crave the new. The more

screen time, the less productivity. Brains are attracted towards colours, visuals, activities and social media is a mixture of all.

Case 2: 20-year-old Soma has said, *“I use my phone during meals, I got scolded by my parents but I cannot stop myself. Actually, I love scrolling and hope for what is coming next. Sometimes even in the class room I scroll face book if I found the class boring. When I get bored by any platform, I switch another one.”*

Here the participant is so addicted that even during meals she cannot stop scrolling. Though she was asked to stop by parents she continued. It has concluded that she has lost in the virtual world. She found that the world was more informative than her class lecture. And the craving for new information drives her to explore options. This is a clear statement of behavior change,

Case 3: 21-year-old Neha has said, *“I love each and every content of Instagram.”*

Her statement clearly shows her emotional dependency on social media for everything. Her uncontrollable urge of psychological dependency makes her more likely to follow Instagram. Her usage pattern clearly shows her addictive nature towards Instagram.

Sub-Theme 3.2: Digital Isolation

Case 1: 19-year-old Srija has said, *“I usually spend my social media time by reading novels. I love to be alone with my novels.”*

Here the participant has spent most of the time by reading novels on screen and tries to avoid gathering. She has remained within herself. She is disconnected from society and does not realize her psychological dependency nature.

Case 2: 21-year-old Neha has said, *“I prefer to talk to friends on social media over face to face.”*

Here the participant clearly stated her social media dependency nature. She has detached herself from real life social connections.

Case 3: Seema, a 20-year-old female participant has said, *“I love to talk to my friends over social media because it has emojis. I can express myself with those emojis. And there are many things that cannot be said face to face but can be easily said through social platforms. And I do not need any friend or anyone for my company, I can easily spend my time with social media.”*

Here emojis have replaced physical touch. Over-dependence on social media has made her feel emojis, stickers are more capable of expressing feelings than physical presence. She has said she spends all her time with social media, it means she is socially and emotionally isolated and only connected with the virtual world. Her statement is an example of her social withdrawal. If someone is afraid of facing and talking to people face to face, then it is a sign of low self-esteem, poor communication skill, crave for virtual validation, fear of missing out(FOMO), disturbed real life relations and many other.

Sub-Theme 3.3: Cyber Bullying

Case 1: 21-year-old Sumana has said, *“I have not personally experienced bullying on social media. But I often have seen people working with other people in different groups. Light bullying is very common among friend groups. It is only for fun. I, sometimes do it for fun. I have seen that it has become of a part of their everyday life of celebrities. I love to see it. I like how they (celebrities) handle it.”*

Another name of social media bullying is cyber bullying. Nowadays, it has become very normal. And people on social media are trying to normalize it. Here, the participant has said she did it for fun. Making fun of others, insulting others and trolling others have become fun which indicates a serious concern regarding mental health. Participants have mentioned about celebrity life, where they get trolled, bullied and they reverse it as their popularity. Celebrity life has a different style from that of common people. If common people have started following it then it is a serious concern.

Case 2: Neha has said, *“I never experience bullying but I sometimes do it with my friends for fun.”*

The participant has said she does it for fun. It indicates a lack of emotional intelligence. It shows decreased empathy and increases cruel behavior. It is an example of following the trend blindly without knowing its consequences.

Sub-Theme 3.4: Creates Delusion

Case 1: Srija has agreed with it by saying, *“Yes, I do very much believe that social media creates delusions. My younger sister believes whatever she has seen on social media. Especially by the social media influencers.”*

The participant has social media literacy, so she understands the social media trends. Social media influencers are mainly promoting products. Whatever they are showing have become truth and they have made a one-sided emotional relation with their audiences.

Case 2: 20-year-old Neha has said, *“I follow a few influencers, I love to watch their vlogs on daily lifestyle. I actually love vlogs on daily life, fashion, food and fitness. I like achieving whatever I seen on screen. Not getting those often creates low feelings. After sometimes, I understood the need for money so I started tuition for primary classes. Then that earning helped me to achieve my desires. Now I want to buy home decor, again that are not in my budget, so I have wait now.”*

Social media influencers have set trends. It has influenced audiences deeply. It has a psychological impact, also. They have shaped a certain perception regarding body image, body positivity, lifestyle, food habits and aspiration. Influencers are very strong enough to set narratives regarding social issues. They have set a false need, demand more over a false consciousness. She said that she is unable to buy something or initially, that product is out of budget, she got annoyed for not achieving that. It creates a disturbance in her mind.



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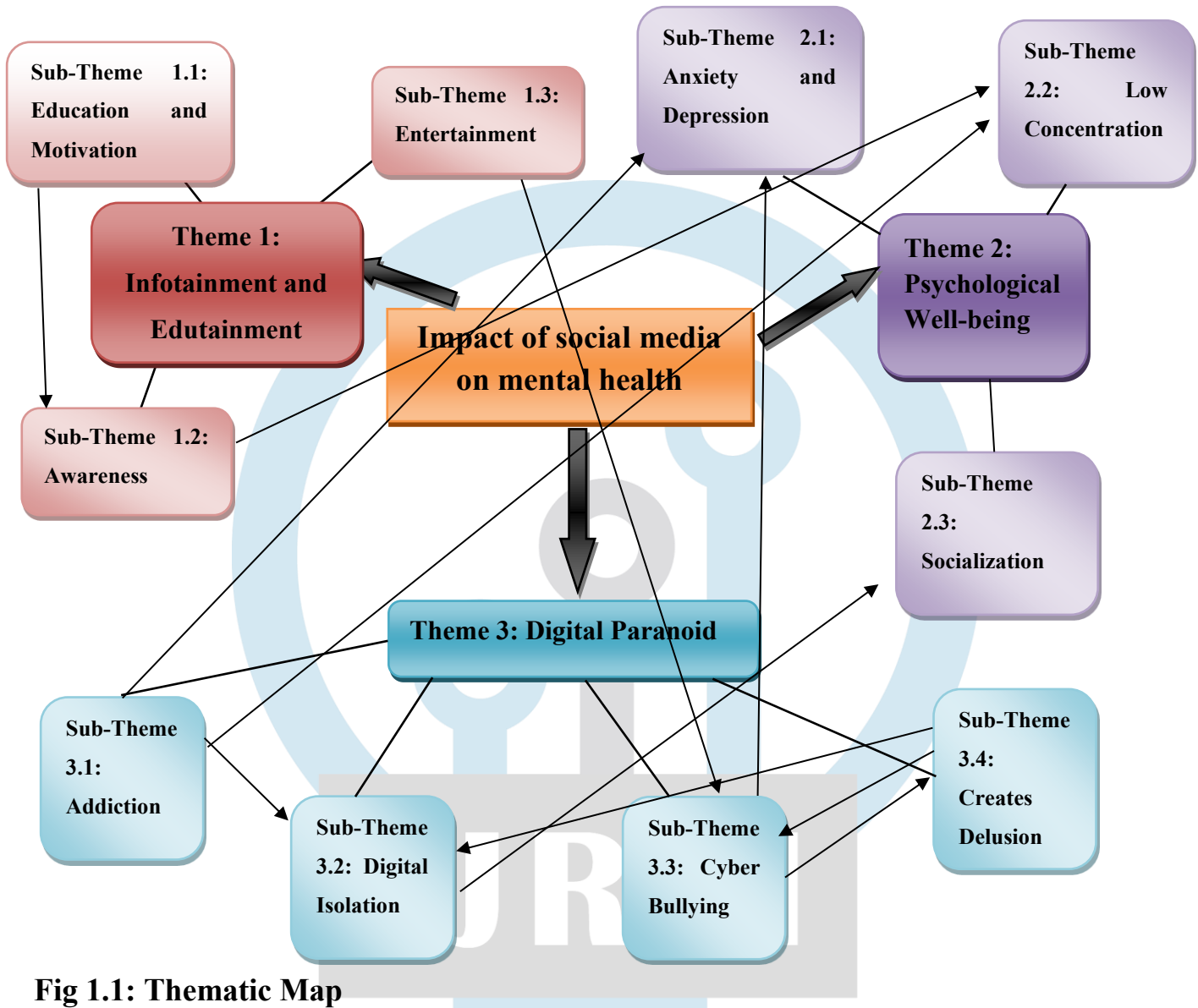


Fig 1.1: Thematic Map

A Thematic map refines and illustrates the essence and interconnections of identified themes (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Figure 1.1 highlights how social media has influenced various aspects of the mental health of young adults. Social media has a direct relationship with education, motivation, and mental health. It has both positive and negative impacts. Social media has enabled access to learning resources. Platforms like YouTube and different educational applications are hosting educational content, which makes it easy to learn and understand. Maximum content is available on the recorded version, which makes it easy for learners to learn. Social media promotes collaborative learning. Different groups are helping students by sharing video lectures, notes, and working on projects together. While updating different learning platforms, social media encourages inspirational content, peer group activities, and skill sharing between peer groups. All of these activities are very helpful to portray support for the needy, generate awareness, and express creativity. Awareness is correlational with education, motivation, and focused concentration. Social media has opened up regarding mental health awareness. But users are also aware of social media usage. The study has found that many participants are socially media literate. They know the limit and how social media can be used as a tool of education and motivation. Awareness is also related to breached concentration. While, participants have zero concentration, there are participants who took several defensive mechanisms to fight against low concentration. They have tried to keep a safe concentration at least during the exam time.

Social media plays a crucial role in entertaining its audience. Its entertainment tool has a relation with a destructive mentality. Short videos, reels, music, audio, audio-visual content, and photos are tools for entertainment. Several researches highlight a disturbing trend among young adults: many engage in bullying or

mocking others as a mode of entertainment. This behavior- whether through insults, trolling, bullying, and persecution – asserts serious risks to mental health. Such activities often consider fundamental issues like frustration, despondency, aloneness and suppressed aggression, rather than actual gratification. It has influenced mental health. And young adults are in that age when they are very much prone to react.

Heavy usage of social media leads to addiction. Addiction creates anxiety and depression. Again addiction leads to the path of isolation. The relationship between addiction and digital isolation is dual. Addiction leads to digital isolation by reducing real-life interaction, emotional withdrawal. Screen addicted people prefer virtual communication over physical presence. People having anxiety, stress, depression are more prone to virtual world for emotional relief. While addiction leads to digital isolation, digital isolation increases addiction. People in the second condition choose digital connection over physical, digital validation decreases loneliness and thus digital dependency develops. Addiction also causes low concentration which leads to inattentive. So there is a direct relationship among addiction, low concentration, inattentiveness.

Social media acts an agent of socialization. It builds connection, interactivity,. Social norms, values, behaviors, culture, social roles are transmitted through the socialization process. According to social learning theory, people learn behaviors through observation and imitation (Bandura,1977). Social media users observe influencers, celebrities peers adopt, follow their behaviors, attitudes and formed own identity based on digital interactions. Socialization process encourages hash tag campaigns, digital activism by spreading ideas, cultural practices, and contents globally. Socialization creates pressure to follow and maintain the trends and norms set by the social media. Virtual socialization constructs digital isolation. Social media activities directly linked dopamine secretion and users are always seeking validation. This process affects mental health. Social media acts as a strong but soft unit. While it connects people globally, it also isolates users and creates psychological disturbance.

Conclusion

The media has soft power, which means it can influence society deeply (Nye,1990). Media soft power consists of cultures, values and narratives. Social media platforms are shaping ideas subtly. Social media has importance regarding mental health as well as tool of soft power at the global level. So, it plays a crucial role in both sides socially and globally. The media shapes public opinion. Social media takes a prominent role to shape public opinion. As social platforms are more interactive, two-way communication, audience participation, instant reach, synchronized communication, promotes user-generated content, its acceptance is more than any other. Social media is very colorful in terms of user generated contents. In spite of having several positive aspects, there are some negatives such as it creates disturbance in the human mind, especially in those who are not social media literate. It creates false consciousness, a make-believe world, social comparisons, false consumerism and misinformation. Users can use social platforms to set trends or narratives.

Mental health is one's psychological, emotional, and social well-being. It is the portrayal of how someone thinks, feels, behaves and makes decisions. There are some affecting factors for mental health including social environment, family environment, physical health, experiences, and social media exposures. It has become very important to keep mental health in good, safe condition for overall well-being.

The present study has focused on patterns of social media usage in relation to mental health and overall well-being. The study has found a connection with the social learning theory, which states that people learn behaviors by observing others (Bandura,1977). The participants of the present study have shown their interest on social media contents and how they got influenced by their consumption. Participants have said they got gratified from social media. They have used it for information as well as education. Here it is proved that social media is a mixture of edutainment. In the present study, all participants are in late adolescence and young adults, this stage demands social acceptance, identity, peer approval and exploration. Social media meets these directly, thus the participants feel connected with social media. And there is a relationship between social media usage and the overall well-being of the participants.

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A large, light blue watermark logo is centered on the page. It features a stylized human head profile with a gear-like structure inside, representing the brain. The letters 'IJRTI' are prominently displayed in a bold, white, sans-serif font across the middle of the head. Below the head, there are several horizontal bars of varying lengths, suggesting a base or a platform.

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