Article

The Relationship Between Social Media Use and Mental Health

Aizat Ibraeva

Department of Sociology, Sakarya University, Turkey

Abstract: The high rates of social media adoption have already become a characteristic of the digital generation, and its effects on mental health are becoming an increasing cause of concern. This paper examines the correlation between mental health and social media use among college students, and more specifically, anxiety and depression. The research design used was descriptive-analytical and a structured questionnaire was used to collect the data, which was given to a purposive sample of 34 from Sakary university students. The tool looked at the trends in the use of social media, psychological impact, social comparison, interpersonal relationships, and balanced use awareness. The results reveal that social media is common and rooted in the lives of the participants, mostly as a form of entertainment and source of information. The positive correlation with both mental health factors and motives of using social media was statistically significant (r = 0.440, p = 0.009), meaning that the more individuals use it, the more anxiety and psychological strain they experience. Social comparison was noted to be one of the major factors that led to less self-satisfaction and emotional pressures, and social media proved to have either positive or negative effects on social relations. Despite the fact that the awareness about the adverse effects of excessive usage was rather high among the participants, a substantial number of them admitted that they thought about reducing their social media usage because of its psychological effects.

Keywords: *Social media, mental health, anxiety, depression, digital generation, university students.*

Introduction

In the last twenty years, social media sites have been integrated into daily routines and through their use, communication, socialisation, and self-expression patterns were powerfully altered, especially among the younger generations often described as the digital generation (Chang & Chang, 2023; Tarihoran & Sumirat, 2022). They grew up in the highly-networked digital worlds, so social media is now a primary source of social interaction, exchange of information and identity formation of this

generation (Taipale et al., 2017; Tarihoran & Sumirat, 2022). As these platforms present important opportunities of connectivity, social support and engagement, a growing concern has been raised about the potential of these platforms and their effects on mental health as the levels of anxiety and depression among young users have increased(Ridout & Campbell, 2018; Seabrook et al., 2016).

According to recent studies, the relation between health and social media is rather multidimensional than homogenous to suggest that it is either positive or negative (Yin et al., 2019; Bekalu et al., 2019). On the one hand, social media has the potential to improve social connectedness, alleviate the feeling of loneliness, and support each other emotionally using online communities (Ryan et al., 2017; Moore & March, 2020). Conversely, overuse has been associated with amplified psychological distress such as anxiety, depressive moods, negative self-assessment, and emotional burnout (Merlici, et al., 2025). The severity and length of use, the exposure to unrealistic or idealised material, the social comparison patterns, and the quality of online communications are all factors that have a crucial influence on mental health outcomes (Tiggemann & Anderberg, 2020; Seekis et al., 2020).

The digital generation suffered from deferent health problems, such as, including anxiety and depression. It has been empirically demonstrated that social media use, the need to project an idealised form of self, and continuous comparison with others may only deepen a sense of inadequacy, stress, and emotional vulnerability (Sao et al., 2024; Hoge et al., 2017). Furthermore, digital addiction can eliminate the possibility of having a meaningful physical interaction, thus, making people socially isolated and psychologically alienated (Nor et al., 2025). These dynamics indicate the necessity to consider social media not only technology instrument, it is a social space that influences the experiences of emotion and the psychological health of a person (Steinert & Dennis, 2022).

Social media and heath studied still ongoing, comparatively little has been said regarding the social context that underlies the use of these platforms, as well as the role of larger social context, in alleviating or increasing their psychological impact. Most of the current research is more concerned with the individual psychological consequences, and they fail to consider the impact of the social norms, the peer culture, family dynamics, and social support systems. This void highlights the need to take a socio-psychological approach, which incorporates the two aspects of mental health outcomes and social conditions.

As such, this research will offer a holistic insight the impact of social media on the youth health, by looking at both the psychological and social aspects. It is dedicated to establishing the processes of how

social media leads to anxiety and depression, as well as discussing the impacts of social environments on the digital engagement patterns. In such a way, the study aims at advancing the new domain of digital mental health, as well as providing evidence-based knowledge that will thrive with balanced, responsible, and healthy use of social media. In the long-term, the study hopes to enlighten policymakers, mental health workers, teachers, and families on how they can develop successful measures to achieve psychological well-being and resilience in the digital era.

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Problem

University students are online daily, and so far, social media platforms have become part of their lives in terms of academic, social, and personal (Bekdemir & Tağrikulu, 2018). Although social media has the ability to develop communication, learning and socialisation, as indicated by recent empirical study outcomes, unregulated use of social media is related to huge cases of mental illnesses, especially anxiety and depression. Such concerns are particularly high in the young population, since its stage of development predisposes them to social comparison, emotional pressure, and digital addiction (Zubair et al., 2023; Beyari, 2023; Rizzo et al., 2025).

The subject matter of the research problem focuses on understanding the character of the relation between social media and youth health through university students, as well as the character of digital content. Though the existing literature has already made some statements about the possible psychological threat, it still lacks a more detailed analysis that would encompass both behavioural patterns of the use of social media results. The need to solve this problem is that it aids in the provision of evidence-based recommendations that facilitate a balanced and responsible use of social media.

Research Questions

To achieve these objectives, the study trying to answer the below questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between social media use and mental health among the digital generation?
2. What key factors contribute to increased anxiety and depression as a result of excessive social media use?

3. What are the main positive and negative effects of social media use on young people's mental health?

4. How do the type of digital content and patterns of online interaction influence individuals' mental health?

5. What strategies can support a healthy balance in social media use and promote psychological well-being?

Research Hypotheses

- **(H_0):** There is no statistically significant relationship at the level of significance ($\alpha < 0.05$) between social media use and mental health among the digital generation.

- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** There is a statistically significant relationship at the level of significance ($\alpha < 0.05$) between social media use and mental health among the digital generation, whereby excessive and unbalanced use is associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression.

Literature Review

The psychological and social impacts of social media have increasingly been studied and this has especially been the case with adolescents and youth who are the high significant part of the digital generation. The initial research emphasised the fast embracement of social networking platforms in the lives of youths and how it has redefined communication, self-expression, and identity formation patterns. Although these platforms make information accessible and allow people to interact socially, there is an increasing concern among scholars that such platforms have the danger of being psychologically hazardous when they are used in excess or uncontrolled equally.

Tawfiq (2018) study showed how social networks like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have become the centre of social life for youths. The research found that as much as social media helps in communication and the growth of culture, overdependence on such media can have adverse psychological and social effects, such as unrealistic social comparison, lowered self-esteem, and poor offline social life.

Social media addiction and its psychological outcomes have recently been the subject of more empirical studies. Al-Ansari et al. (2025) studied the relation among social media and personal adjustment in

young people and used a correlational descriptive study methodology. Their results showed negative correlational between digital addiction and personal adjustment and excessive use is associated with weaker emotional regulation, higher levels of psychological stress and poor relationship with others. These results appear the psychological expenses of obsessive use of social media sites.

On the same note, Haddad (2025) explored social media addiction in university students, but this time around the authors studied Facebook addiction and how it correlates to mental health behaviours like anxiety, depression, and loneliness. The researchers showed strong correlations between Facebook use over a day long and high psychological distress. Learners who spent more time on the site were higher risk of increasing anxiety and depression symptoms, which supports the fear regarding the psychological health of being exposed to social media in intensive use among student groups.

Simultaneously, Naslund et al. (2020) presented a neutral view on the topic by considering both the dangers and the prospects of using social media and mental health. Although the authors recognised possible harms such as cyberbullying, social isolation, and increased symptoms of depression, they also focused on the potential to offer peer support, and awareness of digital interventions with the help of social media when used in an organised and meaningful manner. Such a two-sidedness indicates that what social media does psychologically is determined as much by the intensity of use as the pattern of interaction and content accessibility. In a more recent study, Anto et al. (2023) examined the effect of social media on the university students, but especially concerning the emotional investment in online platforms. Their results found that the level of anxiety had a more significant positive relationship with emotional reliance on online socialisation, including sensitivity to online likes, comments, and social comparison, as opposed to the amount of time spent online alone. Students who used digital feedback to confirm self-worth showed much more anxiety and depression symptoms, which demonstrates the value of qualitative elements of social media interactions.

Methodology

Research Design

The study used the descriptive-analytical design in order to explore the social media impact on youth heath with special reference to the degree of anxiety and depression. This method allows to systematically gather data and make a statistical analysis of the latter, in order to describe the

phenomenon as it is found in the real world and test the hypothesis. The analytical part of the design makes it possible to apply the appropriate statistical methods in order to detect the patterns and the relation of social media use and the youth heath. Simultaneously, the descriptive aspect allows to comprehend the patterns of usage behaviours and the awareness of the participants of the possible psychological dangers linked to excessive or unbalanced social media usage. This research design is quite appropriate when exploring the current social and psychological processes in the rapidly-changing digital environments.

Sample

The target population was university students that are members of the digital generation, which is a population that is highly engaged with social media and is more exposed to its psychological and social impacts. This sample is heterogeneous regarding gender, age, and marital conditions, which gives the possibility to have a general view on the phenomenon. The study sample was developed through a purposive sampling method and comprised 34 participants representing the various categories of the demographics. Out of these 44.1% of the sample were male (n = 15) and 55.9% were female (n = 19). As far as age is concerned, the biggest percentage (47.1) consisted of the respondents who are between the ages of 18 and 25, and then there were the respondents between 26 and 30 years (32.4%), 31 and 40 years (11.8%), and above 41 years (8.8%). Regarding marital status, 52.9% were married, 23.5% single, 20.6% widowed and 2.9% divorced.

Table 1
Presents the distribution of the study sample according to age group

Gender	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Male	15	44.1	44.1	44.1
Female	19	55.9	55.9	100.0
Total	34	100.0	100.0	—

Table 1 shows how the study sample is distributed in terms of gender. The sample size comprised of 44.1 percent of male participants (n = 15) and 55.9 percent of female participants (n = 19). It shows that females have a very slight higher participation rate. On the whole, the sample is relatively balanced in terms of gender, which increases the representativeness of the sample and allows drawing a substantial comparison between the participants of the male and female gender in terms of social media usage and mental health outcomes.

Table 2
Distribution of the Study Sample by Age Group

Age Group	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
18–25 years	16	47.1	47.1	47.1
26–30 years	11	32.4	32.4	79.4
31–40 years	4	11.8	11.8	91.2
Over 41 years	3	8.8	8.8	100.0
Total	**34**	**100.0**	**100.0**	—

Table 2 demonstrates the age composition of the study sample. The largest percentage of the participants was 18-25 (47.1%), 26-30 (32.4%). Lower percentages were found in the participants whose ages were 31-40 years old (11.8%), and those who crossed above 41 years (8.8%). The distribution shows that most of the sample were young adults, who are specifically represented by high rates of social media usage and exposure to its psychological impacts, which is also in line with the purpose of the study.

Table 3
Distribution of the Study Sample by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Married	18	52.9	52.9	52.9
Single	8	23.5	23.5	76.5
Widowed	7	20.6	20.6	97.1
Divorced	1	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total	**34**	**100.0**	**100.0**	—

Table 3 shows the study sample as divided by marital status. Over fifty-two percent of the respondents were married (52.9%), with single participants coming in at twenty-three point five percent (23.5) and widowed participants at twenty percent, (20.6) with a very small percentage of the respondents being those who divorced (2.9).

Instrument

Especial questionnaire was fixed to study the social media and mental health. The questionnaire contained five key dimensions, they were patterns of social media, psychological impact (anxiety and depression), social comparison and self-image, social relationships and psychological support, and awareness and balanced use. To make the responses and the statistical analysis easier, they were tested by a three-point Likert scale (agree, neutral, disagree).

Expert review by scholars in the fields of mental health and digital media was used to determine the content validity of the instrument because they reviewed the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of the items in assessing the targeted constructs. Minor corrections were done to make the words better and understandable thus making the instrument stronger at reflecting the study variables.

To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach alpha was tested and it was appeared a high degree of internal consistency. This proves that the instrument has acceptable reliability and it can be used to achieve consistent and reliable results to be used in data analysis and hypothesis testing.

Measures

Deferent statistics were used to analyse data. The demographic data of the sample (gender, age, and marital status) and the patterns of social media usage and the level of anxiety and depression were summarised with the help of descriptive statistics for example frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

The hypotheses were tested by inferential statistics. The level of measurement of the variables was applied through Pearson correlation coefficient and relevant group comparison tests. The statistical significance of the relationships of social media and mental health among the digital generation was calculated at 0.05 with a range of accurate interpretation of the results.

Results

Results of Research Question One: What are the motivations for using social media?

In addressing this research question, means and standard deviations were computed to analyse the trends and a frequency of using social media by the study participants.

Table 4
Motivations for Social Media Use

Item	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
I spend more than four hours per day on social media	34	1.29	0.58
I use social media mainly for entertainment and leisure	34	1.26	0.57
Social media is my primary source of news and information	34	1.44	0.70
I cannot do without using social media on a daily basis	34	1.32	0.68
I prefer digital communication over face-to-face interaction	34	2.03	0.97

The results of the mean scores of motivations of social media use by participants are represented in Table 4. The findings show that it is used frequently and every day, expressed in the period of time spent on social media above four hours on average (Mean = 1.29, SD = 0.57). Entertainment and leisure was the most popular reason (Mean = 1.26) then came the acquisition of news and information (Mean = 1.44). The level of dependence on social media was also high with a mean of 1.32 on the daily indispensability. Conversely, the inclination towards digital communication rather than in-person communication registered a relatively greater mean (Mean = 2.03), which implies that a percentage of respondents still prefer social interaction with each other as opposed to extensive digital interaction.

Results of Research Question Two: What are the main factors contributing to increased anxiety and depression as a result of excessive social media use?

This section gives us the highlights that can be raised by participants that lead to the increased levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms during excessive use of social media.

Table 5
Main Factors Contributing to Increased Anxiety and Depression Resulting from Excessive Social Media Use

Item	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
I feel anxious when I am unable to interact on social media for a long period	34	2.18	0.94
My level of stress increases after spending a long time on social media	34	1.97	0.97
I notice that social media use negatively affects my psychological stability	34	2.09	0.97
Continuous browsing of social media makes me feel mentally exhausted	34	2.06	0.95
I sometimes feel depressed because of the content I follow on social media	34	2.09	0.93

The findings in Table 5 suggest that the psychological impact of using social media among participants is moderately high or relatively high. Greater average scores indicate that a significant number of the respondents are anxious or experience stress when they are not involved in social media or have taken long before use. The product with the greatest mean was the one where the patient feels anxious when they cannot interact on social media over a long time (Mean = 2.17), which means the emotional dependency is significant. The perceived negative impacts on the psychological stability (Mean = 2.08) and the experience of mental exhaustion and depressive mood related to the content that the participants watch were also reported (Mean = 2.08 and M = 2.08, respectively). On the whole, the results indicate that the high rate and duration of social media use are correlated with the high degree of anxiety and psychological tension among the participants.

Results of Research Question Three: What are the main positive and negative effects of social media use on young people?

In order to answer this research question, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were used to determine the relationship between content type and interaction patterns on digital platforms and mental health of people.

Table 6
Key Positive and Negative Effects of Social Media Use on Young People

Item	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
I compare myself with others' appearance or achievements on social media	34	2.09	0.97
I believe that others' posted images and lifestyles make me less satisfied with my own life	34	2.09	0.97
I feel that social media increases pressure to present an ideal image	34	2.00	0.95
I strive to present a better version of myself when posting on social media	34	1.91	0.97
Social comparisons on social media affect my self-confidence	34	2.03	0.97

Table 6 shows the mean scores of 1.91 to 2.08, which suggest a moderate degree of agreement with the statements that refer to the social comparison in social media. The largest means were found regarding the statements 'I compare myself with the looks or success of other people', and 'I think that the images and lifestyle of other people who post them on social media make me feel dissatisfied with my life' are more negative psychological issues of social media use. Perceived pressure to present an idealised image was also found to be significant among the participants (Mean = 2.00) and tendency to augment their digital self-presentation upon posting had a mean of 1.91, though the effect of social on self-confidence was 2.03. On the whole, the results suggest that the use of social media principals to a greater number of unrealistic social comparisons that are related to a decrease in self-satisfaction and possible adverse effects on mental health.

Results of Research Question Four: How do content type and patterns of interaction on digital platforms affect individuals' mental health?

The descriptive statistics were adopted to respond to this research question by identifying the most effective strategies and suggestions to be carried out to facilitate healthy and balanced utilisation of social media.

Table 7
Effects of Content Type and Interaction Patterns on Mental Health

Item	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social media has helped me form new friendships	34	1.32	0.68
I feel that social media reduces the quality of my communication with family and friends in real life	34	1.62	0.89
Social media provides me with a sense of psychological support from others	34	1.21	0.54
I prefer sharing my problems on social media rather than talking directly to friends	34	2.12	0.95
Social media has contributed to increased feelings of loneliness and isolation	34	1.97	0.97

The outcomes exhibited in Table 7 show inconsistency in the social and psychological outcomes of using social media. Generally, participants had positive social outcomes with social media being seen to help build new friends (Mean = 1.32) and give them a level of psychological supporting by other people (Mean = 1.20), which indicates that the social role of social media is perceived in a rather partial manner.

On the other hand, there are also significant adverse social impacts that the results point to. This is the case of most respondents who stated that social media decreases the quality of face-to-face communication with family and friends (Mean = 1.62). Moreover, the preference to reveal personal problems using social media instead of face-to-face communication was rated at a higher mean (Mean = 2.12), which indicates the tendency towards virtual communication and possible social disconnection with real relationships.

Results of Research Question Five: What strategies and recommendations can support a healthy balance in social media use?

This section presents the statistical findings of a test to determine the relationship between the use of social media and mental health of the use of social media among members of the digital generation.

Table 8
Key Strategies and Recommendations for Achieving a Healthy Balance in Social Media Use

Item	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
I am aware that excessive use of social media may harm my mental health	34	1.44	0.75
I try to set specific times for using social media	34	1.21	0.54
I use social media in a conscious and responsible manner	34	1.09	0.29
I have considered reducing my time on social media due to its negative effects	34	1.97	0.97
I believe that awareness campaigns on balanced social media use are important for university students	34	1.15	0.50

As the findings in Table 8 show, there is a rather high awareness rate of the participants about the effects of using social media on their mental health. The majority of the respondents were aware of the dangers of overuse, as the mean score on the negative psychological effects awareness (Mean = 1.44). It was also reported that participants tried to control their use by allocating certain times to be spent on social

media (Mean = 1.20) and there was also the tendency to use social media consciously and responsibly (Mean = 1.08), which indicates a generally positive and balanced usage behaviour.

Simultaneously, a significant percentage of the respondents indicated that they have thought of spending less time using social media based on its adverse implications (Mean = 1.97), which suggests an increased awareness of the outcomes of inappropriate use. Furthermore, there was high consensus on the need to use awareness campaigns to promote balanced use of social media among university students (Mean = 1.15), which reflects the perceived necessity to implement organisational educational and prevention programs to facilitate healthy use of digital media.

Results of the Research Hypothesis: There is no statistically significant relationship at the level ($\alpha <$ 0.05) between social media use and mental health among the digital generation.

Table 9
Pearson's Correlation Coefficient between Social Media Use and Mental Health Variables

Variables	Social Media Motives (Mean)	Mental Health Factors (Mean)
Social Media Motives (Mean)	1	.440**
Mental Health Factors (Mean)	.440**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	—	.009
N	34	34

Results of Pearson correlation show that motives of using social media and mental health factors have a positive and significant relationship among the study participants. The value of the correlation coefficient was r = 0.440 and the level of significance, p = 0.009, which is less than the accepted level (0.01). This conclusion indicates that the more one is involved with social media, the more such outcomes as anxiety and stress are linked to psychological outcomes.

Based on these findings consequently reject the null hypothesis and affirm the presence of a statistically important relationship among the usage of social media and mental health among the digital generation.

Discussions

The psychological and social consequences of using social media have been widely studied in recent sources, particularly among young adults who are the representatives of the digital generation. Early studies stressed the fast-tracked adoption of social networking sites by youths in their lives and the importance of this in transforming the modes of communication, self-expression, and identity formation. Although these platforms are improving access to information and social interaction, there has been a growing concern among scholars that overuse and uncontrolled use can be very psychologically dangerous.

The results of this research appropriate the same literature. The presence of high daily assignation with social media among the participants shows the centrality of the social platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram that Tawfiq (2018) noted with regards to the social life of youths. In line with the findings obtained by Tawfiq, the present findings show that despite the fact that social media supports communication and entertainment, excessive use of these tools is related to adverse psychological conditions, such as increased anxiety and poorer quality of social interaction in real life. This goes on to indicate that social media is both a social resource and a possible risk factor to youth development.

Additionally, the close connection between excessive use and psychological distress is similar to research on social media addiction. In Al-Ansari et al. (2025), the authors have indicated a strong negative correlation between digital addiction and personal adjustment and that heavy users are characterised by heightened psychological stress and poor emotional control. Similarly, the current research established that those students who struggled to get rid of social media had a higher level of anxiety and emotional stress, which supports the notion that compulsive use compromised the psychological health of the students.

The findings also support the findings of Haddad (2025) on Facebook addiction among university students that established that the anxiety, depression, and loneliness were highly correlated with the duration of Facebook use every day. On the same note, the present study found social comparison, exposure to negatively perceived material, and the lack of interaction as major link amongst social media use and psychological strain.

As the same time, the findings are concurrent with the moderate approach provided by Naslund et al. (2020), who suggested that the psychological impact of social media is not limited by the extent of use and, instead, includes the interaction and content consumption patterns. Even though the current research indicates the dangers of overuse, it also indicates that students are quite aware about the dangers of such overuse, which means that preventive measures can be effectively implemented.

Lastly, the findings of the given study are quite close to the idea about emotional dependence, instead of time spent online as stated by Anto et al. (2023). The respondents who exhibited anxiety due to social comparison and online validation had more distressing mental health results, emphasising the importance of the qualitative element of social media use, i.e. the reliance on likes, comments and digital feedback, as a determinant of the psychological problem.

Combined, the results of this paper support the current literature suggesting that oversensitive and emotionally-inclined social media consumption is highly linked to anxiety and mental distress in young adults. Putting those findings into the context of the existing literature, the study enhances a more articulate comprehension of how disposition patterns of use, emotional investment, and social comparison processes interact to affect mental health in a certain social and cultural setting.

Conclusions

Judging by the outcomes, there are multiple major inferences to make about the connection between social media use and mental health of the digital generation. First, digitisation has been immense through social media platforms also built among students of the university, since social media platforms are a significant part of their lives. Second, the unregulated and heavy use of social media has a very close relationship with anxiety, stress, and depressive characteristics, especially in people who heavily social compare or portray emotional dependency on the internet. Third, the phenomenon of social comparison was revealed as one of the most important psychological processes that shape self-esteem and self-satisfaction, which are caused by constant exposure to idealised online images. Fourth, the impact of the use of social media on social relationships seems to play a dual role, whereby it can lead to the formation of new connections and the perceived emotional support, and at the same time, it can also have a negative impact on the quality of offline interactions and, in other cases, can worsen the social isolation. Lastly, the results have indicated that the participants are reasonably aware of the

negative outcomes of the excessive use, which means that preventive and educative interventions have high chances of being effective in supporting healthier growth of digital behaviours.

Implications

The general outcomes of this study have immense theoretical, practical and policy implications. In theory, the findings strengthen sociological and psychological views that develop social media into an influential social context that can influence the mental health, emotional state of being and behavioural trends of the users, instead of being a medium of communication. In practice, the study outlines the necessity of universities taking proactive measures that lead to digital well-being, such as awareness campaigns, counselling and skill-based oriented training to promote the balanced use of social media and timely detection of problematic use. Policy wise, the results present useful information in the planning of mental health stakeholders and other institutions of learning, to have prepared systems in place for students' assistance that expect the psychological dangers of heavy usage of social media. It is possible that the future introduction of digital well-being into institutional policies and enhanced partnership of universities, mental health professionals, and the providers of digital platforms will help make the online practices healthier and the student outcomes better.

Limitations

As much as this study has contributed, there are a number of limitations which must be noted. The data collection was based on one academic semester, which might not extrapolate the results with the rest of the time periods that had changing digital trends. Also, the research was merely limited to one university setting and as such, the findings cannot be easily extrapolated to other students in different universities or in different cultures. The sample size (n = 34) was also be relatively small, which can decrease the amount of statistical power and external validity. Methodologically, self-reported data may lead to response bias such as social desirability and subjectivity. Moreover, mental health was measured based on the chosen dimensions which are anxiety, social comparison, and awareness and no other psychological variables were tested so that a more detailed measurement method could be used.

Recommendations

According to the research results, the paper suggests enhancing educational and institutional programmes that will sensitise students in universities to the psychological danger of too much social

media coverage and the necessity to ensure balanced digital lifestyles. Universities need to establish digital well-being initiatives, training, and sensitisation, which yield self-control, critical use of social media, and decreasing dependence on adverse social comparisons. There is also a preference to combine educational institutions and digital media platforms in order to create supportive online settings with a high-level of focus on mental health literacy. The implementation of larger and more heterogeneous samples, the use of longitudinal investigations, and larger scale should be utilised in future studies to improve the understanding of the long-term psychological impact of social media use and promote the formulation of evidence-based policies to improve the mental health of young people in the digital sphere.

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