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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This research investigates the impact of social media usage on the mental health of Gen Y and Gen Z, focusing on understanding the correlation between usage patterns and psychological well-being. As social media becomes an integral part of daily life, concerns regarding its influence on mental health have increased, especially among younger generations. This study justifies the growing concerns surrounding social media's role in mental health issues by offering insights into behavioral trends. The research aims to propose strategies to mitigate negative mental health outcomes associated with excessive social media use and encourage healthier digital habits.

1.2 Industry Profile

Social media consists of digital platforms such as Instagram, LinkedIn and Snapchat that allow users to create, share, and interact with content. While social media facilitates global communication and self-expression, it also presents potential risks to users' mental well-being.

The social media industry has experienced remarkable growth, becoming one of the most influential sectors in the digital economy. With billions of active users worldwide, platforms like Meta (formerly Facebook), Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), and Snapchat have revolutionized how people communicate, share information, and consume content.

The business model of social media platforms heavily relies on user engagement, advertising revenue, and data analytics. Platforms offer various features, including multimedia sharing, live streaming, stories, and direct messaging, to retain user interest and increase screen time. This continuous innovation has not only fostered global connectivity but also created opportunities for businesses to promote products and services.

However, the widespread adoption of social media has raised significant concerns. Issues such as data privacy, misinformation, cyberbullying, and the addictive nature of these platforms have prompted regulatory scrutiny and public debates. Additionally, the constant exposure to curated content can have profound effects on users' self-perception and mental well-being, particularly among Gen Y and Gen Z users who form the majority of social media consumers.

1.3 Key Players in Social Media:

Meta (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp)

- **Facebook** remains as widely used social media platform, particularly among older Millennials and Gen X users.
- **Instagram** is a visually-driven platform popular among Gen Z and Millennials, known for curated content, influencer culture, and features like Stories and Reels.
- **WhatsApp**, though primarily a messaging app, is often used for group chats, media sharing, and status updates, contributing to daily social interaction.

TikTok (Bytedance)

TikTok has emerged as a leading platform among Gen Z, offering short-form, algorithm-driven video content. Its virality, creative tools, and personalized feed have contributed to high engagement rates. TikTok plays a substantial role in trend creation and emotional expression, making it a central player in discussions about social media and mental health.

X (formerly Twitter)

X serves as a microblogging and real-time news platform. Though its usage is more niche among Gen Z, it plays a pivotal role in shaping discourse, activism, and digital communities. Recent changes in ownership and policies have impacted its influence and user base.

Snapchat (Snap Inc.)

Snapchat is known for its ephemeral messaging and camera-centric communication. It remains popular among younger users for its privacy features, interactive filters, and Discover content, although it faces growing competition from platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

LinkedIn (Microsoft)

While traditionally professional in nature, LinkedIn has grown in popularity among Millennials for career networking, industry news, and thought leadership. It has less entertainment value but still contributes to digital identity and social comparison.

1.4 SWOT Analysis



Figure 1.1: SWOT Analysis of Social Media

Strengths

- Wide User Base: Social media platforms have billions of active users globally, providing a vast audience for communication and marketing.
- Community Building: Users can express themselves, share creative content, and build communities around shared interests.
- Brand Visibility: Businesses can enhance their visibility and engage directly with customers, fostering loyalty and feedback.
- Market Research: Social media offers valuable insights into consumer behavior and preferences through data analytics.

Weaknesses

- Privacy Concerns: Users' personal data is often at risk of being misused or inadequately protected.
- Cyberbullying: The anonymity and reach of social media can facilitate bullying and harassment.
- Spread of Misinformation: False information can spread rapidly, affecting public opinion and behavior.
- Mental Health Issues: Excessive use of social media has been linked to anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems.

Opportunities

- AI Content Moderation: Advanced AI can help in filtering harmful content and improving user experience.
- Digital Detox Initiatives: Growing awareness of the negative impacts of social media can lead to the development of healthier usage patterns.
- Data Security Measures: Innovations in cybersecurity can address privacy concerns and build user trust.
- Niche Market Penetration: Social media platforms can target specific demographics and interests more effectively.

Threats

- Ethical Concerns of AI: The use of AI in content moderation and data analysis raises questions about bias and fairness.
- Data Security Breaches: Increasing incidents of data breaches can erode user trust and lead to legal repercussions.
- High Market Competition: The social media landscape is highly competitive, with new platforms constantly emerging.
- Government Policies: Governments worldwide are implementing stricter regulations on data privacy and content moderation.

1.5 Problem Statement

This study seeks to improve understanding of how social media affects the psychological well-being of Generations Y and Z, which frequently use digital platforms for entertainment, social interaction, self-expression, and information consumption. The aim is to generate evidence-based insights that can be used by policymakers, mental health practitioners, educators, and stakeholders to promote healthier digital practices and mental well-being among young people.

Given the pervasive role of social media in the daily lives of Generation Y and Z, it is critical to assess not only the benefits of digital connectivity, but also the potential psychological risks it may pose. This study addresses that gap by looking into both active engagement and disengagement behaviors, looking upon the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural consequences of platform use. This analysis adds to the growing body of literature on how digital environments influence mental health in the modern era.

1.6 Research Questions

- How do Gen Y and Gen Z use social media, and which platforms and features do they engage with most?
- What are the perceived effects of social media on users' mental health and emotional well-being?
- What factors contribute to individuals choosing to reduce or stop their use of social media platforms?

1.7 Research Objectives

- To examine the usage patterns and engagement levels of social media among Gen Y and Gen Z.
- To assess the perceived impact of social media usage on the mental well-being of individuals in these age groups.
- To explore the reasons behind social media disengagement and the barriers to usage among certain users.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on individuals aged 12 to 44, segmented into Gen Z and Gen Y cohorts. The research includes both active users and former/non-users of social media platforms. Data will be gathered through a questionnaire exploring usage frequency, engagement patterns, emotional and psychological impacts, and user opinions on corporate responsibility. The scope is limited to self-reported data and subjective experiences, primarily focusing on the intersection between digital behavior and mental health perceptions.

1.9 Significance of the Study

Understanding the relationship between social media usage and mental health is crucial in today's digital landscape. This study provides valuable insights into the mental well-being of younger generations, helping policymakers, mental health professionals, and social media companies create strategies to mitigate negative outcomes. Additionally, the findings may guide the development of healthier digital habits and encourage platforms to implement features that support users' mental health.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Media

Social media, defined as interactive technologies facilitating the creation and sharing of information, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks, has experienced exponential growth over the last two decades. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have become embedded in the daily routines of billions worldwide.

According to (Kaur et al., 2025) ,approximately 4.8 billion users actively engage on social networking sites, with teenagers and adults alike dedicating substantial daily time to these platforms. Teenagers, in particular, exhibit high engagement rates, with about 98% active on social networking websites (Madden et al., 2013), and many reporting habitual usage patterns associated with smartphone addiction (Reid Chassiakos et al., 2016)

The pervasiveness of social media has raised concerns as well as opportunities. (Jafar et al., 2023) argue that while social media can be a double-edged sword, its benefits include promoting social connectivity, providing timely access to health information, and encouraging preventive health behaviors. Social media can serve as an effective communication tool for public health outreach and awareness campaigns.

(Bonfils, 2022) discusses that social media plays a central role in how people, particularly younger generations, manage daily life, social interaction, and entertainment. (Mude & Undale, 2023) reinforce the idea that users engage with platforms for a variety of purposes including education, shopping, and information sharing. The integration of augmented reality features, storytelling formats, and influencer marketing demonstrates the evolution of social media beyond mere communication into a multifaceted engagement tool.

(Tandon et al., 2022) also highlight behavioral consequences tied to digital culture, including phenomena like FOMO (fear of missing out) and phubbing, which alter interpersonal interactions. The widespread and normalized use of social media makes it a key area for ongoing research concerning its implications on human behavior, professional settings, and societal norms.

2.3 Generations

Generation Z (born 1995 onwards) and Generation Y (Millennials, born 1981–1994) represent two of the most socially connected and digitally fluent generations. Gen Z, as the first generation to grow up entirely in the internet age, exhibits distinct digital behaviors.

Nearly all Gen Z individuals own smartphones, and over 65% are active daily on multiple social media platforms including TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram. Their average time spent on social media reaches nearly 3 hours a day, often used for communication, entertainment, and social identity formation.

According to (Mude & Undale, 2023), Gen Z in India uses social media more than Gen Y for education, shopping, entertainment, and socialization. Both generations, however, show equal reliance on social media for information seeking. Gen Z also favors visually immersive platforms and direct content-sharing formats like Instagram Stories and Snapchat, while Gen Y is more engaged on platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn, valuing community engagement and long-form content.

Bonfils (2022) notes that Gen Z's digital identity is closely tied to their social media presence, influencing how they perceive and present themselves. This generation is also more likely to use social platforms as arenas for activism, expression, and social commentary. In contrast, Gen Y, having witnessed the rise of the internet from early dial-up connections to the mobile broadband era, approaches digital spaces with a mix of practicality and familiarity. Gen Y is more likely to be influenced by peer reviews and fair-trade narratives and frequently uses social media for professional networking and brand interaction.

The generational distinction is further marked by usage motivations. Gen Z uses social media to feel connected and for emotional expression, while Gen Y often seeks convenience, credibility, and functional content. Gen Z is characterized as pragmatic, digitally agile, and socially conscious. Gen Y, meanwhile, leverages their online presence for utility, professional growth, and opinion sharing.

These behavioral insights underscore the necessity for tailored digital engagement strategies and contribute to understanding how generational identity shapes technology usage, especially in diverse and rapidly evolving contexts like India.

2.4 Mental Well-being

Mental health is a multidimensional aspect of overall well-being, encompassing emotional, psychological, and social functioning. (Khalaf et al., 2023) report that mental health concerns, particularly among adolescents and young adults, have become more prevalent in recent years. Common issues include anxiety, depression, emotional distress, and sleep disturbances. These are often linked to a complex interplay of biological predisposition, family dynamics, academic or work-related stress, and societal expectations.

(Kaur et al., 2025) emphasize that 20% of youth worldwide experience some form of mental health challenge, and about 75% of mental health disorders begin before the age of 18. The data underscores the urgency for early detection and comprehensive intervention strategies. Common symptoms among adolescents include mood swings, withdrawal from social activities, irritability, lack of concentration, and poor academic performance.

(Naslund et al., 2020) draw attention to the significant treatment gap in mental healthcare, especially for individuals in low-income and underserved areas. Factors such as stigma, lack of trained professionals, limited awareness, and financial barriers often prevent individuals from seeking timely help. To address these gaps, various strategies have been proposed, including school-based mental health programs, community outreach, and integration of mental health services into primary care.

Peer support models and caregiver involvement have also shown promise in enhancing treatment outcomes. Educational campaigns aimed at reducing stigma and promoting help-seeking behavior are essential components of a sustainable mental health framework. Research by (Khalaf et al., 2023) suggests that building resilience, improving sleep hygiene, and fostering emotional regulation skills are effective in reducing vulnerability among adolescents.

Importantly, mental health interventions must be context-sensitive, taking into account cultural values, developmental stages, and environmental factors. This personalized approach helps to ensure that support systems are relevant, accessible, and impactful. Ongoing efforts in mental health research continue to emphasize the need for multidisciplinary collaboration to create integrated models of care that prioritize early prevention and long-term recovery.

2.5 Social Media's Impact on Mental Well-being

This research explores the associations between time spent on specific social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, X, and Snapchat, and mental health outcomes including depression, anxiety, PTSD, loneliness, and self-esteem among young adults. The primary objective is to compare the influence of individual social media platforms on mental health while also examining gender differences in these associations.

(Woodward et al., 2025) conducted a cross-sectional online survey of 575 young adults (aged 18–25), where participants self-reported their social media usage and completed mental health assessments, including PHQ-9, STAI, and PCL-5. Path analysis using Mplus software revealed that TikTok and YouTube use correlated with increased anxiety, depression, and loneliness, whereas Snapchat use was associated with lower anxiety, reduced loneliness, and improved self-esteem. Gender differences were observed, with TikTok having a more significant impact on women and Reddit being more influential for men. However, limitations include the need for longitudinal studies, and further exploration of passive versus active social media use.

(Taddi et al., 2024) investigated social media's impact on stress, anxiety, depression, and cyberbullying among Indian adolescents in the post-COVID-19 period. A cross-sectional survey of 204 adolescents (aged 14–23) utilized structured questionnaires with Likert-scale responses, with descriptive statistics and correlational analyses applied. Findings revealed that 29.4% felt pressured to conform to social norms, 18.6% experienced anxiety related to social media engagement, and 24% feared judgment. Cyberbullying was prevalent, with 27% witnessing online harassment. Identified research gaps include the need for AI-driven interventions, longitudinal studies, and qualitative insights into personal experiences.

(Sao et al., 2024) explored the effects of excessive social media use on anxiety, stress, and depression among Gen Z individuals in India. A survey of 283 participants (mean age: 22.58) utilized the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21), with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Pearson's correlation analysis applied. Results showed strong correlations between social media addiction and stress ($r=0.422$), anxiety ($r=0.345$), and depression ($r=0.370$), with conflict and relapse emerging as key predictors. Limitations include a lack of global and cultural diversity, self-report bias, and omitted variables such as social comparison.

(Joshi et al., 2024) examined the impact of social media on Generation Z in Ahmedabad City, focusing on gender differences in anxiety, self-image, loneliness, sleep quality, and productivity. A non-probability convenience sample of 139 participants (students, professionals, and homemakers) completed structured questionnaires analyzed using SPSS and Excel. Results suggested nonsignificant gender differences and weak correlations across variables, indicating that social media's psychological impact is widespread but not gender-specific. Further research is needed to explore platform-specific effects and demographic factors beyond gender.

(Astleitner et al., 2023) conducted an online survey of 995 European adolescents and young adults, examining personality traits, social media use, and mental health. SEM using LISREL revealed that social media use affects mental health directly and indirectly through Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), ghosting, and vague booking. Higher tendencies toward social comparison and histrionic personality traits correlated with poorer mental health. A key research gap is the limited focus on ghosting and vague booking as mediating factors in international studies.

(Aliverdi et al., 2022) explored the effects of social media use and online emotional relationships on mental health and quality of life in 350 Iranian medical students. Using DASS-21 for mental health and SF-36 for quality of life, data was analyzed through Path Analysis and SEM with PLS and LISREL. Results indicated that social media use and online emotional relationships were associated with increased stress, anxiety, and depression, while socioeconomic status indirectly contributed to a higher quality of life. The study highlights the need for integration of diverse cultural contexts and platform-specific effects.

(Kolhar et al., 2021) examined the impact of social media on learning, social interactions, sleep duration, and physical activity among Saudi university students. A cross-sectional survey of 300 female students (aged 17–29) assessed the effects of non-academic social media use on academic performance, relationships, and health. Chi-squared and Fisher's exact tests, along with SPSS and R software, were used for analysis. Results indicated that 57% of participants reported social media addiction, 52% experienced academic disruptions, and 68% attributed delayed sleep to social media use. Only 1% reported using social media for academic purposes. Research limitations include the all-female sample and the absence of objective measures such as screen-time tracking.

(Dhir et al., 2021) investigated the "dark side" of social media, focusing on stalking, online self-disclosure, sleep hygiene, compulsive use, and problematic sleep. Cross-sectional data from 876 Indian social media users (aged 18–25) was analyzed using SEM with AMOS/SPSS. Findings indicated that social media stalking and self-disclosure were linked to poor sleep hygiene and compulsive use. However, a direct link between self-disclosure and problematic sleep was not supported. Research gaps include platform-specific effects, longitudinal studies, and cultural comparisons. Additionally, emerging technologies such as virtual reality and the metaverse require further examination.

(Hassan et al., 2021) examined social media's influence on purchase behavior and stress levels among Generations X, Y, and Z. An online survey of 195 respondents utilized DASS-21 and PLS-SEM analysis, revealing that social media use significantly predicted purchase behavior and mental health issues. However, no direct link was found between purchase behavior and mental health. This aligns with previous findings, emphasizing the need for longitudinal studies to determine causality.

(Priya, 2020) studied the effects of social media on MBA students' mental health, particularly depression and anxiety. A survey of 90 MBA students in Chennai employed a descriptive design with simple random sampling, using SPSS for analysis. Results demonstrated significant associations between excessive social media use and increased anxiety and depression. Research limitations include the need for demographic-specific studies and evaluations of interventions such as digital detox programs.

Across these studies, common themes emerge, particularly regarding social media's negative impact on mental health. However, research gaps remain, including the need for platform-specific analyses, demographic considerations such as gender and socioeconomic status, and the mechanisms through which social media exerts its influence. Prior studies have also emphasized the need for diverse sample populations and the use of mixed-methods approaches to complement self-reported data.

Additionally, few studies explore interventions such as AI-driven behavioral modifications or policy recommendations. Addressing these limitations could enhance our understanding of social media's impact on mental health and inform the development of effective interventions.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a **quantitative research design** using a **survey method** to collect data on social media usage, engagement, its impact on mental well-being, and barriers to adoption. A structured questionnaire was developed to capture responses from participants, ensuring consistency and comparability of data.

3.2 Target Population and Sampling

The target population for this study includes individuals from **Generation Y and Z**, specifically those aged **12 to 44 years**. A **convenience sampling method** was used to ensure that the data represents a diverse set of participants. The study gathered **150 responses** as the sample size.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data was collected through an **online survey** managed via **Google Forms** which consisted of questions that capture quantitative data on participants' social media usage patterns and perspectives. The collected data was analyzed using excel and python in three phases, first is the correlation analysis to understand relations between all the variables, second is the descriptive analysis to understand what the data is all about and lastly regression analysis to draw inferences about social media usage and its impact on mental health.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

- The survey was **100% anonymous**, ensuring that no personally identifiable information was collected.
- Participants were only required to provide **basic demographic details** such as age, education level, and social media usage status.
- There were **no risks involved** for participants, as the study only sought opinions and behaviors related to social media usage.
- The collected data was used **solely for research purposes** as part of a university dissertation.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Overview

The analytical framework for this study is structured across three key dimensions: correlation analysis, descriptive statistics, and regression analysis each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of how social media usage patterns influence mental health perceptions among Gen Y and Gen Z.

The analytical process begins with **correlation analysis**, utilizing a heatmap generated from the numerically coded variables within the dataset. This initial step serves to examine the strength and direction of linear relationships between key variables. The heatmap visually highlights strong positive or negative associations, revealing key variables that may influence or relate to one another. These insights serve as the foundation for selecting variables for more detailed inferential testing in the regression phase.

Building upon these findings, the next phase involves a **descriptive analysis** of each individual questionnaire item. This section aims to provide a clear and concise summary of the dataset by presenting frequencies, and percentages. Each response category is visualized using appropriate charts including bar graphs and pie charts to enhance interpretability and reveal response patterns across the sample population. This descriptive exploration not only contextualizes the broader dataset but also helps in identifying dominant trends and common sentiments.

Finally, the study utilizes **regression analysis** to explore into the predictive relationships among variables that showed significant correlation earlier. By analyzing regression outputs like R^2 values, and significance levels (p-values), the study determines which factors most strongly predict particular outcomes. This stage transforms observational trends into inferential insights, offering a stronger basis for conclusions and potential recommendations.

Overall, this multi-phase analytical structure ensures a logical flow from pattern recognition to summary reporting and, ultimately, to causal inference. It strengthens the credibility of the findings and supports a nuanced understanding of how digital engagement impacts mental well-being among younger generations.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

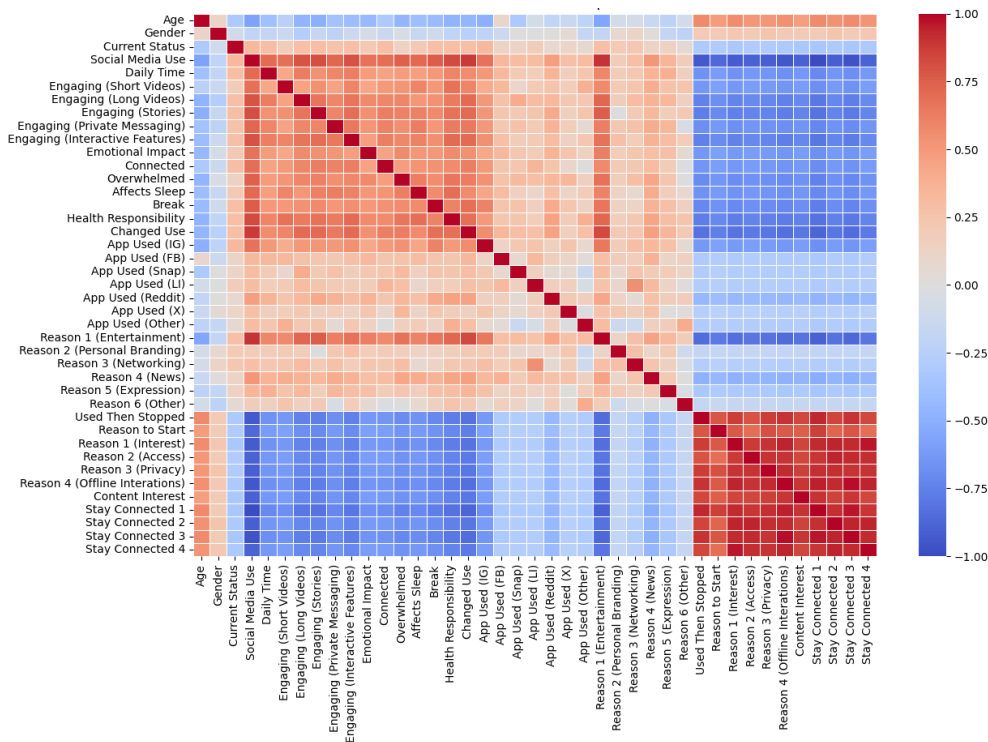


Figure 4.1: Correlation Heatmap of Coded Dataset

The heatmap above illustrates the Pearson correlation coefficients between all numerically coded variables in the dataset. These variables represent different aspects of social media usage, user motivations, and perceived mental health impacts. The purpose of this analysis is to identify which variables are strongly related, thereby guiding the selection of predictors for further statistical modeling.

Notable relationships were observed between various forms of content engagement and overall social media use, as well as between emotional impact indicators and usage patterns. Based on these correlations, three regression models were constructed to examine predictive relationships:

- **Model 1:** Predicts overall social media use based on types of engagement.
- **Model 2:** Assesses the impact of emotional and psychological responses on social media use.
- **Model 3:** Explores motivations behind discontinuing or reducing usage.

These models provide a structured foundation for understanding key behavioral drivers and outcomes within the context of Gen Y and Gen Z social media habits.

4.3 Descriptive Analytics

Demographic Profiles

Table 4.1 Age Distribution of Respondents

Sl No.	Age	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	12-17	15	10%
2	18-26	73	48.7%
3	27-35	42	28%
4	36-44	20	13.3%

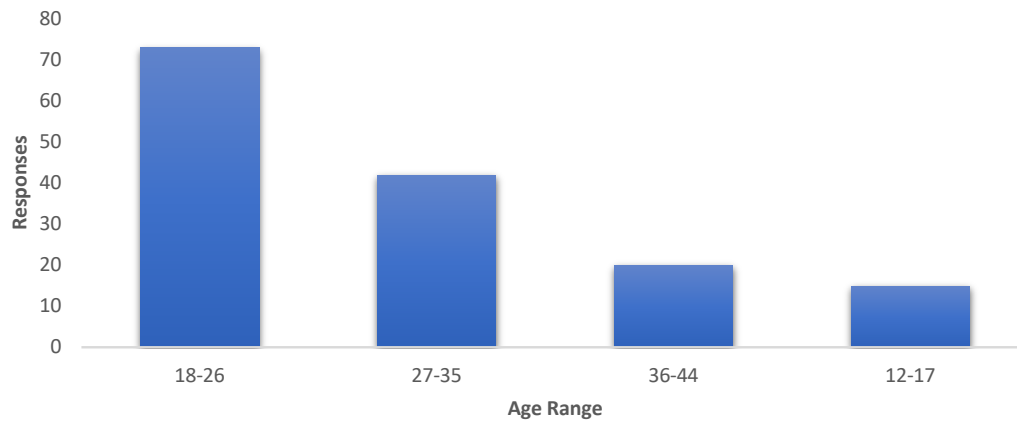


Figure 4.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

The age distribution of respondents shows that the majority fall within the 18–26 age group, comprising 48.7% of the total responses ($n = 73$). This is followed by the 27–35 age group, which accounts for 28% ($n = 42$). The 36–44 age group represents 13.3% ($n = 20$), while the 12–17 age group constitutes the smallest portion, with only 10% ($n = 15$).

This indicates that the sample is heavily skewed toward young adults, particularly those in late adolescence to early adulthood. This demographic is known to be both highly active online and potentially more vulnerable to mental health challenges associated with digital engagement making it highly relevant for this research.

Table 4.2 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Sl No.	Gender	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Male	63	42%
2	Female	87	58%

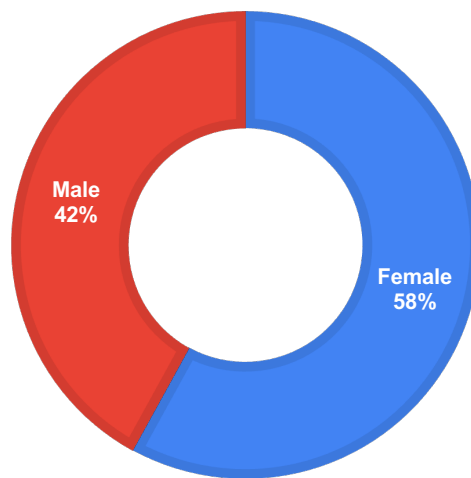


Figure 4.3 Gender Distribution of Respondents

The gender breakdown of respondents shows a higher participation from females, who make up 58% of the sample ($n = 87$), compared to 42% male respondents ($n = 63$). This slight gender imbalance suggests that female perspectives are more prominent in the dataset.

Given the research focus on social media usage and mental health, this distribution may offer valuable insights, as existing literature often highlights gender-based differences in both online behavior and mental health experiences. The higher female representation could potentially influence trends observed in emotional well-being, online engagement patterns, or coping mechanisms related to social media.

Table 4.3 Current Status of Respondents

SI No.	Current Status	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	High School	20	13.3%
2	Undergraduate	64	42.7%
3	Postgraduate	33	22%
4	Employed	33	22%

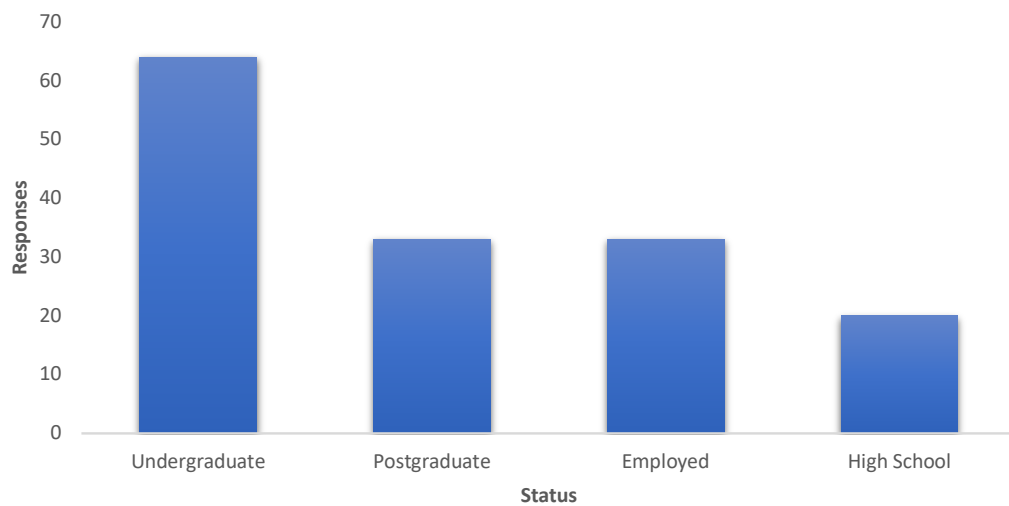


Figure 4.4 Current Status of Respondents

The data on respondents' current status indicates that the largest group consists of undergraduate students, accounting for 42.7% ($n = 64$) of the sample. This is followed by equal proportions of postgraduate students and employed individuals, each making up 22% ($n = 33$). A smaller segment of high school students represents 13.3% ($n = 20$).

The strong presence of undergraduates and postgraduates is relevant, as these groups are among the most active on social media and often face distinct mental health pressures linked to academic, social, and digital environments. The inclusion of employed individuals also provides a comparative perspective on how social media use and mental health concerns manifest across both student and working populations.

Table 4.4 Social Media Usage Among Respondents

Sl No.	Social Media Usage	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Yes	113	75.3%
2	No	37	24.7%

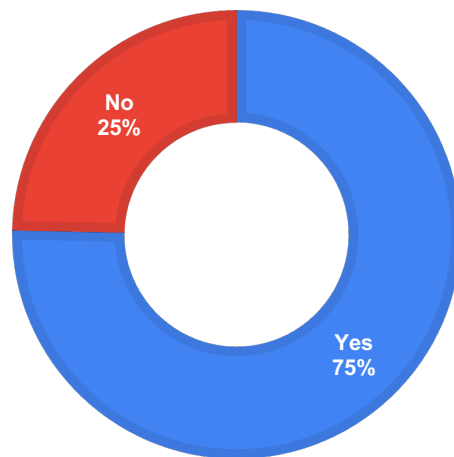


Figure 4.5 Social Media Usage Among Respondents

The data shows that a significant majority of respondents 75.3% ($n = 113$) reported using social media, while only 24.7% ($n = 37$) indicated that they do not.

This high rate of social media usage aligns with global trends, particularly among younger demographics and students, who form the bulk of this study's sample. The widespread use of social media among respondents provides a strong foundation for analyzing its potential impact on mental health. Moreover, the 24.7% who do not use social media offer a useful comparison group that may help identify differences in mental health indicators between users and non-users.

Social Media Engagement

Table 4.5 Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

Sl No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Instagram	87	77%
2	Facebook	36	31.9%
3	Snapchat	33	29.2%
4	LinkedIn	32	28.3%
5	Reddit	61	54%
6	X	29	25.7%
7	Other	34	30.2%

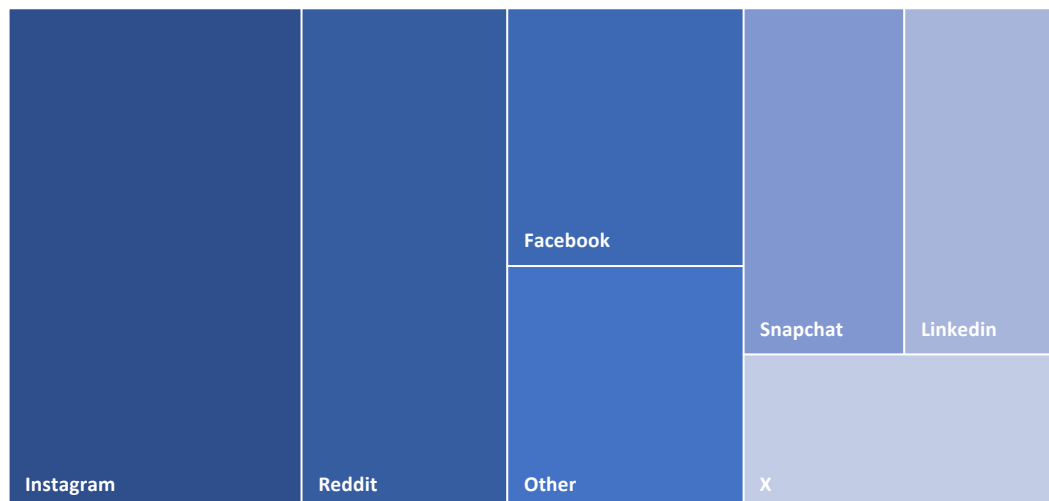


Figure 4.6 Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

Instagram is the most popular social media platform among respondents, with 77% active use. Reddit follows closely at 54%, with Facebook, Other platforms, Snapchat, LinkedIn, and X showing moderate usage. Instagram's presence, particularly among younger users, aligns with social trends. The data suggests that platforms like Instagram may influence users' mental health, as it is a visual-heavy platform associated with body image concerns and Reddit focusing on information-seeking or community support.

Table 4.6 Average Daily Time Spent on Social Media

SI No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	< 1 Hour	7	6.2%
2	1-3 Hours	45	39.8%
3	3-5 Hours	39	34.5%
4	5-7 Hours	21	18.6%
5	> 7 Hours	1	0.9%

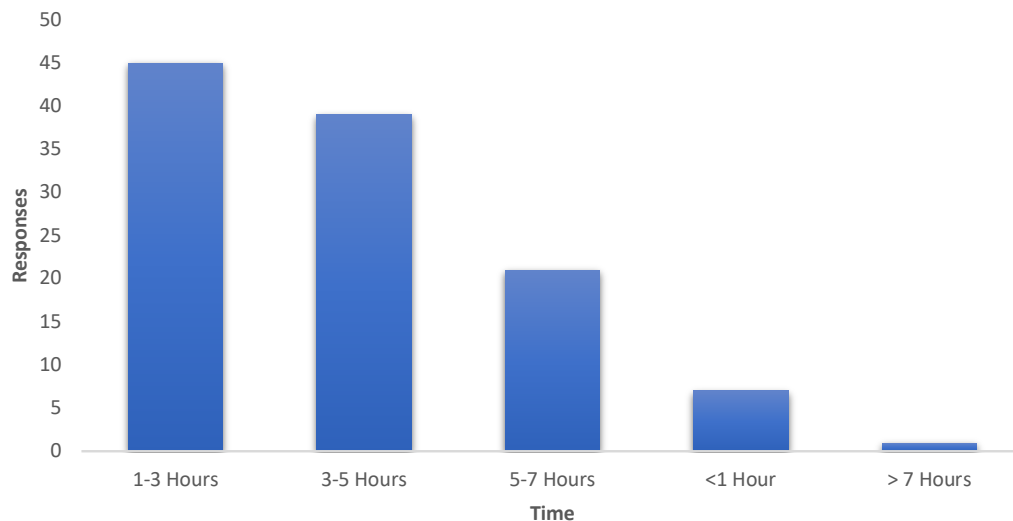


Figure 4.7 Average Daily Time Spent on Social Media

The data on daily social media usage shows that the largest group of respondents — 39.8% (n = 45) spend 1 to 3 hours per day on social media. This is closely followed by 34.5% (n = 39) who spend 3 to 5 hours daily. A smaller portion, 18.6% (n = 21), report using social media for 5 to 7 hours, while only 6.2% (n = 7) use it for less than an hour. Just 0.9% (n = 1) exceed 7 hours of usage per day.

This high usage rate may have implications for mental health outcomes, particularly in terms of screen fatigue, social comparison, or decreased offline interaction. The data provides a critical metric for identifying risk thresholds.

Table 4.7 Primary Motivations for Social Media Usage

Sl No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Entertainment	107	94.7%
2	Personal Branding	15	13.3%
3	Professional Networking	31	27.4%
4	News & Information	67	59.3%
5	Creative Expression	40	35.4%
6	Other	13	11.7%

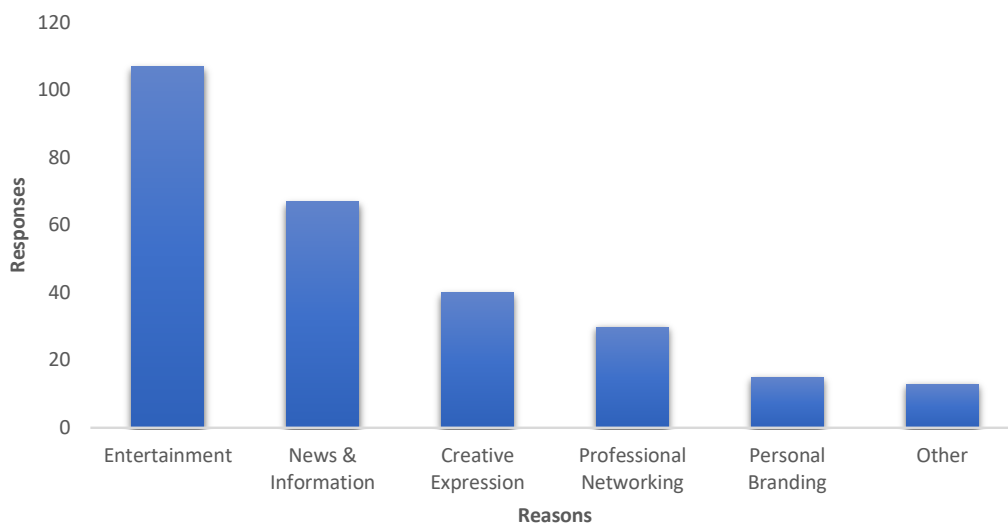


Figure 4.8 Primary Motivations for Social Media Usage

The majority of social media users (94.7%) use it for entertainment, followed by news and information consumption (59.3%) and creative expression (35.4%). Professional networking (27.4%) and personal branding (13.3%) are fewer common reasons. This passive engagement may lead to habits like binge scrolling and procrastination, which can negatively impact mental well-being. The study's educational profile primarily consists of students.

Table 4.8 Engagement Ratings for Social Media Content

Sl No.	Factors	Not Engaging	Somewhat Engaging	Highly Engaging
1	Short Form Videos	7	40	66
2	Long Form Videos	24	58	31
3	Stories	42	46	25
4	Private Messaging	11	52	50
5	Interactive Features	33	52	28

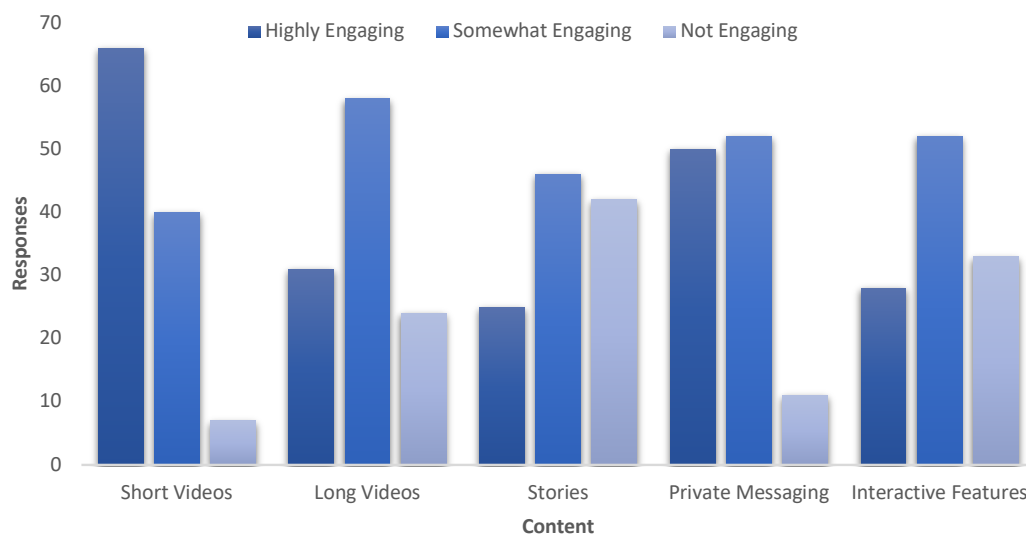


Figure 4.9 Engagement Ratings for Social Media Content

The data on social media feature engagement reveals that short form videos are the most engaging type of content, with 57.9% of respondents ($n = 66$) rating them as highly engaging. A further 35.1% ($n = 40$) consider them somewhat engaging, while only 6.1% ($n = 7$) find them not engaging. These results suggest that short, visually dynamic content and direct communication are among the most engaging elements of social media. In contrast, features like stories and interactive elements appear to generate more divided opinions, potentially due to differences in user preferences or platform design.

Impact on Mental Health

Table 4.9 Emotional Impact of Social Media

Sl No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Positive	18	15.9%
2	Negative	8	7.1%
3	Mixed	87	77%

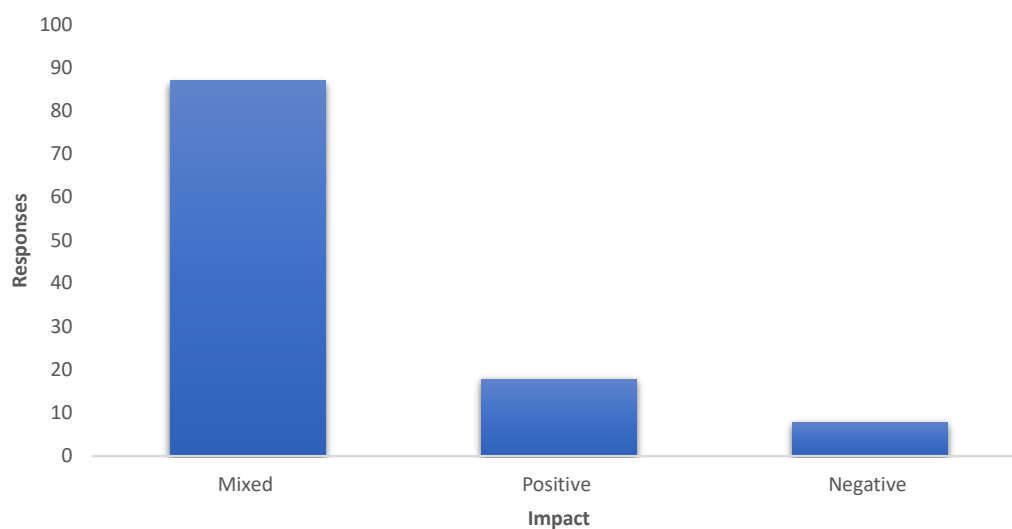


Figure 4.10 Emotional Impact of Social Media

The data indicates that a majority of respondents 77% ($n = 87$) experience mixed emotions when engaging with social media platforms. This suggests that users may encounter both positive and negative emotional responses depending on the context, content, or duration of their usage. A smaller proportion of participants reported a consistently positive experience, with 15.9% ($n = 18$) stating that social media generally has a positive effect on their emotions. In contrast, only 7.1% ($n = 8$) reported a predominantly negative emotional impact.

The high percentage of mixed responses highlights the complexity of users' emotional experiences on social media. While these platforms can foster connection and entertainment, they may also contribute to stress, anxiety, or comparison.

Table 4.10 Perceived Social Connection via Social Media

Sl No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Agree	66	58.4%
2	Disagree	14	12.4%
3	Neutral	33	29.2%

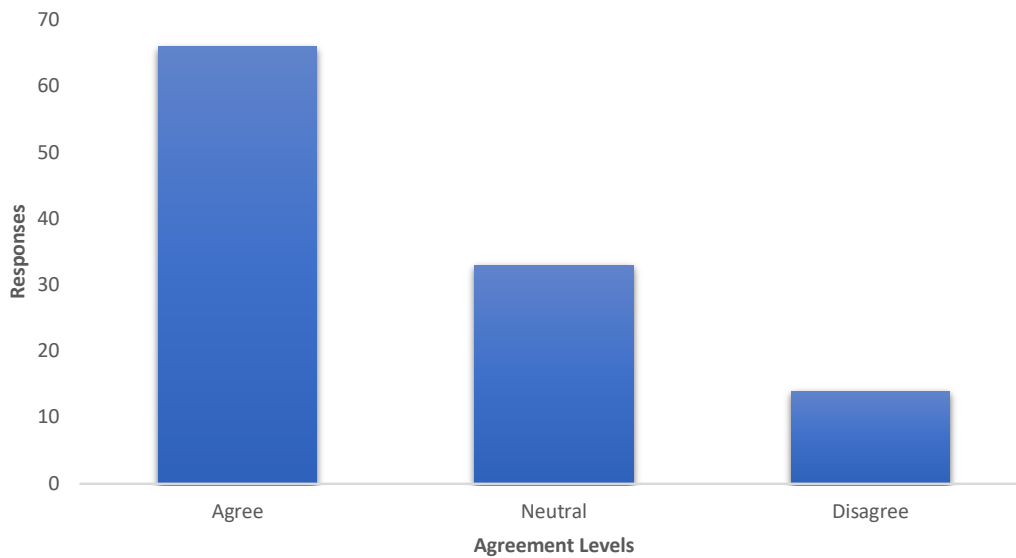


Figure 4.11 Perceived Social Connection via Social Media

The data shows that a majority of respondents 58.4% ($n = 66$) agree that social media helps them feel more connected to others. This suggests that for many users, social media serves as a meaningful tool for maintaining relationships and fostering a sense of social belonging. Meanwhile, 29.2% ($n = 33$) selected a neutral stance, indicating ambivalence or variability in how connected they feel through these platforms. A smaller portion, 12.4% ($n = 14$), disagreed with the statement, suggesting that social media may not fulfill social needs for all individuals.

These findings reinforce the role of social media in enhancing perceived social connectivity, although the notable percentage of neutral and disagreeing responses suggests that its effectiveness may depend on individual usage patterns or social contexts.

Table 4.11 Emotional Strain from Social Media Use

SI No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Agree	45	39.8%
2	Disagree	19	16.8%
3	Neutral	49	43.4%

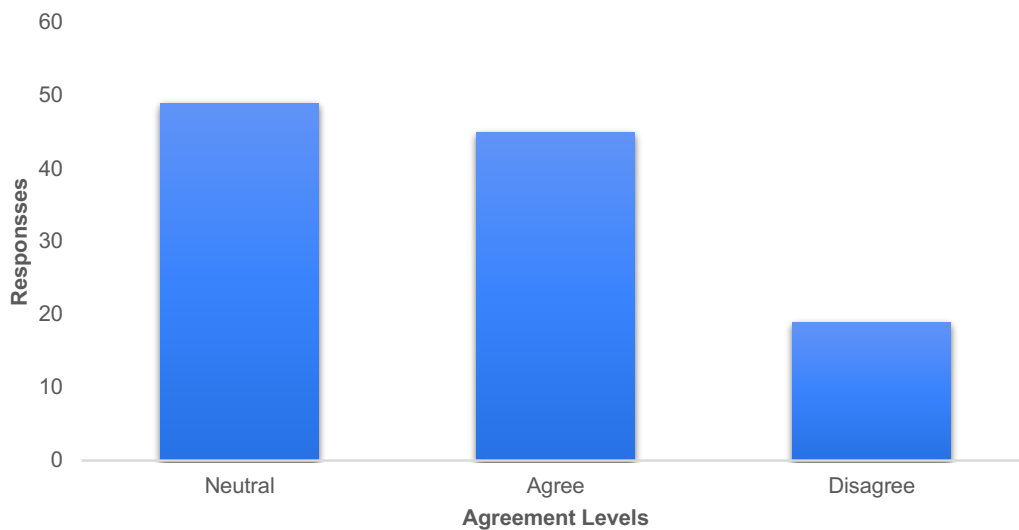


Figure 4.12 Emotional Strain from Social Media Use

The data shows that 39.8% of respondents (n = 45) agree that social media makes them feel overwhelmed. This indicates that a significant portion of users experience emotional or cognitive strain as a result of their social media engagement. In addition, 43.4% (n = 49) selected a neutral response, suggesting uncertainty or variability in how often they feel overwhelmed, possibly depending on the context or intensity of usage. Only 16.8% (n = 19) disagreed with the statement, indicating that a smaller group does not associate social media use with feelings of overwhelm.

These findings highlight that for many individuals, social media may contribute to stress or information overload, which could have implications for mental health and digital well-being. The high rate of neutral responses also suggests the need for further exploration into what specific aspects of social media use contribute to these feelings.

Table 4.12 Impact of Social Media on Sleep

Sl No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Agree	69	61.1%
2	Disagree	26	23%
3	Neutral	18	15.9%

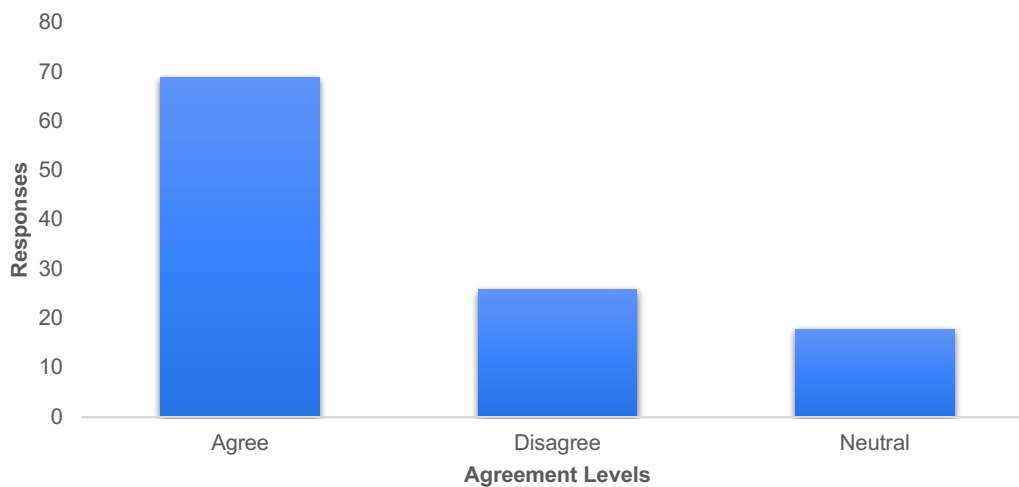


Figure 4.13 Impact of Social Media on Sleep

The data indicates that a majority of respondents 61.1% (n = 69) agree that social media impacts their sleep patterns. This suggests a strong association between social media use and disruptions in sleep, which may be due to late-night scrolling, exposure to stimulating content, or difficulty disconnecting from digital devices. Additionally, 23% (n = 26) of participants disagreed with the statement, indicating that a portion of users do not perceive any significant effect of social media on their sleep. A smaller group, 15.9% (n = 18), responded neutrally, suggesting uncertainty or occasional influence.

These results underscore the potential for social media to affect users' sleep hygiene, which can have broader implications for overall health and daily functioning. The prevalence of agreement also points to a need for awareness around healthy usage habits, especially during nighttime hours.

Table 4.13 Social Media Break Habits

Sl No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Yes, occasionally	51	45.1%
2	Yes, for an extended period	21	18.6%
3	No, but I have considered it	24	21.2%
4	No, I never felt the need to do so.	17	15%

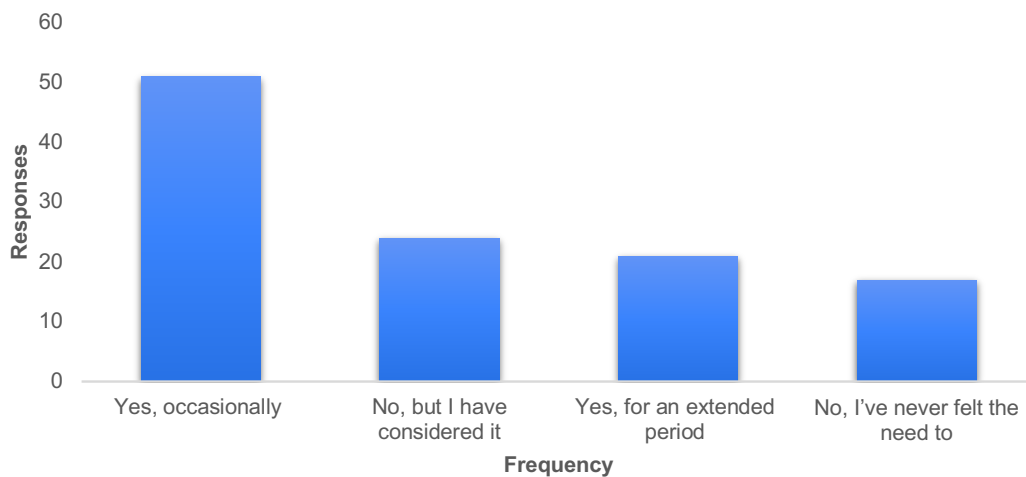


Figure 4.14 Social Media Break Habits

A study reveals that 45.1% of respondents have taken occasional breaks from social media apps, indicating a need for temporary disengagement. 18.6% have taken extended breaks, indicating a deliberate and longer-term approach to disconnecting from social media. 21.2% have considered taking a break but have not yet acted on it, possibly due to reluctance or difficulty in following through. 15% have never felt the need to take a break from social media, implying their usage is manageable or not negatively impacting them.

These findings suggest a growing trend towards self-regulation and the recognition of the need for breaks from social media, indicating users are becoming more aware of its potential effects on well-being.

Table 4.14 Opinions on Mental Health Responsibility

Sl No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Yes, they should implement features to improve user's mental well-being.	37	32.7%
2	Yes, but users should also take responsibility for their well-being	66	58.4%
3	No, social media companies should not be responsible for it.	10	8.8%

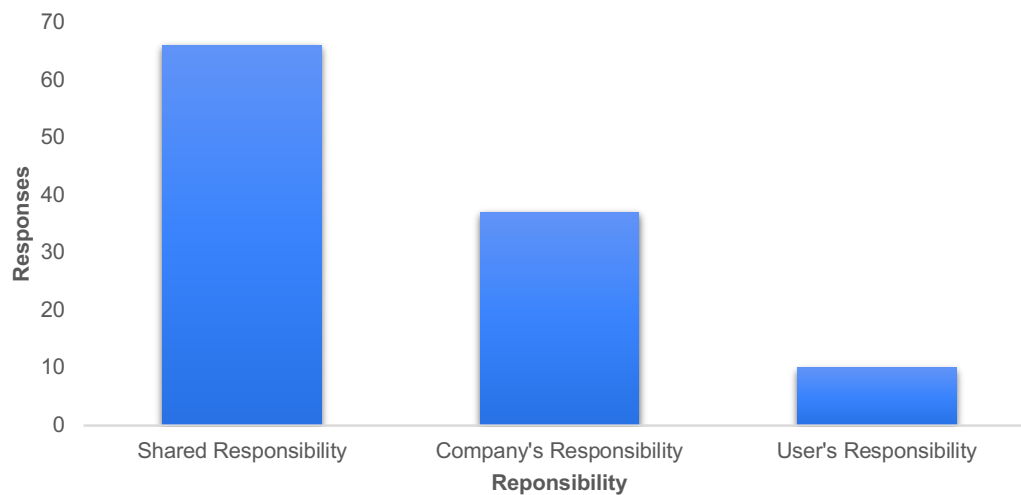


Figure 4.15 Opinions on Mental Health Responsibility

The majority of respondents (58.4%) believe social media companies should take responsibility for users' mental well-being, while also acknowledging that users should manage their own mental health. A smaller portion (32.7%) believes companies should implement features to improve mental well-being. Only 8.8% disagree, stating that companies should not be responsible for mental health outcomes.

This indicates a growing awareness of mental health challenges and a shared responsibility between users and companies to mitigate negative effects. Platforms should integrate features promoting healthier online environments.

Table 4.15 Changes in Social Media Use

SI No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Yes	78	69%
2	No	35	31%

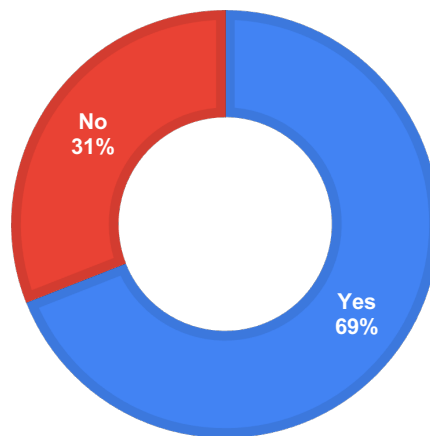


Figure 4.16 Changes in Social Media Use

The data indicates that a majority of respondents — 69% ($n = 78$) — have changed the way they use social media due to mental health concerns. This suggests that a significant portion of users are aware of the potential impact social media can have on their mental well-being and are adjusting their habits accordingly. On the other hand, 31% ($n = 35$) of respondents reported that they have not altered their social media usage, possibly indicating that these users either do not perceive any negative impact or have not yet recognized the need for change.

These results underscore the growing recognition of the mental health challenges associated with social media use and the proactive steps many individuals are taking to mitigate these effects by modifying their usage patterns.

Social Media Barriers

Table 4.16 Past Social Media Usage Patterns

Sl No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Yes	20	54.1%
2	No	17	45.9%

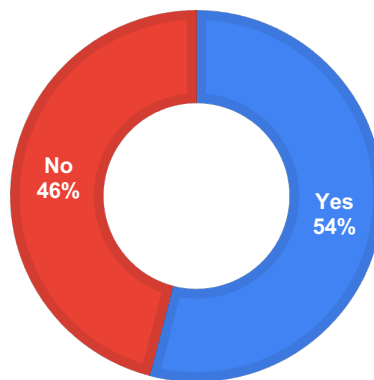


Figure 4.17 Past Social Media Usage Patterns

The data reveals that 54.1% ($n = 20$) of respondents have used social media in the past and then stopped, suggesting that a significant number of users have at some point felt the need to disengage from these platforms. This may reflect issues such as digital burnout, privacy concerns, or the desire for a break from the constant flow of information. On the other hand, 45.9% ($n = 17$) reported that they have never stopped using social media, indicating that these users may have found a sustainable balance or do not feel the need to take a break from social media.

These findings highlight the varying experiences and decisions users make regarding their engagement with social media, pointing to factors that may drive users to temporarily or permanently disconnect from these platforms.

Table 4.17 Reasons For Avoiding Social Media

SI No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Lack of interest	33	89.2%
2	Limited Access	31	83.8%
3	Privacy Concerns	32	86.5%
4	Prefer Offline Interactions	34	91.9%

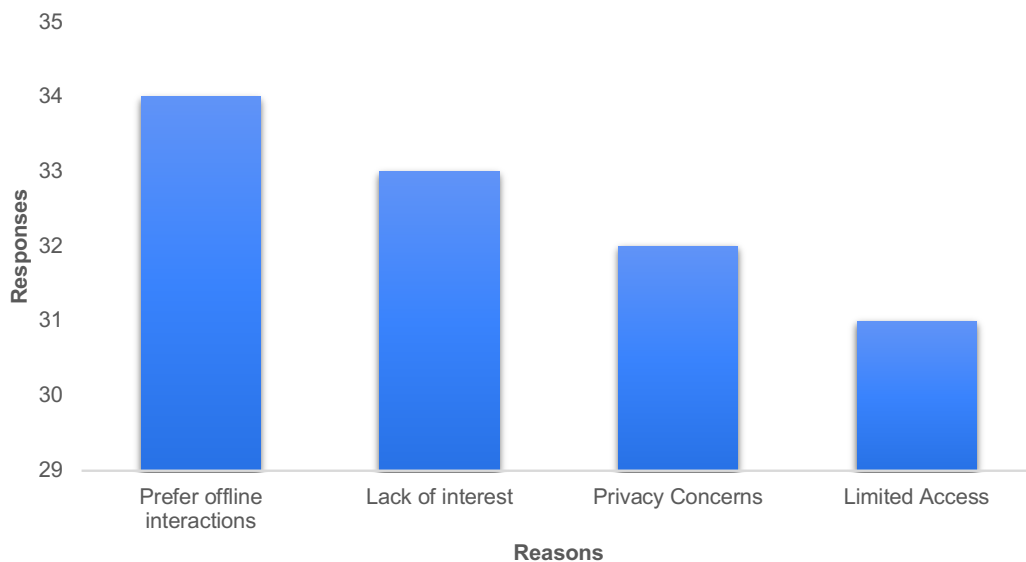


Figure 4.18 Reasons For Avoiding Social Media

The data indicates that the most common reason for not using social media is a preference for offline interactions, with 91.9% (n = 34) of respondents citing this as a key factor. This suggests that a large portion of individuals prioritize face-to-face communication and may feel that social media is less fulfilling in comparison. Additionally, 89.2% (n = 33) of respondents reported a lack of interest in social media, indicating that some individuals simply do not find it engaging or necessary for their daily lives.

These findings provide insight into the barriers preventing certain users from participating in social media, with preference to offline interactions being the most prominent factor for avoiding social media.

Table 4.18 Communication Preferences Without Social Media

SI No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	In-Person Interactions	37	100%
2	Messaging Apps	32	86.5%
3	Phone Calls	35	94.6%
4	Emails	31	83.8%

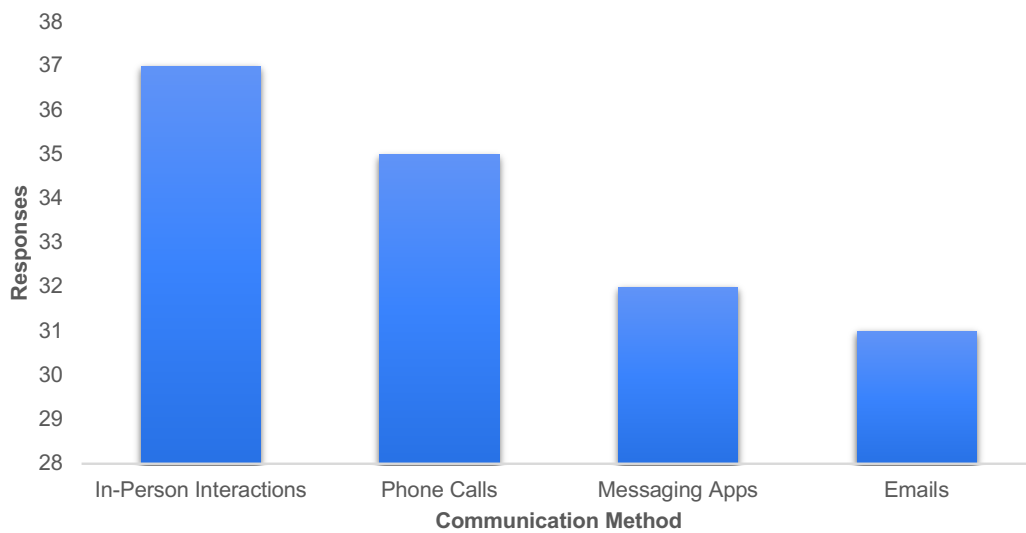


Figure 4.19 Communication Preferences Without Social Media

The data reveals that 90% of respondents rely on in-person interactions for maintaining relationships, emphasizing the importance of face-to-face communication. Phone calls are also a popular method, with 94.6% of respondents using them. Messaging apps are also a popular alternative, with 86.5% using them. Emails are also a popular tool for staying in touch, particularly for formal or professional communication.

These findings highlight a preference for more direct and private forms of communication, providing insight into the strategies people use to maintain social connections without relying on social media.

Table 4.19 Influential Factors for Social Media Adoption

SI No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Stronger privacy controls	7	18.9%
2	Easier to use & navigate	13	35.1%
3	Less advertisements	8	21.6%
4	Educational benefits	9	24.3%

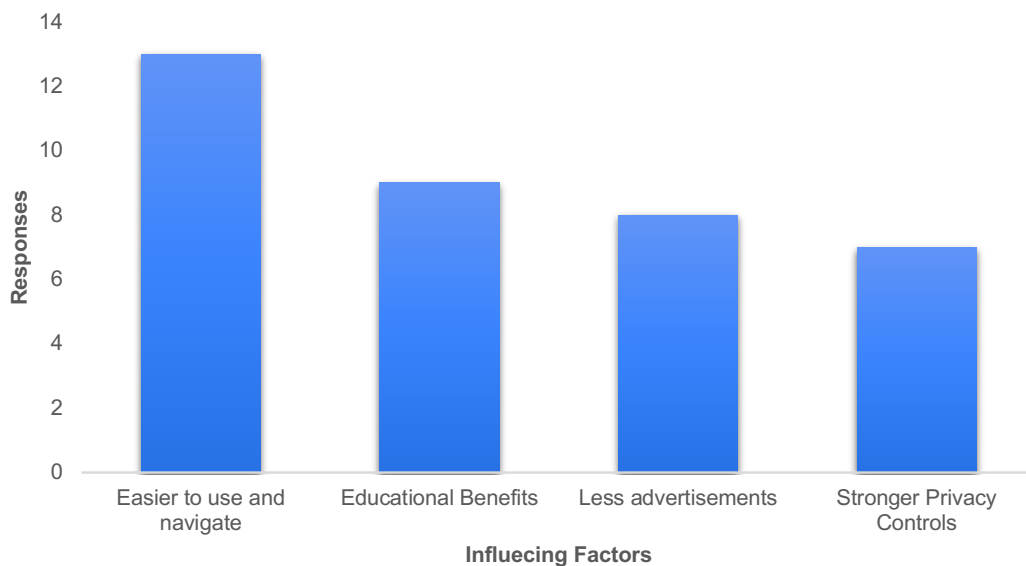


Figure 4.20 Influential Factors for Social Media Adoption

The study reveals that usability, privacy, and content quality are key factors in influencing social media adoption. A user-friendly interface and smooth navigation are the primary considerations for 35.1% of respondents, who are hesitant to engage with social media. The educational benefits of social media, particularly for learning and knowledge-sharing, are also a motivating factor for 24.3% of respondents.

These findings highlight that usability, privacy, and content quality play critical roles in shaping individuals' willingness to adopt social media.

Table 4.20 Preferred Types of Social Media Activities

SI No.	Factors	No of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1	Short form videos	11	29.7%
2	Long form videos	4	10.8%
3	Stories	4	10.8%
4	Private Messaging	11	29.7%
5	Interactive Features	7	18.9%

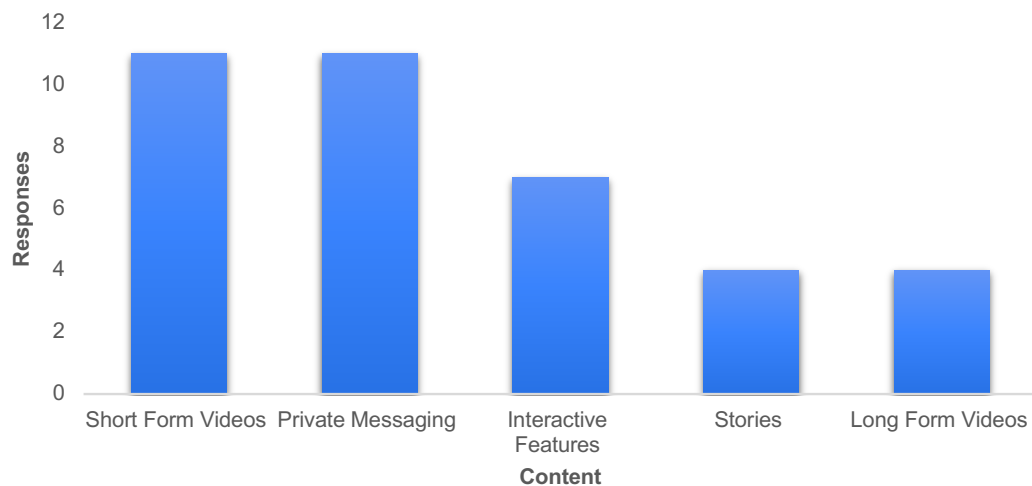


Figure 4.21 Preferred Types of Social Media Activities

The data reveals that respondents' preferences for content or activities on social media are fairly evenly distributed. The most popular choices, each selected by 29.7% ($n = 11$) of respondents, are short form videos and private messaging. This indicates that many individuals are drawn to quick, engaging content as well as private, one-on-one communication, reflecting the appeal of social interaction.

These findings suggest that users are most interested in content that is easy to consume and facilitates direct, personal interaction, rather than more complex or passive forms of engagement.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Model 1:

```
● abrar@Abrars-MacBook-Pro Python % /usr/local/bin/python3 /Users/abrar/Documents/Python/Model1.py
=== Regression Summary ===
Multiple R      : 0.9336
R Square       : 0.8716
Adjusted R Square : 0.8671
Standard Error  : 0.1577
Observations    : 150

===== Coefficients Table =====
Variable      Coefficient  Std Error  P-Value
0             const      1.0967     0.0246    < 0.001
1             Engaging (Short Videos)_Code  0.0838     0.0147    < 0.001
2             Engaging (Long Videos)_Code   0.0995     0.0157    < 0.001
3             Engaging (Stories)_Code        0.1056     0.0173    < 0.001
4             Engaging (Private Messaging)_Code 0.0657     0.0150    < 0.001
5             Engaging (Interactive Features)_Code 0.0620     0.0181    < 0.001
○ abrar@Abrars-MacBook-Pro Python %
```

Figure 4.22 Regression Result of Model 1

This model examines how different modes of engagement contribute to overall social media use. The regression output shows a **high R^2 value of 0.8716**, indicating that approximately **87% of the variance** in social media use can be explained by the five types of engagement activities included in the model. The **adjusted R^2 of 0.8671** confirms the model's robustness even after accounting for the number of predictors.

All five predictor variables are statistically significant at **$p < 0.001$** , suggesting that each type of engagement meaningfully contributes to the prediction of social media use.

- **Engaging with Stories** has the highest coefficient ($\beta = 0.1056$), indicating it is the strongest predictor among the five. This suggests that users who engage with stories tend to use social media more frequently.
- **Engaging with Long Videos** ($\beta = 0.0995$) and **Short Videos** ($\beta = 0.0838$) also show strong positive contributions, reinforcing the idea that video-based content is a major driver of platform activity.
- **Private Messaging** ($\beta = 0.0657$) and **Interactive Features** such as polls or quizzes ($\beta = 0.0620$) are slightly less influential but still significant, indicating that one-on-one and participatory features also play a meaningful role in overall usage.

In summary, the model demonstrates that content consumption, particularly visual formats like stories and videos, are the primary drivers of social media engagement among the sample group. The consistently low standard errors and significant p-values further affirm the reliability of these predictors.

Model 2:

```
● abrar@Abrars-MacBook-Pro Python % /usr/local/bin/python3 /Users/abrar/Documents/Python/Model2.py
=== Regression Summary ===
Multiple R      : 0.9087
R Square       : 0.8257
Adjusted R Square : 0.8197
Standard Error  : 0.1837
Observations    : 150

===== Coefficients Table =====
      Variable  Coefficient  Std Error  P-Value
0      const      1.1313      0.0281    < 0.001
1 Emotional_Impact_Code  0.0962      0.0220    < 0.001
2   Connected_Code    0.0942      0.0179    < 0.001
3   Overwhelmed_Code  0.0894      0.0181    < 0.001
4   Affects_Sleep_Code  0.0777      0.0226    < 0.001
5     Break_Code    0.0806      0.0127    < 0.001
○ abrar@Abrars-MacBook-Pro Python %
```

Figure 4.23 Regression Result of Model 2

This model examines how various emotional and behavioral responses to social media predict overall social media use. The regression output shows a high R^2 value of **0.8257**, indicating that approximately **82.6%** of the variance in social media use can be explained by the five psychological and behavioral factors included in the model. The adjusted R^2 of **0.8197** confirms that the model remains strong even when accounting for the number of predictors.

All five predictor variables are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$, suggesting that each emotional or behavioral factor meaningfully contributes to the prediction of social media use.

- **Emotional Impact** ($\beta = 0.0962$) emerges as the strongest predictor, suggesting that users who report strong emotional responses to content are more likely to engage frequently with social media.
- **Feeling Connected** ($\beta = 0.0942$) and **Feeling Overwhelmed** ($\beta = 0.0894$) also contribute notably, indicating that both the positive and negative intensity of experiences on the platform are associated with increased use.
- **Impact on Sleep** ($\beta = 0.0777$) shows that disruptions to rest are linked to heavier use, perhaps reflecting late-night engagement habits.
- **Taking Breaks** ($\beta = 0.0806$) is also positively associated with usage, which may suggest that even those who take breaks tend to be high-frequency users when active.

In summary, this model demonstrates that emotional intensity both positive and negative as well as behavioral patterns like disrupted sleep and taking breaks, are key drivers of social media engagement. These findings highlight the complex psychological relationship users have with social platforms.

Model 3:

```
/usr/local/bin/python3 /Users/abrar/Documents/Python/Model3.py
● abrar@Abrars-MacBook-Pro Python % /usr/local/bin/python3 /Users/abrar/Documents/Python/Model3.py
=== Regression Summary ===
Multiple R      : 0.9124
R Square       : 0.8325
Adjusted R Square : 0.8279
Standard Error  : 0.2950
Observations    : 150

===== Coefficients Table =====
Variable      Coefficient  Std Error  P-Value
0             const      0.0305     0.0275    0.2677
1             Reason 1 (Interest)_Code  0.3328     0.1811    0.0681
2             Reason 2 (Access)_Code   -0.4351     0.1525    0.0050
3             Reason 3 (Privacy)_Code   0.5591     0.1696    0.0012
4             Reason 4 (Offline Interactions)_Code  1.0891     0.2073    < 0.001
○ abrar@Abrars-MacBook-Pro Python %
```

Figure 4.24 Regression Result of Model 3

This model investigates the factors that predict whether users stopped using social media after initial adoption. The regression output shows a strong R^2 value of **0.8325**, indicating that approximately **83.3%** of the variance in the outcome—whether someone used and then stopped using social media—can be explained by the four stated reasons for discontinuation. The adjusted R^2 of **0.8279** further supports the model’s validity, even when controlling for the number of predictors.

Three of the four predictors are statistically significant, suggesting they play a meaningful role in explaining why users cease engagement.

- **Preference for Offline Interactions** ($\beta = 1.0891$, $p < 0.001$) is the strongest and most significant predictor, indicating that individuals who prioritize face-to-face socializing are much more likely to stop using social media platforms.
- **Privacy Concerns** ($\beta = 0.5591$, $p = 0.0012$) also significantly predict discontinuation, suggesting that data sensitivity and concern over personal boundaries are critical deterrents.
- **Access Issues** ($\beta = -0.4351$, $p = 0.0050$) are negatively associated with the outcome, which may imply that individuals who face fewer access barriers are less likely to stop using social media—perhaps due to continued convenience and availability.
- **Loss of Interest** ($\beta = 0.3328$, $p = 0.0681$) was not statistically significant at the conventional threshold, though the positive coefficient may still reflect a trend worth exploring in further research.

In summary, this model highlights that users are most likely to discontinue social media use when they prefer in-person socializing or have concerns about privacy. Practical barriers like access also play a role, though interest alone may not be a sufficient predictor of dropout.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

From the correlation analysis, notable relationships emerged between types of social media engagement, emotional responses, and overall usage. These insights informed the construction of three predictive regression models focused on usage patterns, emotional drivers, and discontinuation behavior.

Descriptive statistics revealed that the sample was predominantly composed of young adults (18–26), with a slight majority of female respondents and a significant proportion of students. Instagram emerged as the most widely used platform, with most users spending between 1 to 5 hours daily. Entertainment, news consumption, and creative expression were common motivations, while short-form videos and private messaging were the most engaging features.

A large proportion of users reported mixed emotional impacts, with common concerns including feelings of overwhelm, disrupted sleep, and the need for periodic disengagement. A substantial number also acknowledged changing their usage patterns due to mental health concerns and expressed shared responsibility between platforms and users for safeguarding digital well-being.

The regression analysis shows that social media usage and disengagement are influenced by various factors. Content engagement, particularly story interactions, is the most influential factor, with long and short video consumption showing strong positive associations. Emotional and behavioral responses also correlate with higher usage, with emotional impact being the strongest predictor.

Users who prioritize offline interactions or privacy concerns are more likely to stop using social media. Accessibility is also a key factor, with those with fewer barriers less likely to disengage. Loss of interest is not a significant predictor, suggesting deeper values and concerns drive the decision to disconnect.

Collectively, these findings suggest that social media usage is driven by emotionally charged and visually engaging content, while psychological strain, privacy concerns, and a preference for real-life interactions shape disengagement.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the research findings, several key recommendations emerge for users, platform developers, educators, and policymakers:

1. **Promote Healthy Engagement Habits:** Since emotional intensity (both positive and negative) significantly influences usage, educational initiatives should promote awareness around managing screen time, emotional regulation, and digital boundaries especially for younger users who are more vulnerable to psychological impacts.
2. **Platform Responsibility:** Given the shared expectation that social media companies support mental well-being, platforms should implement features that allow users to monitor and manage their usage (e.g., time trackers, emotional check-ins, content filters) and promote healthier consumption patterns, especially related to addictive visual content.
3. **Encourage Digital Detox Options:** With many users reporting the need for breaks, platforms could normalize or even incentivize periodic disengagement through built-in features like “scheduled break” modes or well-being reminders, without penalizing user engagement metrics.
4. **Enhance Privacy Controls:** Since privacy concerns are a strong predictor of discontinuation, platforms must prioritize transparent data practices and give users greater control over content visibility, data sharing, and digital identity.
5. **Foster Offline Connectivity:** Institutions (e.g., schools, universities, workplaces) should facilitate opportunities for in-person interaction and mental health support services, particularly for users who might otherwise substitute social media for social fulfillment.
6. **Targeted Interventions for High-Risk Groups:** Considering the observed demographic patterns, interventions should focus particularly on undergraduate and postgraduate students, who face academic stressors alongside digital fatigue.
7. **Future Research Considerations:** Further studies could explore the long-term mental health outcomes of sustained social media use, and whether deliberate disengagement leads to measurable improvements in well-being.

5.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between social media usage and mental health in Generation Y and Generation Z, with a focus on behavioural engagement, emotional responses, and disengagement patterns. Drawing on both quantitative data and a thorough review of relevant literature, the study reveals key insights into how digital interaction affects psychological well-being in younger age groups.

The findings confirm that social media use is highly prevalent in the daily lives of Generation Y and Gen Z, with platforms like Instagram and content formats like short videos, and private messaging emerging as the most popular. Regression analysis show that these visually appealing and emotionally stimulating features are not only popular, but also effective predictors of overall social media engagement. Emotional responses, specifically feeling connected to others, overwhelm, and sleep disruption were found to have a significant influence on usage frequency.

In contrast, the study identified a number of key factors that influence social media disengagement. The strongest predictors of discontinuation were preferences to offline interaction and privacy concerns, indicating a pushback against the social exposure that often accompany digital life.

The findings are consistent with and extend the existing body of literature. Previous studies, including those by Woodward et al. (2025), Taddi et al. (2024), and Sao et al. (2024), found significant associations between platform-specific use and mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, and stress. Furthermore, the current study confirms findings from international studies that identify social comparison, fear of missing out, sleep disturbances, and cyberbullying as critical mediating factors for social media-related mental health issues.

This study adds to the growing understanding of the psychological implications of social media and emphasizes the critical need for user education, mental health advocacy, and platform accountability. The findings also highlight a common expectation voiced by participants themselves that both users and businesses share responsibility for creating a healthier digital environment. Addressing these challenges will necessitate a collaborative effort among stakeholders to ensure that social media, a tool with enormous social and emotional influence, promotes rather than undermines mental health.

5.4 Limitations

While this study offers important insights into the patterns and psychological impacts of social media use among Gen Y and Gen Z, it is important to recognize that no research is without its constraints. Several limitations should be acknowledged to provide context for interpreting the results and to guide future research efforts.

- **Sample Size Constraints:** The study's sample size of 150 participants, while sufficient for exploratory analysis, may not provide the statistical power necessary for broader generalization. As such, the external validity of the findings may be limited, especially across more diverse or international populations.
- **Self-Reported Data Bias:** All data collected was based on self-reported measures, which are inherently susceptible to biases such as social desirability, selective memory, and inaccurate self-assessment. This could affect the reliability of reported usage patterns and perceived mental health effects.
- **Limited Diversity in Responses:** The reliance on an online survey format may have inadvertently excluded individuals with limited internet access or lower digital literacy. As a result, the participant pool may overrepresent tech-savvy individuals, which could skew the findings.
- **Lack of Qualitative Insights:** The quantitative approach employed, while valuable for identifying statistical relationships, does not capture the depth and nuance of individual experiences. Incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups could provide richer, more contextualized understandings of user behavior and emotional impact.
- **Potential Response Bias:** Some participants may have responded carelessly or without full attention, leading to incomplete or inconsistent data. Although such cases were minimized through data cleaning, this remains a potential limitation affecting data quality.

Future studies can address these limitations by employing larger and more diverse samples, incorporating mixed-methods approaches, and utilizing objective measures of digital behavior (e.g., screen time tracking) to complement self-reported data.

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ANNEXURES

Questionnaire:

Section 1 & 2:





Scroll, Share, Repeat? Analyzing Social Media Usage & Mental Health Trends in Gen Y & Gen Z


Ever caught yourself scrolling for hours without realizing? Or felt both entertained and drained by social media? You're not alone!

This survey dives into how Gen Y & Gen Z use social media and its impact on mental well-being.

Whether you're a user or not, your insights will help us uncover what makes these apps effective and what could make them even better.

 Research Purposes Only

 Completely Anonymous

 Takes ~3 Minutes

* Indicates required question

Age *

☐ 12-17

☐ 18-26

☐ 27-35

☐ 36-44

Gender *

☐ Male

☐ Female

Current Status *

☐ High School

☐ Undergraduate

☐ Postgraduate

☐ Employed

Have you used any social media apps? (Ex: Instagram, LinkedIn, X, Reddit) *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Engagement with Social Media Apps

Love scrolling through social media? Tell me how you use it!

Which social media apps do you use most frequently? (Select all that apply) *

☐ Instagram

☐ Facebook

☐ Snapchat

☐ LinkedIn

☐ Reddit

☐ X (Twitter)

☐ Other: _____

On average, how much time do you spend on social media daily? *

☐ <1 Hour

☐ 1-3 Hours

☐ 3-5 Hours

☐ 5-7 Hours

☐ > 7 Hours

What are your primary reasons for using social media? (Select all that apply) *

☐ Entertainment

☐ Personal Branding

☐ Professional networking

☐ News & Information

☐ Creative Expression

☐ Other: _____

How engaging do you find each type of social media content or activity? Please select the most appropriate level of engagement from the options below. *

	Not Engaging	Somewhat Engaging	Highly Engaging
Short Form Videos (Ex: Reels)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Long Form Videos (Ex: Live Streams)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stories (Ex: 24 Hour Post)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private Messaging (Ex: DMs, Groups)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interactive Features (Ex: Polls, Quizzes, Q&A)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 3 & 4:

Social Media's Impact on Mental Well-Being	Barriers to Using Social Media Apps																
<p>Does social media affect your mood? Share your thoughts on its impact on your mental well-being!</p>	<p>Not a fan of social media? No problem! This section is just for you.</p>																
<p>How does social media generally impact your emotions? *</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Positive (Motivating, Entertaining, Supportive) <input type="radio"/> Negative (Stressful, Anxiety-Inducing, Toxic) <input type="radio"/> Mixed (Depends on the Content) </p>	<p>Have you ever used social media in the past and then stopped? *</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No </p>																
<p>To what extent do you agree with the following statements? *</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Disagree</th> <th>Neutral</th> <th>Agree</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Social media helps me feel more connected to others.</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social media makes me feel overwhelmed.</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social media impacts my sleep patterns.</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Social media helps me feel more connected to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Social media makes me feel overwhelmed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Social media impacts my sleep patterns.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<p>What are your main reasons for not using social media? (Select all that apply) *</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of interest <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Access (Ex: Cost, Internet, or Device) <input type="checkbox"/> Privacy Concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer offline interactions <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ </p>
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree														
Social media helps me feel more connected to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>														
Social media makes me feel overwhelmed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>														
Social media impacts my sleep patterns.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>														
<p>Have you ever taken a break from social media apps? *</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes, occasionally (a few days to weeks) <input type="radio"/> Yes, for an extended period (a month or more) <input type="radio"/> No, but I have considered it <input type="radio"/> No, I've never felt the need to </p>	<p>How do you stay connected with people without social media? *</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> In-Person Interactions <input type="checkbox"/> Messaging Apps (Ex: iMessages) <input type="checkbox"/> Phone Calls <input type="checkbox"/> Emails <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ </p>																
<p>Do you think social media companies should take more responsibility for users' mental well-being? *</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes, they should implement features to improve user's mental well-being. <input type="radio"/> Yes, but users should also take responsibility for their well-being. <input type="radio"/> No, social media companies should not be responsible for it. </p>	<p>What would be the most important factor in convincing you to start using social media? *</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Stronger Privacy Controls <input type="radio"/> Easier to use and navigate <input type="radio"/> Less advertisements <input type="radio"/> Educational Benefits <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ </p>																
<p>Due to mental health issues have you changed how you use social media? If yes, please specify the reason. *</p> <p>Examples: reduced screen time, changed content preferences, unfollowed accounts, etc.</p> <p>Your answer _____</p>	<p>If you were to use social media, which type of content or activity would interest you the most? *</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Short Form Videos (Ex: Reels, Tiktoks) <input type="radio"/> Long Form Videos (Ex: Live Streams) <input type="radio"/> Stories (Ex: 24 Hour Post) <input type="radio"/> Private Messaging (Ex: DMs, Groups) <input type="radio"/> Interactive Features (Ex: Polls, Quizzes, Q&A) </p>																