

social media and mental health

exploratory visual analysis of social media exposure and mental health indicators

background

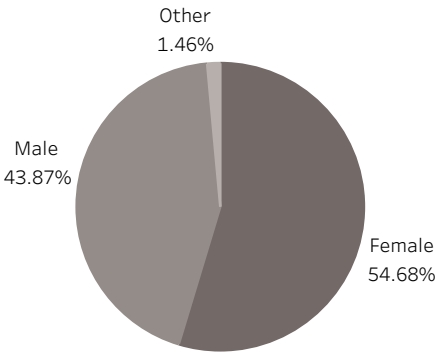
this study explored associations between social media use and mental health indicators using survey data from a predominantly youth-centered sample. social media exposure was measured by time-spent categories, and composite indices of attention difficulties, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and self-esteem vulnerability were constructed from related survey items. the results show that younger respondents reported higher social media exposure, with a moderate negative correlation between age and time spent. mean scores across all mental health indices increased consistently with higher exposure levels, indicating a stable exposure–symptom gradient. stratified analyses further showed higher index scores among younger and non-married respondents. although causal inference is not possible due to the cross-sectional design, the findings provide descriptive evidence of systematic associations between social media exposure intensity and mental health indicators.

findings

the sample size (**n = 474**) is largely composed of younger individuals, with balanced gender representation and a predominance of single and married respondents, providing appropriate context for analyzing social media exposure and mental health patterns.

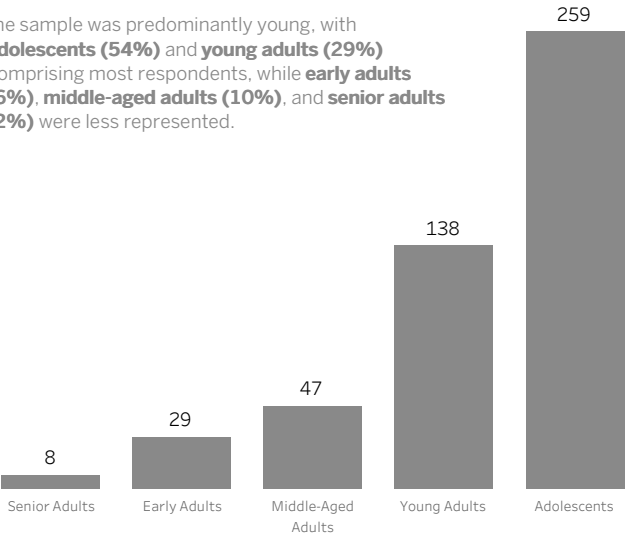
gender distribution

gender distribution was relatively balanced (**55% female, 44% male, ~1% other**).

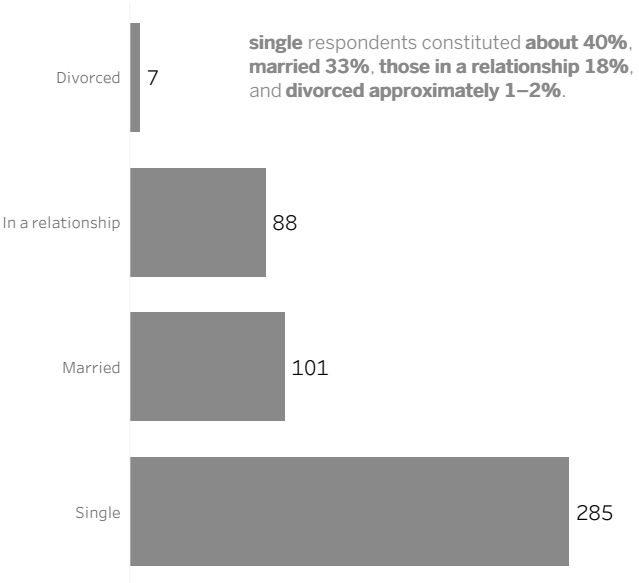


age distribution

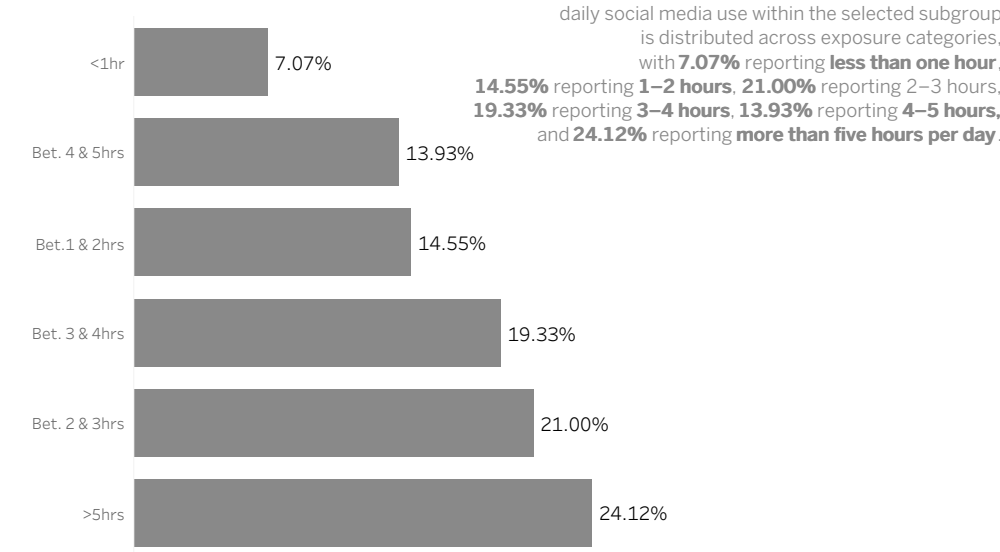
the sample was predominantly young, with **adolescents (54%)** and **young adults (29%)** comprising most respondents, while **early adults (6%)**, **middle-aged adults (10%)**, and **senior adults (2%)** were less represented.



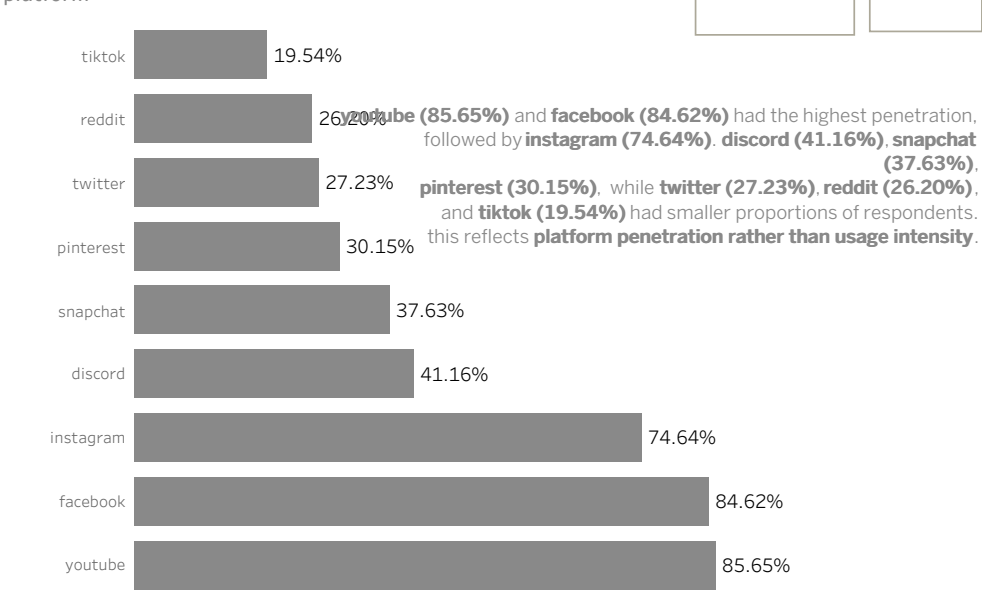
relationship status distribution



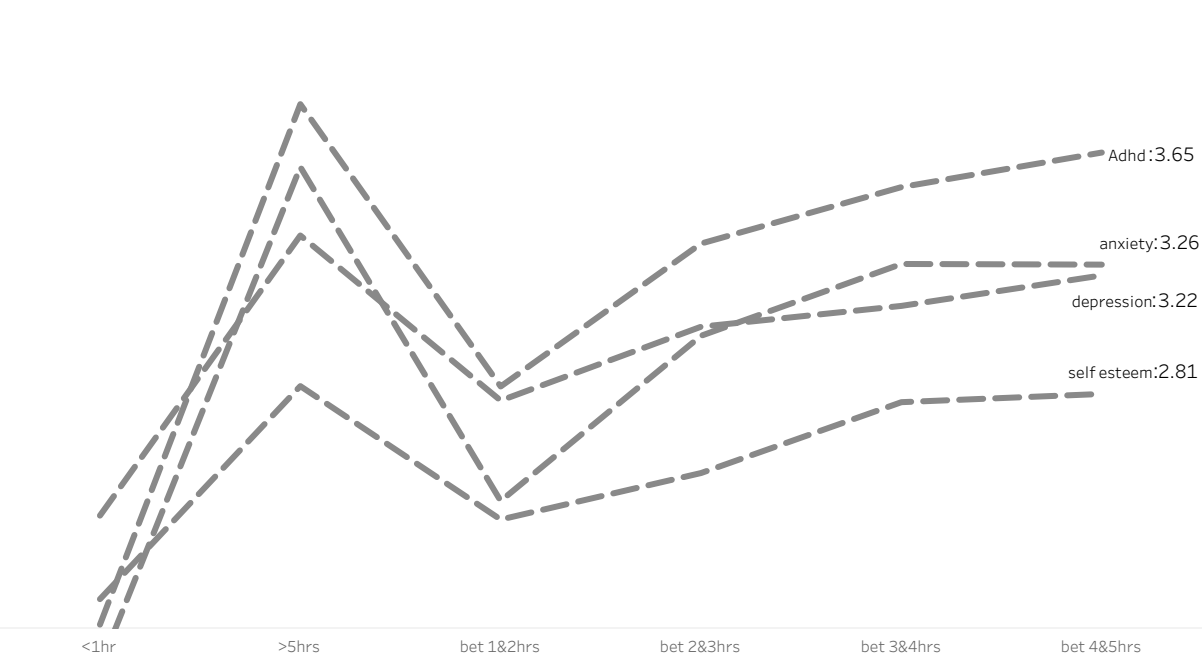
time spent



platform



exposure and mental health patterns



mean scores for attention difficulties (3.197), anxiety (2.908), depression (2.989), and self-esteem vulnerability (2.577) increase across higher daily social media exposure categories within the selected subgroup (481).

mean mental health index scores vary systematically across levels of daily social media use: lower exposure categories are characterized by lower mean scores across all mental health indices, while progressively higher exposure categories show correspondingly higher mean values. respondents reporting three hours or more of daily social media use exhibit the highest mean scores across all measured constructs.

summary of key findings

the sample is dominated by younger respondents, with adolescents and young adults comprising the largest share, consistent with the study’s focus on social media exposure. most respondents report moderate to high daily social media use, with a substantial proportion spending three hours or more per day. platform usage is widespread, led by youtube, facebook, and instagram.

mean scores for attention difficulties, anxiety symptoms, depressive symptoms, and self-esteem vulnerability increase systematically across higher levels of daily social media exposure. this exposure–mental health pattern is observed across age and relationship status subgroups, although absolute mean values vary by demographic composition. overall, the findings describe a consistent association between exposure intensity and variation in multiple mental health indicators.

conclusion

the analysis shows a consistent association between higher daily social media exposure and elevated mean scores across multiple mental health indicators. this pattern persists across age and relationship status subgroups, indicating that exposure intensity is a meaningful dimension of variation within the study population. although causal inference is not possible, the findings provide a clear descriptive basis for understanding how mental health indicators vary with levels of social media use.

discussion

the findings indicate a consistent association between greater daily social media exposure and higher mean scores across multiple mental health indicators. the persistence of this pattern across age and relationship status subgroups suggests that exposure intensity, rather than demographic composition alone, is a salient dimension along which mental health variation is observed within the study population.

while mean levels differ across demographic groups, the exposure–mental health gradient remains directionally stable, implying that increased time spent on social media co-occurs with higher reported symptom levels across diverse respondent profiles. this consistency strengthens the descriptive robustness of the observed patterns and supports their relevance for subgroup-level analysis.

however, these results should be interpreted cautiously. the cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported measures preclude causal inference, and the observed associations do not establish directionality or underlying mechanisms. nevertheless, the findings contribute empirical evidence to ongoing discussions on social media exposure and mental health by demonstrating systematic variation in mental health indicators across exposure intensities within a contemporary, digitally engaged population.