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A STUDY ON PUBLIC ON A PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG TEENAGERS IN CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT:

This study explores the psychological impact of social media usage among teenagers in Chennai, a rapidly urbanizing metropolis where digital connectivity plays an integral role in daily life. With the advent of social media platforms, teenagers are increasingly engaged in online interactions, which have both positive and negative consequences on their mental well-being. The research seeks to understand how social media influences teenagers' self-esteem, anxiety levels, and social behavior, while also considering the role of peer pressure and cyberbullying. Through a mixed-method approach, the study involves quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with a representative sample of teenagers aged 13-19. The data gathered highlights significant correlations between high social media usage and issues such as body image concerns, sleep disturbances, and increased levels of anxiety and depression. Additionally, the study examines how social media contributes to the formation of identity and social relationships during adolescence, a critical developmental period. The findings underscore the need for greater awareness among parents, educators, and policymakers about the potential psychological risks associated with excessive social media use. The study also calls for the implementation of digital literacy programs that can help teenagers navigate social media platforms more safely and healthily. By addressing the psychological impacts identified in this research, it is hoped that more supportive environments can be created for teenagers, allowing them to benefit from social media while minimizing its adverse effects.

KEYWORDS:

Social media, teenagers, mental health, anxiety, depression, Chennai, public opinion, policy.

INTRODUCTION:

In the digital age, social media has become an inseparable part of daily life, particularly among the younger generation. With the proliferation of smartphones and internet access, teenagers are spending an increasing amount of time on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok. These platforms provide a space for communication, entertainment, and self-expression, but they also raise concerns about their impact on mental health, especially during the formative adolescent years. This study aims to explore the psychological impact of social media on teenagers in Chennai, a city that epitomizes the rapid urbanization and digital transformation occurring in India.

The Rise of Social Media

The last decade has witnessed an exponential growth in social media usage worldwide, and India is no exception. According to recent statistics, India has one of the largest numbers of social media users globally, with a significant proportion being teenagers. Chennai, as a major metropolitan city, reflects these national trends, with its youth increasingly engaging with social media platforms for various purposes, including social interaction, entertainment, and information seeking. Social media has revolutionized the way teenagers communicate and form relationships. Unlike traditional face-to-face interactions, social media allows for the creation of virtual identities and the establishment of networks that transcend geographical boundaries. This digital interconnectedness has created new opportunities for self-expression and socialization. However, it also poses risks to the mental health and well-being of young users, who are often more vulnerable to the psychological effects of these platforms.

Adolescence and Mental Health

Adolescence is a critical period of psychological development, characterized by the search for identity, increased sensitivity to peer influence, and heightened emotional reactivity. During this time, teenagers are particularly susceptible to the opinions and behaviors of their peers, which can significantly shape their self-esteem and self-concept. Social media, with its emphasis on image and popularity, can amplify these vulnerabilities, leading to various psychological issues. Research has shown that excessive use of social media can contribute to mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and loneliness among teenagers. The constant exposure to idealized images and lifestyles on social media platforms can create unrealistic expectations and foster feelings of inadequacy and low self-worth. Moreover, the

pressure to maintain a certain image online can lead to stress and anxiety, as teenagers strive to gain validation through likes, comments, and followers.

The Impact of Social Media on Teenagers in Chennai

Chennai, as a bustling urban center, offers a unique context for studying the impact of social media on teenagers. The city is home to a diverse population with varying socioeconomic backgrounds, which influences how teenagers access and engage with social media. In Chennai, social media usage among teenagers is driven by several factors, including the desire for social connection, entertainment, and the need to stay informed about current trends and events. However, the increasing reliance on social media also brings about a range of psychological challenges. Cyberbullying, for instance, has emerged as a significant issue in Chennai, with many teenagers reporting experiences of online harassment and bullying. The anonymity provided by social media platforms often emboldens individuals to engage in harmful behaviors, leading to detrimental effects on the mental health of victims. Another concern is the impact of social media on body image and self-esteem. In Chennai, as in other parts of the world, teenagers are frequently exposed to images that promote unrealistic beauty standards. This can lead to body dissatisfaction, especially among young girls, who may compare themselves to the idealized images they see online. The pressure to conform to these standards can result in unhealthy behaviors, such as disordered eating and excessive exercise, further exacerbating mental health issues. Moreover, social media can disrupt the sleep patterns of teenagers, who may stay up late browsing their feeds or engaging in online conversations. Sleep deprivation is closely linked to various mental health problems, including anxiety and depression, which are prevalent among teenagers in Chennai. The constant connectivity and the fear of missing out (FOMO) on social media updates can also lead to increased stress and a sense of isolation, as teenagers feel compelled to remain online to keep up with their peers.

The Role of Peer Pressure and Social Comparison

Peer pressure is a significant factor influencing social media behavior among teenagers. In Chennai, as in other urban areas, teenagers often feel compelled to conform to the norms and trends set by their peers on social media. This can lead to excessive use of social media platforms and the adoption of behaviors that may not align with their values or interests. The desire to fit in and be accepted by their social circles can drive teenagers to engage in risky

behaviors, such as sharing personal information, participating in online challenges, or engaging in cyberbullying.

Social comparison is another critical issue that arises from social media use. Teenagers are prone to comparing themselves to others, especially when it comes to physical appearance, social status, and achievements. On social media, where users often present curated and idealized versions of their lives, this comparison can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. In Chennai, the pressure to keep up with peers who appear to have more exciting or successful lives can contribute to a negative self-image and increased anxiety among teenagers.

The Need for Digital Literacy and Mental Health Awareness

Given the profound impact of social media on the psychological well-being of teenagers, there is a pressing need for digital literacy and mental health awareness programs in Chennai. Educating teenagers about the potential risks of social media and equipping them with the skills to navigate these platforms safely is essential for mitigating the negative effects. Parents, educators, and policymakers must work together to create supportive environments that promote healthy social media use and encourage open discussions about mental health. Digital literacy programs should focus on helping teenagers critically evaluate the content they encounter on social media, recognize the signs of cyberbullying, and understand the importance of maintaining a balance between online and offline activities. Additionally, promoting mental health awareness can help reduce the stigma associated with seeking help for psychological issues and encourage teenagers to prioritize their well-being. The psychological impact of social media on teenagers in Chennai is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires urgent attention. While social media offers numerous benefits, such as enhanced communication and access to information, it also poses significant risks to the mental health of young users. By understanding the specific challenges faced by teenagers in Chennai and implementing targeted interventions, it is possible to create a safer and more supportive digital environment that promotes the well-being of the city's youth. As social media continues to evolve, ongoing research and awareness efforts will be crucial in addressing the psychological impact of these platforms on future generations.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To analyze public views on the psychological impact of social media among teenagers.
2. To Determine specific psychological issues like anxiety and depression linked to social media use.
3. To Examine the role of peer pressure on teenagers' mental health.
4. To study the digital literacy of teenagers in mitigating negative effects.
5. To analyze how social media affects of teenagers

Review of literature:

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Access GPIU PSMU and POG relationships determine their distinctum NAS exam and links with the destroys and emotional limitations problem it behaviour psychological behaviours psychological diste emotional will be GP IU and psmu closely linked pog recent all behaviour is linked to destroyce and emotional limitations.

Rigo, Adrien & toth kiraly, Istvan & magi, Anna & Eisinger, Andrea & Griffiths, Mark & demetrovics , zsolt (2023) Determine if eveningness predicts problematic online behaviours explore direct and meditated effects “Eveningness” predicts higher risk for all problematic online behaviours “Mediators” depression and time spend online.

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Bradac, vladmir & smolka, Pavel (2020) create a personalized study plan for an English course test the methodology using moodle new methodology platform test group “personal plans” successfully created “integration” effective with moodle with automated tracking.

Huang, ku & Zhang, juwen & duan, wenjie & he, longtao (2021)

Validate the bergen social media addiction scale (BSMAS) Access the moderating effect of peerb relationships on the link between negative emotions and social media addiction risk bergen social media addiction scale negative emotions peer relationships BSMAS is reliable and valid negative emotions increase the risk of social media addiction.

Al bahrani, Abdullah & Patel, darshak & Sheridan, Brandon (2015)

Evaluate students views on using social media in economic classes determine social media effectiveness as a teaching tool social media platforms privacy concerns willingness to connect students are most active on Facebook YouTube Instagram Twitter students have privacy concerns but prefer one way connections with faculty.

Pescott Claire (2024)

Examine children's views on social media surveillance analyzed to impact on their cultural and social practices. children's maintain agency in digital spaces social media surveillance impact children social practices.

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Examine social media's impact on adolescent mental well being identify both positive and negative effects cyberbullying it also supports and communities strategies for balanced use are proposed.

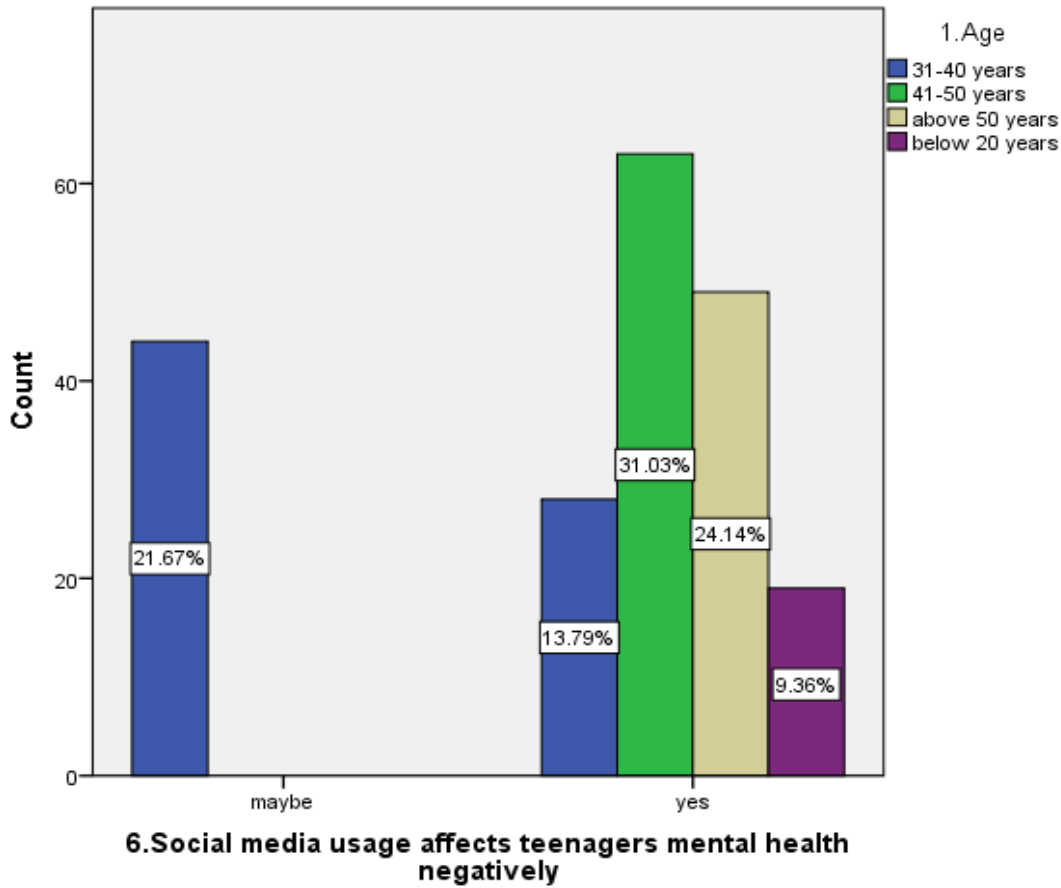
Ofuebe, Justina & nweke, prince & fedinand & agu, uzochukwu & fedinand, uzuchukuru & agu (2022)

Examine social media's Sociological impact on depressed undergraduates recommend Strategies for health educators and institution Digital well being Media Literacy Skills - Social media impacts mental health through norms - Comparison support but also bullying stigma - It offers support poses risks.

Methodology:

The study was based on an empirical method of research. the data were collected within chennai by adopting the convenient sampling method and the sample size is 200. The tool used for the study is the structured questionnaire, the independent variable included in the study is age, gender, education, employment status, marital status. the dependent variable used in the study is a yes or no, MCQ and scale rating questions

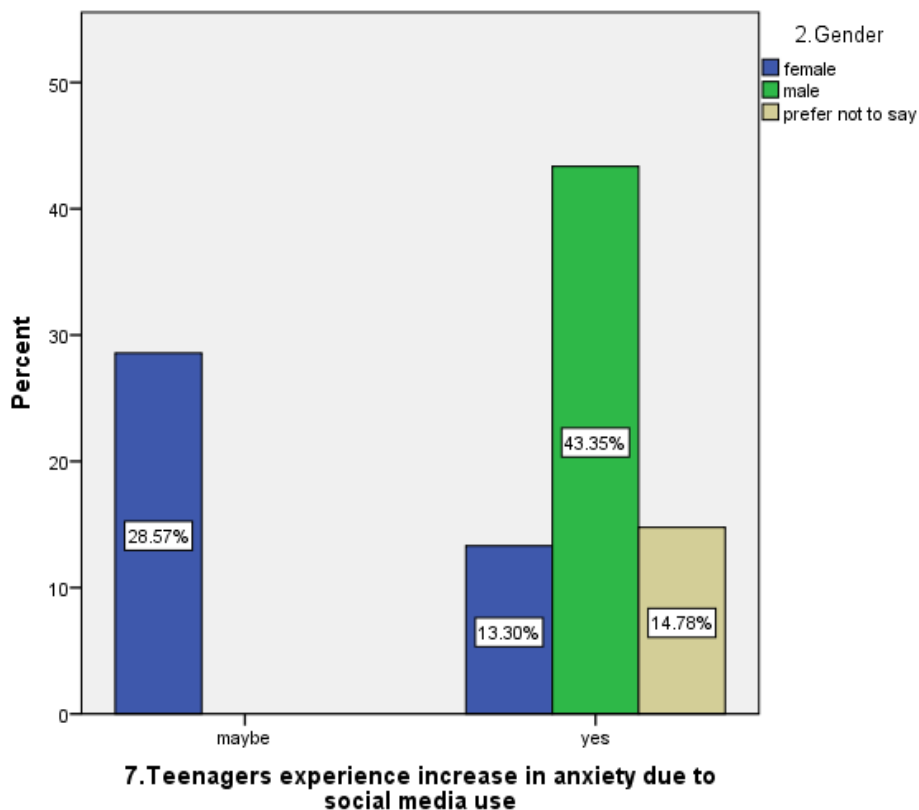
Analysis:



LEGEND: this figure (1) shows age groups (blue: 31-40, green: 41-50, beige: above 50, purple: below 20). The x-axis shows responses ("maybe" or "yes") on social media's negative impact on teens, while the y-axis indicates response counts. Percentages on bars represent each age group's response proportions.

INFERENCES: Older respondents (41-50 and 50+) are more likely to see social media as negatively impacting teenagers' mental health. Younger respondents (below 20) are less likely to agree. The 31-40 age group is mostly unsure.

Figure 2:



LEGEND: The chart shows that 43.35% of males believe social media increases teen anxiety, compared to 13.30% of females and 14.78% of those who prefer not to say. Females are more uncertain, with 28.57% responding "maybe."

INFERNCES: Males are most likely to agree that social media increases teenage anxiety. Females are more uncertain, with a significant portion responding "maybe." Those who prefer not to disclose their gender show moderate agreement with the statement.

LIMITATIONS:

Several limitations affect the study’s findings. The sample size may be insufficient or not sufficiently representative of the diverse teenage population in Chennai, which could impact the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases, as participants might downplay negative experiences or present socially desirable responses. The cross-sectional design of the study captures only a single moment in time, limiting the ability to assess long-term psychological effects and changes in social media

impact over time. Moreover, the study does not differentiate between the effects of various social media platforms, which may have different impacts on mental health. These limitations suggest that while the study provides valuable insights, further research is needed to address these gaps and offer a more comprehensive understanding of social media's psychological impact.

SUGGESTIONS:

To build on the findings of this study, future research should focus on longitudinal designs to track changes in psychological impacts over time and assess how social media use evolves. Expanding the sample size and diversity will improve the generalizability of the results, providing a more accurate picture of the impact across different demographic groups. Developing and implementing targeted intervention programs is crucial; these programs should educate teenagers about the potential psychological effects of social media and promote healthier usage practices. Workshops for parents and educators should also be considered to provide them with tools to support teenagers effectively. Additionally, policymakers should consider recommendations for integrating mental health resources and support systems into social media platforms and schools. Examining the specific impacts of different social media platforms could further elucidate which platforms have more pronounced effects, guiding more targeted interventions and strategies.

CONCLUSIONS:

This study provides a comprehensive examination of the psychological impacts of social media on teenagers in Chennai, revealing both positive and negative effects. Social media offers significant opportunities for social interaction and support, but it also poses risks such as increased anxiety, depression, and body image issues. Understanding these impacts is essential for developing effective strategies to support the mental health of teenagers. The study highlights the importance of addressing both the benefits and challenges associated with social media use. By advocating for informed interventions, supporting mental health initiatives, and continuing research, stakeholders can help mitigate the negative effects.

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