



SCROLL TO WELLNESS: EXAMINING SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT ON MILLENNIAL MENTAL HEALTH IN LIGHT OF SDG 3

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ABSTRACT

The rise of social media has significantly influenced the mental health of millennials, a generation deeply intertwined with digital communication platforms. This study explores the complex relationship between social media usage and various aspects of mental well-being, including self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and social connectivity. By analysing both the positive and negative impacts, the research highlights how social media fosters opportunities for self-expression and community engagement while also contributing to issues such as comparison-induced stress, cyberbullying, and digital addiction. Through a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews, the study aims to provide insights into the behavioural patterns and coping strategies of millennials, offering recommendations for healthier engagement with social media. This research seeks to inform policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals on the implications of social media for millennial mental health, fostering awareness and encouraging balanced usage.

Keywords: social media, mental health, digital platforms.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of social media has significantly reshaped the social and cultural landscape, profoundly influencing the lives of millennials, who represent the first generation to grow up with these platforms. While social media offers numerous benefits, such as fostering global connections, enabling self-expression, and providing access to information, its pervasive use has raised critical concerns about its impact on mental health. Studies suggest a strong correlation between excessive social media usage and mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, loneliness, and low self-esteem, particularly among millennials. This research explores the dual-edged nature of social media, examining how it simultaneously serves as a tool for empowerment and a source of psychological distress. By aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG-3), which emphasizes ensuring good health and well-being for all, the study aims to shed light on the complex interplay between social media use and mental health outcomes. The study also emphasizes the urgency of addressing these issues through targeted interventions, policy recommendations, and awareness campaigns, thereby fostering a healthier digital environment that contributes positively to the mental well-being of millennials.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.SLOUP BRIANNA (2021):

The literature on social media and its effects on millennials highlights both positive and negative consequences on mental health. Studies show that while social media provides a sense of connection, awareness, and support, it is also linked to increased anxiety, depression, and body image issues. Millennials, aged 16-30, are particularly affected, being the most active users of platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and twitter, have transformed from simple blogs into complex, multifaceted networks that influence self-image and social interactions. Research indicates that constant exposure to curated content can lead to comparisons and feelings of inadequacy.

2.FATHADHIKA, SARENTYA, SARAH HAFIZA, AND NANDA RIZKI RAHMITA (2019):

The literature highlights the dual impact of social media on millennials mental health. Social media fosters emotional connection, relationship quality, and self-expression, which can enhance well-being. However, excessive use is linked to negative outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Sedentary behaviour, fear of missing out, and sleep disruptions due to blue light further worsen mental health. Face-to-face interactions and physical activity are noted as essential for improving psychological well-being. Gender differences in usage patterns reveal that females use social media more frequently than males.

3.PATALAY, PRAVEETHA, AND SUZANNE H. GAGE (2019):

Adolescent mental health issues, especially internalizing problems like depression and self-harm, have increased over the years, particularly in girls. Historical studies have shown rising trends in mental health problems globally, with the onset of disorders often occurring by age 14. Conversely, substance use behaviours (smoking, alcohol, cannabis) have significantly declined among adolescents in recent decades. Changes in other behaviours, such as reduced sleep duration and increased obesity, have also been observed. Previous research links health-related behaviours, including substance use and sleep, to mental health risks. but these relationships may be evolving.

4.BRIGITTE VILJOEN (2017):

The review of literature focuses on the intersection of attachment theory, Millennial experiences, and social media use. It highlights the rapid evolution of digital technology and its impact on human connection, particularly for digital natives. Key sources include Neufeld & Mate (2013), Cundy (2015), and Turkle (2011), which explore attachment, digital communication, and psychoanalytic perspectives. Marketing literature often objectifies Millennials, contrasting with the qualitative approach sought in psychotherapy. The literature reveals gaps in understanding the psychological effects of social media on attachment. Studies emphasize the complexity of digital interactions and their influence on relational styles and public health.

5. OKTAVIANI, SILFANIA, (2023):



The literature highlights the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health globally, particularly among younger generations who are crucial drivers of future economies. Studies reveal a rise mental health issue, such as anxiety (47.9%), depression (36.1%), and psychological trauma (16%), with suicidal tendencies reported among 49% if respondents. The pandemic’s abrupt changes, including social restrictions, economic challenges, and fear-inducing information, have caused widespread stress and trauma, especially in Indonesia. Health workers face unique pressures, including stigma and discrimination.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the positive and negative effects of social media on the mental health of millennials.
2. To identify the primary social media platforms contributing to mental health challenges.
3. To explore the role of social comparison, cyberbullying, and addiction in shaping millennials' mental well-being.
4. To evaluate the implications of social media usage on achieving SDG-3’s goal of ensuring good health and well-being.
5. To recommend strategies and interventions for promoting healthy social media habits among millennials.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

Sample design	Convenience sample
Sample size	250 responses
Period of study	3 months
Data source	Primary data

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

- Data were collected using well-structured questionnaire
- Secondary data source: books, journals, web sources, research articles

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Gender

Particulars	No.of. respondents	percentage
Male	81	32.4
Female	169	67.6
Total	250	100



Inference: The above-mentioned table represents the gender of the respondents which was categorised as male 32.4% and female 67.6%

Table 2: Age

particulars	No.of respondents	percentage
Below 20	120	48
20-30	96	38.4
30-40	21	8.4
Above 40	13	5.2
Total	250	100

Inference: The above-mentioned table represents the age group of the respondents which was categorised as below 20(48%), 20-30(38.4%), 30-40(8.4%), and above 40(5.2%) respectively.

Table 3: Qualification

Particulars	No.of respondents	percentage
school	37	14.8
UG	180	72
PG	33	13.2
Toal	250	100

Inference: The above-mentioned table represents the qualification of the respondents which is categorised as school, UG, and PG. The number of respondents for each category are 37 (14.8%), 180 (72%), 33 (13.2%) respectively.

Table 4: Social media makes me feel more connected to my friends and family

Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	77	30.8
Agree	90	36
Neutral	62	24.8



Disagree	12	4.8
Strongly disagree	9	3.6
Total	250	100

Inference: The above-mentioned table represents the connectivity of social media with friends and family which is categorised as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. The number of respondents for each category are, 77 (30.8%), 90 (36%), 62 (24.8%), 12 (4.8%), 9 (3.6%) respectively.

Table 5: I often feel anxious or stressed after using social media

Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	50	20
Agree	76	30.4
Neutral	67	26.8
Disagree	41	16.4
Strongly disagree	16	6.4
Total	250	100

Inference: The above-mentioned table represents the anxiety and stress of the respondents after using social media which is categorised as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The number of respondents for each category are 50 (20%), 76 (30.4%), 67 (26.8%), 41 (16.4%), 16 (6.4%) respectively.

Table 6: Social media helps me stay informed about current events

Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	57	22.8
Agree	81	32.4



Neutral	68	27.8
Disagree	27	10.8
Strongly disagree	17	6.8
Total	250	100

Inference: The above-mentioned table represents the information of current events through social media which is categorised as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The number of respondents for each category are 57 (22.8%), 81 (32.4%), 68 (27.8%), 27 (10.8%), 17 (6.8%) respectively.

Table 7: I feel pressure to present a perfect image of myself on social media

Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	35	14
Agree	74	29.6
Neutral	83	33.2
Disagree	40	16
Strongly disagree	18	7.2
Total	250	100

Inference: The above-mentioned table represents the pressure of the respondents on presenting themselves in a perfect image on social media which is categorised as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The number of respondents for each category are 35 (14%), 74 (29.6%), 83 (33.2%), 40 (16%), 18 (7.2%) respectively.

Table 8: Social media helps me express myself and my interests

Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	35	14



Agree	94	37.6
Neutral	65	26
Disagree	33	13.2
Strongly disagree	23	9.2
Total	250	100

Inference: The above-mentioned table represents the respondents expressing themselves and their interest in social media which is categorised as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The number of respondents for each category are 35 (14%), 94 (37.6%), 65 (26%), 33 (13.2%), 23 (9.2%) respectively.

Table 9: Social media negatively affects my sleep patterns

Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	50	20
Agree	101	40.4
Neutral	49	19.6
Disagree	24	9.6
Strongly disagree	26	10.4
Total	250	100

Inference: the above-mentioned table represents the negative effects of respondents' sleep patterns which are categorised as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The number of respondents for each category are 50 (20%), 101 (40.4%), 49 (19.6%), 24 (9.6%), 26 (10.4%) respectively.

Table 10: I feel social media contributes to unrealistic beauty standards

Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
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Strongly agree	34	13.6
Agree	82	32.8
Neutral	61	24.4
Disagree	55	22
Strongly disagree	18	7.2
Total	250	100

Inference: The above-mentioned table represents the social media's contribution towards unrealistic beauty standards which is categorised as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The number of respondents for each category are 34 (13.6%), 82 (32.8%), 61 (24.4%), 55(22%), 18 (7.2%) respectively.

Table 11: I feel that social media has made me more self-aware

Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	50	20
Agree	101	40.4
Neutral	58	23.2
Disagree	27	10.8
Strongly disagree	14	5.6
Total	250	100

Inference: The above-mentioned table represents the respondents self- aware through social media which is categorised as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The number of respondents for each category are 50 (20%), 101 (40.4%), 58 (23.2%), 27 (10.8%), 14 (5.6%) respectively.

Table 12: Social media helps me maintain long-distance relationships

Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
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Strongly agree	58	23.2
Agree	109	43.6
Neutral	48	19.2
Disagree	25	10
Strongly disagree	10	4
Total	250	100

Inference: The above-mentioned table represents the maintenance of long-distance relationships of respondents through social media which is categorised as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The number of respondents for each category are 58 (23.2%), 109 (43.6%), 48 (19.2%), 25 (10%), 10 (4%) respectively.

Table 13: I use social media to escape from real-life stressors

Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	44	17.6
Agree	73	29.2
Neutral	78	31.2
Disagree	34	13.6
Strongly disagree	21	8.4
Total	250	100

Inference: The above-mentioned table represents the respondents' escapism from real life stressors by using social media which is categorised as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The number of respondents for each category are 44 (17.6%), 73 (29.2%), 78 (31.2%), 34 (13.6%), 21 (8.4%) respectively.



Correlations

		Social media negatively affects my sleep patterns	I feel social media contributes to unrealistic beauty standards	I feel that social media has made me more self-aware	Social media helps me maintain long-distance relationships	I use social media to escape from real-life stressors
Social media negatively affects my sleep patterns	Pearson Correlation	1	-.036	.263**	.289**	-.178**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.572	.000	.000	.005
	N	250	250	250	250	250
I feel social media contributes to unrealistic beauty standards	Pearson Correlation	-.036	1	-.065	-.121	.131*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.572		.306	.057	.038
	N	250	250	250	250	250
I feel that social media has made me more self-aware	Pearson Correlation	.263**	-.065	1	.414**	-.162*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.306		.000	.010
	N	250	250	250	250	250
Social media helps me maintain long-distance relationships	Pearson Correlation	.289**	-.121	.414**	1	-.096
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.057	.000		.132
	N	250	250	250	250	250
	Pearson Correlation	-.178**	.131*	-.162*	-.096	1



I use social media to escape from real-life stressors	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.038	.010	.132	
	N	250	250	250	250	250

Pearson correlation values range from **-1 to 1**.

- A **positive correlation** means that as one variable increases, the other also tends to increase.
- A **negative correlation** means that as one variable increases, the other tends to decrease.
- Correlations marked with ** (e.g., .263**) indicate statistical significance at the **p < .01** level (highly significant).
- Correlations marked with * (e.g., .131*) indicate statistical significance at the **p < .05** level (moderately significant).

Social media negatively affects my sleep patterns

- **Positively correlated** with:
 - *Feeling that social media has made me more self-aware (r = .263, p < .01)*
Those who believe social media affects their sleep also feel more self-aware.
 - *Social media helps maintain long-distance relationships (r = .289, p < .01)*
Those who report sleep disturbances due to social media also feel that it helps them maintain relationships.
- **Negatively correlated** with:
 - *Using social media to escape from real-life stressors (r = -.178, p < .01)* People who use social media as an escape tend to report fewer sleep disturbances.

I feel social media contributes to unrealistic beauty standards

- **Positively correlated** with:
 - *Using social media to escape from real-life stressors (r = .131, p < .05)* Those who think social media sets unrealistic beauty standards are also more likely to use it as an escape.
- **No strong correlations** with other variables.

I feel that social media has made me more self-aware

- **Positively correlated** with:



- *Social media helps maintain long-distance relationships* ($r = .414, p < .01$) Those who feel more self-aware due to social media also think it helps maintain relationships.
- **Negatively correlated** with:
 - *Using social media to escape from real-life stressors* ($r = -.162, p < .05$) People who feel more self-aware due to social media are less likely to use it as an escape.

Social media helps me maintain long-distance relationships

- **Positively correlated** with:
 - *Feeling that social media has made me more self-aware* ($r = .414, p < .01$) Those who use social media to maintain relationships are more likely to feel self-aware.
- **No significant negative correlations.**

I use social media to escape from real-life stressors

- **Negatively correlated** with:
 - *Social media negatively affects my sleep patterns* ($r = -.178, p < .01$) People who use social media as an escape report fewer sleep disturbances.
 - *Feeling that social media has made me more self-aware* ($r = -.162, p < .05$) People who use social media as an escape feel less self-aware.

FINDINGS

From the above research undertaken the findings were:

- A. 67.6% of the respondents were female and 32.4% male.
- B. 48% of the respondents belongs to the age group of below 20.
- C. 72% of the respondents belongs to UG.
- D. 36% of the respondents feels that social media making them connect with their family & friends.
- E. 30.4% of the respondents feels anxious or stressed after using social media.
- F. 32.4% of the respondents feels that social media helps them informed about the current events.
- G. 33.2% of the respondents feels pressure to present a perfect image of themselves in the social media.
- H. 37.6% of the respondents feels that they can express themselves and their interest in social media.
- I. 40.4% of the respondents feels that social media affects their sleeping pattern negatively.



- J. 32.8% of the respondents feels that social media contributes to unrealistic beauty standards.
- K. 40.4% of the respondents feels that it makes them feel more self-aware.
- L. 43.6% of the respondents feels that social media helps them maintain their long-distance relationships.
- M. 31.2% of the respondents feels escaped from real life stressors after using social media.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research highlights the profound impact that social media has on the mental health of millennials, underscoring the complex relationship between digital connectivity and well-being. While social media provides valuable platforms for social interaction, self-expression, and community-building, it also introduces significant risks to mental health, including anxiety, depression, body image concerns, and sleep disturbances. These challenges are particularly acute for millennials, a generation that has grown up with constant digital engagement. In light of SDG 3—Good Health and Well-being—the findings of this study suggest that achieving the goal of mental well-being for all requires a multifaceted approach to mitigating the negative effects of social media. Raising awareness about the mental health risks of social media, promoting digital well-being, and encouraging healthier offline habits are essential steps toward protecting the mental health of millennials. By integrating these insights into policy-making, digital platform design, and public health initiatives, it is possible to create a more balanced relationship between millennials and the digital world, one that aligns with the broader goals of SDG 3 and fosters a healthier, more connected future.

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