DIGITAL DEPENDENCY AND ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING: THE MEDIATING ROLES OF LONELINESS AND SELF-ESTEEM AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF RESILIENCE IN POST-PANDEMIC INDIA

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Abstract

People are worried about the effects of internet and social media addictions on mental health due to the growing use of digital technology in everyday life, especially during the COVID-19 epidemic. In addition to facilitating social interaction, the online world has the potential to exacerbate mental health issues, including anxiety, despair, and low self-esteem. Using theoretical and empirical frameworks from psychology, education, and culture, this research delves into the complex issues young people encounter as they navigate online environments, identifies the psychological and behavioural risk factors associated with excessive digital participation, and investigates potential solutions. Social media can enhance classroom instruction and student-teacher communication, but it can also undermine students' ability to focus and pay attention. Comprehensive intervention measures, including programs to improve digital literacy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and time management training, are necessary to address these difficulties.

Keywords: Internet Addiction; Social Media Addiction; Mental Well-Being; Self-Esteem

Introduction

Adolescents worldwide now typically spend their time and communicate via screen-based activities, according to strong evidence that existed even before the COVID-19 pandemic (Twenge, 2019). A substantial rise in time spent using digital technologies (DT) was driven by significant disruptions to everyday life, educational routines, and practices due to the epidemic (Kastorff, 2023). These assertions have been supported by studies using Croatian samples, both quantitative (Jokić, 2022) and qualitative (Žulec, 2023). Throughout the transition from elementary to lower secondary school, screen use increases at a rate most pronounced during the early adolescent years (Booker, 2018; World Health Organisation, 2020). More time is spent using DT as people become older, and males report engaging in screen-time activities more often than girls, according to longitudinal and cross-national time-use studies (Gracia, 2022). Various studies have examined the link between DT use and adolescent mental health, and the findings have been all over the map: a linear adverse effect (Orben & Przybylski, 2019), a nonlinear association (Przybylski & Weinstein, 2017), no association (Best, 2014), and a positive association (Antheunis, 2016). When you consider that the epidemic has had a detrimental impact on teenagers' psychological functioning in many ways, including their happiness and sense of isolation, this connection takes on even more significance (Farell, 2023). Among older adolescents and females, these adverse effects were more noticeable (Samji, 2022).

The growing problem of teenage phone addiction is a big issue in modern culture. They risk serious psychological harm from relying on these technologies excessively. Addiction to mobile devices, also called smartphone addiction, is characterised by obsessive and excessive usage of these gadgets. Every aspect of their life, from social relationships to academic achievement and overall health, may be profoundly impacted by this. Parents' behaviours have a significant impact on their children's behaviour and how they interact with technology, making them an important figure in this area (Sahu, 2019). "When parents spend too much time glued to their phones, it becomes the standard, and their children are more likely to follow suit". Addiction may set in when teens get dependent on their phones to the point that they miss out on life without them and suffer from withdrawal symptoms when they cannot have them. Typical of their parents' tendencies, research indicates that 39.6% of South Korean youngsters exhibit symptoms of smartphone addiction (Kim, 2021). The blue light emitted by displays impacts the generation of the sleep hormone melatonin. People frequently get addicted to their

cellphones because they use them for socialising and amusement when they cannot sleep. Anxiety and stress may be exacerbated by excessive phone usage, according to research, which causes 67% of teenagers to report sleep loss (Emanuel, 2015).

Sixty percent of American college students and almost half of American parents believe their kid has a smartphone addiction. Their mental health and general well-being might be negatively impacted in the long run by the psychological disorders that can arise from excessive mobile phone usage, including anxiety, depression, and sleep disruptions (De-Sola Gutiérrez, 2016). Countless people succumb to FOMO, or the fear of missing out, and check their smartphones frequently, which may lead to compulsive behaviours (Choliz, 2012). According to the statistics, a whopping 83.9% of youngsters own cellphones, with around 37% exhibiting symptoms of addiction. Teens use their cellphones a lot, according to research (Bhanderi, 2021). On average, teenagers spend 7 hours a day on their phones, mainly for social networking. These platforms utilise a variety of methods to stimulate dopamine release in the brain, thereby increasing user engagement (Bahia, 2017). Several adverse outcomes, including worse sleep quality, difficulties with academic performance, and an increased risk of driving accidents, are associated with excessive technology use (Kiran, 2019).

Literature Review

One of the most revolutionary developments in the contemporary era, digital technologies are now intrinsic to how we live our lives. Many people now rely on the internet and social media in their daily lives, whether for work, school, pleasure, or communication (Agarwal, 2009). During the COVID-19 epidemic, when people were forced to isolate themselves from others, lockdowns were implemented, and people started using the internet for both personal and work-related matters. This change was very noticeable. It seems that people were more engaged online during the epidemic, according to reports (Statista, 2023b). This was especially true of social media platforms. There are valid concerns about the potential negative impacts of excessive internet and social media use, despite their many advantages, such as instantaneous communication and information access. "Anxiety, despair, and poor self-esteem are among the mental health issues that have been associated with problematic behaviours like internet or social media addiction, which may result from excessive participation (Besalti and Seydi, 2022; Budd, et al. 2020)". To fully grasp the far-reaching consequences of heightened digital involvement, it is crucial to understand these effects in the aftermath of the pandemic.

There are many similarities between internet addiction and social media addiction. Both involve compulsive thinking about using social media, changing one's mood to control emotions, building a tolerance, wanting to use more, seeking pleasure, experiencing withdrawal symptoms, having problems focusing on work or relationships, and relapsing after trying to cut back or quit (Griffiths, 1996; Griffiths, 2000b). There seems to be a positive correlation between different types of technology addiction in the literature (Kuss, 2014). "Internet addiction is seen as a catch-all phrase that includes many other types of online addiction, such as social media addiction, gaming addiction, online relationships addiction, online shopping addiction, and browsing addiction (Grover, 2019; Young, 1998a; 1998b)". Addiction to social media is defined by three main symptoms: (a) an unhealthy preoccupation with using the platform, (b) an overwhelming desire to use the platform, and (c) an unhealthy level of commitment to the platform, which causes the person with an addiction to neglect other aspects of their lives, including their relationships, health, and productivity at work or school (Andreassen, 2014).

Overuse of smartphones (Samaha and Nazir 2016), Facebook addiction (Brailovskaia, 2018), internet addiction (Feng, 2019), and social media addiction (Zhao and Guangyu 2021) are all behaviours that have been linked to problems in managing stress, according to the research. Further research has linked anxiety-related coping mechanisms, such as poor time management, to risk-taking and impulsivity, which in turn may lead to careless internet use (McNicol, 2017). The significance of larger environmental impacts on the development of addictive behaviours may be shown in the fact that socioeconomic and cultural variables, such as insufficient income, educational level, and cultural setting, also seem to impact online addiction (Durkee et al. 2012; Hur, 2006; Petruzelka, 2020).

One theoretical framework for comprehending internet addiction is the Compensatory Model (Kardefelt-Winther, 2014). As a coping mechanism for mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and stress, this paradigm proposes that

people engage in behaviours like heavy internet use. People who suffer from low self-esteem or other unpleasant feelings may find temporary relief through excessive internet use, which serves as an escape from daily stressors. Nevertheless, the inverse is often true when using this technique. When people become overly dependent on their online lives, it can lead to a vicious cycle that leaves them feeling even more isolated. An individual's internet addiction develops over time as a result of preexisting mental health issues (Kardefelt-Winther, 2014).

Due to the profound psychological and social changes occurring during the exploratory period of self-discovery, young adults and teenagers without familial obligations seem to be at a higher risk of developing an addiction to the internet (Lozano-Blasco, 2022). Men between the ages of 16 and 29 had a greater propensity for developing an addiction to the internet, according to research that included participants aged 16 to 74 years old (Bakken, 2009). Similarly, among a sample of people aged 18–65, another research found that smartphone addiction was more common among males aged 18–34 who did not have any family responsibilities (i.e., who were not married) (Nahas, 2018). It seems that young males without families are more likely to get addicted to the internet than young women of the same age (Andreassen, 2012). Empirical evidence demonstrating gender variations in patterns of internet addiction lends credence to this gender gap. Addiction to social media and online shopping is more common among women because these activities help them meet their requirements for belonging via connection, socialisation, and identity construction. When it comes to seeking enjoyment, amusement, or relief from boredom, males are more likely to partake in online activities like gambling, pornography, or video games (Andreassen, 2012; Chiu, Shao-I, 2013; Attanasi, 2021). "It is important to note that there is research that has not discovered a significant association between gender and internet addiction." This shows how complicated the topic is (Attanasi, 2021). It is necessary to have a thorough grasp of this issue because it involves the interaction of several individual and environmental factors. However, gender and family obligations are predictors of internet addiction.

People who have issues with their internet usage often go through emotional ups and downs, according to research on mental health issues, including anxiety, worry, and sadness. "As an example, research has linked compulsive internet use to mental health issues, including anxiety and sadness (Anand, 2018a; Anand, 2022; Anand, 2018b)." In particular, studies have shown that the link between depression and internet addiction is two-way, meaning that depression may be a cause of and a consequence of excessive internet usage (Lim, 2017).

Having a healthy sense of self-worth protects mental health by preventing people from becoming overly dependent on technology and by helping them better handle emotional ups and downs. One's self-perception, encompassing one's character, talents, and attributes, is what makes up one's self-esteem (Santrock, 2016). The fleeting emotions triggered by successes and failures affect an individual's self-esteem (Brown, 2001). In addition, one's self-definition is influenced by one'sself-confidence, which reflects one's ideas about oneself (Burns, 1982). Within the context of their own self-perception and self-awareness, it serves as a guiding mechanism for their self-esteem (Hur, 2006). All of these things, plus an individual's resilience in the face of adversity and their capacity to influence their own fate, make up what is often known as self-esteem (Harter and Robert 1999). People who have poor self-esteem often have trouble expressing themselves, which may make them turn to the internet as a way to escape, which can lead to addiction (Bahrainian, 2014). Some have proposed that internet use may alleviate some deficiencies, such as poor self-esteem (Niemz, 2005). To fill in the blanks in their offline identities and to forge new social identities, the internet allows some people to project idealised versions of themselves (Harter, 1999). On the other hand, presenting an inaccurate picture could amplify undesirable emotions like loneliness and depression, which in turn can bring down one's self-esteem even more (Harter, 1999).

The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to cause widespread isolation, social withdrawal, quarantine, and prolonged lockdowns in 2020. Economic instability and profound changes to everyday life and socialisation were results of the global crisis's disruption of social structures (Ramsetty, 2020). Social ties also went digital to keep in touch with people when employment, school, and training moved online (Budd, 2020). "An increase in internet and social media addictions was inevitable as a result of the detrimental effects on people's mental health and self-confidence caused by these profound societal shifts (Li, 2021a; Li, 2021b)". The negative impacts of internet addiction on mental health have been associated with the epidemic, according to researchers (Fernandes, 2021; Fernandes, 2020). Despite a marked decline in in-person

communication during the lockdowns, internet use skyrocketed, leading many to experience heightened levels of isolation, depression, and anxiety (Dong, 2020). Internet users sought solace in a "safe" and sterile environment, while the epidemic disrupted established conventions. While interacting with others online reduced the fear of getting the virus, it also made me feel even more anxious and depressed, which are symptoms of internet addiction (Elhai, 2020). In this setting, the internet helped people deal with feelings of worry and depression caused by the future's unpredictability (Bao, 2020).

This study delves into the effects of internet and social media addiction on the mental health and self-esteem of the Cypriot population during the COVID-19 epidemic, building on other studies that have consistently shown the harmful effects of these habits. This step is crucial because it allows us to learn more about the long-term consequences of heavy internet use.

Resilience Theory
The complexity and ever-changing nature of resilience theory have made it a hot topic in developmental psychology, sparking ongoing debate about what exactly it entails. Drawing on the research of Rutter [68] and Ungar (2005) respectively, this study will examine resilience from the trait-life and state-like viewpoints. The term "resilience" now describes a person's ability to overcome adversity, a term that has developed from years of research. Rutter (2006) argues that resilience is best understood as an interactive notion that accounts for the interplay between risk experiences and generally favourable outcomes; however, many other theories and definitions of resilience are found in the literature. To understand resilience levels and how they may affect internalising mental illnesses, Rutter's paradigm emphasises investigating protective and risk factors surrounding people.

Rutter (2006) defines protective variables as traits or life circumstances that increase resilience, lessen the impact of risk factors, and improve outcomes. On the other hand, according to Rutter (2006), risk factors make people more susceptible to adverse events. Some of the psychological components that have been shown to increase the likelihood of problematic and excessive technology usage include a lack of self-regulation abilities, mental health problems, and low self-esteem (Billieux et al. 2015). Greater resilience is associated with more protective characteristics, such as strong peer support. From Rutter's point of view, it is crucial to think about all the things that could influence a person's resilience and, by extension, their vulnerability to internalising mental diseases.

On the other hand, according to Ungar (2005), resilience is not only about a person's traits but also about the larger context in which they find themselves. To determine resilience levels, Ungar's method emphasizes examining how an individual's attributes interact with their environment. Ungar argues that a person's resilience is shaped by both their inherent qualities and the social and institutional frameworks in which they find themselves. From this vantage point, it is clear that environmental factors such as community support and resource availability are crucial for building resilience and achieving desired outcomes.

According to Bronfenbrenner (2001), to put resilience in perspective, Ecological Systems Theory provides a framework for thinking about how people interact with their natural surroundings. The original intent of this idea was to explain how children's settings shape their development. However, it has subsequently been expanded to include people of all ages and the wide range of situations they face. Both Ungar's [69] concept of resilience and Bronfenbrenner's theory emphasize the importance of examining people in their communities or academic settings to understand how resilient they are. Taking into account the individual's unique circumstances and the interconnected systems in their lives allows us to design settings that foster resilience and, by extension, progress. Rutter emphasizes personal traits and protective variables, whereas Ungar emphasizes the larger environmental context in his trait-like view of resilience. To better understand resilience and its implications for mental health outcomes, this study will use a comprehensive approach to evaluate resilience among young people. It will address both trait and environmental variables. This research intends to investigate the potential influences of individual (e.g., gender, ethnicity, resilience levels) and contextual (e.g., peer support) elements on mental health issues (e.g., suicidal thoughts, depression, anxiety) among young people by using a strength-based social ecology framework. Young people's resilience and mental health outcomes are complex processes, and this research aims to shed light on these processes by investigating the interactions between personal characteristics and contextual variables.

The Effects of Social Media Addiction on Mental, Social, and Physical Well-Being

Adolescents and young adults in particular are worried about the effects of digital addiction on their mental and physical well-being, particularly as it relates to an unhealthy dependence on social media. Both the addictive potential and the resulting changes in user conduct are expected outcomes of the meteoric rise of social media and their use.

a) Psychological: A variety of psychological and cognitive problems, including but not limited to cognitive impairments, may result from prolonged and heavy use of social media and other forms of media. The motivations for using social media are related to a compulsive need to participate, which, in turn, causes changes in one's mental and emotional state. There has been much research showing that social media may be harmful and even addictive. After the epidemic, people's habits changed as a result of social media addiction, which manifested in changes to their screen time, scrolling habits, and bingeing. Their productivity and quality of life were both affected by the effects of this addiction. Cognitive impairment and social skills stem from a psychological imbalance. Addiction to social media is associated with a variety of adverse mental health outcomes. Negative emotions, irritability, isolation, melancholy, anxiety, limited attention span, burnout, and other symptoms may accompany an addiction to social media. There is evidence from several studies that suggests that heavy social media usage is associated with increased stress, anxiety, and depression (Huang, 2023). Several adverse consequences on users have been associated with it, most notably with cognitive functioning and attention span. Attention bias and decreased focus, as shown in the research, may affect academic performance and general health if social media use is not regulated (Xiao 2022). It seems that psychological discomfort and social media addiction have a mutually reinforcing relationship (Tullett-Prado, 2023). Indirectly, via elevated levels of worry and stress, it might have a deleterious impact on academic performance (Malak, 2021). Anxiety about overusing social media mediated the association between this variable and social media burnout, according to a study of college students (Liu & Ma, 2018). Among Indonesian college students, those with higher addiction scores were much more likely to suffer from clinical depression (Sujarwoto, 2021). Researchers in Malaysia found a link between teenage sadness and excessive social media use (Victor, 2024). To gauge whether college students felt addicted to social media, researchers used a nine-item Social Media Disorder scale (Allahverdi, 2021). According to the results, 20% of college students felt entirely dependent on social media, while around 50% felt 75% to 100% hooked. The most important factors that predicted whether someone would feel addicted to social media were withdrawal and perseverance. Research has shown that college students who experienced psychological abuse as children are more likely to develop an addiction to social media, either directly or via the mediating effect of FOMO (Wei & Yu, 2024).

b) Furthermore, those who are addicted to social media are more likely to have anxiety symptoms, according to studies conducted in Turkey using the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (Demirci, 2019). Based on these findings, it seems that anxiety and social media addiction may be mutually reinforcing. Research has shown that fear of missing out (FoMO) increases participation in and dependency on social media (Al-Busaidi, 2022). Addiction and subjective well-being are connected via the mediating effects of social comparison, remarkable ability comparison, and fear of missing out (FoMO) (Steinberger & Kim, 2023). Social media addiction is more common in certain groups than others; for example, a Vietnamese study found a strong correlation between fear of missing out (FoMO) and stress caused by online friends' neglect and addiction to social media (Doan, 2022).

c) One reason people are becoming more isolated is that they spend too much time on social media. According to available research, there is a complex link between the two occurrences, and they are strongly related. A vicious loop may be formed, since research has shown that social media addiction is both caused by and predicts feelings of loneliness (Baltacı, 2019). There is a correlation between feeling lonely and having an addiction to social media, as stated by Rachubińska et al. (2021). Addiction moderates the relationship between psychological adjustment and COVID-19 anxiety, which is mediated by a sense of belonging at college (Arslan, 2021). A person's mental health took a serious hit throughout the coronavirus pandemic and quarantine. A large body of research has linked excessive social media usage to addiction and the aforementioned psychological problems (Huang, 2023).

d) Social: An over-reliance on digital devices, particularly cellphones, and an increase in screen time are outcomes of social media's massive user base. That caused them to withdraw from society and the actual world. Changes in

society have their origins in people's minds. A more socially adept individual may, for instance, be emotionally mature. Isolation, diminished social competence, interpersonal interactions, communication, and social maturity are some of the changes that have been seen in individuals as a result of the explosion in social media usage and addiction that has resulted from it. Consumption of social media and addiction both impact several aspects. According to studies, a person's social life may be significantly impacted by their addiction to social media. Addiction is associated with less equality in interactions with both parents, more conflict, and worse happiness in relationships with both parents (White-Gosselin, 2024). This suggests that family communication and dynamics might be affected by excessive social media use. In addition, it mediates the connection between parental relationships and addiction by being associated with feelings of despair and anxiety (White-Gosselin, 2024).

e) Physiological: Humans' bodily and biological characteristics are what the term "physiological" refers to. Several studies have shown that people's health is one of the physiological variables that are negatively impacted by social media addiction. There has been a dramatic change in human life since the COVID-19 pandemic, characterised by an increasing reliance on technology. Several physiological features have been linked to social media addiction. Numerous countries' public mental health systems have seen the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting social media addiction (Arslan, 2021). People spend much time glued to their internet-connected devices during the long-term pandemic quarantine, which may contribute to feelings of isolation and loneliness. Spending more time on leisure activities during the pandemic led to increased content consumption, which in turn led to changes in physique, worsening mental health, and poorer physical health. Considering the majority of the research was carried out after the epidemic, it is clear that social media addiction has serious negative consequences. According to research published in the Iowa Gambling Task (IGT), people who are addicted to social media have trouble controlling their impulses, and this problem becomes worse when they are exposed to social media or stimuli associated with it (Reed, 2022). Addiction to social media is linked to detrimental mental health impacts, such as stress, anxiety, and depression, according to Ergün et al (2023). A disruption in the regular operation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and fluctuations in cortisol levels are also associated with anxiety. Studies have shown conflicting results about the correlation between anxiety and cortisol. Anxiety and cortisol levels have been linked in several studies of anxious children and adolescents. Through psychological anguish, there is a strong correlation between social media addiction and food addiction (Huang, 2023).

Digital Technology Use, Loneliness, and Well-Being

A risk factor for unfavourable mental and physical health outcomes is loneliness, defined as the experience of insufficient social ties that leads to unpleasant emotions (Goossens, 2018). Perceived loneliness among teenagers has been on the rise even before the epidemic (Xerxa, 2021). Teens who report feeling lonely also tend to report lower levels of happiness, and this trend is more pronounced in females than in boys (Twenge, 2019). According to specific research, DT usage significantly affects how lonely people feel (MacDonald & Schermer, 2021). Adolescents of all ages reported higher rates of loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was a significant drawback of the virus (Farell, 2023). Reducing social media use is associated with lower loneliness, according to an investigation among college students (Hunt, 2018), suggesting a direct relationship between DT use and loneliness. Some studies have shown that loneliness mediates the association between DT usage and well-being among college students (Gong, 2021), which is important for our investigation. A decrease in face-to-face social contact may have contributed to both increased DT use and loneliness, consistent with the firm conclusion that such interactions help guard against feelings of isolation (Pea, 2012).

A person experiences the unpleasant emotion of loneliness when their social requirements are unfulfilled by the number of connections they have developed (Perlman & Peplau, 1982). Research shows that among the most prevalent feelings experienced throughout adolescence is loneliness (Havighurst, 1956), which is not surprising given that developing social relationships is one of the most critical developmental tasks during this time (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009). Depression (Spithoven, 2017), stress (Yaacob, 2009), social anxiety (Baytemir & Yildiz, 2017), drug usage (Kayaoğlu, 2022) and technological addictions (Parashkouh, 2018) are all positively correlated with teenage loneliness, according to the research. When teens are lonely, they are more likely to get addicted to social media. When adolescents are unable to form meaningful connections, they often isolate themselves and experience feelings of loneliness (Qualter, 2015). When teenagers are lonely,

they seek solace in online communities where they may connect with others (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). Adolescents who experience feelings of isolation may begin to develop an addiction to social media, even if this may seem normal at first. Research has shown a correlation between teenage social media addiction and high rates of loneliness (Schwartz-Lifshitz, 2022). However, Brand et al.'s (2016) I-PACE model may provide light on the connection between social media addiction and loneliness. However, Brand et al.'s (2016) I-PACE model may provide light on the connection between social media addiction and loneliness. According to the I-PACE Model Brand et al.'s (2016), several factors, including people's minds, bodies, emotions, and social environments, contribute to problematic internet use. Anxiety, tension, sadness, shyness, and loneliness are some of the negative emotional states that people deal with by turning to the internet, according to the I-PACE model. Unfortunately, people's negative emotional states worsen with increased internet use, trapping them in a cycle in which they have to use the internet even more to cope with their feelings. Adolescence is a time when many people feel lonely (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009). A feeling of isolation among teenagers is associated with an increased risk of developing an addiction to social media (Allen, 2014). The I-PACE model suggests that teenagers who report higher levels of loneliness may be abusing social media as a coping mechanism. Adolescents may experience more loneliness and fewer social connections as a result of their heavy use of social media. Adolescents risk being trapped in a loop of using social media as a crutch to manage their emotions.

The Mediating Role of Positive Childhood Experiences and Self-Esteem

There has been a recent uptick in the recognition of PCEs as possible protective factors in the fight against PSMU. The benefits of PCEs for adult health, psychological resilience, and emotional reactions have been well documented (Bethell, 2014). Adverse childhood experiences: Assessing the impact on health and school engagement and the mitigating). They believe that PCEs may lessen the harmful impacts of social media and the risk of PSMU by encouraging psychological resilience (Öztekin, 2024). In addition, as a buffer against adverse effects like PSMU, PCEs are linked to fostering stable attachment, which improves people's ability to create and sustain social interactions (Zimmer-Gembeck, 2017). In addition to improving enjoyment and mitigating the adverse effects associated with social media addiction, PCEs contribute to general well-being (Demir, 2021). People may benefit significantly from learning about the connection between PSMU and PCEs, so they can learn to use digital platforms healthily and maintain their psychological resilience.

 Managing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and its symptoms, such as loneliness, requires a healthy dose of self-esteem. One piece of evidence is that those with a healthy sense of self-worth are better able to withstand the adverse effects of PSMU (Fatima & Bhatt, 2024). Having a good sense of self-worth is essential for minimising feelings of loneliness (Balcı, 2020) and increasing subjective well-being (Yildirim, 2019). It also makes it easier to form healthy connections with others. The importance of self-esteem in coping with the adverse social and psychological effects of social media cannot be overstated. Strategies to reduce PSMU and increase psychological well-being may be guided by an understanding of and emphasis on PCEs and self-esteem, which pave the way for more positive interactions with digital media.

Conclusion

There are serious consequences for one's emotional, social, and physical well-being as a result of an addiction to social media. It has been associated with a host of mental health issues, including heightened tension, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, and impaired focus. Because social media use worsens psychological suffering and hurts academic achievement, these problems are interconnected. Isolation, a decline in face-to-face social skills, and strained personal connections (especially within families) are social outcomes of excessive use, which also promote reliance on digital communication. In terms of the body, this addiction makes it hard to sleep, strains the eyes, and hinders mental clarity. More generalised health issues are exacerbated by its effects on hormone levels and dietary choices. While social media may improve communication and teamwork in the classroom, it also increases diversions and makes it harder to focus. Training in time management, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and computer literacy is part of the comprehensive intervention techniques necessary to tackle these difficulties. It is crucial to address psychological requirements and promote offline activities for healing. Holistic intervention programs that address mental, social, and physical health should be the goal of future studies. There is a need to improve educational programs that teach students digital literacy and resilience. Incorporating design elements that encourage digital wellness and inhibit addictive behaviours should be a priority for social media platforms. Standards for

appropriate use in the classroom and the workplace need to be set by public policy. To develop effective treatments, it is necessary to investigate the cultural factors that contribute to social media addiction. A more holistic approach to therapy may be informed by research on comorbid diseases and mindfulness treatments.

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