



SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

Social media addiction is a compulsive pattern of digital use that drains your time, harms daily functioning, and opposes positive mental health by lowering overall emotional well-being. Objectives of this study were to compare social media addiction and positive mental health in respect of gender, stream, and residence, and also correlate between social media addiction and positive mental health. The researchers were used a descriptive survey method for the study and the Social Media Addiction Scale-Student Form (SMAS-SF), which was developed by Sahin (2018), and Positive Mental Health Scale, which was developed by Lukat et al. (2016) used to collected data from 325 arts and science undergraduate students from government aided colleges under Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University. The findings revealed a significant difference in social media addiction in respect of gender, but no significant difference in respect of stream and residence among undergraduate students. The study also found that no significant difference in positive mental health in respect of gender, and residence, but significant difference in respect of stream among undergraduate students. Also, can be said that there is a significant relationship between social media addiction and positive mental health among undergraduate students. The study concluded that the growing significance of social media in the lives of undergraduate students and its association with positive mental health.

Keywords: *Social Media Addiction, Positive Mental Health, Emotional Well-Being, Descriptive Survey, Undergraduate Students*

Introduction

In the contemporary digital age, social media has become an integral part of daily life, especially among undergraduate (UG) students. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube have transformed the ways young people communicate, share information, entertain themselves, and maintain social relationships. In the last two decades, the use of social media has increased in the world, the addiction to it can affect mental health of the users (Zulfikar, et al., 2024). Young people are avid social media users and, as such, might be prone to mental health issues because of the comparison of the kind of life they see on social media (Onyeizu, et al., 2022). Social media addiction can lead to mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, emotional disorder, bipolar affective disorder, psychosis, and loss of concentration (Kapahi, et al., 2013). Most used social media platform increased level of social media addiction, and the relationship between social media addiction and mental health, in particular result is depression, anxiety, and loss of concentration (Kreya and Wok, 2000). According to the American Psychiatric Association, mental health issue is defined as the problem to function in the social aspect and it is related to the conditions involving changes in emotion, thinking, and/or behaviour of an individual. It is associated with depression, anxiety, and distress with problems functioning in social, work, or family activities. Mental health has been a global concern in recent years. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is defined as the state of well-being in which individuals realise their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and are able to contribute to their community. Positive mental health is an important aspect of human development and refers not merely to the absence of mental illness but also to the presence of psychological well-being, emotional stability, self-confidence, life satisfaction, resilience, and the ability to cope effectively with life's challenges.

Review of the Related Literature

In a longitudinal study, Liu et al. (2026) discovered that depression strongly predicted higher social media addiction in teenagers. Tang et al. (2026) investigated the relationship between social media and mental health changes among Generation Z in Batam, Indonesia and discovered that social anxiety and parasocial contact have a strong and favourable influence on YouTube

addiction. Cai et al. (2026) have studied on the impact of social media addiction on college students' mental health through social support and found that social media addiction is positively linked to mental health problems. Korkmaz and Şimşek (2026) have explored on social media addiction (SMA) in five major mental disorders and study indicated that SMA prevalence was highest in OCD and lowest in SSD.

Abbasi et al. (2025) observed a positive correlation between social media addiction and the mental health of students. Zhu et al. (2025) investigated the effects of smartphone addiction on mental health and its relationship to life satisfaction in the post-COVID-19 period and revealed that smartphone addiction was significantly positively correlated with negative emotions while negative emotions were significantly negatively correlated with life satisfaction. Yang et al. (2025) found that social media positive feedback was associated with adolescents' health risk behaviours both directly and indirectly through cognitive bias and negative emotions. Bhojak et al. (2025) demonstrated that excessive and unbalanced social media use, despite its role in encouraging connectivity, can have a negative impact on mental health. Giri and Shrestha (2025) discovered that while social media addiction does not directly affect life satisfaction, it does have a favourable indirect effect via self-esteem. Cemiloglu et al. (2025) found that while problematic social media use had no overall direct association with well-being, individual symptoms such as obsession, tolerance, and withdrawal were positively associated with reported well-being. Ahmed et al. (2025) explored that problematic social media use was strongly associated with higher levels of despair and anxiety over time. Meynadier et al. (2025) discovered that both positive and negative metacognitions about social media use strongly predict social media addiction. Mangoulia et al. (2025) found a link between problematic social media use and anxiety among both sexes and generations. Feng et al. (2025) explored a substantial positive relationship between social media addiction and both academic fatigue and mental health difficulties. Agyapong-Opoku et al. (2025) discovered that problematic use and passive consumption were most strongly associated with negative outcomes, whereas active use occasionally provided enhanced social support and reduced isolation.

Ansari et al. (2024) discovered that problematic social media use has a substantial negative relationship with both subjective and psychological well-being. Yam et al. (2024) discovered that psychological resilience partially mediates the relationship between loneliness and social media addiction. Karaman and Arslan (2024) identified social media addiction and phubbing act as mediators between basic psychological needs satisfaction and relationship satisfaction. Hatamleh and Aissani (2024) discovered that social media use and engagement are positively associated to well-being, but social media addiction is adversely related to subjective well-being. Shannon et al. (2024) found that problematic social media use at baseline was significantly negatively correlated with resilience while positively correlated with all other mental health outcomes.

Ergün et al. (2023) revealed that social media addiction was linked to lower mental health through internet addiction and phubbing. Beyari (2023) found that likes, comments, and follows were the most significant causes to poor mental health on social media. Wu et al. (2023) discovered that social media use has a positive direct effect on subjective well-being, and that internet addiction plays a suppressing role in the relationship between social media use and subjective well-being. Hammad and Awed (2023) found that 60.3% of students were addicted to social media, with significant disparities between addicts and non-addicts. Zhang et al. (2023) found that using social media indirectly enhances psychological and subjective well-being by increasing self-esteem and providing online social support. Luk et al. (2023) discovered that social media addiction strongly mediated the link between fear of COVID-19 and anxiety and depressed symptoms.

Lopes et al. (2022) discovered a strong and often bidirectional relationship between social media use and depression or anxiety. Kocabıyık and Bacıoğlu (2022) showed a link between emotion-oriented and unfunctional coping mechanisms and social media addiction. Mitropoulou et al. (2022) suggested that social media addiction was adversely associated with self-compassion and favourably associated with distress. The impact of social media use on psychological well-being has been studied by Ostić et al. (2021), and suggested that social media use had a favourable overall indirect influence on psychological well-being, mostly through bonding and bridging social capital. Gupta and Sharma (2021) revealed a substantial relationship between FoMO and a number of unfavourable consequences. It is associated with worse mental health, with higher levels of anxiety, depression and emotional discomfort. Brailovskaia et al. (2020) discovered that addicted Facebook use may increase the likelihood of suicide-related outcomes. Twenge and Campbell (2019) indicated that heavy digital media users were lower well-being, unhappiness, and mental health risks like depression, suicidal thoughts, and suicidal attempts.

Bányai et al. (2017) found that 4.5% of the adolescents belonged to the at-risk group and reported low self-esteem, high levels of depression symptoms, and elevated social media use. Primack et al. (2017) discovered that young adults with high SMU were more likely to report greater perceived social isolation. Levenson et al. (2017) found that SM use in the 30 minutes before bed is independently associated with disturbed sleep among young adults. Hawi and Samaha (2017) explored that, addictive use of social media had a negative association with self-esteem, and the latter had a positive association with satisfaction with life. Lin et al. (2016) revealed that SM use was significantly associated with increased depression. Kross et al. (2013) indicated that Facebook use predicts negative shifts on both of these variables over time.

Important research in this field includes those Block (2008); Kim et al. (2011); Hormes et al. (2014); Kar et al. (2014); Appel et al. (2015); Chatterjee et al. (2016); Mohanti et al. (2016); Andreassen et al. (2017); Fardouly et al. (2018); Mondal et al. (2018); Hunt et al. (2018); Glaser et al. (2018); Brailovskaia et al. (2020); Gayen and Sen (2021); Cheng et al. (2021); Kar and Saha (2021); Gorain et al. (2021); Sen et al. (2021a; 2021b); Ansary et al. (2022); Sutradhar and Sen (2022); Sutradhar et al. (2023); Cifti et al. (2023); Meng et al. (2023); Sen et al. (2023); Chaudhuri et al. (2023); Adhikari et al. (2023a; 2023b; 2023c); Gorain and Saha (2023a; 2023b); Mahato et al. (2023); Mahato et al. (2023); Mahato et al. (2023); Das and Mahato (2024); Mahato and Das (2024a; 2024b); Ansary and Khatun (2025); Ho et al. (2025); Jameel et al. (2025); Bauri and Mahato (2025); Karaman

et al. (2025); Das (2025a; 2025b); Sen et al. (2025); Orben et al. (2025); Mondal (2025); Roy and Mahato (2025); Patra and Mahato (2025); Sen and Saha (2026) etc.

Objectives of the study

- I. To compare the social media addiction between male and female undergraduate students.
- II. To compare the social media addiction between arts and science undergraduate students.
- III. To compare the social media addiction between rural and urban undergraduate students.
- IV. To compare the positive mental health between male and female undergraduate students.
- V. To compare the positive mental health between arts and science undergraduate students.
- VI. To compare the positive mental health between rural and urban undergraduate students.
- VII. To find out the relationship between social media addiction and positive mental health among undergraduate students.

Hypotheses of the study

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference in social media addiction between male and female undergraduate students.
H₀₂: There is no significant difference in social media addiction between arts and science undergraduate students.
H₀₃: There is no significant difference in social media addiction between rural and urban undergraduate students.
H₀₄: There is no significant difference in positive mental health between male and female undergraduate students.
H₀₅: There is no significant difference in positive mental health between arts and science undergraduate students.
H₀₆: There is no significant difference in positive mental health between rural and urban undergraduate students.
H₀₇: There is no significant relationship between social media addiction and positive mental health among undergraduate students.

Methodology

Method: Descriptive survey method was used for the study. This was a quantitative study conducted at Purulia district in West Bengal.

Population: All the undergraduate students of Purulia district of West Bengal studying in different colleges under the Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University considered as the population of the study.

Sample and Sampling Technique: 325 undergraduate arts and science students from government aided colleges under Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University were selected as the sample for this study. The study employed the stratified random sampling technique to conduct this study.

Tools Used: The researchers were used the Social Media Addiction Scale-Student Form (SMAS-SF), which was developed by Sahin (2018). It uses a 5-point Likert type scale with 29 items, and Positive Mental Health Scale, which was developed by Lukat et al. (2016). It uses a 4-point Likert type scale with 9 items.

Statistical Techniques: Descriptive statistics like mean, Std. Deviation, correlation and inferential statistics like the t-test were used in the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Results of 't'- test for social media addiction regarding gender of undergraduate students

Variables	N	M	Std. Deviation	df	't'	Remarks
Male	150	85.03	15.094	323	4.573	Significant at 0.05 level.
Female	175	77.54	14.389			

Hypothesis Testing 1: From Table 1, the mean scores for male and female undergraduate students are 85.03 and 77.54, respectively, while the Std. Deviation for male and female students is 15.094 and 14.389. At the 0.05 level, the t-test result of 4.573 with df of 323 is significant. A discernible difference between male and female undergraduate students is indicated by the calculated statistics. So, the null hypothesis, H₀₁: 'There is no significant difference in social media addiction between male and female undergraduate students' is failed to be accepted, this indicated that male and female undergraduate students differed significantly. Hence, a significant difference in social media addiction was observed between male and female undergraduate students.

Table 2: Results 't'- test for social media addiction regarding stream of undergraduate students

Variables	N	M	Std. Deviation	df	't'	Remarks
Arts	231	81.01	15.226	323	.028	Not significant at 0.05 level.
Science	94	80.96	15.092			

Hypothesis Testing 2: From Table 2, the mean scores for arts and science undergraduate students are 81.01 and 80.96, respectively, while the Std. Deviation for arts and science undergraduate students is 15.226 and 15.092, at the 0.05 level, the t-test result of .028 with df of 323 is not significant. No discernible difference between arts and science undergraduate students is indicated by the calculated statistics. So, the null hypothesis, H₀₂: 'There is no significant difference in social media addiction

between arts and science undergraduate students' is retained, this indicated that arts and science undergraduate students not differed significantly. Hence, no significant difference in social media addiction was observed between arts and science undergraduate students.

Table 3: Results 't'- test for social media addiction regarding residence of undergraduate students

Variables	N	M	Std. Deviation	df	't'	Remarks
Rural	268	81.12	14.920	323	.314	Not significant at 0.05 level.
Urban	57	80.42	16.391			

Hypothesis Testing 3: From Table 3, the mean scores for rural and urban undergraduate students are 81.12 and 80.42, respectively, while the Std. Deviation for rural and urban undergraduate students is 14.920 and 16.391. At the 0.05 level, the t-test result of .314 with df of 323 is not significant. No discernible difference between rural and urban undergraduate students is indicated by the calculated statistics. So, the null hypothesis, H_{03} : 'There is no significant difference in social media addiction between rural and urban undergraduate students' is retained, this indicated that rural and urban undergraduate students not differed significantly. Hence, no significant difference in social media addiction was observed between rural and urban undergraduate students.

Table 4: Results of 't'- test for positive mental health regarding gender of undergraduate students

Variables	N	M	Std. Deviation	df	't'	Remarks
Male	150	23.56	4.591	323	-1.889	Not significant at 0.05 level.
Female	175	24.51	4.446			

Hypothesis Testing 4: From Table 4, the mean scores for male and female students are 23.56 and 24.51, respectively, while the Std. Deviation for male and female students is 4.591 and 4.446. At the 0.05 level, the t-test result of -1.889 with df of 323 is not significant. No discernible difference between male and female undergraduate students is indicated by the calculated statistics. So, the null hypothesis, H_{04} : 'There is no significant difference in positive mental health between male and female undergraduate students' is retained, this indicated that male and female students not differed significantly. Hence, no significant difference in positive mental health was observed between male and female undergraduate students.

Table 5: Results 't'- test for positive mental health regarding stream of undergraduate students

Variables	N	M	Std. Deviation	df	't'	Remarks
Arts	231	24.26	4.491	323	1.179	Not significant at 0.05 level.
Science	94	23.61	4.622			

Hypothesis Testing 5: From Table 5, the mean scores for arts and science undergraduate students are 24.26 and 23.61, respectively, while the Std. Deviation for arts and science undergraduate students is 4.491 and 4.622, at the 0.05 level, the t-test result of 1.179 with df of 323 is not significant. No discernible difference between male and female undergraduate students is indicated by the calculated statistics. So, the null hypothesis, H_{05} : 'There is no significant difference in positive mental health between arts and science undergraduate students' is failed to be rejected, this indicated that male and female students not differed significantly. Hence, no significant difference in positive mental health was observed between arts and science undergraduate students.

Table 6: Results 't'- test for positive mental health regarding residence of undergraduate students

Variables	N	M	Std. Deviation	df	't'	Remarks
Rural	268	23.99	4.461	323	-.706	Not significant at 0.05 level.
Urban	57	24.46	4.874			

Hypothesis Testing 6: From Table 6, the mean scores for rural and urban undergraduate students are 23.99 and 24.46, respectively, while the Std. Deviation for rural and urban undergraduate students is 4.461 and 4.874. At the 0.05 level, the t-test result of -.706 with df of 323 is not significant. No discernible difference between rural and urban undergraduate students is indicated by the calculated statistics. So, the null hypothesis, H_{06} : 'There is no significant difference in positive mental health between rural and urban undergraduate students' is retained, this indicated that rural and urban students not differed significantly. Hence, no significant difference in positive mental health was observed between rural and urban undergraduate students.

Table 7: Correlations test between social media addiction and positive mental health.

Correlations				
			Social Media Addiction	Positive Mental Health
Pearson's rho	Social Media Addiction	Correlation Coefficient	1	-.489**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	325	325
	Positive Mental Health	Correlation Coefficient	-.489**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	325	325

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis Testing 7: From the table 7, shows that the obtained correlation coefficient value is, -.489, it significant at the 0.01 level of significance. Hence the hypothesis H_{07} : "There is no significant relationship between social media addiction and positive mental health among undergraduate students" is failed to be accepted. In other words, a significant relationship between social media addiction and positive mental health was found among undergraduate students.

Findings of the Study

- I. Higher social media addiction is exhibited by male undergraduate students than by female students; however, no significant difference in social media addiction is observed between male and female undergraduate students.
- II. Higher social media addiction is exhibited by arts undergraduate students than by science students; however, no significant difference in social media addiction is observed between Arts and Science undergraduate students.
- III. Higher social media addiction is exhibited by rural undergraduate students than by urban students; however, no significant difference in social media addiction is observed between rural and urban undergraduate students.
- IV. Higher positive mental health is exhibited by female undergraduate students than by male students; however, no significant difference in positive mental health is observed between male and female undergraduate students.
- V. Higher positive mental health is exhibited by arts undergraduate students than by science undergraduate students; however, no significant difference in positive mental health is observed between Arts and Science undergraduate students.
- VI. Higher positive mental health is exhibited by urban undergraduate students than by rural undergraduate students; however, no significant difference in social media addiction is observed between rural and urban undergraduate students.
- VII. A significant relationship between social media addiction and positive mental health is found among undergraduate students.

Educational Implications of the Study

The results of the present study have several important educational implications for students, teachers, educational institutions, counsellors, and policymakers. From the different results obtained through the analysis, it has been suggested that digital literacy programmes should be incorporated into the curriculum by educational institutions to help students develop responsible and balanced social media usage habits. Awareness regarding the benefits and risks associated with excessive social media use can be provided to students so that informed decisions can be made regarding their online activities. Since a significant relationship was found between social media addiction and positive mental health, mental health awareness programmes, workshops, and seminars should be organized by colleges and universities to educate students about the maintenance of psychological well-being in the digital age. Counselling services should be strengthened by educational institutions to identify students experiencing excessive social media addiction and to provide them with appropriate guidance and intervention. Through regular counselling sessions, stress can be managed, self-regulation can be improved, and positive mental health can be maintained among students. Wellness programmes, mindfulness activities, and life-skills training can be implemented by colleges to enhance emotional resilience, self-esteem, and positive mental health among undergraduate students. Teachers should be sensitized to recognize the signs of excessive social media use that may affect students' academic engagement, concentration, and overall well-being. Through early identification, timely support and appropriate intervention can be facilitated.

Conclusion

The present study was undertaken to examine the social media addiction and positive mental health among undergraduate students and to determine whether significant differences existed across gender, academic stream, and residential background. The study also explored the relationship between social media addiction and positive mental health. The findings revealed a significant difference in social media addiction between male and female undergraduate students, indicating that gender plays an important role in influencing patterns of social media use. However, there was no substantial difference in social media addiction between arts and scientific students and between rural and urban students. These results imply that the level of social media addiction among undergraduate students is not significantly affected by academic stream and residential origin. The results showed no substantial difference between male and female students, arts and science students and rural and urban students in positive mental health. Thus, positive mental health appears to be generally stable across demographic and educational groupings of undergraduate students. One of the primary findings of this study was that there is a substantial association between social media addiction and positive mental health among the undergraduate students. It implies that students' social media usage

patterns are related to their mental well-being and emphasizes the need to investigate the effect of online activities on mental health.

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