Influence of Social Media Use on Users' Emotional Health: An Exploratory Analysis

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Abstract

Social media is mostly being utilised more and more as a vital information source, especially during recent global crises like the Covid 19 epidemic. The proliferation of information gleaned from social media exposes individuals to risks to their mental well-being. The current study looks at the relationship between using social media and mental health, with a particular emphasis on the consequences of the pandemic on social media users' emotional well-being. According to the findings, social media users' emotional tension, rage, and anxiety would rise in response to an increase in false information, hate speech, and unconfirmed news.

Introduction:

Since information has become essential to modern culture, it is difficult to ignore it when using social media. It is now a necessary and indispensible part of daily life. In today's engaged society, people rely on the media to get and evaluate information relevant to their interests. In actuality, during a pandemic, individuals become more watchful and frantically look for information on the new corona virus; they need to know about its spread, advancements, and research. In addition to seeking for accurate information, those who utilise new media are often presented with false information, which is a concerning state of affairs at the moment. Users who have been exposed to this sensitive material are exhibiting strange behavioural patterns, which culminate in jingoistic expressions and hate speeches and fake news is of a great concern on social media than ever before.

According to an article in The Verge, the global quarantine orders have caused a rapid boom in the usage of Facebook and other social media interfaces, as well as a massive increase in the average amount of time spent looking at screens. Facebook and its affiliated social media platforms, including Instagram, Whatsapp, and Messenger, are doomed. The Facebook team has

acknowledged that the gain is only transitory, but they were surprised to see that usage of messaging services had increased by 50% over the previous year, and they recorded a record-breaking 700 million calls made on WhatsApp and Messenger.

Numerous study findings make it clear that individuals are using social media platforms more frequently than they used to. In addition to bringing people together from all over the world, social media has developed into a convenient way to get news about viral outbreaks, contamination incidents, and attack recovery. Users have succumbed to social media material, and social media exposure has resulted in major trends and problems that are drawing academics' and researchers' attention to this field of study.

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The use of social networking on mobile devices has skyrocketed. In addition to meeting people's information requirements, social media is making problematic contributions to society. On social media, hate speech, fake news, and jingoism have all become commonplace. Because of their worries in this field, academicians and researchers have written a large number of research papers on social media platforms to better understand the information systems, use patterns, and peer groups' use of social media. Social media is used for identification, communication, presence, connections, sharing, and reputation building. It is also used to create thinking groups and groups with similar experiences. It is applied outside of the mentioned framework.

The most recent information on how people use the internet, social media, mobile devices, and e-commerce worldwide can be found in Digital 2020's July Global Statshot Report. 83% of respondents said that, generally speaking, digital media helps them deal with COVID-19-related lockdowns, and 76% said that it aids in their children's education.

Users of social media, on any platform, spend an average of two hours and twenty-four minutes a day on social media. With 2,449 million users, Facebook is the most popular social media platform, followed by Whatsapp and YouTube. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a rise in

digital and internet activities. Streaming more films and television series is the most engaging activity, followed by using social media for longer than normal. Because social media is so engaging and persuasive, most academics are interested in studying how individuals utilise it in their lives.

An intriguing finding from the July 2020 Global Statshot Report on Digital 2020 is that the number of social media users has increased by more than 10.5%. 3.92 billion of the 3.96 billion active social media users access the platform using a mobile device, accounting for 99% of all users.

Concern about the mental well-being of social media users and the amount of time spent finding accurate information have increased along with the surge in activity throughout the crisis. It is important to pay attention to what is real and what is phoney. An average of 56% of persons who are at least 18 years old say they are concerned about the difference between false and authentic news in digital media.

The global village with residents of worldwide exposure is now feasible because to the world wide web, which has shortened physical distances between individuals and countries. Another troubling issue has arisen, even as the physical distance has vanished. False information and determining the reliability of the information supplied. A mass-produced and widely disseminated falsehood transforms into the actual reality, according to Umberto Eco, an Italian semiotician. Hyper-reality affects people, making it difficult for them to distinguish between reality and illusion.

Review of Literature:

Kristine de Valck examined the impact of social media networks since 1999 and discovered that they had a big influence on their users in a paper that was published at the HEC, Paris Business School. The primary focus of the study is on how social media and the internet are influencing behaviour. It highlights how "online communities of consumption represent highly diverse groups of consumers whose interests are not always aligned." In OCCs, social control attempts to efficiently handle issues brought on by this diversity. It makes it quite evident that there are differences throughout the online groups and that their requirements do not coincide. Control exercised by a society is aimed at resolving issues related to heterogeneity. In their book "Spreadable Media: Creating value and meaning in a networked culture," Joshua Green, Henry Jenkins, and Sam Ford describe how viewers participate in the quick transmission of news. An increase in Facebook usage Gurupreet Kaur asserts that social media platforms play a crucial role in disseminating information about COVID-19. further supported the dissemination of knowledge

about the safety measures to stop the spread of illnesses. Facebook is also directing public opinion towards basic necessities during pandemics, generating funds to stop the spread, and encouraging social media users to share videos and images linked to the disease at a rate that has never been seen before.

as stated in an India Today article written by Yasmin Ahmed. Globally, the usage of social media has surged as more individuals turn to the virtual social realm for comfort. Facebook Vice President of Engineering Jay Parikh and Vice President of Analytics Alex Schultz stated in an official blog that the company has seen a 50% rise in Facebook Messaging in the previous month in order to bolster this claim. On WhatsApp and Messenger, the number of voice and video calls has more than doubled. Italy, the nation most affected after China, has witnessed a 70% rise in the amount of time spent on Facebook. The number of views on Instagram and Facebook Live has increased over double.

Over the past month, there has been a 50% rise in texting and a 100% increase in group calling time. There has been a reported abrupt increase in the utilisation of group call time in Italy following February 2020. Facebook is assisting the international public health community in keeping its users informed and safe amid the corona virus crisis, according to Kang-Xing Jin, Head of Health at Facebook, in his blog post Connecting People with Authentic Information and Entertainment. Facebook connects individuals via facilitating crisis communication, giving access to relevant information, and assisting efforts to contain and treat the following.

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- Facebook is supporting its partner by providing with data and tools.

- Health organizations and their communication is supported by Facebook with free ads.

- Facebook is functional to the society during the covid crisis. Facebook and its apps are stable and reliable despite of increase in heavy use by netnography. The hackathon of Facebook has come up

with new products exclusively meant to serve the needs of its users during and post-lockdown. COVID-19 Information Center and Workplace or free are few to cite.

Facebook Promoting Emotional Health claims that Emotional Health is a function that is unique to Facebook and aids users in overcoming a range of mental health issues during pandemics. Facebook has collaborated with cutting-edge scientists to boost mental health studies. A working title for the programme, "Peace of Mind with Taraji," stars Golden Globe Award-winning actress Taraji P. Henson and Tracie Jade Jenkins. It was launched on Facebook as part of the initiative. Turning on the WHO Health Alert Chatbot on WhatsApp, distributing a new set of WHO stickers related to mental health via Messenger, and endorsing a crisis text line to help launch initiatives to assist those dealing with mental health issues.

Fighting disinformation: Vice President of Global Affairs and Communications Nick Clegg stated in a blog post that "Facebook is committed to combat COVID-19 misinformation across ours apps." In a blog post, Nick Clegg, a former deputy prime minister of the United Kingdom, stated that following the World Health Organization's (WHO) declaration of Covid-19 as a public health emergency, the Covid-19 Information Centre on Facebook, the WHO Health Alerts on Whatsapp, and the provision of millions of ad credits and an endless supply of free advertisements helped ensure that the appropriate information reached the right people at the right time. Facebook began using information for fact-checking in 2018 and, as of March 2020, had installed 55 fact-checking criteria in 45 languages to refute any erroneous statements that could lead to the physical harm.

Fact-checking program of Facebook check and rate all types of content pertaining to COVID -19 and vent the harmful and misleading texts from the feeds and restrict any such content to further spread.

It's interesting to interact with youngsters both during and after the global lockdown. An open community called "Zoom Memes for Self-Quaranteen" is set up specifically for teens to exchange amusing COVID-19-related memes. An essay by Mehreen Shafqat discusses using black comedy to release tension that has built up during lock-down. The group's material demonstrates the degree of self-deprecation and enticement to join the same league as others. Even though they impart humour in a light hearted manner, the memes reveal the underlying anxieties and motives of those who engage with them by like, commenting on, and spreading the humorous yet darkly humorous content.

Statement of the Problem: Does Social media usage affect users' emotional health?

The objective of the current research is to study the influence of misinformation overload over social media on the emotional health of its users.

Research Hypothesis:

1. Overloaded misinformation on social media and Emotional Stress and Nervousness of users are positively correlated.

2. Expose to Hateful Expressions and Emotional Stress are positively correlated.

3. Fake News pertaining and Emotional Stress of social media users are strongly associated.

4. Age and Anger of social media users are not associated.

Data Analysis:

The study's primary goal is to investigate the connection between users' emotional well-being and social media use. One of India's most populous southern states, Andhra Pradesh, is the location of the research. For the study, the Andhra Pradesh population is identified. Based on the W. G. Cochran sample size calculation (S=Z2 * p(1-p)/M2), a sample size of 385 is determined for this investigation with a 95% confidence level and a Z-Value of 1.960. The estimated margin of error and population proportion are 0.05 and 0.5, respectively. The period of data collection is January 2021–June 2021. Social media users between the ages of 15 and 55were the respondents for this research.

Results

1. Pearson Chi-Square analysis is used to examine the association between two categorical variables Covid-19 Information overload on social media and Emotional Stress and Nervousness. It was found that there a significant relationship at 5% significance level between Covid-19 Information overload on social media and Emotional Stress and Nervousness ($x2$ = 4.621a, df = 1, p = 0.032). Hence, we reject H1 and conclude that that there is significant relation between variables and thus an increase in the Covid-19 Information overload would lead to an increase in the emotional stress and nervousness of the social media user.

Table 1: Association between Information Overload and Emotional Stress
Chi-Square Tests

Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.621a	1	.032	
Continuity Correctionb	4.173	1	.041	
Likelihood Ratio	4.621	1	.032	
Fisher's Exact Test		.033	.021	
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.609	1	.032	
N of Valid Cases		385		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 63.94.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Pearson Chi-Square analysis is used to examine the association between two categorical variables Reading Hateful Expression and Emotional Stress during pandemic times. It was found that there a significant relationship at 5% significance level between Reading Hateful Expression and Emotional Stress ($x2 = 5.142$a, df = 1, p = 0.023). Hence, we reject $H2$ and conclude that that there is significant relation between variables and thus Reading Hateful Expressions related covid-19 will lead to an Emotional Stress and Nervousness in the social media users.

Table 2: Association between Reading Hateful Expression and Emotional Stress Chi-Square Tests

Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.142a	1	.023	
Continuity Correctionb	4.663	1	.031	
Likelihood Ratio	5.117	1	.024	
Fisher's Exact Test		.030	.016	
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.128	1	.024	

N of Valid Cases   385
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 56.52.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

3. Pearson Chi-Square analysis is used to examine the association between two categorical variables Fake News pertaining to Covid-19 and Emotional Stress and Nervousness of the social media users. It was found that there a significant relationship at 5% significance level between Exposure to Fake News and Emotional Stress ($x2 = 12.873_a$, df = 1, p = <.001). Hence, we reject H3 and conclude that there is significant relation between variables and thus reading fake news related Covid-19 will result an emotional stress and nervousness in the social media users.

Table 3: Association between Fake News and Emotional Stress

Chi-Square Tests

Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.873a	1	<.001	
Continuity Correction$_b$	12.113	1	<.001	
Likelihood Ratio	13.105	1	<.001	
Fisher's Exact Test	<.001		<.001	
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.839	1	<.001	
N of Valid Cases	385			

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 59.70.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

4. Pearson Chi-Square analysis is used to examine the association between two categorical variables Age and Anger during pandemic times. It was found that there is insignificant relationship at 5% significance level between Exposure to Age and Anger ($x2 = .718_a$, df = 3, p = 0.869). Hence, we support H3 and conclude that there is no significant relation between the variables Age and Anger during pandemic times.

Table 4: Association between Age and Anger

Chi-Square Tests

Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)

Pearson Chi-Square	.718a	3	.869
Likelihood Ratio	.718	3	.869
Linear-by-Linear Association	.122	1	.727
N of Valid Cases		385	

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.96.

Discussion:

The results of the present study on social media and emotional health of its users revealed that there is an overload of information during recent times on social media and is associated with the emotional stress and nervousness of the social media users. Out of 385 subjects for the study 53% of the subjects have reported that there is an overload of News and Information on social media while 64.7% of the subjects have suffered emotional stress and nervousness while reading updates on social media. 58.4% of the total respondents have reported that they read Hateful Expression. Results from the study state that there is an association between Hateful Expression and Emotional Stress and nervousness of users. Fake news is one of the prevalent issues that digital natives are suffering from today and it is read from the study that there is an association between Fake News and Emotional Stress and Nervousness of users. Age and Anger from the study are found to be insignificantly related. The Pearson Chi-Square analysis is used to identify the relation between key variables of study. Descriptive frequencies are put in use to better understand the subject's response in percentages and the same is presented.

Further Research:

A further research on social media impact on cognitive development of users is recommended to gain more insights into the relationship between social media and emotional health of users. Knowledge gained from studying the relationship between social media and Impact on Emotional Health of its Users would help in effective social media management for the Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication in the days to come.

Conclusion:

People's emotional health is extremely important in all situations. People's emotional well-being must be safeguarded during times of crisis and emergency from a variety of sources that might lead to concerning circumstances in any given culture. The results of this study indicate that social media use and emotional well-being are related. It is advisable to read postings on social media more carefully and to carefully assess the sources of information when exposed to an abundance of false information. It is strongly advised that hate speech and bogus news be avoided when reading material. Emotional health of an individual is to be taken care at all levels by encouraging an individual to be optimistic and following the prescribed measures strictly from time to time and to be aware of information which causes stress, in order to ignore such information. An individual's emotional well-being should be attended to on all fronts, including promoting positivity, firmly adhering to periodic recommended measures, and being aware of stressful information so that it is ignored.

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