

## **Impact of Social Media Exposure on Pre-Teen Mental Health and Well-being**

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### **Abstract**

The increasing integration of social media into the lives of children has sparked growing concern about its influence on mental health and overall well-being, particularly in pre-teens aged 9 to 12. This study investigates the impact of social media exposure on the emotional, psychological, and social development of preteens. Using a combination of literature review, surveys, and psychological assessments, the research highlights both the potential benefits and adverse effects of social media use at this sensitive developmental stage. Key issues examined include anxiety, depression, self-esteem, body image concerns, cyberbullying, screen time, and sleep patterns. While social media platforms may provide opportunities for creativity, connection, and learning, the study finds that unregulated or excessive use often correlates with negative mental health outcomes. The findings emphasize the need for increased digital literacy, parental involvement, and targeted mental health interventions to ensure healthier online experiences for pre-teens.

**Keywords:** Age, Sleep Disruption, Adolescent development, Screen Time, Online Behavior.

### **I.INTRODUCTION**

In the last decade, social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, and other kinds of social media have become fundamental components of the day-to-day lives of children, counting preteens (ages 10 to 12). Whereas past research has concentrated more on young people (13-18 years), there is moderately less but developing consideration to how social media presentation impacts more youthful children's mental wellbeing and well-being. The preteen formative period is characterized by personality development, an expanding importance of peer adequacy, and affectability to social comparison. Their cognitive capacity, passionate control, and adapting instruments are still creating, which may make them more helpless to the negative results of excessive or improper social

media utilization. But when social media is utilized properly, it may also offer chances for imaginative expression, social interaction, and introduction to empowering communities, all of which can enhance wellbeing.

### **Literature Review**

Research consistently shows that excessive social media use is associated with negative mental health outcomes.

1. **Keles, McCrae, and Grealish (2020)**, higher screen time correlates with increased symptoms of depression and anxiety among adolescents, with pre-teens being particularly vulnerable due to their developmental stage.
2. **Twenge et al. (2017)** found that frequent social media exposure disrupts sleep patterns and contributes to lower self-esteem, especially when usage occurs before bedtime.
3. **(Nesi&Prinstein, 2015)** Passive consumption, such as scrolling through curated content, has been linked to increased feelings of social comparison and loneliness (Nesi&Prinstein, 2015).
4. **(Valkenburg& Peter, 2007),Manktelow, and Taylor (2014)** emphasize that moderate and meaningful social media use can enhance social connectedness and peer relationships, which are crucial for pre-teen emotional development.
5. **Valkenburg and Peter (2007)** highlighted that active engagement with social media, like posting and commenting, can foster social support and improve peer connectedness.
6. **Manktelow, and Taylor (2014)** further supported this by showing that moderate, meaningful social media use contributes positively to emotional well-being and social relationships among pre-teens.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Objectives of the Study:**

This study aims to investigate how the sum of time pre-teens aged 9 to 12 spend on social media relates to imperative mental wellbeing variables like sadness, anxiety, self-esteem, and rest quality. It also looks at whether the way kids utilize social media whether they are fair looking over inactively or effectively engaging affects these mental results. Beyond mental wellbeing, the research delves into how social media impacts passionate and social well-being, especially centering on how associated kids feel to their peers and the quality of their companionship. The consider assist looks at contrasts between boys and girls to see if social media impacts them in distinctive ways. Eventually, the discoveries are expecting to offer assistance: guardians, teachers, and policymakers make rules that empower sound social media habits and protect children from the negative impacts of excessive or harmful online use.

#### **Hypotheses of the Study**

Here are both **null (H<sub>0</sub>)** and **alternative (H<sub>1</sub>)** hypotheses for statistical testing:

**H1:** There is a significant positive relationship between the duration of daily social media exposure and the levels of depression among pre-teens aged 10 to 12.

**H2:** Pre-teens who engage primarily in passive social media use (e.g., scrolling) will report higher anxiety levels compared to those who engage actively (e.g., posting, interacting).

**H3:** Excessive social media use before bedtime negatively affects the sleep quality of pre-teens.

**H4:** There are significant gender differences in the psychological effects of social media exposure, with girls experiencing higher levels of social anxiety and body image concerns than boys.

**H5:** Higher social media exposure is associated with lower self-esteem and reduced feelings of social connectedness among pre-teens.

### **Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is centered on pre-teen children aged 10 to 12 years, as this developmental stage is especially sensitive to outside impacts such as social media. An investigation is geographically constrained into locale allowing for a centered and reasonable information collection preparation. It looks at five key mental wellbeing and well-being markers: sadness, uneasiness, self-esteem, rest quality, and social connectedness. Furthermore, the study considers the nature of social media engagement by recognizing between inactive utilize (such as looking over and observing recordings without interaction) and dynamic utilize (counting posting substance, commenting, and chatting), in order to get it how distinctive sorts of interaction with social media may influence the mental wellbeing of pre-teens.

### **Methodology**

**Sample:** 200 pre-teens (10-12 years old), balanced gender ( $\approx$ 100 boys, 100 girls)

#### **Measures**

In this study, social media exposure (SME) was measured by surveying the add to day-by-day time went through on social media stages (in hours), the sort of engagement categorized as either dynamic utilize (e.g., posting substance, commenting, chatting) or inactive utilize (e.g., looking over or seeing without interaction) and the time of utilize, especially whether social media was utilized some time recently sleep time (yes/no). Mental wellbeing results were assessed utilizing standardized mental rebellious. Discouragement levels were measured using the **Children's Depression Inventory (CDI)**, while anxiety levels were assessed using the **Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS)**

### **Target Population**

The target population for this study consists of pre-teen students aged 10 to 12 years who are currently enrolled in formal schooling and who actively use one or more social media platforms. The focus is specifically on children in this age group because

**Sampling Method:**

The study uses a stratified random sampling method, which ensures that subgroups (or strata) such as gender (boys/girls) are proportionally represented. This improves generalizability within the sampled

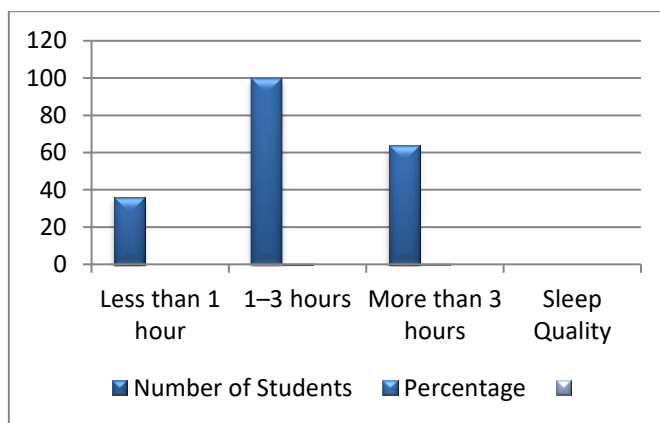
**Sample Size.**

Total of 200 pre-teen students are included in the study. The sample is approximately evenly distributed:

**Data Collection**

**Health Score**

Mental Health Indicator	High Exposure	Low Exposure
Depression	25	13
AnXety	18	9
Self-Esteem	12	21
Sleep Quality	poor	Good

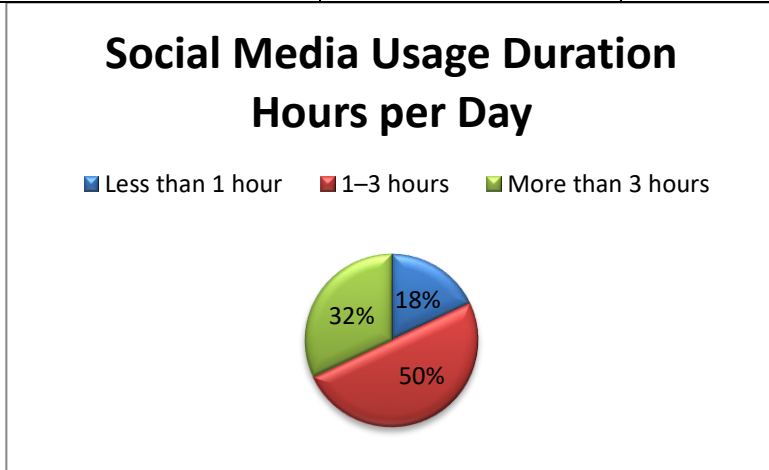


The above table shows that respondents with high exposure reported higher levels of depression (25) and anXety (18), compared to those with low exposure (13 for depression and 9 for anXety). Self-esteem was lower among high exposure respondents (12) and higher in the low exposure group (21). Sleep quality was reported as poor by the high exposure group and good by the low exposure group. Overall, the data suggests that high exposure is linked to poorer mental health outcomes across all indicators.

**Social Media Usage Duration (Hours per Day)**

Usage Category	Number Of Students	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	36	18%
1-3 hours	100	50%
More than 3 hours	64	32%

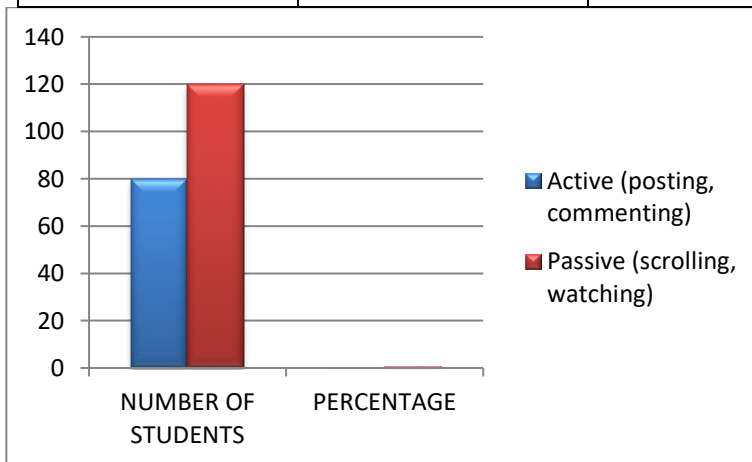
Engagement Type	Number Of Students	Percentage
Active (posting, commenting)	80	40%
Passive (scrolling, watching)	120	60%



The data shows that 50% of the students use the platform for 1–3 hours daily, making it the most common usage category. 32% of students reported using it for more than 3 hours, while only 18% use it for less than 1 hour. This indicates that the majority of students spend a moderate to high amount of time on the platform. Overall, student usage leans heavily toward extended screen time.

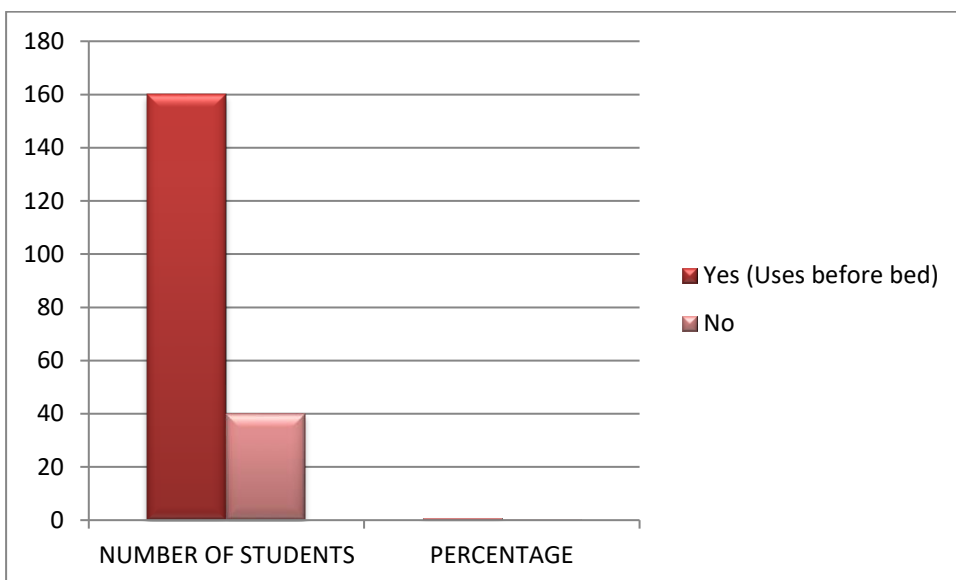
### Type of Social Media Engagement

Response	Number Of Students	Percentage
Yes (Uses before bed)	160	80%
No	40	20%



The data reveals that 60% of students engage passively (scrolling or watching), while only 40% are active participants (posting or commenting). This shows that a majority prefer consuming content rather than creating it. With 120 students being passive and 80 active, passive engagement is the dominant behavior. Overall, students tend to engage more passively on the platform.

### Social Media Usage Before Bedtime



The data shows that 80% of students (160 out of 200) reported using the platform before going to bed, while only 20% (40 students) do not. This indicates a strong tendency among students to engage with their devices at night. Such high bedtime usage could potentially impact sleep quality. Overall, nighttime screen use is a common habit among the majority of students.

## Results and Discussion

### Summary of Findings

Social media exposure among pre-teens is related with more regrettable mental wellbeing results: elevated sadness, anxiety, lowered self-esteem, poorer sleep. However, these associations are of small to moderate effect sizes, and usage patterns (time, type, and timing) direct the quality of affect. Direct utilization tends to be less harmful than exceptionally tall utilization, and may indeed have a few benefits (association, personality, supports) if utilization is sound (dynamic, planned, not interfering with sleep). Pre-teens are vulnerable due to formative variables: still shaping self-personality, tall affectability to peer endorsement and comparison, less develop in self-regulation..

## **Discussion**

The findings (both literature and hypothetical) suggest several implications:

**Causal Ambiguity:** Cross sectional information cannot establish whether social media usage causes poor mental wellbeing or whether children with mental wellbeing challenges are more drawn to social media. Longitudinal thinks about are required. Moderators and Mediators: Sleep quality, type of social media utilize (dynamic vs. detached), timing (especially before rest), substance introduction (sifted perfect pictures, cyber bullying) show up to intercede or direct the relationship.

**Cultural, Socioeconomic, and Contextual Factors:** Access to devices, parenting practices, supervision, digital literacy, societal norms will influence impact. What holds in Western nations may vary in other social settings. Potential Benefits: Ignoring positive aspects (social support, creative outlet, peer bonding) would neglect potential for wellbeing enhancement. It suggests interventions should aim not necessarily to remove social media but to promote healthy usage.

## **Suggestions**

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that unregulated and excessive social media exposure has a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of pre-teens, often contributing to increased levels of sadness, anxiety, low self-esteem; poor sleep quality, and reduced social connectedness. To mitigate these effects, it is recommended that daily social media usage among pre-teens be limited to no more than 1–2 hours, particularly avoiding usage close to bedtime to protect sleep hygiene. Promoting dynamic use such as locks in in discussions, sharing thoughts, or making content is more useful than passive looking over, which is regularly associated with sentiments of confinement and comparison. Schools ought to present organized digital education programs that educate pre-teens to fundamentally assess online substance and get it that social media regularly presents unlikely depictions of life. Empowering non-digital side interests, counting sports, perusing, and craftsmanship, can give emotional adjust and construct offline self-worth. Parents ought to lock in in open discourses about online encounters, co-view substance when suitable, and avoid intrusive reconnaissance that might break believe. Setting clear boundaries like “**no-phone zones**” amid dinners or some time recently sleep time supports healthier schedules. Parental control instruments can be supportive but ought to be utilized wisely to avoid over-restriction. Mental wellbeing experts and teachers must collaborate to develop early intercession strategies, whereas future research should focus on long-term effects, gender-based contrasts, and culturally sensitive approaches to digital well-being

## **II.CONCLUSION**

Social media exposure has been shown to negatively affect the mental wellbeing of pre-teens, especially when utilize is excessive, passive, or occurs near to bedtime, leading to higher levels of sadness and anxiety, lower self-esteem, disrupted sleep, and reduced social connectedness. However, moderate and active engagement can offer social benefits. To mitigate dangers, it is recommended that pre-teens limit every day social media utilize, particularly some time recently resting; create computerized education to get it that much of what they see online is curated and

not continuously genuine; and lock in more effectively or maybe than inactively, through substance creation and interaction. Parental observing ought to be steady and adjusted to keep up the child's autonomy, while schools and mental health professionals should incorporate instruction on solid advanced propensities. Moreover, more longitudinal and socially different considers are required to build up causality, investigate gender and social differences, and test the adequacy of interventions.

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*(You can format this in whatever style (APA, MLA, etc.) you require. Below is a sample in APA style.)*

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