

# The Impact of Social Media Addiction on Adolescent Mental Health: A Systematic Literature Review

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**Abstract.** Social media addiction has become a widespread phenomenon among adolescents, raising concerns about its impact on mental health. This study systematically reviews existing literature on the relationship between social media addiction and adolescent mental health. Using databases such as Taylor & Francis and ScienceDirect, relevant studies were identified, assessed, and synthesized. The results indicate that social media addiction is closely associated with mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Adolescents with excessive social media use also face increased risks of sleep disorders and deteriorating interpersonal relationships. These findings highlight the need for early intervention and educational programs to mitigate these negative effects. While social media offers benefits like connectivity and information access, its excessive use can seriously harm adolescent mental health. A multidisciplinary approach involving families, schools, and policymakers is essential to create a healthier digital environment. This should include education on responsible social media use, parental supervision, and psychological support for affected adolescents.

**Key words:** social media addiction, mental health, and adolescents

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## INTRODUCTION

In the current digital era, social media has become an integral part of daily life, especially for teenagers. While social media offers numerous benefits, such as facilitating communication, sharing information, and building social connections, there is an increasing concern about its detrimental effects on mental health due to excessive use. Social media addiction, now a common phenomenon among teenagers, not only consumes their time and diminishes productivity but also poses significant risks to their mental well-being. Research has consistently shown a strong correlation between social media addiction and mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Furthermore, overuse of social media is associated with sleep disturbances and a decline in the quality of interpersonal relationships.

To tackle these pressing concerns, this systematic literature review aims to evaluate and synthesize findings from various studies examining the relationship between social media addiction and adolescent mental health. By reviewing research published in reputable databases such as Taylor & Francis and ScienceDirect, and using specific keywords like "social media addiction," "mental health," and "adolescents," this review endeavors to offer a comprehensive understanding of the adverse impacts of social media addiction on teenagers' mental health. Additionally, this review underscores the importance of early intervention and educational programs to mitigate these harmful effects.

This review will explore a multidisciplinary approach that involves families, schools, and policymakers in creating a healthier digital environment for teenagers. Key strategies include educating teens on the responsible use of social media, ensuring parental supervision, and providing psychological support for those exhibiting signs of addiction. By implementing these strategies, it is hoped that the negative impacts on mental health can be significantly reduced, enabling teenagers to thrive both mentally and emotionally in the digital age.

In preparing the background for this research, it is crucial to identify and address existing research gaps with references from academic journals. The background should be streamlined to emphasize the significance of the research, its objectives, and its potential contributions to society. This focus will reinforce the importance of understanding and addressing the impact of social media addiction on adolescent mental health.

## METHODS

This study employs the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, a systematic approach to identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant research findings related to a specific research question or topic. The goal of this method is to provide a comprehensive and structured overview of the impact of social media addiction on adolescent mental health.

**Table 1: inclusion and exclusion criteria**

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
<b>Publication Date</b>	Studies published within the last 5 years (2019-2024)	Studies published before 2019
<b>Language</b>	Studies written in English	Studies written in languages other than English
<b>Population</b>	Adolescents (ages 10-19) as the main subjects	Studies that do not focus on adolescents
<b>Topic</b>	Studies examining the relationship between social media addiction and adolescent mental health	Studies that only mention social media or mental health in general
<b>Study Type</b>	Empirical studies (qualitative/quantitative) with a clear research design	Theoretical studies or literature reviews without new empirical data
<b>Accessibility</b>	Studies with accessible full text	Studies without full text access (e.g., abstract only)

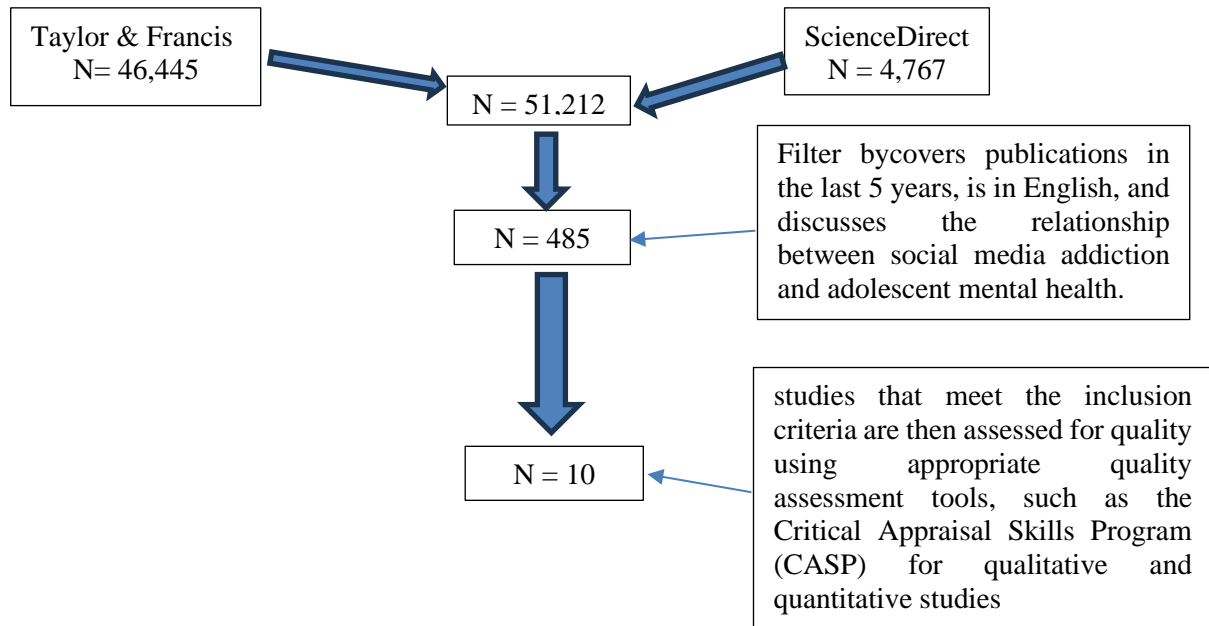
The literature search process for this study commenced with a comprehensive identification of relevant research using major scientific databases, namely Taylor & Francis and ScienceDirect. These databases were selected for their extensive repository of high-quality publications across a broad spectrum of academic disciplines. The search strategy utilized a carefully chosen combination of keywords, including "social media addiction," "mental health," and "adolescents." This targeted approach aimed to unearth studies that explore various facets of the impact of social media addiction on adolescent mental health.

After the initial search, the identified studies underwent a rigorous screening process according to predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The preliminary screening involved examining titles and abstracts to assess their relevance to the research question and ensuring they were published within the past five years. This time frame was chosen to ensure the information is current and relevant. Studies that passed this initial filter were then subjected to a full-text review to confirm they met the inclusion criteria: being written in English, focusing specifically on adolescents, and providing empirical data on the effects of social media addiction on mental health. Studies not meeting these criteria were excluded to maintain the quality and relevance of the data included in the review.

To ensure methodological rigor, each study was evaluated using quality appraisal tools, such as the Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP). This tool is vital for assessing various aspects of research quality, including the design, data collection methods, analysis procedures, and the validity of the findings. Only studies demonstrating high methodological quality were retained for further analysis.

The data extraction phase involved systematically collecting essential information from each study, including research objectives, methodology, results, and conclusions. This information was meticulously recorded in a worksheet and then analyzed thematically. Thematic synthesis involved categorizing the extracted data into relevant themes, such as the impact of social media addiction on depression, anxiety, self-esteem, sleep disturbances, and interpersonal relationships. This method allowed for a thorough understanding of how social media addiction affects different aspects of adolescent mental health, identified gaps in current research, and provided actionable recommendations for future studies.

By adhering to these detailed steps, the study aimed to deliver a clear and comprehensive picture of the effects of social media addiction on adolescent mental health. This approach not only contributed valuable insights to the field but also guided future research efforts, providing a solid foundation for addressing the negative impacts of social media on adolescent well-being.



**Figure 1. Flow diagram related to the systematic literature review steps**

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table: Summary of Studies on Problematic Social Media Use and Mental Health**

No	Title/Author	Objective	Types of Research	Method	Subject	Results
1	<b>Problematic Instagram Use: The Role of Perceived Feeling of Presence and Escapism (2019)</b>	Examine the relationship between psychological factors and unhealthy Instagram usage.	Quantitative	Cross-sectional	Teenagers	Positive correlation between perceived presence, escapism, and problematic Instagram use. Escapism strengthens the relationship between presence and problematic use.
2	<b>Problematic Social Media Use and Mental Health (2021)</b>	Measure unhealthy social media use and its relationship with psychological disorders in Lebanese adolescents.	Quantitative	Cross-sectional	Teenagers	55.5% showed unhealthy use. Positive correlation with depression, anxiety, and insomnia; stress partially mediates these relationships.
3	<b>Psychometric Testing of Three Chinese Online-Related Addictive Behavior Instruments (2019)</b>	Evaluate the validity of addiction measurement tools in the Chinese cultural context.	Quantitative	Instrument Validation	Teenagers	All three instruments demonstrated high reliability and validity for measuring online-related addictive behaviors.
4	<b>Addicted to Facebook? Relationship Between Facebook Addiction Disorder and Narcissism (2019)</b>	Uncover dynamics between Facebook use, narcissism, and addiction.	Quantitative	Cross-sectional	Teenagers	Positive correlation between Facebook usage duration, narcissism, and addiction. Narcissism moderates the relationship between usage duration and addiction.
5	<b>Social Comparison, Envy, and Depression on Facebook (2020)</b>	Examine the impact of social comparison on envy and depression among Facebook users.	Quantitative	Instrument Development	Teenagers	Higher social comparison linked to increased envy and depressive symptoms. Envy mediates the relationship between social comparison and depression.
6	<b>Is Social Network Site Usage Related to Depression? (2019)</b>	Meta-analysis of the relationship between Facebook use and depression.	Quantitative	Meta-analysis	Teenagers	Small but significant positive relationship between Facebook use and depression. Various factors moderate this relationship.

7	<b>FoMO and Social Media's Impact on Work Productivity (2020)</b>	Explore the relationship between FoMO, social media use, and work productivity.	Quantitative	Online Questionnaire	Teenagers	High FoMO correlates with intensive social media use, leading to reduced work productivity. Problematic use mediates the relationship between FoMO and negative outcomes.
8	<b>Depressed Adolescents' Positive and Negative Use of Social Media (2020)</b>	Investigate patterns of social media use among depressed adolescents.	Qualitative	Interviews	Teenagers	Social media offers emotional support and creative outlets but also exacerbates depressive symptoms through social comparison and exposure to negative content.
9	<b>Problematic Online Behaviors Among Adolescents (2019)</b>	Examine the relationship between cyberbullying, social media use, and psychosocial factors.	Quantitative	Online Questionnaire	Teenagers	Positive correlation between cyberbullying and problematic social media use. Psychosocial factors like low empathy and self-esteem contribute to these behaviors.
10	<b>Problematic Social Networking Site Use and Health Outcomes (2019)</b>	Examine the relationship between problematic social media use and various health aspects.	Quantitative	Online Questionnaire	Teenagers	Problematic use linked to poor sleep quality, ADHD symptoms, depression, anxiety, and stress.

## DISCUSSION

This discussion can focus on synthesizing the existing findings, comparing them with the existing literature, and exploring broader implications. Across various studies, there is a recurring theme indicating that social media use is associated with negative impacts on mental health, such as depression, anxiety, and sleep disorders. Psychological factors such as the feeling of presence, escapism, and narcissism exacerbate these negative effects. This suggests that intense social media use can impact users' mental well-being, particularly among individuals with certain psychological vulnerabilities.

Additionally, several studies emphasize the importance of psychosocial factors such as self-esteem, empathy, and social comparison in moderating the impact of social media on mental health. For instance, individuals with low empathy or low self-esteem tend to be more vulnerable to problematic social media use, which may contribute to negative behaviors such as cyberbullying. This indicates that interventions targeting these psychosocial factors could play a crucial role in mitigating the negative effects of social media.

The implications of these findings suggest the need for targeted interventions to address these psychosocial factors and promote healthier social media usage habits. For example, better education on responsible social media use, along with support to enhance self-esteem and empathy, could help reduce the negative impacts of social media use. This also highlights the importance of a more holistic approach to addressing this issue, considering the various psychological and social factors involved.

These studies make significant contributions to the growing body of knowledge on digital well-being, offering insights that can influence policy, education, and therapeutic approaches to reduce the negative impact of social media use on mental health. Thus, this research not only enhances our understanding of how social media affects mental health but also offers practical guidance for developing more effective interventions in this context.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the systematic review conducted, numerous studies have demonstrated that excessive use of social media can significantly harm teenagers' mental health. Adolescents addicted to social media frequently experience issues such as prolonged sadness (depression), excessive anxiety, sleep disturbances (insomnia), and difficulty concentrating (ADHD). Additionally, they often struggle with feelings of jealousy, reduced productivity, and dissatisfaction with their lives. Without early intervention, these challenges can severely disrupt the natural developmental processes of adolescence—a critical phase marked by heightened curiosity, intense desires, and the exploration of new interests. Adolescents who are addicted to social media are more likely to engage in negative social comparisons, experience envy, and suffer from decreased productivity and quality of life. Psychosocial factors, such as narcissism, low empathy, and lack of social support, exacerbate the risk of social media addiction. To address this issue, it is crucial for teachers and parents to educate teenagers about the dangers of excessive social media use, guiding them in managing their screen time and selecting appropriate content. Providing emotional support and teaching self-regulation and empathy are also essential. Schools should implement policies regulating social media use and offer programs, such as individual counseling or group guidance, to assist addicted students. To mitigate the adverse effects of social media addiction on teenagers, comprehensive education, support systems, and clear usage guidelines are imperative. Future research should explore strategies to reduce the impact of social media addiction among adolescents.

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