The Dual Impact of Social Media on Mental Well-being & Conflict Management: A Survey-Based Analysis

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Abstract- This survey-based study examines the complex relationship between social media, online conflict, and mental health. The survey showed 83.7% of the population is on the two most widely used platforms daily, Instagram (72.7%) and WhatsApp (50.9%). Forty-four point five per cent reported subjective mental fatigue as "occasionally" or more. Indeed, 47.3% of the sample were comparing themselves online, 32.2% were arguing online frequently, and 50.9% were making a digital detox for their mental health. What's even more surprising is that with trolling and all, 69.1 percent of people said that social media overall had a positive influence. The report even warns people to be careful about how they use social media, as it could become an unpleasant way to communicate with others.

Indexed Terms- Social media, mental health, online conflict, digital detox, well-being.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media's ubiquity reshapes human interaction, yet its psychological consequences remain contested. While platforms foster connectivity, emerging studies associate prolonged use with anxiety, social comparison, and conflict exposure [1, 2]. This "double-edged" dynamic necessitates granular analysis of user experiences. Our survey-based study addresses this gap by investigating:

1. Usage patterns and platform preferences,
2. Mental exhaustion triggers,
3. Conflict exposure and response behaviors,
4. Mitigation strategies like digital detoxes.
We contextualize these elements within broader mental well-being outcomes.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Survey Design
A 10-question digital survey collected anonymized data from 55 participants (aged 18–44 predominantly). Questions covered:
1. Platform usage frequency,
2. Daily time investment,
3. Mental exhaustion levels,
4. Social comparison habits,
5. Online conflict experiences,
6. Response tactics to disagreements,
7. Digital detox history,
8. Perceived mental health impact.

B. Analysis
Descriptive statistics (percentages) quantified responses. Open-ended feedback supplemented quantitative data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Usage Patterns (Fig. 1)
- Platform Dominance: Instagram (72.7%) and WhatsApp (50.9%) led, reflecting visual/text-based engagement preferences.
- Time Investment: 83.7% spent >2 hours daily; 36.4% exceeded 4 hours, indicating high immersion.

B. Mental Health Correlates
- Exhaustion/Anxiety: 44.5% reported these feelings "sometimes" to "always."
- Social Comparison: 47.3% compared their lives to others "very often" or "sometimes," aligning with the "highlight reel" effect [3].

C. Conflict Exposure & Management
- ConflictPrevalence:32.2%witnessed/experienced conflicts "many" or "a few times."

- Responses: 29.1% ignored disagreements; 24.5% responded politely. Blocking/reporting (9.1%) and emotional reactions (9.1%) were less frequent.

D. Digital Detox & Overall Impact
- Detox Adoption: 50.9% took breaks for mental health, underscoring self-awareness of negative impacts.
- Net Positivity: Despite challenges, 69.1% perceived overall "positive" effects, revealing social media's value as a net emotional resource.

E. Paradox Resolution
The coexistence of mental exhaustion and net positivity suggests:
1. Benefits outweigh costs for most users (e.g., community support, information access).
2. Adaptive strategies (e.g., ignoring conflicts, detoxing) buffer harm.

CONCLUSION

Social media functions as a dual force: fostering connections yet triggering exhaustion through comparison and conflict. Users' self-regulated practices (selective engagement, detoxes) mitigate risks, explaining the net positive sentiment. Future work should explore demographic nuances and platform-specific interventions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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