Research Paper

Impact of Social Media on Anxiety and Eating Disorders

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ABSTRACT

The impact of social media on anxiety and eating disorders is a complex issue with various contributing factors. This systematic review analysis examines the relationship between social media and mental health conditions related to anxiety and eating disorders, highlighting the influence of unrealistic body standards, cyberbullying, addiction, and the amplification of negative emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also attempts to give solutions and identify the causal factors of anxiety and body dysmorphia due to social media use especially in teenagers and young adults.

Keywords: *Anxiety, Body dysmorphia, Adolescents, Social media, Addiction*

The impact of social media on anxiety and eating disorders is a significant concern in today's society. Anxiety is a future-oriented, long-acting response characterized by persistent worrying and can lead to distress in personal, social, and occupational areas. Eating disorders encompass atypical eating patterns that pose risks to one's physical and emotional well-being. The "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders" (DSM-5) identifies several types of anxiety disorders and eating disorders. Social media platforms provide opportunities for the exchange of information and expression, but they can also play a part in the development of anxiety and eating related disorders. Anonymity, cyberbullying, exposure to unrealistic body standards, addictive nature, and the spread of misinformation are some of the factors that can negatively impact mental health. Understanding the causal factors and exploring viable solutions, such as the body positivity movement and online support programs, can help mitigate the negative effects of social media on anxiety and eating disorders.

Social Media
Social media refers to interactive technologies that allow for the creation and exchange of information, opinions, interests, and other forms of expression within different communities and networks wirelessly (APA). It has revolutionized communication and sharing and With the rapid advancements in technology, Social media platforms have become an indispensible part of our everyday lives, influencing many parts of society.

Key Features of Social Media
User-generated Content: Social media platforms rely on user-generated content, meaning that individuals actively contribute and share information, photos, videos, and opinions with

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others. This user-centric approach fosters engagement and a sense of ownership among users.

Social Networking: Social media platforms provide opportunities for users to create personal profiles, connect with others, and build networks. These networks can range from close friends and family to professional contacts and communities of interest.

Real-time Communication: Social media platforms offer real-time communication features such as instant messaging, comments, and live video streaming. These features facilitate immediate and interactive exchanges between users, regardless of geographical distance.
Information Sharing: Social media serves as a platform for sharing a wide range of information, including news, articles, blog posts, and multimedia content. Users can share, comment on, and engage with this information, leading to the rapid spread of ideas and trends.

Benefits of Social Media
Global Connectivity: social media enables individuals to connect with others across the globe, fostering international friendships, collaborations, and cultural exchange.

Information Access: social media provides copious amounts of information, allowing visitors to stay up to date on current events, study other points of view, and access educational content.

Promoting Creativity and Self-expression: Social media platforms offer spaces for individuals to highlight their talents, creativity, and personal narratives through photos, videos, artwork, and writing.

Challenges
Privacy and Security Concerns: The extensive utilization of social media expresses worry regarding data breaches, data security, and online harassment. Users must navigate the potential risks associated with sharing personal information online (Calancie et al., 2017).

False or excessive information: Abundance of data on social media can lead to excessive information and make it difficult to fiend reliable data from misinformation or "fake news" (Kwan et al., 2021).

Mental Health Impacts: Social media has a significant impact on mental health, including anxiety and eating disorders. The coetaneous exposure to idealized personas of other people's lives can lead to social comparison, feelings of inadequacy, and fear of missing out, contributing to anxiety. Moreover, the proliferation of content related to body image, dieting, and weight loss on social media can trigger body dissatisfaction, reinforce unrealistic beauty standards, and promote disordered eating behaviors. Social media's emphasis on appearance and external validation intensifies self-criticism and affects self-worth. Addressing these mental health impacts requires education, resilience-building, support from mental health professionals, and responsible actions from social media platforms to foster a healthier online environment (Derenne & Beresin, 2017).

Anxiety Disorders
According to the American psychological association (APA) (2022), Anxiety is a prolonged, forward-looking reaction that encompasses a wide-ranging sense of apprehension. It is a

neurotic spectrum disorder in which there are persistent feelings of worrying, particularly about the future, to a level at which a person may experience some distress in personal, social, or occupational work. One might suffer from several types of anxiety related disorders mentioned in the DSM 5 by the American psychiatric association:

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD): Individuals GAD frequently display excessive and ongoing concern and anxiety about multiple areas of life, including work, health, and everyday circumstances. They may also experience restlessness, fatigue, trouble concentrating, irritability, muscle tension, and disrupted sleep patterns.

Panic Disorder: It is characterized by recurring and sudden panic attacks, which are intense episodes of fear accompanied by physical manifestations such as heart palpitations, difficulty breathing, chest pain, dizziness, and a feeling of impending danger. Individuals with panic disorder commonly experience concerns about future panic attacks and may develop agoraphobia, a fear of being in environments or situations that could provoke an attack.

Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD): SAD generally is marked by intense fear and anxiety specifically in social situations. Individuals with SAD may fear being judged, embarrassed, or humiliated, leading to avoidance of social interactions. They may experience symptoms similar to GAD when in social situations.

Specific Phobias: it entails having a severe and unreasonable aversion to a certain objects, circumstance, or action. Common examples are fear of spiders (arachnophobia), heights (acrophobia), flying (aviophobia), and public speaking (glossophobia). The fear is excessive and may cause significant distress or avoidance behavior.

Agoraphobia: A defining feature of agoraphobia is the fear and avoidance of specific situations or locations that may be difficult to escape or where help may not be readily present. This fear often leads to confinement within familiar environments. It can be associated with panic disorder, as individuals may fear having a panic attack in public.

Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD): SAD is typically diagnosed in children but can persist into adulthood. It involves excessive amounts of anxiety about being separated from attachment figures, such as parents or caregivers. Individuals with SAD may worry about harm befalling their loved ones and exhibit clingy behavior, nightmares, physical complaints, and refusal to go to school.

Eating disorders
Eating disorders, according to APA, are abnormal eating habits that can threaten your health or even your life; the DSM 5 also includes several types of eating and related disorders: -

Anorexia Nervosa: Anorexia nervosa is characterized by a skewed sense of one's own body image and a crippling fear of gaining weight or becoming overweight. Anorexics engage in excessive dietary restriction, resulting in significant weight loss and, in many cases, dangerously low body weight. They may engage in excessive exercise and have a preoccupation with food, calories, and body shape. Other physical symptoms may include thinning hair, dry skin, and brittle nails. Anorexia nervosa can have severe medical consequences and requires comprehensive treatment.

Bulimia Nervosa: Bulimia nervosa is characterised by binge eating on a regular basis, followed by weight-controlling behaviours such as self-induced vomiting, excessive exercise, or the abuse of laxatives or diuretics. Bulimics usually experience a loss of control during binge episodes, as well as emotions of guilt, humiliation, and mental discomfort. They are typically of average or near-average weight, making it less noticeable compared to anorexia nervosa. Bulimia nervosa can also have significant physical and emotional consequences.

Binge Eating Disorder (BED): Binge eating disorder is characterised by repeated episodes of ingesting huge amounts of food in a short period of time, followed by a sense of loss of control. Individuals with binge eating disorder, unlike those with bulimia, do not engage in compensatory behaviours on a daily basis. They often feel shame, guilt, and distress due to their eating patterns. BED is associated with significant distress and physiological risks such as obesity, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID): avoidance or restriction of some types of foods or food groups, resulting in inadequate nutrition or limited food intake. It is not driven by concerns about body weight or shape but may be related to sensory sensitivity, fear of negative repercussions, or a lack of desire to eat. ARFID can result in significant weight loss, nutritional deficiencies, and impaired functioning.

Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorder (OSFED): OSFED refers to eating disorders that do not entirely match the diagnostic criteria for anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, or binge eating disorder but cause significant distress or functional impairment. This category includes subthreshold presentations of these disorders or conditions with mixed features. Despite not meeting the full criteria, individuals with OSFED require appropriate assessment, diagnosis, and treatment.

Social Media's Correlation with Anxiety and Eating Disorders
While there have been overall many benefits for social media and the Internet in general, in terms of globalization and self-expression, this expression of views itself becomes a bane in a society where traditional roles of body and behaviour are expected to apply to all people, causing distress and discomfort to those who do not identify with such standards. This applies to many aspects, such as gender, viewpoints, faiths, and physical appearance. The DSM-5 defines Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) as a mental disorder explained by a obsession with one or more perceived defects or abnormalities in physical appearance that are not readily apparent or look trivial to others. This false perception causes compulsive behaviours of either trying to fix the said flaws or seeking repetitive assurance from others, which causes significant distress to the person and could lead to eating disorders. One of the features of social media is the anonymity it provides to the user. At the same time, it also has many benefits, and it could also be potentially harmful as human beings do tend to act hostile towards other people when they know they cannot be persecuted or judged when they are anonymous, resulting in cyberbullying (Fayaz & Khalique, 2016), (Hoge et al., 2017). This potentially hostile behaviour could cause anxiety-related disorders at the receiver's end. All these behaviours are also reinforced when corporate greed turns social media applications into a platform for quick dopamine release by catering to people's subconscious and making them addicted to the said apps. This sense of addiction happens due to the ability of social media apps to form a false sense of connections with people online and superficial relationships, which diminish interpersonal skills, leading to anti-social behaviour, low self-esteem, and anxiety in teenagers and young adults (Amedie, 2015).

Impact of Social Media on Anxiety and Eating Disorders

Media Industry has always objectifying females, mainly young women, to unrealistic and hypersexualized body standards. This was increased tenfold due to the rise of social media and people's unrestricted to a much larger audience. This content is harmful, especially to young people with developing minds (Kendal et al., 2016). Hypersexualized content has been shown to cause unhealthy body comparisons, especially in teenage girls causing a rise in cases of teenagers viewing unscientific and mindless videos to change their appearance, such as weight loss gimmicks, which in the end has shown to cause cases of depression, anxiety, and eating disorders primarily due to increased body dissatisfaction (Derenne & Beresin, 2017). Multiple studies on university students primarily done by monitoring social media use in daily life have also been shown to cause an increased risk of situational anxiety and poor cognitive performance (He et al., 2022), (Dhiman, 2020). One of the few things that have been seen from the rise in popularity of apps like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc., is the rise of selfie culture and photoshopping with filters; this practice allows people to fake their appearances to look more conventionally beautiful by their societal and individual standards. This behaviour could potentially be harmful to both the sender and the receiver as it could create unrealistic standards and a dire desire to change one's looks and self. This has been shown to cause social comparisons, repeated gratification from others, and an inability to cope with negative feedback, which are stepping stones to anxiety disorders and body dysmorphia (Perloff, 2014). Addictive content on social media has also seen an enormous rise in recent years, mainly due to the launch of ticktock and Instagram reels. This rise is due to these apps' ability to produce enormous amounts of shot form content of general around 30 seconds to 1 minute, which caters to addictive information as quickly as possible and reduces attention spans. This content is mostly unregulated, and due to algorithms, it can be used to push brainwashing and evil agendas to individuals (Ayguasanosa Ávila & Anna, 2022), (Harriger et al., 2022). Studies have also shown that generalized and social anxiety disorders have a direct correlation with social media addiction (SMA) due to its ability to reduce self-esteem, interpersonal skills, and reduce overall cognition (Vannucci et al., 2017), (Mundy et al., 2020). This happens because social media often gives a false sense of connection and a coping mechanism, especially to young and vulnerable minds, bankrupting them of real-world skills such as emotion regulation or nonverbal/verbal communication (Hoge et al., 2017) (Amedie, 2015). A study by Calancie (2017) also introduced us to the term Facebook stressors, i.e., stressors that could occur when someone is addicted to social media apps. These stressors explain how people generally behave when they are suffering from SMA. These people often seek the approval of others repeatedly, fear judgment/ scrutiny from others, escalate interpersonal issues, show neuroticism, fake themselves on the Internet, and feel disconnected from people they are talking to online. These increased stressors can cause self-esteem issues and anxiety, normally and even more when at risk. People suffering from SMA have also been shown to avoid physical interactions and depend on social media apps and their instant messaging features. These instant messaging features harm the individual as they can cause anxiety over the receiver not getting instantaneous replies from the sender (Hoge et al., 2017). While social media has been shown to cause BDD in many individuals, especially in adolescent and young adult females, due to BDD's comorbidity with eating disorders, there has also been a rise in cases of anorexia and bulimia across individuals (Derenne & Beresin, 2017), (Kendal et al., 2016) (Srbije, 2022), (Cohen et al., 2017). As discussed before, this behaviour is mainly due to displaying hypersexualized and unrealistic content with algorithms to make that content more addictive to the user. Some researchers argue that users participating in celebrity worship and comparing themselves to celebrities may also contribute to their false perceptions of self-objectification (Brown & Marika Tiggemann, 2016). Internalized sexism is also one of the possible reasons for self-objectification by women, as peer pressure and media portrayal

have set a particular standard of what males and females should look and behave like (Veldhuis et al., 2020). A study by (Gültzow et al., 2020) showed that the promotion of unrealistic standards is also on the male side as much as on the female spectrum. The study concluded that conventional standards for a healthy body for men particularly included leanness and hypermasculinity, which, in theory, can potentially harm men and their body image portrayals. Social media, while being harmful to the minds of the general audience, has been shown to potentially be more harmful to people who are at risk with anxiety and eating disorders, whether that is because of genetic predispositions or because of past experiences (Calancie et al., 2017), (The Academy for Eating Disorders, 2021). The effects of social media on Anxiety and Eating disorders have been shown to worsen during the COVID-19 pandemic, which took place in 2020. Due to the restricted access to physical contact and the only entertainment source being smartphones, social media apps like TikTok and Instagram saw a huge boom in popularity and users. This involved a mixture of misinformation about the said pandemic resulted in higher cases of people with generalized anxiety disorders, especially in older people, as they are more susceptible to this information (Kwan et al., 2021), (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2021). Social can also indirectly cause cases of anxiety in populations; multiple studies have shown that how apps like Facebook and Instagram cause high levels of loneliness and have a negative impact on physical health and social skills, all three being some of the indirect causes for generalized anxiety and social anxiety in an individual (Dobrean & Păsărelu, 2016), (Fayaz & Khalique, 2016).

Possible Causal Factors and Theories on Social Media Addiction
Along with causal factors there are several theories on what might cause social media addiction in individuals and why it might lead to anxiety and eating disorders: -

Attachment Theory: Attachment theory explores the impact of early relationships on an individual's emotional and behavioral development. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, attachment theory suggests that individuals who have insecure attachment styles may be more prone to seeking validation and connection through online platforms. This can contribute to increased anxiety and a reliance on social media as a means of coping or seeking approval.

Cognitive-Behavioral Theory (CBT): CBT investigates the connection between ideas, feelings, and behaviours.. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, cognitive-behavioral theory suggests that individuals may develop distorted thoughts and beliefs about body image, self-worth, and social comparison through their online interactions. These cognitive distortions can play a part in the development and maintenance of anxiety and eating disorders.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: The Theory proposes that individual behaviour is based upon a hierarchy of needs, starting from basic physiological needs and progressing towards self-actualization. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, individuals may prioritize their need for social belonging and validation over other important needs. The constant exposure to idealized images and the pursuit of social acceptance on social media can create a sense of inadequacy and contribute to anxiety and disordered eating behaviour.

Impression Management Theory: Impression management theory suggests that individuals actively shape and manage the impressions they present to others. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, individuals may feel

pressure to maintain a carefully curated online persona that aligns with societal beauty standards. This can intensify self-consciousness, anxiety, and the desire to engage in disordered eating behaviors to achieve a certain appearance.

Reinforcement Sensitivity Theory: Reinforcement sensitivity theory explores individual differences in the sensitivity and response to rewards and punishments. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, individuals may become increasingly sensitive to the positive reinforcement (e.g., likes, comments) received from their online presence. This can lead to an excessive reliance on social media for validation and a heightened vulnerability to anxiety when such reinforcement is not obtained.

Symbolic Interactionism: Symbolic interactionism examines how individuals interpret and assign meaning to symbols, such as language and gestures, within social interactions. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, symbolic interactionism suggests that individuals may internalize societal messages and norms around body image and appearance. This can lead to self-comparisons, feelings of inadequacy, and the adoption of disordered eating behaviors to conform to those ideals.

Social Learning Theory: The importance of observation and modelling in learning and behaviour modification is explained by social learning theory. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, individuals may observe and imitate behaviors and attitudes displayed by others on social media platforms. Exposure to images and narratives promoting thinness, dieting, or extreme fitness can contribute to the development of anxiety and disordered eating patterns through observational learning.

Cognitive Load Theory: The theory inspects how the capacity of working memory affects learning and information processing. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, excessive exposure to social media content can overload an individual's cognitive resources. This can result in heightened stress, anxiety, and impaired decision-making abilities, potentially exacerbating symptoms related to anxiety and disordered eating.

Operant Conditioning and Extinction: Operant conditioning focuses on how behaviors are influenced by rewards and punishments. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, individuals may engage in behaviors such as seeking reassurance or engaging in disordered eating patterns due to the positive reinforcement they receive from online interactions. Extinction, on the other hand, involves the gradual reduction or elimination of a behavior through the removal of reinforcement. By reducing reinforcement for maladaptive behaviors and promoting positive reinforcement for healthier coping strategies, individuals can work towards reducing anxiety and disordered eating patterns.

Selective Exposure Theory: According to selective exposure theory, people intentionally seek out information or media material that supports their prior views and attitudes. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, individuals may actively seek out content that reinforces their negative body image, perpetuating feelings of anxiety and contributing to the maintenance of disordered eating behaviors.

Social Identity Theory: Social identity theory explores how individuals' self-concept and social identity are shaped by group membership. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, individuals may develop a strong identification with online communities that promote unhealthy body ideals or disordered eating behaviors. This identification can reinforce negative self-perceptions, increase anxiety, and perpetuate maladaptive patterns.

Social Exchange Theory: Social exchange theory examines the social interactions and relationships in terms of costs and rewards. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, individuals may engage in online interactions seeking validation, acceptance, and social support. However, the pressure to maintain these relationships and receive positive feedback can contribute to anxiety and disordered eating behaviors as individuals strive to meet the perceived expectations and demands of their social connections.

Social Comparison Theory: This theory suggests that people evaluate their own abilities, traits, and social status by comparing themselves to others. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, individuals may engage in constant social comparisons with others' perfect lives and bodies typically depicted on these platforms. This can lead to feelings of worthlessness, decreased self-esteem, and heightened anxiety, as individuals strive to meet unrealistic beauty standards and achieve the same level of perceived success.

Information Processing Theory: Information processing theory focuses on how individuals perceive, interpret, and process information. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, individuals may be exposed to a constant stream of information and stimuli on social media platforms. This information overload can lead to cognitive distortions, heightened anxiety, and impaired decision-making abilities, further exacerbating symptoms related to anxiety and disordered eating.

Bystander Effect Theory: This theory suggests that individuals are generally not willing to intervene in a situation when others are present. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, individuals may witness harmful or triggering content on social media platforms, such as pro-anorexia or pro-bulimia communities, but may hesitate to take action due to the diffusion of responsibility and the belief that others will address the issue. This can contribute to the perpetuation of harmful content and increase anxiety among those who come across it.

Social Cognitive Theory: Social cognitive theory highlights the significance of cognitive processes, observational learning, and self-efficacy in facilitating behavioral changes. In the context of anxiety and eating disorders related to social media and social media addiction, social cognitive theory suggests that individuals' beliefs about their own abilities and the outcomes of their behaviors can influence their engagement in online activities. If individuals have low self-efficacy in managing anxiety or resisting disordered eating behaviors, they may be more susceptible to the negative influences of social media and develop or maintain anxiety and eating disorders. (Baron, 2017)

A study by (Cerniglia et al., 2020) examined how internet/social media addiction relates to specific genes and psychological factors. They found that young adults with internet addiction tended to have more feelings of depression, anxiety, and interpersonal problems,

especially with their families. These psychological factors seemed to affect the relationship between family functioning and internet addiction. They also found that specific gene types influenced this relationship. This is one of the studies showing that social addiction and anxiety through SMA are generally caused by biopsychosocial factors involving interpersonal relationships, genetics, and cognitive influences. In contrast, other studies have consistently shown social media to give a false sense of perception by showing unrealistic body standards, which in turn cause body dysmorphia and an eating disorder.

Possible Solutions to Prevent Anxiety and Eating Disorders
Body positivity movement has been one of the famous measures taken to educate people about unrealistic standards and promote healthy and realistic standards for physical appearance. The movement aims to promote bodies of all sizes on all social media platforms, to remove the false perception of a perfect body. The movement strives to promote acceptance and give treatment to those suffering from eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa.. The movement has the benefits of relieving anxiety and body dysmorphia across individuals, both adults and adolescents, across multiple studies. The movement also has been criticized for neglecting general health due to the acceptance bias and objectification, which is opposite from the conventional stereotype (Cohen, 2021), (Rodgers et al., 2022), (Manfredi, 2021), (Nelson et al., 2022).

Online support and ED recovery programs have been shown to have anywhere from a moderate to severe effect on reducing and helping people cope with eating disorders and generalized anxiety disorders. This also includes school-based intervention programs, which have been shown to have a moderate effect on Anxiety and Depression, at least in the short term. (Werner-Seidler et al., 2021), (Walstrom, 2004), (Juarascio, 2010)

Digital detox and mindfulness exercises have been shown to reduce anxiety and body dysmorphia across individuals. Digital detox includes not using anything technology-related for a few days or possibly weeks. This has been shown to add new perspectives and reduce anxiety which previously may have occurred from problematic social media/ cellphone use. Mindfulness techniques like CBT and stress reduction therapy have also been shown to reduce anxiety in individuals (Sutton, 2017), (Chang et al., 2023)

Parental mediation and censorship for children and adolescents could help prevent children from using too much social media and prevent them from possibly explicit or harmful content. Parental mediation also includes having open conversations with children, which can help them to see social media content with much more mature and broader perspectives (Mascheroni, 2018).

Active social media use has been seen to provide less anxiety than passive social media use. This is due to the active use being self-expression and socialization with other people rather than involving oneself with social comparison by reposting and browsing content meaninglessly. Cognitive and memory exercises to improve sustained attention have also been shown to reduce anxiety from SMA (He et al., 2022), (Thorisdottir et al., 2019).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
The conventional predictors of social media addiction (SMA) and eating disorder symptoms (EDS) among Chinese female college students were investigated in a study by (He et al., 2022). The study comprised 216 students who took tests on cognitive flexibility, sustained attention, anxiety levels, social media addiction, and eating problems. The findings

demonstrated a significant link between SMA and EDS. The proposed model was tested using structural equation modelling, which included factors such as anxiety, cognition, sustained attention, social benefit, and EDS. According to the findings, the participants' cognitive flexibility and sustained attention impact the link between state anxiety and SMA/EDS.

An article (Derenne & Beresin, 2017) examines how the Internet and digital media impact body image and eating disorders, particularly among young people. Social media applications like Facebook and Instagram contribute to body dissatisfaction by promoting unrealistic ideals and fostering comparisons. Photo editing tools and the pressure to present "perfect" images worsen these concerns. The article also talks about how the Internet also serves as a mixed source of health information, with both helpful and harmful messages prevalent. Pro-eating disorder communities thrive online, making it challenging to regulate harmful content. Conflicting messages about diet and exercise further confuse the public. The article highlights the importance of raising awareness among educators, parents, and healthcare professionals to address these issues and support individuals at risk of eating disorders. While digital media offers innovative therapy options, it cannot replace the value of face-to-face therapeutic relationships in treating eating disorders.

A cross-sectional study (Mellado & Ozer, 2021) examined the connection between addictive cell phone use, SAD, and EDS among university students. Between October and November 2017, 28,669 Inonu University students participated in the study with sample size calculated at 95% confidence to be around 308. The survey collected information on socio demographics, mobile phone usage, the Problematic Mobile Phone Use Scale, the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale, and the Eating Attitudes Test. The study's findings shed light on the links between addictive cell phone use, SAD and EDS among university students.

Adolescents suffering from eating disorders may jeopardize their social, emotional, and physical development and future chances. Despite their reluctance to seek help, individuals frequently seek information, guidance, or support on social media networks. Social media's influence on young people's well-being is a highly emotive issue with little clarity. This qualitative research project by (Kendal et al., 2016) sought to study the usage habits of a youth-centred online eating disorder forum monitored by an eating disorders charity.

This cross-sectional study by (Srbije, 2022) examined the association between social networking, eating habits, anxiety, and depression among 532 Romanian adolescents aged 12 to 15. In the general and not-at-risk groups, depressive and anxiety symptoms somewhat moderated the association between social networking and eating attitudes, but not in the at-risk group. Adolescents with eating problems symptoms benefited from social networking. The findings imply that social media use may enhance unhealthy eating habits in non-at-risk teenagers while protecting those who already have symptoms. These findings have consequences for teenage mental health in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic.

The purpose of this research (Juarascio, 2010) was to look at the existence and content of pro-ana groups on social networking sites. The researchers used a general inductive technique to analyze the material and discovered two key themes: social support and eating disorder-specific information. Although the themes were comparable across all groups, language analysis indicated variances across groups on various social networking sites. Notably, the regular material available on websites needed to be included. According to the

research, pro-ana groups on social networking sites prioritize social connections above eating disorder-specific material commonly available on internet sites.

Online social networking sites have gained global popularity, but research on their impact on mental health is relatively new. Previous literature indicates that these platforms positively and negatively affect individuals. This study (Dobrean & Păsărelu, 2016) aims to comprehensively review existing research concerning the relationship between online social networking and social anxiety, critically examining the findings.

A study by (Vannucci et al., 2017) looked at how social media usage affects symptoms of anxiety in young people. A nationally representative sample of 563 people aged 18-22 from the United States participated in a web-based poll. Participants completed anxiety questionnaires and reported their daily usage of several social media platforms. The study aimed to uncover the link between social media use and anxiety symptoms in this demographic.

Amedie (2015) conducted a research named "The Impact of Social Media on Society" to investigate the detrimental impacts of social media on numerous elements of society, concentrating on mental health, interpersonal communication, and societal challenges. It emphasizes the link between social media usage and neurotic disorders such as depression and anxiety, addresses the role of social media in encouraging cyberbullying and criminal activity, and emphasizes the need to have a balanced awareness of the effects of social media.

This research by (Calancie et al., 2017) investigated how teenagers with anxiety problems use Facebook. Seeking approval, fear of judgment, growing interpersonal conflicts, privacy concerns, self-identity negotiation, and peer comparisons surfaced as themes. Positive feelings are transient, and strategies for avoiding unpleasant remarks were suggested. The findings emphasize the relevance of reducing stress in worried teenagers' social media use.

Concerns are growing about the influence of digital devices on children's emotional well-being, particularly depression and anxiety. (Hoge et al., 2017) investigates the impact of conventional and interactive media on acute anxieties, negative social comparison, a lack of emotion-regulation skills, social anxiety, connection issues, and cyberbullying are all examples of symptoms. While digital media has been linked to depressive symptoms, it also provides chances for mood enhancement and health promotion. More study is needed to comprehend these processes properly.

The purpose of this research by (Kwan et al., 2021) was to examine the connections among COVID-19 information shared on social media, symptoms of anxiety, trust in information sources, and adherence to COVID-safe behaviors among elderly individuals in Hong Kong. A telephone survey was undertaken to investigate the correlations and mediation effects of anxiety symptoms, investigating numerous components and applying regression analysis and structural equation modelling.

This study by (Mundy et al., 2020) examined the link between social networking and depression and anxiety symptoms in children and adolescents. Data from the Childhood to Adolescence Transition Study were used in cross-sectional and prospective studies. Females with solid social networking usage had higher odds of depression and anxiety symptoms, whereas men had higher odds of depressive symptoms. The data indicates a weak to

moderate link between heavy social networking use and an elevated risk of sadness and anxiety in both genders. Early preventative programs focusing on social networking use may help treat mental health difficulties in adolescents.

The aim of this study by (Thorisdottir et al., 2019) was to investigate the association between social media use and psychological distress among Icelandic teenagers. The findings found that passive social media usage had higher levels of anxiety and depression, whereas active social media use was associated with lower levels of anxiety and depression. These relationships remained substantial even after accounting for usage time on social media. Self-esteem, offline peer support, body image, and social comparison were risk and protective variables. The impact of social media on emotional discomfort differed by sex, with females exhibiting a higher link between social media time and emotional misery. Future studies should look at the elements that function as a buffer between social media use and emotional well-being in teenagers.

This study by (Ayguasanosa Ávila, Anna, 2022) examined how diet culture attitudes are represented on TikTok and how they affect self-image, comparison, and obesophobia among female university students. The Analysis of 200 TikTok videos identified themes such as weight loss glorification, the presentation of eating to acquire thinness rather than enjoyment and exercise as a tool for body moulding. A subsequent experimental study with 61 female undergraduates discovered that exposure to negative diet related content on TikTok increased comparison and internalization of body image pressures, resulting in worsened self-perception, heightened insecurities, and potentially disordered eating attitudes.

The influence of social media algorithms on body image issues is highlighted in this paper by (Harriger et al., 2022). It addresses how algorithms personalize content, frequently resulting in more extreme and less controlled information that interests consumers. The paper delves into media coverage and disclosures made by former employees of social media platforms regarding the improper utilization of algorithms. It also highlights related firms' understanding of the distress that algorithms inflict, particularly among young and vulnerable users. Recommendations are made for influencers, educators, researchers, physicians, parents, and users, emphasizing social media firms' obligation to protect user well-being.

The Academy for Eating Disorders (AED) (2021) emphasizes the negative impacts of social media on persons at risk of disordered eating in a letter to social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. They demand that these platforms take urgent and open action to reduce damage and promote good messaging. The AED asks for greater openness about algorithms, user-friendly reporting systems, AI-based detection and removal of dangerous information, and a halt to developing platforms for younger age groups. They also recommend consulting with experts and pre-registering studies on the effects of social media on eating disorders. The AED thinks that by taking these steps, social media companies may help to solve the issue and improve user well-being.

Brown and Tiggemann (2016) investigated the influence of beautiful celebrity and peer images on women's body image. Female college students (n=138) were allocated at random to see photos of celebrities, peers, or controls. When compared to seeing trip photographs, exposure to celebrity and peer images resulted in a bad mood and dissatisfaction with one's body. The impact was mitigated by celebrity adoration, and the effects of celebrity pictures on body dissatisfaction was mediated by state appearance comparison. These findings imply

that exposure to beautiful celebrity and peer photos might have a negative impact on women's body image.

(Cohen et al., 2017) did a study to evaluate the association between specific characteristics of social networking sites (SNS) and body image issues among young women. A total of 259 women between the ages of 18 and 29 answered questionnaires about their usage of social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as their body image issues. According to the findings, engaging in appearance focused SNS activities, such as participating in picture activities on Facebook and following accounts that emphasise appearance on Instagram, was associated with higher levels of body image issues, such as internalising the thin ideal, body surveillance, and a desire for thinness. This study emphasises the necessity of taking unique SNS traits into account when treating and resolving body image issues in young women.

The purpose of this study by (Gültzow et al., 2020) was to look at how the male are portrayed in terms of body image comparisons on Instagram and how people react to such photographs. A content analysis of 1,000 relevant Instagram posts revealed that the majority of the examined posts had significant degrees of muscularity and leanness. Posts featuring males with this body type drew the most attention. Health-related messages and physical activity promotion were more prevalent than appearance-related conceptions and dietary behaviours. However, these findings may damage men's body image, raising questions about the need to see skinny and robust males to promote health-related behaviours.

The repercussions of seeing body-positive content on Instagram, particularly on body image in adult women of various ages were investigated in this study (Nelson et al., 2022). Participants were randomly allocated to watch body-positive, thin-ideal, or appearance-neutral information. Compared to thin-ideal and neutral material, exposure to body-positive information resulted in more body appreciation and happiness. There were no statistically significant variations in self-objectification between conditions. Age was shown to be a major modulator of self-objectification only in the thin/ideal condition, indicating that body-positive content may increase body appreciation and pleasure in women of any age.

The purpose of this study (Dhiman, 2020) looked at the link between SMA and social anxiety among Kurukshetra University postgraduate scholars. A survey was utilized to collect data and acquired via purposeful sampling. According to the data, there was no link between social media and social anxiety among the individuals. This shows that social media does not influence the development of social anxiety among university students. The study suggests various reasons may cause social anxiety, but social media does not appear significant among Kurukshetra University students.

This study (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2021) looked at the link between the Covid-19 pandemic's toll and addictive social media usage (SMU). During the spring of 2020, data was collected from 550 social media users in Germany using online questionnaires. The findings suggested that the felt sense of control influenced the relationship between load and addictive SMU. Furthermore, symptoms related to anxiety attenuated the co-relation between a sense of authority and SMA, with the correlation being substantial for people with moderate to high anxiety symptoms. These findings give information on the processes driving the development of addictive tendencies during the epidemic and prospective techniques for mitigating the deleterious repercussions of the Covid-19 burden.

This study (Fayaz & Khalique, 2016) explores the sociological implication of social media sites. Social networking has significantly influenced human interaction, behaviour, and society. While it has benefits such as low-cost socializing, self-promotion, and commercial prospects, it also has problems such as addiction, privacy issues, and online bullying. Social networking has altered communication, resulting in isolation and negatively impacting mental health. It has also impacted politics, elections, and commercial promotion. Overall, the study aims to describe how social networking has a wide range of sociological effects, impacting relationships, individual behaviour, and social dynamics in good and bad ways.

This study (Manfredi, 2021) talks about the role of social media on psychological health; it also says that social media includes the promotion of unrealistic body standards, which leads to body shaming and the development of eating disorders such as anorexia—an extreme obsession with losing weight via dietary restriction. Furthermore, social media might lead to agoraphobia, an unreasonable dread of overcrowded or open areas, leaving one's home, or situations in which escape is difficult. These disorders emphasize the negative consequences of social media on people's health. The study also talks about Body positivity and the "ed recovery" movements that try to address these challenges by encouraging self-acceptance, accurate depictions, and healthier lives. We may strive towards a psychologically better future in the digital era by addressing these problems.

This paper (Perloff, 2014) presents a paradigm for explaining how social media promotes body image concerns through unfavourable social comparisons, transportation, and normative peer processes, drawing on communication and social psychology theories. According to the suggested model, individual susceptibility factors, social media usage, and psychological processes result in greater body dissatisfaction and EDS. The paper also discusses the need for more study on male body image, intersections with ethnicity, and potential solutions to these concerns.

this study by (Veldhuis et al., 2020) investigates the links between self image, self-objectification, self-esteem, and selfie behaviours in young females. Higher body admiration is connected with more participation in selfie selection and sharing, whereas self-objectification is associated with increased involvement in numerous selfie activities. The findings imply that body image influences the outcome and the motivation for selfie behaviours on social media. Understanding these relationships is critical for digital-age therapies and policies addressing body image and self-esteem.

The effects of the body positivity movement are investigated in connection to body image and social media in this paper by (Rodgers et al., 2022). It emphasizes the potential advantages of body-positive material in fostering positive body image and decreasing appearance comparison. However, more study is needed to discover individual-level determinants and investigate various situations and material kinds. Understanding the efficacy of body-positive social media material and how it interacts with individual and contextual factors might help prevent and reduce body image problems.

This research (Walstrom, 2004) investigates interaction dynamics in an online eating disorder support group, emphasizing the difficulties of guaranteeing safety when addressing appearance-related topics. While online support groups provide a nonjudgmental atmosphere, the nature of eating disorders that involve size and weight conversations poses concerns to participants' well-being. Through a discourse analysis of three discussions, the study demonstrates the potential therapeutic benefit of online forums as safe places for

women with eating disorders to coping with associated concerns. The study emphasizes the importance of continuing research into online forums as valuable alternatives to face-to-face support groups considering the rising prevalence of anorexia and bulimia.

The notion of "digital detox" is investigated in this study (Sutton, 2017) in response to worries about the influence of digital technology on our connections and experiences. The research focuses on Camp Grounded, a retreat and summer camp for individuals who want to disconnect from digital technology. Participants at Camp Grounded relate technology usage to eating, emphasizing the fleeting nature of digital relationships against the more full and nutritious nature of face-to-face interactions. The study critically examines the food/technology metaphor, exposing its shortcomings and raising critical concerns about our changing relationship with digital technology.

COVID-19 has exacerbated social media addiction (SMA) and needs appropriate therapies. Although mindfulness has been proposed as a possible remedy, the underlying psychological mechanisms remain unknown. 446 Chinese college students were analyzed in this study by (Chang et al., 2023), which revealed that the relationship between mindfulness and SMA is influenced by attentional control and fear of missing out (FOMO). Mindfulness decreased SMA in three ways: mindfulness attention control SMA, mindfulness FOMO SMA, and mindfulness attention control FOMO SMA. These findings support mindfulness-based therapies to treat social media addiction, particularly those aimed against FOMO.

Digital Parenting: The Challenges for Families in the Digital Age (Mascheroni, 2018) examines many facets of digital media and parenting, concentrating on social media. The book addresses how parents navigate the digital world by moderating their children's usage of social media platforms, as well as the possible hazards and advantages of doing so. It also emphasizes the importance of social media in offering support networks for parents, allowing them to share experiences, seek advice, and form communities. The authors stress the need to recognize generational differences in media use and the need for parents to adjust their parenting practices to the ever-changing digital environment. The book aims to share insights and spark conversations on the problems and possibilities that social media brings for families in the digital era.

In this study, (Werner-Seidler et al., 2021) assessed the effectiveness of school-based psychological preventative programmes for depression and anxiety in children and adolescents. It looked at 118 trials with 45,924 participants and discovered minor favourable effects on symptoms right after the therapies. Targeted programs for at-risk individuals outperformed universal depression programs. External providers also demonstrated certain advantages over school-based programs. The research's overall quality was moderate, and additional refinement and sustaining ability of these programs in schools is required for population-level preventative effects.

This paper (Cohen, 2021) examines the connection between body positivity and social media, focusing on the advantages and disadvantages of engaging with body-positive content. It emphasizes the risk factors common to eating disorders and obesity, such as body dissatisfaction, diets, media impact, and weight-related teasing. The essay recognizes the harmful influence of idealized images on social media, which can contribute to low mood and body dissatisfaction. It also investigates the growth of body positivity on social media, which aims to change appearance ideals, encourage body acceptance, and emphasize body functions and health. According to the authors, engaging in body-positive content may

improve body image. The paper also criticizes the movement for reinforcing norms of obesity, although more research is required.

The purpose of this study by (Cerniglia et al., 2020) was to look at the relationship between internet addiction (IA) and genetic variants in four genes connected to neurotransmitter systems. However, no significant links were discovered between IA and these genetic variants. According to the study, young adults with IA had greater levels of depression, anxiety, and avoidant personality issues and a lower view of family functioning. According to mediation studies, these psychological characteristics moderated the association between family functioning and IA. This association was also regulated by the genotypes of three genes (5-HTTLPR, DAT1, and MAO-A). These findings emphasize the intricate interaction of biopsychosocial components in the development of IA.

"Social Psychology" by Baron (2017) is a comprehensive textbook exploring the principles, theories, and research findings in social psychology. In its 14th edition, the book covers assorted topics such as social perception, attitudes, social influence, group dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and applied social psychology. It provides an in-depth understanding of how social factors influence human behavior, thoughts, and emotions. The book is designed to appeal to students, researchers, and professionals interested in the study of social psychology.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is an organization issued by the United Nations responsible for international public health. It plays an important role in promoting and coordinating health initiatives globally, including mental health.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) is a widely used diagnostic manual published by the American Psychiatric Association. It provides standardized criteria for the classification and diagnosis of mental disorders. The DSM-5 helps clinicians and researchers accurately identify and treat mental health conditions.

The American Psychological Association (APA) is a federal organization representing psychologists in the United States. It provides resources, guidelines, and ethical standards for the practice and advancement of psychology. The APA also publishes various journals and publications, such as the DSM-5, contributing to psychology and mental health research.

DISCUSSION

The impact of social media on anxiety and eating disorders is a complex issue with various contributing factors. This study tries to answer all the significant aspects of the topic with possible solutions. One significant aspect is the effect of social media on body image perceptions. The proliferation of hypersexualized and unrealistic body standards portrayed on social media platforms has been shown to lead to body dissatisfaction, which can contribute in the development of anxiety and eating disorders (Kendal et al., 2016) (Derenne & Beresin, 2017). The constant exposure to edited and filtered images and the culture of comparison and validation-seeking can create a distorted view of one's body and increase the desire for appearance-related changes (Perloff, 2014). Anonymity and the potential for cyberbullying on social media platforms also play a role in exacerbating anxiety. Online interactions lacking face-to-face communication can lead to hostile behaviour and the spread of negativity. Cyberbullying can significantly impact individuals' mental well-being, causing increased stress, anxiety, and social isolation (Fayaz & Khalique, 2016) (Hoge et al., 2017).

The study explains how the addictive nature of social media apps further contributes to anxiety and eating disorders. Social media applications are designed to trigger a dopamine response, creating a sense of reward and reinforcing usage. This addictive behaviour can lead to excessive time spent on social media platforms, neglecting real-life interactions and impairing interpersonal skills. The consistent need for approval and FOMO associated with social media can heighten anxiety levels, particularly in vulnerable individuals (Amedie, 2015) (Mundy et al., 2020). This, with the COVID-19 pandemic, also amplified the impact of social media on mental health. With limited physical contact and increased reliance on smartphones, social media usage skyrocketed during the pandemic. The spread of misinformation and heightened anxiety surrounding the virus further compounded the harmful effects of social media on individuals' mental well-being (Kwan et al., 2021).

Regarding possible solutions, the body positivity movement has gained momentum to combat unrealistic body standards perpetuated on social media. By promoting acceptance and embracing diverse body shapes and sizes, this movement aims to alleviate body dissatisfaction and reduce anxiety and eating disorders (Cohen, 2021) (Rodgers et al., 2022). Online support and intervention programs have also shown promise in assisting individuals with anxiety and eating disorders. These programs provide a platform for individuals to seek help, receive guidance, and connect with others experiencing similar challenges (Werner-Seidler et al., 2021). On the other hand, Digital detox and mindfulness exercises are strategies individuals can employ to reduce anxiety and body dysmorphia associated with social media use. Taking breaks from smartphones and engaging in activities that promote mindfulness and self-reflection can help individuals gain perspective and alleviate the adverse effects of excessive social media consumption (Sutton, 2017) (Chang et al., 2023). Regarding adolescents' protection from SMA, Parental mediation and censorship are essential to protect them from explicit or harmful content and teach them responsible social media usage. Open conversations about social media and its potential impact can help young individuals develop a mature and critical understanding of the content they encounter (Mascheroni, 2018).

At last Active social media use discusses self-expression and meaningful social interactions and how they are less anxiety-inducing compared to passive social media consumption. Engaging in positive online communities, sharing personal experiences, and connecting with like-minded individuals can foster a sense of belonging and reduce anxiety levels (He et al., 2022) (Thorisdottir et al., 2019). This Analysis also has its limitations, as some of the studies mentioned include limited cultural exposure, qualitative research, and self-report biases, and some dated studies might have less applicability today. In conclusion social media usage has shown a significant positive correlation between anxiety and eating disorders, especially in adolescent teenagers. While there are some methods and interventions one could take to fix these issues, this report serves as a reminder to the cooperations to design social media apps in a way that does not harm individuals and their mental health.

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