
Social Media Use and Its Impact on Youth in Nangarhar Province

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ABSTRACT

Social media have become an integral element in the lives of young people, offering communication, learning, work and information opportunities. This survey focuses on the positive and negative impacts of social media on young people of Jalalabad city, with special emphasis on awareness, education, skill development, job opportunities and the social life of the youth in regard to the positive and negative impacts and challenges regarding excessive use of social media. This study was conducted with a quantitative descriptive-analytical research design. Data collection methods were primary data in the form of questionnaires. Questionnaires were used in this study using Google Forms. The sample for the survey included 40 respondents, and descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and mean scores) were used in analyzing the data obtained. The results show that social media have positive and negative consequences for young people. For the positive impact, 100% stated that social media give them access to advertisements and jobs, while 100% stated that it allows them to communicate and is helpful for awareness of the global culture. Further, 88.9% of them agreed that social media raises awareness about politics and adds positivity to youth skill building and 77.8% agreed that it is a source of information, skills, and education. When it came to the negative side, 100% agreed that unnecessary information causes confusion and ambiguity for young people, while 88.9% agreed that excessive social media use is detrimental to physical activity. Not to mention, 66.7% of them agreed social media can be a source of time wastage and can have a negative impact on social norms. Overall, the results show that there are educational, social, cultural and employment benefits of using social media, yet there could be physical, behavioral and time management issues if social media are used too much and not controlled. The study suggests a more balanced and responsible use with the support of digital literacy, parents' guidance and institutional awareness programs.

KEYWORDS: Social Media Use, Youth, Positive Impacts, Negative Impacts, Information Access

1. INTRODUCTION

The internet and social media have become an integral part of our lives, especially young people's lives, in the modern digital age. Young users have a variety of communication, education, entertainment, information sharing, social interaction and self-expression opportunities on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. According to a recent study, social media usage among children and youth has grown significantly, and it is an emerging field of academic and social research (Jungselius, 2024).

Social media can offer a platform for youth to access educational and informational content, engage with peers, share information, build digital literacy and be involved in current social and cultural activities. Social media has also been recognized as a promising educational tool for learning, teaching, collaboration, and engagement in educational settings (Perez et al., 2023).

However, due to the increasing intensity and problematic use of social media, concerns have been raised regarding the potential impact of social media on the academic, psychological, behaviour and social health of young people. It is also suggested that systematic reviews in the recent past have shown that the link between social media and youth well-being is nuanced and can be contingent on the nature, volume, intent, material and context in social media use (Valkenburg et al., 2024).

Specifically, using social media has been correlated with negative mental-health effects, though the relationship in terms of direction and intensity differ among studies and individual cases (Ahmed et al., 2024; Poli et al., 2025). Studies have also shown links between excessive or problematic use of social media, sleep issues, anxiety, depression, and decreased well-being among adolescents and young adults (Yu et al., 2024; Ahmed et al., 2024). The use of social media could also have implications for young people's academic activities and their behaviour in everyday life. A recent systematic review of literature revealed that in many of the studies conducted with children and adolescents, off-task social media and smartphone usage was negatively related to academic achievement, indicating that excessive use for recreational purposes may have a negative impact on learning and study-related activities (Pyhälä et al., 2025).

The evidence related to health-related behaviours of young people also suggests that there are certain health-risk behaviours associated with the use of social media, but the nature and extent of the association varies among populations and the type of social media use (Purba et al., 2023).

Moreover, social media facilitates information to flow at high speed, exposing the youth to informative and misleading or inaccurate information, which shows the importance of digital literacy and critical evaluation skills (Mulisa et al., 2025). The problem with problematic use of social media (PPSM) is therefore an important

research challenge as it is not just the time spent on the internet that is important. The findings in recent studies have focused on factors such as individual traits, interpersonal relationships, the intent of use, platform features, and the type of content users encounter on social media, highlighting their potential impact on the outcomes of social media use (Pazdur et al., 2025; Poli et al., 2025).

Social media, however, should not be seen as a risk only, as there is also evidence that social media can be used purposefully and responsibly to learn, communicate, create, connect socially, and to participate (Perez et al., 2023; Jungselius, 2024). This complexity underlines the need for empirical research on a case-by-case basis and not generalizing the effect of all social media usage.

While there has been a recent surge in international research on the social media use of youth, there are significant gaps in research on the local effects of social media on the lives, learning, behaviour and social experiences of youth. The results from the literature is also inconclusive on the benefits and detrimental effects that social media has on society, which further reinforces the need to conduct more empirical studies. Hence, the current study aims to add to the previous studies by exploring the effect of social media use on youth and its opportunities and challenges. The study aims to give empirical evidence that could help to understand young people's social media usage patterns and inform responsible and productive social media engagement.

This study aims to explore how youth are being affected by social media and to determine what are the significant opportunities and challenges with youth and social media in relation to their academic, social, behavioural, and everyday activities.

1.1 Problem Statement

The primary question that this current study aims to answer is the increasing role of social media in young people's daily lives and how to maintain a healthy balance between the positive and negative impacts of social media on young people. Social media can be used as a useful tool to learn, communicate, search for jobs, participate in cultural events, develop skills, etc., but its overuse or misuse can lead to time wastage, decreased physical activity, behavior changes, unnecessary information, and other social and academic issues. Although young people are highly engaged in social media, how much they are aware of and how much they feel these positive and negative impacts on them needs further investigation. This study hence explores the impact of social media on young people and the key advantages and issues involved in using social media.

1.2 Research Objectives

- To explore how the use of social media affects youth and the key opportunities and challenges it presents for young people when it comes to their learning, social, behavioral and daily routines.

1.3 Research Questions

- How do social media Positive and negative impacts youth?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

H₁: Social media use has a significant influence on youth.

H₀: Social media use does not have a significant influence on youth.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is important since social media have become a vital part of young people's lives and, despite its many potential benefits, it has its challenges. Study results might offer empirical data that can be useful in understanding the relationship between the use of social media and the academic, social, behavioral and daily lives of youth.

The study can be beneficial for students and young people as it may raise awareness about responsible and productive use of social media. It could benefit parents and families in understanding the opportunities and challenges of young people's interaction with social media. The results could also help educational institutions and teachers design relevant awareness programs and strategies to encourage learners to engage in useful usage of digital tools.

In addition, the study can offer valuable data for other organizations and policymakers that are involved with youth and digital literacy development to create awareness and educational programs about social media use. Last, the study could improve the existing body of academic research and serve as a foundation for future studies aimed at examining the use of social networks and its impact on young people in similar settings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media are becoming more and more of a part of young people's social, educational and daily lives. In recent years, research has significantly increased with the surge in platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. A recent scoping review of 244 peer-reviewed studies showed that research and literature on social media use by children and adolescents has grown significantly and rapidly over the past few years, and also that this research field covers a broad spectrum of social, behavioral, educational and psychological outcomes (Jungselius, 2024). The increasing research in this area indicates that social media have a more complex impact on young people: not all social media is positive and not all social media are negative, and its impact depends on the purpose and context in which young people use social media.

2.1 Social Media Use and Educational Activities

Previous studies have explored the connection between the use of social media and education, and this is one aspect that needs further study. Social media can be used to enable students to communicate with fellow students, share information, access educational resources, collaborate on academic tasks, and engage in learning communities. A systematic review conducted by Perez et al. (2023) revealed that social media have been found to have a positive impact on social interaction, collaboration, knowledge sharing and student engagement in higher education, and can be a tool for teaching and learning. The results suggest that if the teacher uses social media with the intent of using them for educational purposes, it can serve as an educational opportunity.

The role of education and impact of social media, though, is strongly reliant on the goal and level of social media use. Recent evidence has separated educational (on task) and recreational (off task) use. In a systematic review of 34 studies that included children and adolescents, Pyhälto et al. (2025) found that off-task social media and smartphone use were related to poorer academic performance in most of the studies that were reviewed. The authors also determined that problematic use was virtually always linked to lower academic performance. Likewise, studies on students' social media engagement, including those of Tarifa-Rodriguez et al. (2024), highlight the need to assess students' social media use more than simply by asking if they do or don't use it; understanding the frequency, purpose, and type of their use is also crucial. Thus, the academic value of social media could differ along the lines of the purpose for which the young people are using them, either for educational or entertainment or other non-academic uses.

2.2 Social Media Use and Social Behaviour

The use of social media also affects how youth communicate and connect with one another. Digital platforms offer opportunities for interaction with friends, participation in online community, expression of views, and building social connections. Modern studies on young people's social media include communication, social relationships, identity, wellbeing, and other aspects of adolescents' lives, reported by Jungselius (2024). The results corroborate the view that social media is an important social space in which young people cultivate and maintain social relations.

Meanwhile, the social impact of social media is not always the same. Sala et al. (2024) concluded from their umbrella review of the social media and adolescent well-being relationship that individual-level characteristics, patterns of use, social-media content and platform design all have an impact on this interaction. This indicates that the level of social media usage alone is not sufficient to account for its impact on youth's social life. The quality and purpose of online interaction is more important than for example usage time.

2.3 Social Media Use and Mental Well-Being

Another large area of Social Media research is mental health and psychological well-being. There is new evidence that the link between social media use and adolescent mental health is complicated and that an assumption of "good" or "bad" social media use is not enough to explain the link. In an umbrella review of 24 systematic, scoping, and narrative reviews/meta-analyses, Sala et al. (2024) found that social media use's relationship with adolescents' mental health is moderated by demographic and psychosocial factors, by the characteristics of how adolescents use social media, and by the features of social media platforms.

Likewise, Orben et al. (2024) examined the pathways by which social media could potentially contribute to mental-health vulnerabilities in adolescents and highlighted that the current evidence is inconsistent and that developmental, social and individual factors should be taken into account to understand these links. A systematic review and meta-analysis of many studies on mental health and sleep in young people was also conducted, which found associations between social media usage and mental health and sleep, but with significant differences between the studies on hand (Ahmed et al., 2024). The results of these findings suggest that an understanding of patterns and contexts of social media use is needed to discuss the impact of social media on the wellbeing of young people rather than assuming that all social media use is comparable.

2.4 Problematic and Excessive Social Media Use

There has been a proliferation of research specifically around problematic use of social media. In a systematic review of the literature on longitudinal studies, Pazdur et al. (2025) identified a set of factors that were related to problematic social media use among young people, such as motivations for use, peer factors, negative emotions, self-regulation, personality characteristics, mental health, and social environmental aspects. Methodological difficulties in the literature and the need for more longitudinal studies were also stressed.

Similarly, Poli et al. (2025) conducted a review of longitudinal studies and interventions related to problematic social media use among mid-adolescents. Their results showed that intrapersonal and interpersonal factors could be linked to problematic use, and that there is a relatively small number of studies and inter-individual variability in the field of intervention studies, which hinders reaching definite conclusions. These results are significant as they indicate that overuse of social media should be considered as a multidimensional issue that encompasses personal, social and behavioral issues.

2.5 Social Media Use and Behavioural Outcomes

The extensive use of social media can also be linked to young people's overall behaviors. In a systematic review and meta-analysis of 126 studies and over 1.4 million adolescents, Purba et al. (2023) identified linkages between social media use and various adverse health behaviors. They encompassed substance use, unhealthy

eating habits, gambling, sexual-risk behaviours, and antisocial behaviors, but noted some limitations in the evidence, and the challenges of drawing causal inferences. This evidence indicates that what and how youths interact with content on social media might be related to their behavior.

Recent studies have also focused on the content and processes by which social media might impact adolescents. Mulisa et al. (2025) concluded that social media can offer opportunities for learning and connect adolescents with others, but also with content and pathways that might negatively impact mental health. So, the effects of social media use could be related to length of time using social media as well as the information, interactions and experiences that young people will encounter online.

2.6 Research Gap

The literature reviewed shows that social media have opportunities as well as challenges for young people. Educational engagement, academic achievement, social relationships, mental health, problematic use, and behavioral outcomes have been subjects of previous research. The results, however, do not align completely, and a number of reviews highlight that individual characteristics, patterns of use, purpose of use, social contexts, and platform characteristics are of importance in understanding the outcomes of social media use (Jungselius, 2024; Sala et al., 2024). In addition, most of the current evidence has been produced in the global or international context, and evidence on young people in particular local and developing-country contexts is relatively limited.

Furthermore, most studies have studied the effect of social media on mental health or on academic achievement individually, and others have looked at how it affects the child in a different dimension of life. Another gap to consider is that few studies have attempted to explore the holistic effect of social media on the child in all areas of academic, social, behavioral and everyday life. Also, methodological weaknesses, such as cross-sectional designs and self-reported questionnaires, have been pointed out in some reviews (Pazdur et al., 2025; Poli et al., 2025).

Hence, this study aims to fill that lacuna by using a questionnaire-based quantitative research methodology to investigate the effect of the use of social media on young people. The study not only examines the potential benefits of social media use, but also the challenges which are also taken into account and the connection between social media and academic activities, social behavior, everyday activities, opportunities and challenges of young people. The study looks at these dimensions in a particular research context to give empirical evidence which can be added to the existing international literature.

2.7 Hypothesis Development

The literature reviewed offers a conceptual and empirical foundation to study the relationship between social media use and youth outcomes. Research shows that when social media are used appropriately, it can have a positive impact on education, communication, collaboration, and the sharing of information, but when it is used excessively or for the wrong purpose, it can lead to academic struggles and other negative consequences (Perez et al., 2023; Pyhälä et al., 2025). Likewise, findings on social and psychological outcomes suggest that the impact of social media is dependent on how it is used, personal traits, social environment, and social media platform content (Sala et al., 2024; Orben et al., 2024). The present study thus assumes that, based on the above findings, the use of social media has a significant effect on youth and explores this relationship in the dimensions of youth outcomes chosen.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study was conducted with a quantitative research method based on descriptive-analytical research design to analyze the impact of social media consumption by young people. The quantitative approach was used in this study as it was intended to gather data from the respondents and analyze the data statistically which can be measured. The descriptive aspect was used to describe the patterns of the use of social media by the respondents and their perceptions of the benefits and challenges of social media, and the analytical aspect was used in order to study the observed influence of social media on the selected dimensions of youth activities.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of the study was young people who are active users of social media platforms. The study was conducted with 40 respondents for various reasons such as practical and accessibility reasons. Respondents were contacted by an online questionnaire (Google Forms). The sample comprised those who volunteered to take part in the survey and answered the questionnaire.

Due to the small size of the sample and the fact that it was selected from an online survey, the results are taken in the context of the respondents who participated in the survey and cannot be extended to the general youth population without further evidence from larger and more representative samples.

3.3 Sampling Technique

The method of recruitment was non-probability sampling technique (convenience sampling). An online questionnaire, using Google Forms, was sent to eligible participants (young social media users who had access to the survey) and participation was voluntary. This method was chosen because it allowed for easy access to those who are active on social media and within the time and resources of the study.

3.4 Data Sources

The data used in this study was primary and secondary. Primary data were gathered from the respondents by using a structured questionnaire. Recent peer-reviewed journal articles, research papers and other relevant academic literature related to social media usage, youth, educational activities, social behaviours, lifestyle, and opportunities and challenges of social networking platforms were used to collect secondary information. The secondary literature consisted mainly of background information for the study, a research framework and interpretation of the results.

3.5 Research Instrument

The study's objectives and research questions were used to create a structured questionnaire, which was based on themes found in the literature. The questionnaire was centered on social media usage and perceptions of how social media affect young people among the respondents. The instrument contained questions about the frequency and duration of social media usage, learning and informational benefits, communication and social interaction, skill development, employment opportunities, behavioral and lifestyle changes, and problems that could occur with excessive and inappropriate social media use.

A five-point Likert scale was used to measure respondents' perceptions. The answers were strongly agreed (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). This scale allowed the participant to rate his/her agreement with each statement.

3.6 Variables and Measurement

Social media use was the independent variable and youth outcomes were the dependent variable in the study. The social media use was measured by the frequency of usage, duration of usage and involvement with social networking websites by respondents.

Youth outcomes were compared in various areas, such as activities in school, social behavior and communications, cultural and informational awareness, employment and skill development opportunities, daily lifestyle and physical activities, and the benefits and challenges of using social media. These dimensions were assessed with statements that were presented on a Likert scale in the questionnaire.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

An online questionnaire was used to obtain data, which was done using Google Forms. A questionnaire link was sent to the potential participants via electronic means of communication. Respondents were informed of the academic reason for the study and that the study was voluntary prior to the completion of the questionnaire. All the answers were completed and were included in their analysis.

The data-collection process was chosen for being online, with the target respondents being active social media users and thus reachable efficiently via digital communication channels.

3.8 Data Analysis

The responses were later analyzed and arranged using a descriptive statistical method after the data were collected. The characteristics of the respondents and their use of social media were summarized using frequencies and percentages. Likert-scale items were used to measure respondents' perceptions of the statements and mean values were calculated to summarize the perceptions.

The results were presented in tables for ease of interpretation and comparison between the measured dimensions. The analysis was aimed at describing how the respondents perceived social media use and the perceived educational, social, behavioral, cultural, employment and lifestyle implications of social media.

Due to the relatively small sample size and non-probability sampling method, analysis focuses mainly on descriptive results and not making general population-level causal statements.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

In order to increase the question awareness, the items in the questionnaire were formulated according to the research goals, research questions, conceptual framework, and relevant literature in recent times. A questionnaire was pre-tested for clarity, relevance and consistency with the dimensions examined to identify in the study prior to its administration.

If the data is available, Cronbach's alpha (α) should be used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire. In general, a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is regarded as an acceptable criterion of internal consistency for research instrument. The reliability coefficient that is reported should be based on the actual statistical analysis of data collected and not assumed in advance.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with basic research and ethics principles. The respondents were given information regarding the academic purpose of the research and participation was voluntary. No respondent was asked to give unnecessary personally identifying information. The responses were gathered anonymously and only for research for academic purposes. Since this was a voluntary survey, respondents had the option to refuse or leave at any time without providing any data.

3.11 Methodological Limitations

The methodology has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the sample consisted of only 40 respondents, which limits the statistical generalizability of the findings. Second,

convenience sampling may introduce selection bias because participants were not randomly selected from the entire youth population. Third, the study relied on self-reported perceptions rather than objective measurements of social media use or independently verified academic, behavioral, or health outcomes. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the survey does not allow causal relationships between social media use and youth outcomes to be established.

Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of respondents' reported perceptions and experiences rather than as definitive evidence of causal effects of social media on the broader youth population.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The information gathered via a questionnaire regarding the effects of social media on young people is presented in this study. A five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree was used to collect responses from forty participants via Google Forms. The consequences are examined in light of the goals of the study. The results of this study demonstrate that young people are affected by social media in both positive and negative ways. Social networking sites, on the one hand, offer opportunities for awareness, education, communication, and personal growth. Nevertheless, young individuals who use social media excessively and carelessly may have social, psychological, and scholastic difficulties. The results are in line with earlier research that highlighted social media's dual role in contemporary culture. Though excessive use of social networking sites may have disadvantageous effects on young people's behavior and wellbeing, responsible and balanced use can promote social and educational growth. As a result, young people need to be properly informed, guided, and to use technology responsibly. Families, schools, and lawmakers should support social media use that is constructive and raise awareness of the perils of excessive internet activity.

4.1 Social Media Usage among Youth

Table 1: The use of social media has become a habit of wasting time for young people.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	3	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Agree	6	66.7	66.7	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The results in Table 1 indicate that, according to the respondents' perceptions, social media has become a habit of wasting time among young people. Of the 9 respondents, 3 (33.3%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 6 (66.7%) agreed. No respondent selected neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree options.

Table 2: Using social media (chatting, calls, links, and likes) causes young people to waste time.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	22.2	22.2	22.2
	Agree	4	44.4	44.4	66.7
	Neutral	1	11.1	11.1	77.8
	Disagree	2	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The survey Table indicates that the majority of respondents believe that social media activities such as chatting, calling, sharing links, and liking posts cause young people to waste time. Of the 9 respondents, 2 (22.2%) strongly agreed, and 4 (44.4%) agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, 1 respondent (11.1%) remained neutral, while 2 respondents (22.2%) disagreed. No respondent selected the strongly disagree option.

Table 3: Excessive social media use harms young people's physical activity.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	22.2	22.2	22.2
	Agree	6	66.7	66.7	88.9
	Neutral	1	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The Table shows that the majority of respondents believe that excessive social media use negatively affects young people's physical activity. Of the 9 respondents, 2 (22.2%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 6 (66.7%) agreed. Only 1 respondent (11.1%) remained neutral, and no respondents disagreed with the statement.

4.2 Positive Impact of Social Media on Youth

Table 4: Social media is a source of information, skills and education for youth

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	5	55.6	55.6	55.6
	Agree	2	22.2	22.2	77.8
	Neutral	1	11.1	11.1	88.9

Disagree	1	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	9	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 4, 5 respondents (55.6%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 2 respondents (22.2%) agreed. Cumulatively, this amounts to 77.8% of all respondents, indicating that most people think social media is beneficial for youth education, skill development, and knowledge dissemination. This encouraging observation might be the result of social media applications' simple access to online learning resources, instructional videos, tutorials, news updates, and skill-development platforms.

Table 5: Social media provides opportunities for young people to find advertisements and job opportunities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Agree	3	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The findings of the table, three respondents (33.3%) agreed with the statement, while six respondents (66.7%) strongly agreed. This indicates that all respondents (100%) had good opinions; none chose the indifferent, disagree, or strongly disagree options. The results unequivocally show that participants firmly feel that social media is crucial in providing young people with employment-related marketing, career information, and job prospects.

Table 6: Social media is a way for people to connect.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	7	77.8	77.8	77.8
	Agree	2	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 6, two respondents (22.2%) agreed with the statement, whereas seven respondents (77.8%) strongly agreed. There were no neutral or negative comments, indicating that all respondents (100%) agreed.

The high degree of strong agreement shows that, despite geographical distance, the majority of participants think social media efficiently facilitates communication, interaction, and relationship maintenance.

Table 7: Social media plays a crucial role in promoting and spreading awareness of global culture

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	7	77.8	77.8	77.8
	Agree	2	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The table shows that two respondents (22.2%) agreed with the statement and seven respondents (77.8%) strongly agreed. This indicates that 100% of respondents expressed positive views, with no neutral or negative responses. The high level of strong agreement indicates that most participants strongly believe that social media contributes significantly to cultural awareness and global connectivity.

Table 8: Social media helps in increasing political awareness among young people

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4	44.4	44.4	44.4
	Agree	4	44.4	44.4	88.9
	Neutral	1	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

Four respondents (44.4%) strongly agreed and four more respondents (44.4%) agreed with the statement, according to Table 8. These together make up 88.9% of all answers, demonstrating a very favorable opinion of social media's contribution to political consciousness. On the other hand, no respondents disagreed with the statement, and 1 respondent (11.1%) stayed neutral.

Table 9: Social media plays a positive role in developing young people's skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Agree	2	22.2	22.2	88.9
	Neutral	1	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

According to the survey, two respondents (22.2%) agreed with the statement, while six respondents (66.7%) strongly agreed. Together, these represent 88.9% of all respondents, indicating a broad consensus that social media helps young people grow. Conversely, no respondents disagreed, and 1 respondent (11.1%) was neutral.

4.3 Negative Impact of Social Media on Youth

Table 10: The use of social media harms the social norms of young people

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1	11.1	11.1	11.1
	Agree	5	55.6	55.6	66.7
	Neutral	2	22.2	22.2	88.9
	Disagree	1	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The table shows that five respondents (55.6%) agreed with the statement, while one respondent (11.1%) strongly agreed. All told, 66.7% of respondents think social media undermines the social norms of young people. This indicates that most people believe social media can lead to unfavourable behavioural changes, like less in-person engagement, exposure to offensive information, or the adoption of foreign cultural behaviours that might not be consistent with local customs and values.

Table 11: Social media negatively affects young people's education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1	11.1	11.1	11.1
	Agree	3	33.3	33.3	44.4
	Neutral	2	22.2	22.2	66.7
	Disagree	.3	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The results of the table show that young people generally view social media as a time-waster. Six (66.7%) of the nine respondents agreed with the statement, while three (33.3%) strongly agreed. Neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree were not chosen by any responder.

Table 12: Social media spreads immoral content among young people

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	22.2	22.2	22.2
	Agree	2	22.2	22.2	44.4
	Neutral	.4	44.4	44.4	88.9
	Disagree	1	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

According to the table, respondents' opinions on whether or not young people are exposed to immoral content on social media are divided. Two (22.2%) and two (22.2%) of the nine respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. Furthermore, one respondent (11.1%) disagreed and four respondents (44.4%) were neutral. The strongly disagree option was not chosen by any responder.

Table 13: Social media affects young people's morals, behaviour, and social etiquette.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	22.2	22.2	22.2
	Agree	3	33.3	33.3	55.6
	Neutral	1	11.1	11.1	66.7
	Disagree	3	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The table's results demonstrate that respondents' opinions on whether social circumstances influence young people's moral behavior and social graces are divided. Three (33.3%) of the nine respondents agreed with the statement, while two (22.2%) strongly agreed. Furthermore, three respondents (33.3%) disagreed with the assertion, while one respondent (11.1%) remained neutral.

Table 14: Excessive social media use harms young people's physical activity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	22.2	22.2	22.2
	Agree	6	66.7	66.7	88.9
	Neutral	1	11.1	11.1	100.0

Total 9 100.0 100.0

The results of the table show that respondents firmly believe that excessive social media use has a detrimental effect on young people's physical activity. Six (66.7%) of the nine respondents agreed with the statement, while two (22.2%) strongly agreed. Furthermore, no respondent chose the disagree or strongly disagree options, and one respondent (11.1%) remained indifferent.

Table 15: Unnecessary information on social media creates confusion and ambiguity among young people

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4	44.4	44.4	44.4
	Agree	5	55.6	55.6	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The Table shows that unnecessary information on social media creates confusion and ambiguity among young people. Of the 9 respondents, 4 (44.4%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 5 (55.6%) agreed. No respondent selected neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree options.

4.4 Time Spent on Social Media

Table 16: Using social media (chatting, calls, links, and likes) causes young people to waste time

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	22.2	22.2	22.2
	Agree	4	44.4	44.4	66.7
	Neutral	1	11.1	11.1	77.8
	Disagree	2	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The Table shows that using social media (chatting, calls, links, and likes) wastes young people's time. Of the 9 respondents, 2 (22.2%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 4 (44.4%) agreed. In addition, 1 respondent (11.1%) remained neutral, and 2 respondents (22.2%) disagreed with the statement.

Table 17: Social media provides opportunities for young people to find advertisements and job opportunities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Agree	3	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The Survey shows that social media provides young people with opportunities to find advertisements and job openings. Of the 9 respondents, 6 (66.7%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 3 (33.3%) agreed. No response and select neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree options.

4.5 DISCUSSION

This study explored how social media is perceived to impact young people, specifically in regards to time usage, physical activity, education, skills development, employment opportunities, communication, cultural awareness, political awareness, social norms, and unnecessary and inappropriate information. The overall results show that the social media plays a double role in the life of youth. The respondents shared some important educational, social, cultural and employment related opportunities that they associate with the use of social media, but also expressed concerns about wasting time, inactivity with physical activity, educational challenges, shift in social norms, exposure to inappropriate content and information overload. This mix of positive and negative results aligns with recent studies indicating that the effects of social media use vary significantly by type, amount, intent, and use of social media platforms.

The results suggest that an excessive usage of social media is considered as one of the major sources of time spent by youth. As seen in Table 1, all the respondents agreed that social media has become a habit of wasting time and Table 2 indicates that 66.6% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that it is possible for social media activities like chatting, calls, sharing links and liking posts to waste time. Similarly, 66.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that these activities waste youth's time, as seen in Table 16. These findings indicate that time spent on social networking activities could be time spent on other educational, social, and/or physical activities.

The present finding aligns with the findings of Pyhältö et al. (2025) in a systematic review of 34 studies that revealed a link between off-task social media use and smartphone use with academic achievement, problematic and off-task social media and smartphone use frequently showing negative relationships with academic outcomes. Their research indicates that it is not the presence of social media that is the problem, but rather the

amount of time spent on the platforms for leisurely or non-school purposes. In other regard, Pazdur et al. (2025) found self-regulation challenges, negative emotions, peer factors and problematic patterns of social media use to be some of the factors associated with problematic social media use among the young.

The present results also highlight worry over physical activity. 88.9% strongly agreed and agreed that overuse of social media negatively affects youth's physical activity compared to 11.1% who were neutral or neither strongly agreed nor disagreed, in Tables 3 and 14. This finding supports findings that long-term exposure to screen and media can be linked to a decrease in physical activity among adolescents. For instance, Shao and Zhou (2023) found that prolonged screen time and overuse of media technology were associated with adolescents' less habitual physical activity. Similarly, Purba et al. (2023) identified links between social media use and various health-related risk behaviors among adolescents, but noted that the link with physical activity was not consistently negative across studies. Thus, the current study should be understood as a “perceived” relationship, not a causal connection between social media and decreased physical activity.

The results show a high level of positive attitudes towards social media as a platform for learning, information and skill development. The results from the respondents, as presented in Table 4, indicate that 77.8% strongly agree or agree that social media is used to share information, skills, and education for the benefit of youth. Likewise, Table 9 shows that 88.9% of respondents believed that social media has a positive impact on the skills development of young people.

The results are in line with the systematic review conducted by Perez et al. (2023) on social media as a teaching and learning tool in higher education. We have learned that social media networks can provide support for information sharing, communication, content development, discussion, and collaborative learning from their review. The authors also observed that the use of social media was an emerging part of today's education. Hence, the positive results of this study could be due to the ease of access of the educational videos, tutorials, discussion forums, professional resources, news articles and other learning materials that are available via social media.

A scoping review of 244 studies conducted by Jungselius (2024) on social media use among children and adolescents showed that research has become more focused on social media and its various purposes in children and adolescents' lives. The present study builds on this, as it demonstrates that the respondents consider social media to be a useful source for knowledge and skills for them. But educational benefits seem to be contingent on the use. Social media can be used purposefully for learning and information gathering, or excessively for recreation, which can interfere with study. This distinction is significant because young people can use the same platform in different ways, achieving different results.

A second significant finding is related to employment and career opportunities. As seen in Table 5, all the respondents agreed that social media gives opportunities for getting advertisements and job opportunities for young people, 66.7% of the respondents strongly agreed while 33.3% agreed. This is similarly seen in Table 17. This suggests that respondents generally feel very strongly that social media is now becoming a source of information for young people to gain access to information in relation to employment.

This study is in line with Ruparel et al. (2023) who did a systematic review of professional social media platforms and stated that they have revolutionized the traditional job market by enabling online hiring, applicant search processes, professional self-presentation, and employer–employee communication. A transition from higher education to employment, similarly, was linked by De Schepper et al. (2023) with social networks, albeit highlighting that not everyone has access to social networks that are useful for the transition to the labor market.

This current discovery is therefore significant as social media can be used not only as a place to entertain and communicate with others but also as a source of employment information and networking. However, posting job ads does not mean that employment is successful. Social media can help with accessing information and opportunities, but employment can only be obtained through the right qualifications, skills, the working market, professional networks and other factors.

The results are very strong in regards to the communicative role of social media. Table 6 shows that 100% of the respondents agreed that social media is used to connect people, with 77.8% strongly agreeing. This finding reveals that social media is mostly perceived as a significant means of sustaining social relationships and communication.

The discovery was in line with the latest literature, which focuses on the social and relational aspect of online platforms. In an umbrella review, Sala et al. (2024) found that social media has both risks and opportunities for adolescent well-being and that the impact of social media is dependent on individual factors, social media use patterns, content type, and the design of the social media platforms. Likewise, studies of social relationships in online contexts suggest that online can offer opportunities for social support, self-expression and social connection, but can also include social comparison and lack of support.

This current discovery thus lends credibility to the notion that social media should not be limited to being a bad technology. It can enable young people to communicate over distance, to keep in touch, share information, and provide socializing opportunities. The quality of such interactions is still significant, however. Online communication can be used to supplement face-to-face connections, but an over-dependence on online communication can have a variety of social and behavioral implications.

The research also revealed that there is a high level of awareness about the role of social media in cultural and political awareness. The results presented in Table 7 indicate that all respondents have agreed that social media contribute to the promotion of awareness of the world culture, while 77.8% of respondents strongly agree. As is also evident in Table 8, 88.8% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that social media contributes to the political awareness of the youth, with 11.1% being neutral.

These results suggest that the respondents see social media as an important environment to get information from outside their geographical and social environment. The young can find information about other cultures, social practices, public issues and international developments via social media. This exposure can broaden their awareness or understanding of issues outside their communities.

But having more information doesn't mean all of it is accurate, balanced, or reliable information received from social media. This is especially true of the findings in Table 15, where 100% of the respondents agreed that they found it confusing and unclear when there is too much information on social media that is not relevant to them. Therefore, the positive finding relating to awareness should be taken with the understanding of the challenge of information overload and the need for critical evaluation of information online.

The results also indicate worries about the impact of social media on social norms and behaviour. As shown in Table 10, 66.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that social media has negative effects on the norms of youth in society. Those who agreed or strongly agreed (55.5%) that social media impacts on youth morals, behavior, and social etiquette were somewhat different than those who disagreed (33.3%) or were neutral (11.1%) see Table 13.

These two findings are significant differences. It implies that the social impacts of social media are not uniform perceived by everyone. Although the majority were worried about the social norms, significant numbers did not believe that social media has a negative impact on morals and behaviour. This is in line with recent studies demonstrating the heterogeneous nature of social media effects, which are not necessarily negative or positive.

Mulisa et al. (2025) highlighted that the impact of social media on youth is highly contingent on the nature of such content and how users are exposed to it. They identified the positive aspects of social media to learning and keeping social relationships and the negative aspects to adolescents. This is also the finding of Sala et al. (2024) who found that individual characteristics, patterns of use, content and platform design can have an impact on the risks or opportunities that social media can offer. Based on the current results, therefore, it is suggested that social media can be interpreted in a context rather than believing that social media has a negative influence on social norms or morality in young people.

The results on education are mixed and hence must be interpreted with caution. The results in Table 4 clearly suggest that the respondents consider the social media as a source of education and skills, while the results in Table 11 suggest that the respondents are concerned with the negative effect of social media on education. The table shows that 44.4% agreed or strongly agreed that social media has a negative impact on youth education, 22.2% were neutral and 33.3% disagreed. This seeming paradox does not necessarily contradict. It could suggest that social media can be used as educational tools, but also be distracting and too much when it comes to schoolwork.

The results of Pyhäntö et al. (2025) largely support the interpretation that off-task and problematic social media use in general was related to lower academic performance. Conversely, Perez et al. (2023) highlighted that social media could be an enabler in educational communication and teaching and learning activities that are used in an educational context, such as knowledge sharing, creating content and collaborative learning.

Thus, the results of the present study indicate the conditions under which social media has an educational effect. Proper use for educational goals will benefit learning, while improper or recreational use may result in less time and attention spent on learning. This is particularly important when considering the respondents' perceptions and not social media use as a general behaviour.

The level of inappropriate content was a somewhat mixed bag. As seen in Table 12, 44.4% of the respondents agreed (strongly agreed) that in the society, young people are exposed to immoral contents through social media, 44.4% were neutral, and 11.1% disagreed. This distribution suggests that the question was not as clear as the other questions, which included communication, employment, cultural awareness, and physical activity.

In contrast, Table 15 yielded a much more robust response: 100% of respondents agreed that young people are confused and filled with ambiguity when receiving unnecessary information on social media. It implies that information overload can be seen as a more prevalent problem than exposure to inappropriate material.

Recent studies have confirmed the need to focus on content and usage patterns to predict social media outcomes. The importance of the pathways and social media contents in shaping the experiences of adolescents was highlighted by Mulisa et al. (2025). Purba et al. (2023) also determined that exposure to content about health-risk behaviours was associated with a range of outcomes among youth, though some outcomes showed less evidence and strength of association. These results show the need for media literacy in addition to social media, which children need to process information online in order to assess, filter and interpret it, rather than merely use more or less.

The results show that social media has a twofold function in the life of young people together. Positive findings are access to information and education, development of skills, information on employment opportunities, communication, cultural awareness and political awareness. The negative results mirror time demands, concerns about reduced exercise, potential education disruption, social norms and behavior shifts, inappropriate exposure to content and information overload.

This is consistent with the overall evidence. Based on a systematic review and meta-analyses of large number of youth participants, Ahmed et al. (2024) reported that the associations of ordinary social media use with depression and anxiety were relatively weak, while the associations of problematic social media use with poorer well-being, depression, anxiety, and sleep problems were stronger. In a similar manner, Poli et al. (2025) found that there was evidence linking problematic social media use to negative outcomes, with an awareness of the variability of evidence and the need to consider risk and protective factors.

Thus, the present study supports an interpretation that relates the effects of social media to the usage of the media, but in addition to the question of whether young people use social media, also to how, why and how intensely they use it. The results indicate that responsible and purposeful use can help provide education, social and cultural, and professional opportunities, whereas excessive or poorly-regulated use can be correlated with loss of time, decreased physical activity, academic problems, and other negative results.

The findings have some practical implications. Young people can gain an understanding of how to use digital and media-literacy skills to differentiate between useful educational and professional information and unnecessary or misleading information, as well as the benefits of doing so. Second, educational institutions can foster a constructive learning culture around social media, promote its effective use for learning, communication, career networking, and skill development, and help students and faculty understand the problem of excessive and distractive social media use. Third, families can help create a balance in how a young person uses technology without declaring every use on social media as “bad.” Lastly, interventions promoting problematic social media use should take into account individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors, but not just time spent on social media.

This approach has been supported by recent systematic reviews. However, in the study of Pazdur et al. (2025), self-regulation, peer relationships, emotional factors and mental health-related factors were identified as factors associated with problematic use of social media, while Poli et al. (2025) emphasized the significance of protective factors and psychosocial approaches. Accordingly, plans for the use of social media with young people must change from just controlling their access to responsible use, self-regulation, critical information evaluation and purposeful engagement.

The results of this study broadly correspond with recent literature that suggests the social media medium is an opportunity and a challenge for the youth. The most favourable views in this current study were those of communication, cultural awareness, employment opportunities, education and skills development. Time usage, physical activity and information overload were the most relevant concerns. Results regarding education, social norms, morality and inappropriate content were more varied, indicating that these outcomes might differ based on the type of social media use and/or intensity of use.

It is important to note that the results are not necessarily a reflection of actual causal effects, but rather perceptions of respondents. The study is of a questionnaire and descriptive statistics type, and thus cannot conclude that the effects reported are caused by the use of social media. This aligns with recent reviews, which highlight the diversity of studies and the importance of longitudinal research to better understand directionality and mechanisms (Ahmed et al., 2024; Pazdur et al., 2025).

Finally, there is no denying the role of social media in providing educational, social, cultural and professional opportunities for young people to benefit from and enjoy, but also of posing challenges when inadequate and excessive use, or when it is more about distracting and unnecessary content. The central message isn't that social media is all good or all bad, but that consequences are tightly linked to patterns, purposes, content and regulation of social media.

5. CONCLUSION

Social networking is widespread, and especially significant to the lifestyle of the younger generation in our technological and digital age. The present study adopted a quantitative approach with a questionnaire which was used to study the effect of social media on young people. The results of the study demonstrate that social networking sites have an impact on young people's attitude, behaviors, communication and daily activities.

The results of this study reveal that social media have a very significant role in the lives of young people, especially in the areas of communication, education, skill development, cultural awareness and job opportunities, with the participants expressing a high consensus on this. Other findings indicate some concerns, including time wastage, a lack of physical activity and possible harmful effects on behavior and social norms, but these are not universal perceptions.

Participants' opinions varied in specific areas, such as exposure to immoral information, indicating doubt. According to the study's overall findings, social media primarily have good effects, although their drawbacks cannot be disregarded. Therefore, the impact of social media is highly dependent on how they are used and thus young people's responsible, controlled, and moderate use of social media is essential.

5.1 Suggestions and Recommendations

A number of ideas and recommendations are put out to inspire the accountable and fruitful use of social networking sites based on the results of this study on the effects of social media on young people.

- Most importantly, it is directed that the use of social media by young people is moderated and supervised. They need to be able to effectively manage screen time to prevent overuse and its potential impact on their learning, mental health and personal development. Time management should be encouraged so social media is not a distraction in the learning process and other important activities.
- Second, parents and guardians must be involved and closely monitor and guide their children's online activities. With the right supervision, cyberbullying, online addiction and exposure to harmful content can all be reduced. In the digital society, it's important that families understand responsible and safe Internet usage.
- Thirdly, educational institutions should promote awareness sessions on social media as its pros and cons. Schools and colleges can conduct training sessions, seminars and workshops to educate students on digital literacy, online safety and responsible use of social networking websites.
- Fourth, in order to guaranty a safer digital environment for young people, policymakers and pertinent authorities should put policies and procedures into place. Some examples of this are campaigns against the abuse of social media platforms, cyber safety laws, and awareness campaigns.
- Fifth, social media companies should be in charge of encouraging instructive and informative content and minimizing harmful content. Young users can benefit from a healthier online environment thanks to enhanced user protection measures and content filtering systems.
- Last but not least, research in this area is recommended with larger sample sizes and diverse populations to provide better understanding of the long-term impacts of social media on the behaviours, psychology and academic performance of youth.
- In summary, the promotion of responsible use, awareness, and digital discipline can help to optimize the use of social media and reduce its negative impact on youth. Further research is recommended, with the use of larger sample sizes and other demographic groups, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the potential long-term implications of social media on the behaviour, psychology and academic performance of teenagers.

In overall, responsible use, understanding and digital discipline maximize the benefits of social media and minimize their negative impacts on youth.

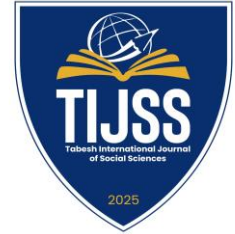
5.2 Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in the work of any author.

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