

Effect Of Covid'19 On Use Of Social Media And Its Implication For Mental Health Of University Students

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Abstract

The unexpected consequences of COVID-19 forced to close several educational institutions, causing many issues for the students. An online survey was administered on students at Government College University Lahore to learn how COVID-19 affected their use of social media and its implication for mental health. A sample of 131 students took part in the survey. It was found that more than one-half of the participants spent more time on social media because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The sleeping time of most of the students was affected due to the dependence on social media. The most preferred apps among the students were Instagram and Facebook where they spent time to entertain themselves. Salience and withdrawal were found as the two main indicators of social media accounts for the increase in mental health issues.

Keywords: Effect of COVID'19, Social Media, Mental Health, University Students.

Introduction

Coronavirus 2019 (COVID'19) emerged from China in December 2019. It spread to more than 200 nations throughout the world, disrupting people's lives and creating massive problems for mankind. Historically, large scale pandemics generally had long-term social and psychological consequences for humanity. COVID'19 emerged as a major health threat around the globe, and it also brought a few social, financial, and psychological challenges. The large-scale pandemic had a negative impact on the lives of a significant portion of the world's population, putting additional strain on those people who are living in developing or underdeveloped countries such as Pakistan.

In Pakistan, the first case of COVID'19 was reported during the third week of March in 2020 (Rizwan et al, 2021). There was a nationwide lockdown to have a control on the spread of the virus. All educational institutions, public places including restaurants, shopping malls and religious worship places as well as many industries were closed in accordance with lockdown measures. The lockdown caused a lot of issues that were likely to exacerbate the psychological burden on the population even in developed countries. The implementation of lockdown disturbed the routine of people while increasing their emotional stress.

Social media usage increased during the time of COVID-19 as it helped in dissemination of

information. It was used as a strong instrument and dependable resource for timely information regarding significant issues and health concerns. Many social media platforms provided untrustworthy information, making it difficult to distinguish between rumors and facts. COVID-19 caused widespread mental health problems due to social media platforms. There are currently 46 million users of social media in Pakistan. This figure has increased up to 9% from the year 2020-2021 and the reason behind it is the outbreak of COVID'19 and social isolation (Kemp, 2021).

According to the research conducted in Pakistan, social media usage among men and women is nearly equal each day. The mean COVID-19-related knowledge score of men was significantly higher than that of women, but women scored significantly higher on COVID-19 prevention measures in terms of attitude and practices. Despite this, it was still determined that women had higher levels of psychological issues than men, such as anxiety, stress, and depression. Due to the widespread media coverage of COVID-19, there was a strong correlation between the amount of time spent on social media apps and the frequency of these mental health illnesses. According to a recent Pakistani study. About 90% of research participants utilized social media to find out about COVID-19. Most of them were misinformed in different ways. They added that the majority of the participants' mental and psychological health had been negatively impacted by the pandemic. The financial strain brought on by the extended quarantine was one of the main sources of stress and anxiety (Rizwan et al, 2021).

Previous studies were conducted on excessive use of social media Apps with its impact on mental health of people which

shows positive, negative and no relation. The researches conducted during COVID'19 all over the world on the use of social media and its impact on mental health shows that those who use social media apps a lot are more likely to have depressive symptoms and other mental health issues but no significant reasons are provided so far for it. Very few studies have been conducted on COVID'19 till now as it is a new area of concern. It is important to see in this aspect to know about the mental condition of the people, especially of the students and how their lives have been impacted during the time of pandemic by staying at home and using social media. University students were more inclined towards the use of social media as this segment of population is more technologically advanced and a major shift in their routine was seen at that time. The study pattern was shifted from physical classes to online classes for more than a year due to which their internet usage increased a lot and with this increase the level of distraction from studies also intensified. The academic performance was highly affected. Students stayed in touch with their fellows through these platforms and kept an eye on their activities as well.

The most widely used social media networks are Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok. YouTube and Facebook. Social media was initially developed as a means of communication between friends and family, but businesses gradually used it as a tool to connect with clients. The power of social media is its capacity to connect with and disseminate information to everyone on earth, or to many people at once. Every year, new social media platforms like TikTok and Clubhouse emerge to compete with long-standing social networks like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram. Social media is a field that is constantly evolving

and developing. The Pew Research Center (2021) reports that younger people utilize social media more frequently. Nearly 90% of social media users are between the age of 18 and 29.

Numerous electronically supported activities can be used as social media platforms. This includes sharing photos, playing social games, using business networks, exploring virtual worlds, sharing videos, writing reviews, blogging, and other activities. Politicians and governments also engage with voters and constituents on social media. Social media is used by people to connect with their extended families and peer group. Social media platforms are used by some people to search for job opportunities, connect with people around the world who have common interests, and communicate their thoughts, feelings, insights, and emotions. Members of this community are a part of an online social network. The way that we all communicate online has changed due to it. It enables us to stay in touch with distant friends, communicate with one another, and learn about current events in the world. At our doorsteps, it offers access to an endless amount of information. Social media has in many ways made it easier for people to engage with one another online, which has made the world seem more accessible. According to a Pew Research Center report from 2020, using social media is associated with having more friends and a wider personal network, especially in emerging nations. Despite the advantages of social media, many people continue to criticize it and compare excessive use to an addiction. Some claim it leads to distraction, anxiety, and jealousy. According to the National Centre for Biotechnology Information Distress and excessive social media usage are apparently related. It can also serve as a source of inaccurate and misleading

information (Lin et al., 2016).

Facebook is the world's largest social media platform, with a clear advantage over other social media platforms, despite having similar audiences to others such as Twitter and Instagram. The following are the figures for the most popular social media websites as of January 2021: On Facebook (2.74 billion users), WhatsApp (2 billion users), Instagram (1.22 billion users), QQ (617 million users), Weibo (511 million users), YouTube (2.29 billion users), messenger on Facebook (1.3 billion users), TikTok (689 million users) and Douyin (600 million users) (Social Media: Sharing Ideas and Thoughts, 2021).

According to the studies, social media has both positive and negative impact on the mental health on the people Emotional, psychological, and social well-being all impact the mental health. It influences feelings, beliefs, and behavior of the people. It also has an impact on how we handle stress, interact with others, and make healthy decisions. From childhood to adolescence to adulthood, mental health is essential at all stages of life. There are various types of mental illnesses with varying degrees of severity. Among the most prevalent are eating disorders, personality disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, anxiety, and depression. While everyone frequently encounters tension, fear, or grief, mental illness arises when these emotions become so upsetting and overwhelming that people find it difficult to manage daily responsibilities like work, leisure, and maintaining relationships. People with depressive disorders may, at their worst, be physically incapable of getting out of bed or taking care of themselves. People with anxiety disorders may find it difficult to leave their houses or turn to compulsive rituals as a coping

mechanism.

Many people struggle with mental health issues while attending university during the lockdown. These concerns may be exacerbated by the additional effects of usage of social media. While university and social media were stressors for Generation Z, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 added another factor to the equation. When the viral epidemic initially started, everyone was sent home and the world quickly shut down. Everyone used a screen as their primary form of communication. During COVID-19, people used social media and the internet for their job, school, and social life. These new social media and internet applications significantly increased screen time. However, little has changed in terms of technology for Generation Z students. The pandemic increased this generation's already excessive screen time. Meanwhile, the purpose of social media use shifted from recreational to online classes and online work. Social media emerged as one of the last remaining avenues for communication as face-to-face interactions have become rare now. People will have to learn to adjust to our "old normal" once they reintegrate into a society that is operating regularly. Social media might be an important factor if inquiries are made into how the pandemic affected people's mental health. The research questions are:

1. How COVID-19 affected university students' mental health in relation to their use of social media?
2. Does social media affect both the genders in the same or opposite ways?
3. How has the use of social media by university students changed during COVID-19?
4. Does the well-being of students is

affected using social media?

The goal of this study is to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how it affected the use of social media of university students. More broadly, the goal is to investigate how it affected mental well-being. This study aims to connect these topics to investigate how social media use during COVID-19 affected the mental health of university students from Generation Z. The literature on social media's impact on mental health would be broadened by the findings of this study. Many of these studies, as previously stated, are geared toward Millennials. There is also a lot of research on how Generation Z uses social media. Social media use and COVID-19 is the subject of new research. The significance of this research is that it will provide insight into the well-being of this generation of university students after the COVID-19 pandemic started. This research will help the mainstream researchers and overall population in raising awareness regarding the mental health issues that are experienced by the students during the first wave of COVID'19.

Research Methodology

Research site: The research site for this study is Government College University Lahore (GCUL) because this research is specifically on university students and both undergraduate and postgraduate students are present over here.

Population: The population of this research comprised of the undergraduate and postgraduate students who were enrolled in public sector universities of Lahore at the time of first wave of COVID'19.

Pilot testing: The validity and reliability of the tools was also tested for this research. For

checking the face validity, the questionnaire or the tools were checked by the supervisor again and again. And for checking the reliability of tools, pretesting was done. Data from 20 respondents was collected from different demographic backgrounds and it was entered into the SPSS and reliability test was applied on it. The tools to measure both usage of social media and mental health were reliable as their Cronbach's Alpha value were 0.873 and 0.947 respectively. Both the values are greater the 0.8 which shows that they are highly reliable.

Sampling: The sample of 131 university students was collected from GCUL. The students who were in their 3rd and 4th year of BS (Hons) programs were included in the research. The reason for selecting only 3rd and 4th year students of BS (Hons) programs is that when COVID'19 broke out in Pakistan and there was nationwide lockdown and these students were studying in the university, whereas those students of social sciences, basic sciences and languages who were in their 1st or 2nd year of BS (Hons) were excluded because they were in their intermediate at the time of first wave of COVID'19. The students of 3 different disciplines; social sciences, natural sciences and languages were made part of this research to examine the difference in their usage of social media among them and its effect on their mental health. The departments under these three faculties were department of Sociology, Philosophy, History, Political science, Management studies, Commerce and Finance, Fine arts, Economics, English language, Arabic and Islamic studies, Persian, Punjabi, Urdu, Physical Education and Psychology. The postgraduate students were also part of this research.

The sampling technique used for this research is convenience sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling. It was the most appropriate technique for this research

because the sampling frame was not available. Just because the researcher did not have access to the sampling frame that is why simple random sampling was not used. The email ID of the majority of the students was missing due to the unavailability of a sampling frame for the researcher so, that is why questionnaire was not shared with them. So, all those students of 3rd and 4th year of BS (Hons) and postgraduate who were easily accessible were included in the sample.

Method: For conducting this research survey method was used which is the most suitable way for this research. It is cross-sectional research; the overall data is collected at one time because researchers just want to know about the pattern in which social media was used during the first wave of COVID'19 and what was its implication on mental health at that time.

Data collection: Since it was quantitative research so questionnaire was used as a data collection tool by the researcher. The data that was collected through the questionnaire was primary data because it was the first-hand information which was given directly from the respondents to the researcher. Socio-demographic variables were asked from the respondents to know about the family structure and income and see whether it influences the usage of social media or not. Similarly, the gender of the respondents was asked to see whether both the genders are affected equally or not. And through the demographic questions the variety of people was seen who responded to the questionnaire. To measure the usage of social media Apps during the time of COVID'19, social networking addiction scale was used which is developed by Ghazi Shah Nawaz and Usama Rehman in 2020. It is a 21-item scale that measures salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse

(Shahnawaz & Rehman, 2020). It was a Likert scale which ranges from 1-7 strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree. The questions from 1-21 were taken from the social networking addiction scale with little modification whereas the questions from 22- 25 were researchers own questions. To explore the dimension of addiction the obtained score under each item is summed up. The score can range from minimum 21 to maximum 147. And if the total score of any respondent cross 84 then it comes under the category of addiction. To measure the mental health of students Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) was used. WEMWBS is a 14-item mental well-being scale that assesses psychological functioning and subjective wellbeing in which all statements are written in positive manner and addresses the aspects of positive mental health (Tennant et al., 2007). The scale is scored by adding the sum of responses on each item on 1 to 5 Likert scale. The scale score ranges from minimum 14 to maximum 70.

The questionnaire was sent to the respondents through online platforms because the data was collected during the month of July and at that time students get free from their final exams and stay at home during summer vacations. Further the students were asked to share the link of questionnaire with their friends and fellows who are enrolled in the departments of BS (Hons) sciences and languages and postgraduate programs. To analyze the data for this research SPSS was used by the researcher. While entering the data it was made sure that no duplicate response is added and if there is any incomplete response then it is discarded immediately. The data was analyzed by applying descriptive and inferential statistics.

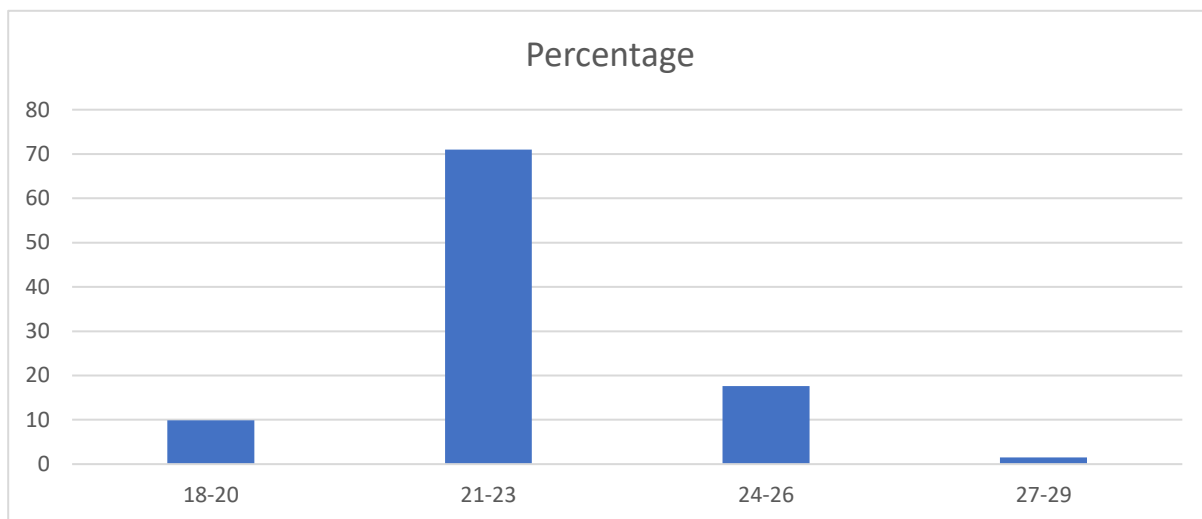
Ethical consideration: While conducting the research the consent of respondents was taken whether they want to become part of this research or not and the purpose of research was also mentioned on the questionnaire so, before filling the questionnaire they should know the objective of this research. The privacy of respondents was ensured and the identity was not disclosed. No scientific fraud was done; even before using social networking addiction scale and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale permission was taken from the authors and credit was also given to them in the text.

Results and Findings

Once the survey was completed, the researcher was able to draw a conclusion. The main thing which researcher wanted to know was the percentage of demographic factors of respondents along with the relationship between social media and mental health. The researcher wanted to know how the indicators of social media impact mental health individually. Through descriptive statistics the main thing researcher wanted to know how much time students spend on social media and which social media Apps are highly used and preferred by them and does it have any relationship with mental health or not.

Demographic Information of the Respondents

There were 131 respondents who participated in this survey out of which 9.9% respondents were between the age of 18-20, 71% were between 21-23, 17.6% were between 24-26, whereas only 1.5% respondents were between the age of 27-29. According to most of the respondents of undergraduate and postgraduate were between 21-23 years.

Figure 1: Age of the Respondents.

Almost one half of the respondents were males whereas the other half were female who were included in this research as shown in Figure 2. The proportion of males and females are

almost same because GCUL provides co-education and the number of males and females students who are enrolled in GCUL are almost same.

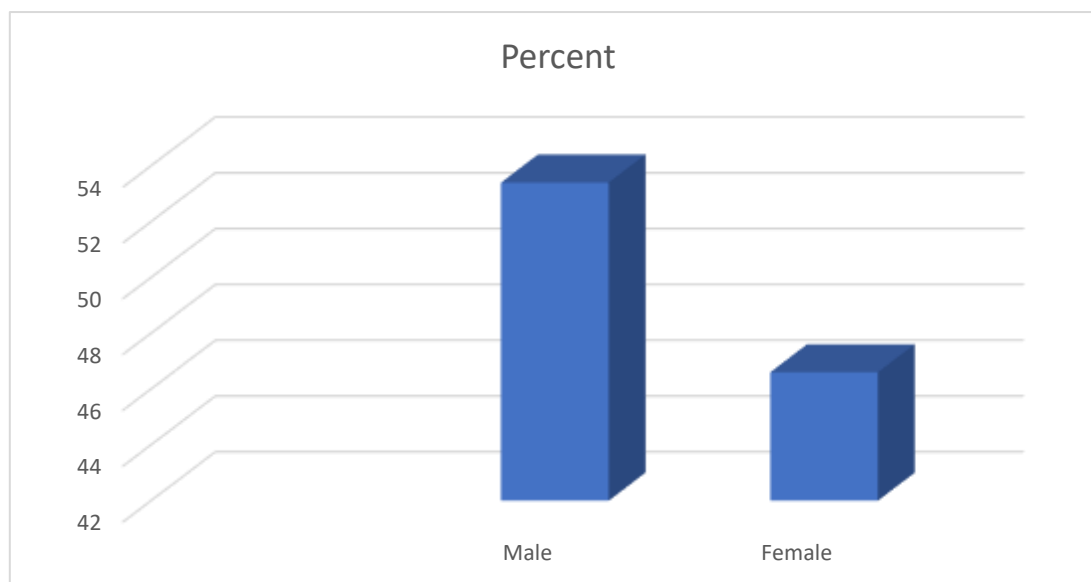
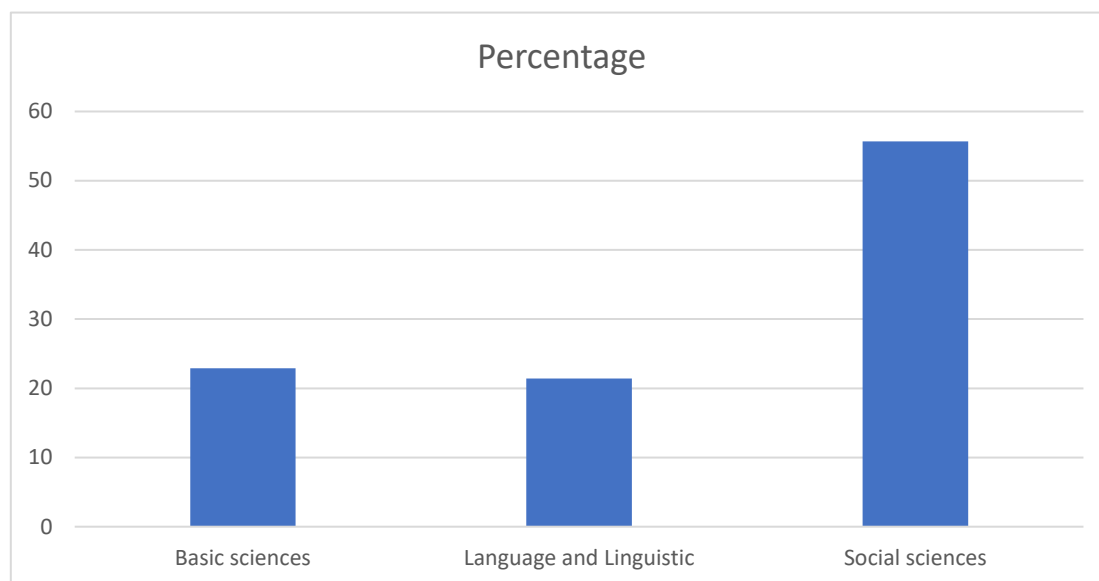
Figure 2: Gender of the Respondents

Figure 3: Disciplines of the Respondents

For this research the data was collected from 3 different disciplines; basic sciences, social sciences and language and linguistics to know about the variations and have a deeper insight and know students of which departments uses the social media most and whether the effect on their mental health is same or not. According to Figure 3, 55.7% students from the social sciences, 21.4% students from the

language and linguistics and 21.8% students from the basic sciences in total took part in this research. Only 13.7% of students from the postgraduates and 86.3% undergraduates took part in this research as shown in Figure 4. The reason for not getting equal responses from both the degrees is that sampling frame was absent and the access to the postgraduates was very difficult.

Figure 4: Level of Education

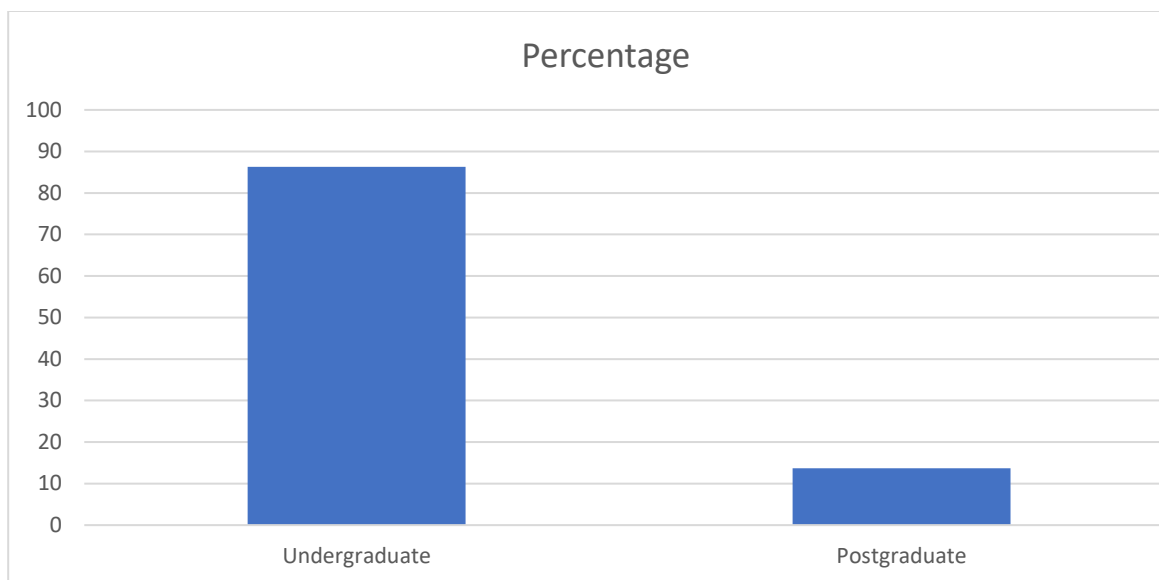
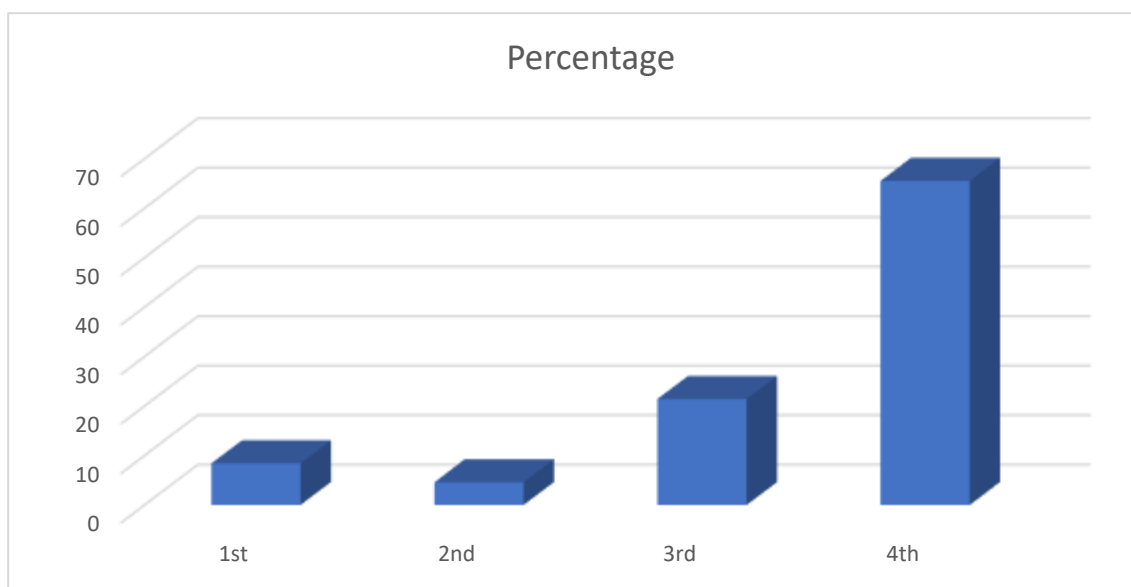
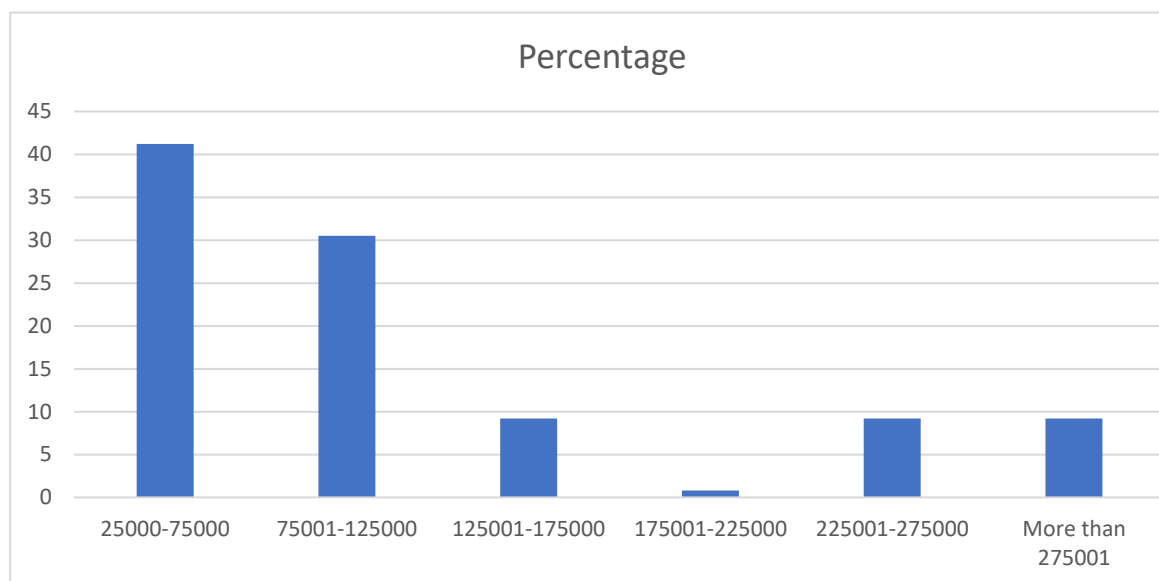


Figure 5: Academic year of the respondents



Most of the students who participated in this survey were in 4th year which makes around 65.6%. Only 3rd and 4th academic year students were included in this research because they were enrolled in university when COVID'19

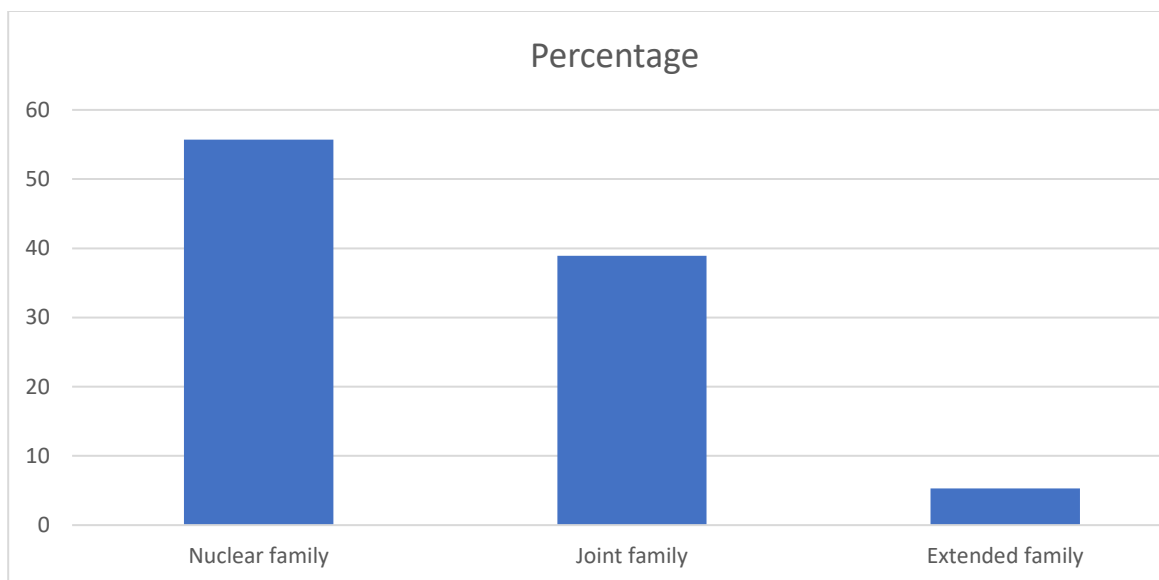
broke out in Pakistan. Whereas postgraduates were also enrolled in the university at that time but access to these students was limited so that is why only 21.4% responses was collected from them.

Figure 6: Monthly Income of the Family

According to Figure 6, the majority of the respondents had their monthly income between 25000-75000 which makes around 41.2% it means that they belong to lower- or middle-class families. Only 0.8% respondents had their income between 175001-225000 whereas those students who had their monthly income more than 275001 were 9.2%.

Out of 131 respondents more than 50% were living in nuclear families, 38.9% were living in joint families and a small proportion was living in extended family. Table 7 indicates that the proportion of respondents who were living in extended family was extremely low, and the majority lived in nuclear family system.

Table 7: Family Structures of Respondents



USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

This study was conducted to learn about the usage of social media and tell us about the pattern in which students of undergraduate and

postgraduates use social media Apps and how it impacted their mental health. Table 1 shows the indicators which are used to measure the usage of social media.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of responses against each item associated with usage of social media

No.	Items	Response category						
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Salience:								
1.1	While I study, my mind remains on social media Apps	3.1	12.2	3.8	6.1	35.1	26.7	13.0
1.2	I go to social media Apps instantly after waking up in the morning.	2.3	7.6	8	8	13.7	42	32.8
1.3	I check for updates on social media Apps while studying/working.	1.5	5.3	6.1	4.6	19.8	41.2	21.4

1.4	I check my social media account before starting any task.	3.1	9.9	9.9	6.9	20.6	27.5	22.1
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Mood modification:

1.5	I go to social media Apps whenever I am upset.	4.6	10.7	3.1	8.4	16.0	37.4	19.85
1.6	Social media Apps helps me lift my mood.	4.6	9.9	3.1	10.7	27.5	32.1	12.2
1.7	I feel relaxed whenever I am on social media Apps.	6.1	12.2	5.3	19.1	20.6	28.2	8.4

Tolerance:

1.8	These days I spend more and more time on social media Apps.	0	15.3	4.6	8.4	16.8	32.8	22.1
1.9	When compared I spend more time on social media Apps now than I did in the past.	2.3	16.8	5.3	9.2	16.0	33.6	16.8
1.10	I need to be on social media Apps for longer time than before to be satisfied.	5.3	26.0	9.2	11.5	20.6	19.1	8.4

Withdrawal:

1.11	I feel sad when I am unable to log in to social media Apps.	4.6	22.1	10.7	9.2	18.3	19.1	16.0
1.12	I become irritable whenever I cannot log in to social media Apps.	5.3	18.3	11.5	7.6	18.3	22.9	16.0
1.13	I feel frustrated when I cannot use social media Apps.	7.6	19.8	13.7	10.7	19.8	14.5	13.7
1.14	I become restless when I do not get time for social media.	9.2	31.3	9.9	14.5	11.5	16.8	6.9

Conflict:

1.15	I try to hide the time I spend on social media Apps.	8.4	36.6	9.2	10.7	13.0	15.3	6.9
1.16	I need to lie to my parents and others when they ask about my social media usage.	16	31.3	13.	9.9	13.7	9.2	6.1
1.17	I ignore my sleep because I have/want to be on social media Apps.	13.7	19.8	10.7	9.9	22.1	18.3	5.3

Relapse:

1.18	I have failed to cut down the time I spend on social media Apps.	3.8	16.8	13.0	13.	28.2	22.9	2.3
1.19	I have tried to stop using social media Apps, but have failed.	5.3	21.4	9.2	19.	16.8	20.6	6.9
1.20	I am unable to cut-down the time I spend on social media Apps.	3.8	16.8	14.5	19.1	20.6	19.8	5.3
1.21	My repeated attempts to reduce the time I spend on social media Apps have failed.	6.9	15.3	15.3	15.3	22.1	18.3	6.9

According to statement 1.1, 35.1% students somewhat agreed that their mind remain on the social media Apps while they study whereas only a small proportion of 3.1% students strongly disagreed with it. The usage of social media Apps among the students is so high that their mind remains on social media apps even while studying. Statement 1.2 shows that students are so obsessed with their social media apps that approximately 42% respondents agreed that they instantly check their phone in the morning while 2.3% strongly disagreed with it. Statement 1.3

indicates that 41.2% students want to stay updated on what is going on social media that is why they use their social media Apps very religiously while studying. From statement 1.4 we can see that more than two third of the students check their social media accounts before starting any task but 22.9% claims that they do not engage in social media this much.

According to the table 1 social media helps majority of the students to lift up the mood or helps them to feel better it basically modifies the mood of students. In total 73.2%

respondents claims that whenever they feel low, they just login into their social media accounts to feel better whereas a very small proportion of respondents totally disagreed with it. According to the statement 1.7, 28.2% agreed that they feel relaxed when they use social media whereas 12.2% disagreed with it.

According to the statement 1.8 the usage of social media apps of university students is very high. Only 15.3% students disagreed with it and 8.4% had neutral opinion on it. From the analysis of statement 1.9 we can see that during the time of COVID'19 the usage of social media apps increased by 66.4% in total but for 24.4% respondents the usage of social media remained same.

We get mixed responses for the withdrawal of social media as almost 22.1% students disagreed that they do not feel sad when they cannot login into their social media accounts, but almost same percentage of people also agreed to it. Statement 1.12 and statement 1.13 indicates that 5.3% and 7.6% respondents strongly disagreed that they do not feel irritable or frustrated when they cannot use their social media. 18.3% respondents agreed and similarly 18.3% respondents disagreed with the statement 1.12. From the statement 1.14, we get to know that in half of the total

respondents do not feel restless when they do not get time for using their social media, whereas 14.5% gave neutral response on it and 35.2% agreed to the statement.

From the statements 1.15 and 1.16 we get to know that majority of the students disagreed that they don't hide the time they spend on social media and they don't even lie to their parents and friends about their social media usage. Almost half of the respondents agreed to the statement 1.17 that they ignore their sleep just for the sake of social media.

Statements from 1.18 to 1.21 shows the relapse of social media. 28.2% somewhat agreed and 22.9% agreed they were not able to cut down the time they use on social media but around 32% people were successful in cutting down the time. There are mixed results for the statement 1.21 as almost the same proportion of students agreed and disagreed that even after many attempts, they have failed to reduce the time they spend on social media.

EFFECTS ON MENTAL HEALTH

The mental health of university students due to the usage of social media is given in the Table 2. It shows how much social media has affected the mental health of university students during the first wave of COVID'19.

Table 2: Percentages distribution of responses against each item associated with effects on mental health

No.	Items	Response categories				
		None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
2.1	I have been feeling optimistic about the future	4.6	11.5	29.0	38.2	16.8

2.2	I have been feeling useful	7.6	16.8	22.9	38.9	13.0
2.3	I have been feeling relaxed	6.1	22.9	31.3	30.5	9.2
2.4	I have been feeling interested in other people	12.2	33.6	29.0	19.8	5.3
2.5	I have had energy to spare	5.3	21.4	36.6	30.5	6.1
2.6	I have been dealing with problems well	4.6	17.6	32.1	35.	9.9
2.7	I have been thinking clearly	3.8	16.8	29.0	38.2	12.2
2.8.	I have been feeling good about myself	9.2	16.8	26.7	29.0	18.3
2.9	I have been feeling close to other people	10.7	26.7	27.5	28.2	6.9
2.10	I have been feeling confident	6.1	16.0	29.0	32.8	16.0
2.11	I have been able to make up my own mind about things.	4.6	13.0	29.0	38.2	16.0
2.12	I have been feeling loved	13.0	24.4	26.0	27.5	9.2
2.13	I have been interested in new things	6.9	13.7	22.1	34.4	22.9

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According to statement 2.1 38.2% of students often feel optimistic about their future whereas only 4.6% students never feel optimistic. Statement 2.2 indicated that approximately 40% of students often feel like they are useful and a very small proportion of 7.6% denied that they never feel useful. The result of statement 2.4 indicates that most of the students do not feel interested in other people but there are 5.3% students who feel interested

in other people all of the time. Statement 2.6 shows that most of the students can deal with their problems well. 26.7%, 29.0% and 18.3% students in statement no. 2.8, stated that they feel good about themselves by selecting some of the time, often and all the time from the response category respectively. The results of statement 2.10, show that 32.8% students feel confident about themselves. According to statement 2.12, around 50% students feel loved rarely whereas only 27.5% students often feel loved. Statement 2.13 and 2.14 indicates that 22.9% and 15.3% respondents were interested in new things and have cheerful feeling all the time but 13.7% and 17.6% rarely had interest in new things and did

not have feeling of cheerfulness respectively.

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL HEALTH

Firstly, to check the association between usage of social media and mental health correlation

was applied to it. Correlation basically tells whether the variables have any association between them and whether this association is positive or negative. For social media and mental health, we get a negative association between them. Table 3 indicates that when one variable increases the other decreases.

Table 3: Correlation between the social media and mental health

		TotalSM	TotalMH
TotalSM	Pearson Correlation	1	-.157
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.073
	N	131	131
TotalMH	Pearson Correlation	-.157	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.073	
	N	131	131

Note: TotalSM= Total usage of Social Media, TotalMH= Mental Health of respondents

The negative sign with the values reflects the type of association in this table. Since we are not sure till now so we can say whether use of social media is affecting mental health or due to poor mental health students tends to use more social media Apps.

There are six indicators of social media which

are covered in this research. The reason to specify each indicator is to check its relation separately with mental health. Regression analysis was applied on the data to see how salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict and relapse independently affect the mental health of the university students.

Table 4: Regression analysis on salience and mental health

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.

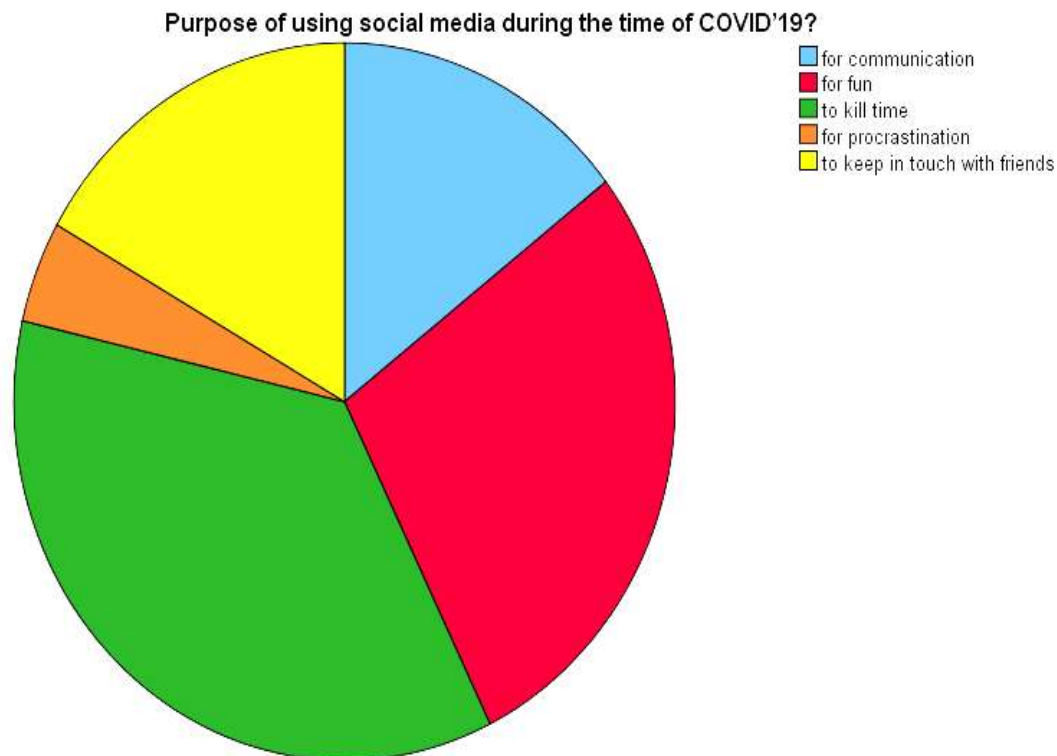
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	55.295	4.208		13.140	.000
	salience	-.465	.195	-.206	-2.386	.018

a. Dependent Variable: TotalMH

The mental health of university students is majorly affected by salience which is an indicator or factor of social media. It shows that the value 0.018 indicated that the data is significant enough as it is smaller than 0.05. It indicates the direct relationship among the two variables that when university students have high salience towards to social media, they have a negative impact on the mental health. The reason for this is that students are so obsessed with social media Apps that they

check their social media accounts after waking up, before starting any task or while studying as well. The figure 8 shows the reason why students were so obsessed with their social media Apps 35.6% students they used to kill their time whereas 27.3% used it for fun. The content which is watched by the students on social media Apps varies from person to person and it leaves an impact on their mental health.

Figure 8: Purpose of Using Social Media During the Time of COVID'19



The second indicator which leaves a negative impact on the mental health of the students is withdrawal. Data shows that when students are not able to cut down the time, they spend on social media Apps then they get addicted to it. The value 0.024 shows that data collected for the withdrawal indicator is significant and the negative sign shows the negative relation among our two variables. When the time spent

on social media increases, then students start getting frustrated and irritable when they cannot login into their social media accounts. According to most of the people use social media for 5-6 hours per day, like this we can say that it gets difficult for them to withdraw the time and eventually it affects them negatively.

Table 5 Regression analysis on withdrawal and mental health

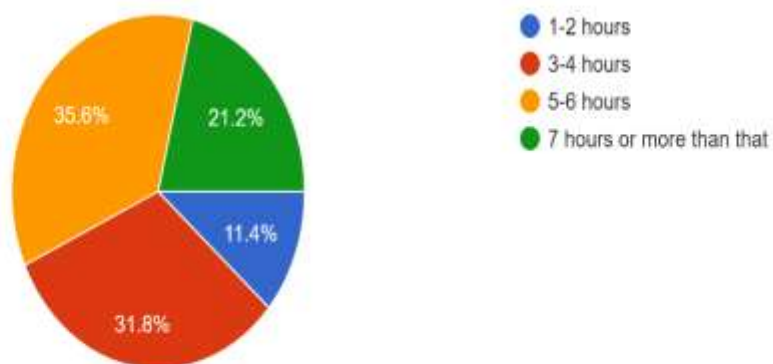
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	50.436	2.339		21.562	.000
	Withdrawal	-.298	.130	-.197	-2.287	.024

a. Dependent Variable: TotalMH

Figure 9: Time Spent on Social Media per Day

How much time do you spend on social media per day?

132 responses



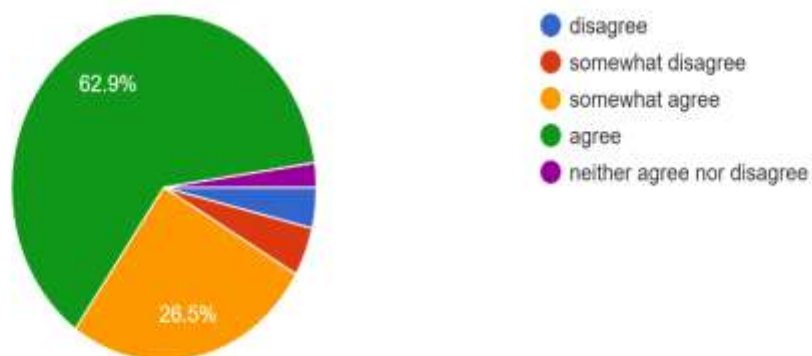
The use of social media Apps of students increased during the time of COVID'19. It shows that two-third of students agreed that

their usage of social media increased and only a small proportion disagreed with it.

Figure 10: Usage of Social Media Apps Increased During the Time of COVID'19

My social media Apps usage increased during the time of COVID'19?

132 responses

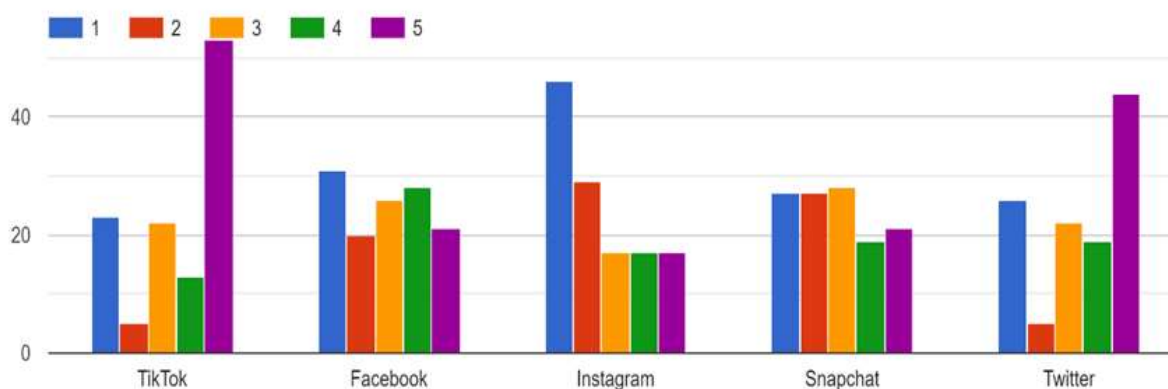


These findings show that the most used social media App is Instagram and the least preferred or use App is twitter. As majority of students claimed that they use social media to kill time so, they can do it on Instagram, the have variety of content there for example videos, pictures, motivational speeches etc. People can also stay in touch with their loved ones or public personalities on Instagram, but at the same time it spreads hate and negativity among the people. According to a study conducted by Seabrook, Kern & Richard (2016) those students who have negative social interactions and face trolling, swatting,

or doxing tend to have higher rate of mental health issues. Social media develops beauty standards among the people due to which they do not feel comfortable in their own skin, they develop body dissatisfaction (Fleps, 2021). So, for this research we could assume that those students who used social media in access during the first wave of COVID'19 they might have faced body shaming, comments on private life and cyber bullying which causes inferiority complex and social comparison and makes people sad and depress and ultimately it impacted their mental health negatively.

Figure 11: Most Used Social Media App

Which social media site you use the most? Rank the following from 1 to 5. 1 being the most and 5 being the least.



Conclusion

The study found that the COVID-19 pandemic affected how university students used social media, and that this had a detrimental effect on their mental health. Since the pandemic,

students have expanded their use of social media; more than half of them now spend more than five hours per day online. Instagram and Facebook were the two platforms that students used the most frequently during the first wave of COVID'19, while Twitter and

TikTok were the least popular. The findings showed a substantial rise in mental health problems associated with COVID-19 social media use. Moreover, one-half of respondents stated that COVID-19's initial wave increased their reliance on social media. The two major factors that contributed to the decreased mental health are salience and withdrawal. To conclude, in the aftermath of the worst global health crisis in a century, college students from Generation Z use social media more than ever causing negative emotions that is taking toll on their mental health.

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