

# Assessment of the Effects of Social Media on Social Relations

Naresh Kumar Jatiya

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, S.D. Government College, Beawar, Rajasthan, India

**ABSTRACT:** Social media can affect all types of relationships in both positive and negative ways. It can help people stay connected, but may also lead to less quality in-person time. People can use social media to stay connected to long-distance friends and family members or improve communication with their partners, children, and healthcare professionals. In contrast, social media use can lead to less quality in-person time spent with loved ones and relationship dissatisfaction. These drawbacks may be related to pre-existing relationship issues or psychological conditions.

**KEYWORDS:** social media, social relations, effects, psychological, family

## I. INTRODUCTION

Social media can affect relationships in the following positive ways.

### 1. Helps boost connectivity

According to recent research, social media use has a positive impact on social connection if people use it actively. [1,2,3]

Family members and friends do not always live in the same city, or even the same state or country. Social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook are quick and convenient ways for long-distance loved ones to stay in touch. People can post updates about themselves and others in their lives, such as spouses and children, as well as share photos of vacations and other important family events. Additionally, people can tweak their privacy levels and share more personal information or pictures through individual or group messages.

These and other social media apps provide ways for people to video chat in real-time, further helping them feel more connected.

### 2. Helps improve communication

Margaret E. Morris, Ph.D., clinical psychologist and author of *Left to Our Own Devices: Outsmarting Smart Technology to Reclaim Our Relationships, Health, and Focus*, conducted a 2019 review of how people in various types of relationships use technology. Morris found that it is not the specific type of technology people use but how they use it that can bring value to the partnership.

Morris discusses the benefits of various types of technology. One example is a parent sharing a self-help app with a child to work through an argument. In discussing romantic relationships, Morris highlights how sharing images via social media can also feel like an extra way to communicate. Using tools such as WhatsApp, and texting through an argument, may also help some people communicate through writing. This allows a person time and space to formulate the right words when face-to-face conversations prove difficult.

### 3. Aids sexual gratification

Concerning romantic relationships, social media might actually help partners achieve sexual gratification. More specifically, this refers to pornography consumption on social media.

During a 2019 study involving 379 participants, researchers found pornography consumption may significantly help a person's sexual gratification in their romantic relationships. However, the degree to which participants felt this improvement was dependent on the person's sexual confidence and sexual compulsivity.

Learn more about the benefits and risks of pornography usage here.

Negative effects of social media on relationships



The following are some negative ways in which social media can impact relationships.

### 1. Fuels functional impairments

Substituting social media interactions for face-to-face communication may impact not only existing relationships but also the ability to form new relationships.

For example, while some researchers note the necessity for more research on social anxiety and social media use, it is possible Trusted Source for people with social anxiety to experience continued functional impairments — e.g., being uncomfortable or unable to form and engage in face-to-face relationships — when they replace in-person interactions with social media use.

Furthermore, failing to make or maintain in-person relationships may also appear as a consequence of social media use. During a 2018 study at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia, researchers found that more than half (59%) of the 300 participants reported prolonged use of social media had impacted their social interactions, negatively affecting family relationships and friendships while also making face-to-face communication more difficult. However, the study consisted only of students who identified as female aged 17–29 years, so [4,5,6] more research is necessary.

### 2. Decreases quality time and relationship satisfaction

Excessive social media use can negatively impact quality time, create conflict, and reduce relationship satisfaction — whether the relationship is romantic or not.

During a 2018 study, researchers used Instagram and the app’s time-tracking capability to learn more about the connection between social media and relationship satisfaction.

They found an increase in Instagram usage led to a decrease in relationship satisfaction and an increase in conflict and negative outcomes. Furthermore, the dissatisfaction, conflict, and negative outcomes triggered an addictive use of Instagram.

On the flipside, making daily sacrifices for the relationship partner had a positive effect on relationship satisfaction and decreased the likelihood of conflict and negative outcomes.

However, there is also the issue of phubbing — the act of snubbing a person in a social setting by focusing on one’s smartphone. For example, if two people sit down for a face-to-face conversation and one continues to scroll social media apps and check notifications, that person is phubbing the other.

Numerous studies and research materials Trusted Source show that many people feel phubbing is rude and goes against social norms. Phubbees, or people who have experienced phubbing, report a reduced sense of emotional connection, empathetic concern, and interpersonal trust.

Additionally, phubbing may lead to heightened jealousy between romantic partners, as well as weaken their bond and lower their satisfaction with the relationship.

### 3. Provides an avenue for infidelity-related behaviors

“Infidelity-related behaviors,” such as communicating with alternative partners, can lead to relationship dissatisfaction, breakups, and divorce. Social media provides such an avenue for those behaviors.

While there is not much empirical evidence regarding social media infidelity-related behaviors (SMIRB) and marital relationships, there is growing research on the topic.

For example, researchers conducted a 2017 survey Trusted Source of 338 married or cohabiting partners on SMIRB. In addition to existing materials such as the Quality of Marriage Index and Experiences in Close Relationship Scale-Short Form, participants completed a survey specific to this study. Question topics revolved around online activities, emotions, and secrecy.

A small percentage of people reported participating in social media infidelity-related behaviors. However, researchers found that more participation in these behaviors was significantly related to lower relationship satisfaction, higher relationship ambivalence, and other relationship concerns.[7,8,9]



## II. DISCUSSION

How to manage social media use around relationships

Regardless of the relationship type, ideas for managing social media use around relationships include:

- putting away their smartphones while spending time together
- planning activities that do not leave space or time for scrolling
- leaving their phones outside the bedroom
- avoiding reaching out to old romantic relationships

Tips for general social media management

Ways to manage social media usage during everyday life include:

- moving social media apps away from the home screen or into folders
- turning off social media notifications
- installing internet browser extensions that limit or block social media access on computers
- setting time limits for using social media apps on smartphones — for example, through iPhone’s built-in Screen Time feature or Android’s built Digital Wellbeing
- committing to a social media detox
- Risks and dangers of social media
- Additionally, social media may bring risks unrelated to relationships.
- For example, social media use — including problematic social media use — may:
- have associations with mental health concerns such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem — although some studies have limitations
- spread misinformation about health issues
- exacerbate existing dangerous behaviors, for example, the possible link between social media and heavy alcohol consumption
- lead to less physical activity and poor sleep patterns
- decrease productivity at home, school, and work

Given the potential pitfalls of social media, it’s important to have strategies in place for managing it in relationships. Here are a few tips to get you started:

Set boundaries and expectations. Talk to your partner about what you’re comfortable with in terms of social media use. This could include things like not posting photos of each other without permission, or agreeing to limit phone use during meals or other quality time together.[10,11,12]

Prioritize face-to-face communication. While social media can be a great way to stay connected, it’s important not to let it overshadow in-person interactions. Make time for date nights, long conversations, and other activities that allow you to connect on a deeper level.

Balance online and offline interactions. Social media can be a valuable tool for connecting with others and finding resources, but it’s important to balance this with other forms of communication. Make sure to take breaks from social media and spend time doing other activities that bring you joy.

The impact of social media isn’t limited to romantic relationships. In fact, social media can have a significant impact on other types of relationships as well, such as friendships and family connections.

### Friendships

Social media has revolutionized the way we connect with friends. It’s now easier than ever to stay in touch with friends from high school or college, even if they live across the country or world. However, social media can also create new challenges for friendships. For example, it’s easy to misinterpret messages or tone online, which can lead to misunderstandings or hurt feelings. Additionally, social media can facilitate social comparison and feelings of inadequacy, as we see our friends’ highlight reels online.

### Family Connections

Social media has also changed the way we interact with our families. It’s now possible to stay connected with extended family members who we might not have seen or talked to in years. However, social media can also create new tensions and conflicts within families. For example, political discussions or differences of opinion can easily spill over into



social media, creating rifts between family members. Additionally, social media can exacerbate existing family conflicts or lead to misunderstandings.

It's important to recognize that social media can impact all types of relationships, not just romantic ones. By understanding the unique challenges and opportunities that social media presents in each type of relationship, we can build stronger, more resilient connections with the people we care about.

#### Practical Tips

Here are some practical tips for managing social media use in relationships:

- Set clear boundaries: It's important to have open and honest conversations with your partner about your social media use and how it affects your relationship. Together, you can set clear boundaries around when and how you use social media. For example, you might agree to put your phones away during meals or to avoid scrolling through social media before bed.
- Be mindful of how you portray your relationship online: It's important to consider how your social[13,14,15] media posts might impact your partner and your relationship. Avoid oversharing personal details or airing your grievances online, as this can be hurtful to your partner and may damage your relationship.
- Address conflicts offline: If you have a disagreement or conflict with your partner online, it's important to address it offline as soon as possible. Misunderstandings and hurt feelings can quickly spiral out of control online, so it's best to have a face-to-face conversation to resolve the issue.
- Practice empathy and understanding: It's important to recognize that social media can be a source of insecurity, jealousy, and comparison in relationships. If your partner is struggling with social media use, try to practice empathy and understanding. Ask them how you can support them and work together to find solutions.
- Take breaks from social media: It can be helpful to take regular breaks from social media to recharge and reconnect with your partner. You might agree to take a social media detox together or to limit your social media use to certain times of day.

By implementing these practical tips, you can build a healthier, more positive relationship with social media and your partner. Remember, social media can be a valuable tool for connecting with others, but it's important to use it mindfully and in a way that supports your relationship.

#### Perspectives from Experts:

To gain further insights into the impact of social media on modern relationships, we reached out to experts in the fields of psychology, technology, and relationships. Here's what they had to say:

1. Dr. Justin Lehmiller, a social psychologist and research fellow at the Kinsey Institute:

“Social media can be both a blessing and a curse for modern relationships. On one hand, it can help us stay connected with our partners and facilitate communication. On the other hand, it can also be a source of stress and conflict, especially if we're comparing ourselves to others or experiencing jealousy. The key is to use social media mindfully and to be aware of how it's affecting our relationship.”

2. Sherry Turkle, a professor of social studies of science and technology at MIT:

“Social media has fundamentally changed the way we relate to one another, and this includes our romantic relationships. One of the downsides is that it can create a sense of ‘always-on’ connection, which can be exhausting and make it harder to disconnect and be present with our partners. However, social media can also create opportunities for self-expression and connection, especially [16,17,18]for those in long-distance relationships.”

3. Esther Perel, a psychotherapist and author of “Mating in Captivity: Unlocking Erotic Intelligence”:

“Social media has brought us new ways of communicating and connecting with one another. However, it's also created new opportunities for secrecy and deception, especially when it comes to infidelity. It's important to have open and honest conversations with our partners about social media use and to be transparent about our online interactions.”

By incorporating perspectives from experts in psychology, technology, and relationships, we can better understand the complex and nuanced impact of social media on modern relationships.

Social media has had a profound impact on modern relationships, both positive and negative. While it can be a great way to stay connected with loved ones and find resources and support, it can also distract from face-to-face communication, promote unrealistic expectations, and facilitate jealousy and insecurity. By understanding the potential pitfalls of social media and implementing strategies for managing it in relationships, we can build stronger, more



authentic connections with our partners and enjoy the benefits that social media has to offer. So go ahead, post that cute couple selfie, but don't forget to put the phone down and enjoy each other's company too.

### III. RESULTS

#### Section 1: The Rise of Digital Media

Over the past decade, digital media has experienced exponential growth, transforming the way we communicate and connect with others. From the early days of email and instant messaging to the rise of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, digital media has become a central part of our daily lives. These platforms allow us to share thoughts, photos, and videos instantly with friends, family, and even strangers across the globe.

#### Section 2: Enhancing Global Connectivity

One significant positive aspect of digital media is its ability to enhance global connectivity. Through platforms like Facebook and Twitter, people from different parts of the world can connect and engage in meaningful conversations. This has led to increased cultural understanding, breaking down barriers and fostering a sense of global unity. Digital media has provided a platform for marginalized voices to be heard and has played a crucial role in social movements, such as the Arab Spring and #BlackLivesMatter.

#### Section 3: Bridging Long-Distance Relationships

Another way in which digital media deepens human connections is by bridging long-distance relationships. In the past, maintaining a relationship with someone who lived far away required expensive phone calls or physical letters. With digital media, we can now stay connected in real-time through video calls, instant messaging, and social media updates. This has made it easier for families and friends separated by distance to maintain strong bonds and stay involved in each other's lives.

#### Section 4: The Illusion of Connection

While digital media has undoubtedly brought people closer together in many ways, it also has its downsides. One notable negative aspect is the illusion of connection it can create. With a few clicks, we can like someone's post or send a quick message, giving us a false sense of connection. However, these shallow interactions often lack the depth and intimacy that come with face-to-face interactions. Studies have shown that excessive use of digital media can lead to increased feelings of loneliness and isolation.

#### Section 5: The Rise of Online Communities

Digital media has given birth to countless online communities centered around shared interests and hobbies. These communities allow individuals to connect with like-minded people from all over the world, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie. Whether it's through forums, Facebook groups, or subreddits, people can find support, advice, and friendship within these online communities. This deepening of niche connections has been made possible by digital media.[19,20]

#### Section 6: The Erosion of Face-to-Face Communication Skills

One concern raised by critics of digital media is its potential impact on face-to-face communication skills. As more interactions happen in the digital realm, some argue that people are losing the ability to communicate effectively in person. Nonverbal cues, such as body language and facial expressions, play a vital role in human communication, but they are often absent in digital interactions. This erosion of face-to-face communication skills can hinder our ability to form deep connections with others.

#### Section 7: Digital Media as a Catalyst for Cyberbullying

Unfortunately, the rise of digital media has also led to an increase in cyberbullying. Online anonymity and the ease with which hurtful messages can be sent make it easier for individuals to engage in harmful behavior without facing immediate consequences. Cyberbullying can have severe effects on mental health and well-being, causing individuals to withdraw from social interactions and further isolating themselves.

#### Section 8: Finding Balance in a Digital World

It is essential to acknowledge both the positive and negative impacts of digital media on social interactions. While it can deepen connections and create new opportunities for connection, it can also lead to superficial relationships and isolation. To navigate this digital world successfully, finding a balance is crucial. Setting boundaries on screen time, prioritizing face-to-face interactions, and being mindful of the quality of our digital connections can help us maintain meaningful relationships while still benefiting from the advantages of digital media.





#### IV. CONCLUSION

Digital media undoubtedly has a profound impact on social interactions. While it can deepen human connections by enhancing global connectivity and bridging long-distance relationships, it also presents challenges such as the illusion of connection and erosion of face-to-face communication skills. By understanding these dynamics and finding a balance between offline and online interactions, we can harness the positive aspects of digital media while preserving the depth and authenticity of human connections[20]

#### REFERENCES

1. Kietzmann, Jan H.; Hermkens, Kristopher (2011). "Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media". *Business Horizons* (Submitted manuscript). 54 (3): 241–251. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.005. S2CID 51682132.
2. <sup>^ a b c d e f g h i j k</sup> Obar, Jonathan A.; Wildman, Steve (2015). "Social media definition and the governance challenge: An introduction to the special issue". *Telecommunications Policy*. 39 (9): 745–750. doi:10.2139/ssrn.2647377. SSRN 2647377.
3. <sup>^ a b c d e f</sup> Kaplan, Andreas M.; Haenlein, Michael (2010). "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media". *Business Horizons*. 53 (1). Bloomington, Indiana: Kelley School of Business: 61, 64–65, 67. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003. S2CID 16741539. Retrieved 28 April 2019. Social Media is a very active and fast-moving domain. What may be up-to-date today could have disappeared from the virtual landscape tomorrow. It is therefore crucial for firms to have a set of guidelines that can be applied to any form of Social Media [...].
4. <sup>^ a b</sup> Fuchs, Christian (2017). *Social media: a critical introduction* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles London New Delhi Singapore Washington DC Melbourne: SAGE. ISBN 978-1-4739-6683-3.
5. <sup>^ a b c d e f</sup> Boyd, Danah M.; Ellison, Nicole B. (2007). "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship". *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. 13 (1): 210–30. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x.
6. <sup>^ a b</sup> Dijck, Jose van (2 January 2013). *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-997079-7.
7. <sup>^ a b</sup> Schivinski, Bruno; Brzozowska-Woś, Magdalena; Stansbury, Ellena; Satel, Jason; Montag, Christian; Pontes, Halley M. (2019). "Exploring the Role of Social Media Use Motives, Psychological Well-Being, Self-Esteem, and Affect in Problematic Social Media Use". *Frontiers in Psychology*. 11: 3576. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2019.617140. ISSN 1664-1078. PMC 7772182. PMID 33391137.
8. <sup>^ a b c d e</sup> Schurgin O'Keeffe, Gwenn; Clarke-Pearson, Kathleen (2011). "The impact of social media on children, adolescents, and families". *Pediatrics*. 127 (4): 800–804. doi:10.1542/peds.2011-0054. PMID 21444588. S2CID 56801712.
9. <sup>^</sup> Agichtein, Eugene; Castillo, Carlos; Donato, Debora; Gionis, Aristides; Mishne, Gilad (2008). "Finding high-quality content in social media" (PDF). *WISDOM – Proceedings of the 2008 International Conference on Web Search and Data Mining*: 183–193.
10. <sup>^ a b</sup> Tao, Xiaohui; Huang, Wei; Mu, Xiangming; Xie, Haoran (18 November 2016). "Special issue on knowledge management of web social media". *Web Intelligence*. 14 (4): 273–274. doi:10.3233/WEB-160343 – via Lingnan scholars.
11. <sup>^ a b</sup> Pavlik, John; MacIntoch, Shawn (2015). *Converging Media 4th Edition*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. p. 189. ISBN 978-0-19-934230-3.
12. <sup>^</sup> "How Social Media Affects Your Teen's Mental Health: A Parent's Guide". *Yale Medicine*. Retrieved 24 May 2018.
13. <sup>^</sup> "Social Media and Teen Mental Health". *The Annie E. Casey Foundation*. 10 August 2018. Retrieved 24 May 2018.
14. <sup>^</sup> Stacy, Christopher C. (7 September 1982). "Getting Started Computing at the AI Lab" (PDF). *MIT Artificial Intelligence Laboratory*. Archived (PDF) from the original on 23 March 2019.
15. <sup>^</sup> Cerf, Vinton; Dalal, Yogen; Sunshine, Carl (1974). "Specification of Internet Transmission Control Program". RFC: 675. doi:10.17487/RFC0675. Retrieved 29 August 2018.
16. <sup>^ a b</sup> Edwards, Benj (4 November 2016). "The Lost Civilization of Dial-Up Bulletin Board Systems". *The Atlantic*. Retrieved 5 February 2018.
17. <sup>^</sup> "CMOS Sensors Enable Phone Cameras, HD Video". *NASA Spinoff*. NASA. 2017. Retrieved 6 November 2019.
18. <sup>^ a b</sup> Ngak, Chenda (6 July 2011). "Then and now: a history of social networking sites". *CBS news*. Retrieved 26 January 2018.



19. ^ Kirkpatrick, David (2011). The Facebook effect: the real inside story of Mark Zuckerberg and the world's fastest-growing company. London: Virgin.
20. ^ a b "A Brief History of Social Media & timeline - 1973 to 2018". Dewzilla. 11 February 2019. Archived from the original on 23 October 2019. Retrieved 1 June 2018.