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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Social Media, Mental Health, Wellbeing, Young Adults, Cyberbullying, Pakistan	This research aims to investigate the nuanced association of social media with mental health in young adults from Pakistan. Using a mixed-method approach of surveys and semi-structured interviews with 18–25-year-olds (young adults) from urban/rural areas. It investigates several determinants related to its use, like social comparison, cyberbullying, sleep disturbances, and benefits of using it. Through situating the research within this cultural framework, more nuanced sympathetic of whether social media translates to poor mental health that can be gained through proper evaluation. This research, presumptive in understanding the nuance behind mental health conversations, will serve as the valuable way to deliver potential risks and benefits from exposure to different social media ends. It is predictable that these insights will inform similar future public health interventions as well as strategies to elicit responsible social media use may help in reducing the detrimental impact & enhancing the positive effects of digital technology upon mental well-being of youth in Pakistan to cater to situation in tailor-made format.
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## INTRODUCTION

The social media in contemporary era, is here to stay, and it shows that we communicate, not just as colleagues, sisters, or brothers but as human beings. Moreover, social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok (now available in US market), Twitt, and Snapchat are part of their routine. They are platforms that allow them to connect, express themselves, and share information like no other era in history (Tajjamul & Aleem, 2022). Nonetheless, this is accompanied by an increasing body of research demonstrating the negative mental health effects that social media use can have on young

adults (Carr & Hayes, 2015). One characteristic that defines social media is its constantly evolving nature and how quickly everyone signed up for their account after one did. Instead, we can exist in a hyperconnected space where the walls of geography barely limit our interaction (Ostic, Qalati, Barbosa, Galvan, Herzallah & Liu, 2021). Adults do not use social media merely to talk with family and friends, but it has transformed into major source for carving their self-identities as they engage in personal validation. The young people are vulnerable when it comes to social media power due purely to where many adolescents typically find themselves in terms of growth, exploring identity while gaining growing sensitivity to any form or indication/measure/evidence, we belong (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The most damaging element of the social media for young adults is this sociological concept called social comparison. Social networks are filled with manufactured content, usually a distorted version of reality. It continued by reporting that young adults observed a never-ending feed of photos and status updates representing best parts of others' lives (Naureen, Javaid, Somia, Shaukat & Mughal, 2022). This exposure can result in social comparison, where one compares their life experience with others and concludes that they have perfect lives. Media leads to the comparisons of likeability and popularity with other people, typically resulting in feelings of territory wars amongst friends, if you can call them, they are virtually making anyone uncertain about themselves (Karim, Oyewande, Abdalla, Chaudhry & Khan, 2020). Such social comparison on SNSs (frequent) lead to symptoms of depression and anxiety, findings from research have shown (Khalaf, 2023). One of most prominent issues concerning young people is cyberbullying. The social media networks make it easier for bad actors to engage in harmful behaviour online, everything from harassment and bullying to simple spitefulness, like people spreading malicious rumors. The link amid cyberbullying and poor mental health outcomes, like higher rates of stress, depression or even suicidal ideation amid young adults, is well documented.

The traditional bullying is limited where it can occur (school grounds, for example), cyberbullying can happen anywhere and does not leave victim when they go home, providing new 24/7 element that makes this form of harassment almost impossible to avoid. The sleep patterns are also common source of concern with social media. The blue light from screens, the nature of content, and FOMO (fear of missing out) influence sleep among younger adults. Late-night social media scrolling can be addictive and is the last thing we see before bed (Azmi, Nasir, Elias, & Hassan, 2020). Thousands of studies have confirmed that poor sleep hygiene is related to myriad of mental health consequences, including the depression and anxiety, true cognitive impairments. The impact on sleep is critical to overall health and mental well-being, and with these findings in mind, this relationship could be worrying (Braghieri, Levy & Makarin, 2022). Of course, social media has its advantages, too. At the same time, social media can offer valued support to young people, especially those who experience marginalization and isolation in offline worlds. So many of us seek online communities that give us some sense of identity & little validation as we navigate difficult life experiences. The social media allows people to practice self-expression and share their thoughts, ideas, and creativity with world as an added benefit.

The opportunity to engage with like-minded individuals and hear good things about us can be a powerful tool for boosting our self-esteem, as it does on social media. Besides, social media platforms are more serving as mental health resources (Hiustra, Angelica & Pangaribuan, 2023). Thus, many organizations and public figures use these platforms to increase the awareness about mental health, produce educational contents, and educate the masses about the support services available. Using the likes of social media, campaigns like mental health awareness and other initiatives centered on mental health have reached millions around entire world to de-stigmatize anxiety disorders while actively helping wide-conversation political about positive actions for us all. Social media bridges the gap for many young adults who may feel uncomfortable seeking out mental health resources through traditional means (Chancellor & Choudhury, 2020). The Pakistani cultural context makes this the reality for other young adults, a part of which is that social media has intimate relationship with their mental health. A few years ago, Pakistan was not among leading countries in using social media sites and applications, mainly because cultural constraints played part, and religious values & socioeconomic factors combined dictate how young adults interact on these platforms for diverse leading outcomes.

Focusing on family honor and community forms only furthers the already extreme pressure, which felt inaccurate and picture-perfect social media pre, making that contrast more damaging. Equally, Pakistan's woefully underdeveloped mental health education and resources could make it harder for youth to identify problems in their use of social media. It can only be done with the inspiration to back practical knowledge about how social media impacts mental health about influential plans from Pakistan. Pakistan, a country with overwhelmingly young population and high mobile phone penetration rate, is called on to explore this delirium in making. Social media can be great in that it provides medium of self-expression and access to information; however, with all positive attributes comes downside, that, in this case, harms young adults' mental health. Social comparison, downtime (aka sleep disruption), and the potential for cyberbullying are just a few of the challenges related to social media. Nonetheless, they are risks that, if understood and the exposure to them controlled, can limit adverse events while fostering positive impacts social media has on the mental well-being of young adults. The results offered in this paper add to growing literature on social media & mental health, providing insights that may guide possible public health intrusions geared toward young adults in Pakistan.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, there has been increasing attention to links between social media use/technology and mental health among young adults as a symptom of increasingly digital culture. In this section, we examine the existing research on how social media impacts mental health with a key emphasis upon (i) social comparison and (ii) cyberbullying/ sleep disturbances, the good, i.e., the constructive aspects of using the social media. It also incorporates the specific cultural context of Pakistan to understand how it may have wielded an interaction effect between social media and mental health among young adults.

### Mental Well-Being & Social Comparison

The social comparison is one of the most researched social media and mental health themes. Visual platforms for social media, such as Instagram, increasingly show a feed in which highly stylized and idealistic versions of the world appear endlessly. The people become more exposed to upward social comparison, where they compare themselves with others they feel are doing better or happier and thus face issues around feeling less competent than peers. Research has found that increased social comparison on social media is linked with the greater anxiety, depression, and body dissatisfaction, especially among types of youth who have a heightened vulnerability to peer influence currently (Khalaf, 2023; Popat, 2023). Thus, it is exacerbated by the way social media algorithms promote “engagement,” which often means highlighting the most attractive and socially desirable posts. This feedback loop can serve up a steady stream of reminders, whether they realize it or not, that there is someone else with a greater sense of the fulfilment and successes. This, in turn, makes social media a chronic stress that can exacerbate anxiety, depression, and other mental disorders (Chancellor & Choudhury, 2020).

### Depression or Stress Due to Cyberbullying

One major quandary surrounding the world of social media is cyberbullying, a widespread scourge for teenagers. The function and reach of outlets have turned social media into a breeding ground where people can post things, they never would to someone's face, which is harmful in the case of harassment or bullying. While classic form of bullying is limited to few familiar environments, such as school or possibly work, cyberbullying can take place at any time and in various locations online, it follows you into your private life (becoming invisible), turning itself from an acute threat during certain hours each day become grinding pain with different names 24/7. The studies revealed that teenage cyberbullying suffers from diverse types of severe psychological outcomes, like depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation (Popat, 2023). The cultural side of Pakistan is making life tough for those already in distress because cyberbullying has on their mental health. Since family honor and social reputation are emphasized in our society, public aspects of sites result in greater ostracization by peers (a horrific punishment given how much people rely on friends for their identity), which has psychological costs. With absence legal contexts & support systems to deal with cyberbullying in Pakistan, these victims have few resources to turn for help, hence amplifying their misery (Olweus & Limber, 2018).

### Depression & Worsening Sleep

Relationship with sleep disturbances the effect of social media use on sleep disturbances is another critical area. For example, the emotional spectrum of social media can be too uplifting to go gently into a remorseful night; FOMO is real, but not only are we missing about getting on fine without us and all those swirling faces nothing wants for our presence in their company. Many people are up late, browsing social media purely because this is what they are doing to aid in cramming as much information into brains before calling it a night. Lack of good sleep hygiene is linked with myriad of the psychological illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, and cognitive dysfunction. This is worrying, considering vital status of sleep on well-being and mental health (Khalaf, 2023). Some research has indicated that people who spend loads of time on social media, especially right before bed, tend to

have more sleep disturbances and lower-quality sleep (Nagata, Yang, Singh, Kiss, Testa & Baker, 2023). This is confirmed by impaired sleep, leading to a self-perpetuating loop where the use of the social media feeds insomnia, leading in turn into negative mood. In the more socially conservative country of Pakistan, where mobile phone use is high and social media use is also very widespread, we might expect to find that young is most likely to their sleep disturbances, which interfere with mental health.

### Pros of Social-Media

As tricky as it is to navigate the world of social media, we have no choice but to accept that it also does some good for our mental health. This tool can unite people, self-express, and reach for needed info or help. At same time, social media can provide social support, especially if they feel excluded in real life due to their age, other identities as many young adults do (Magner, 2018). For individuals who have gone through difficult experiences, online communities can provide a sense of belonging and validation. Social media is also an essential channel for self-expression, where many users share their thoughts, ideas, and creativity with a global audience (Popat, 2023). In addition, social media platforms have grown to double as mental health resources. The leaders use Instagram & Facebook to spread awareness about mental health, offer educational resources, and help needy individuals. Campaigns like mental health awareness have used social media to promote thousands of people, tackle the stigma, and facilitate an open dialogue on mental health. Social media offers accessible and less intimidating way to get connected with mental resources and support, especially for young adults in Pakistan, where talking about mental health is more of a taboo. With this background, the research seeks to study nuanced association between social media use and mental health in young adults in Pakistan.

This study explores the profiles of social media use: what can be associated (negatively) with mental health and how, at same moment, positively affects it. To summarize, social media and psychological well-being nexus in young adults involves a multidimensional relationship. Whether the good old days truly are better is up for debate, but there is no arguing that social media has some plusses: At its best, it is a connector; you can say more about yourself than in the real life and get info from the trustworthy sources. However, it also poses plenty of risks to mental health. Social media use also comes with a wide range of difficulties, including the stress of social comparison, increased risk of experiencing cyberbullying, and sleep issues. Despite this, being aware of these risks and promoting the responsible use of social media platforms, we can minimize those negative effects, ensuring that they create a positive environment for young adults/citizens. There is a need to explore the specific areas such as influence of social media on anxiety, depression, self-esteem, overall life satisfaction. Thus. given the importance of interpersonal touches in such culture-mate societies where rapidly increasing Internet penetration is making social media part of the daily life, these insights could be highly relevant when working to determine appropriate public health interventions and strategies among young adults.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This followed methodology section, which also focuses on research design, data collection methods, and analytical techniques adopted to analyze social media's effect on mental health among young

adults in Pakistan. Since the topic is so complex and requires quantitative and qualitative measures to grasp it, this research uses a mixed-method approach by using surveys alongside semi-structured interviews. Considering unique cultural context in Pakistan overall, use of this methodology offers a inclusive understanding of how young adults experienced and maintained mental health over the social media usage.

### Research Design

The study design of this research follows a mixed method combined with qualitative approach and a quantitative one. They have opted for a subtler approach to examine relationship between social media and mental health. Quantitative methods help collect data that statistically be analyzed to pinpoint patterns and correlations, whereas qualitative methods obtain a deeper understanding of subjective experiences and perceptions regarding people involved. Using case study methodology, research only considers young adults in Pakistan between 18 and 25. Young adults are a convenient sample to target here; they use social media extensively and at stage of their lives where accounts seem plausible but can have serious risks. The case study design facilitated an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under the specific cultural context of Pakistan, wherein social norms, religious values, and socioeconomic status could affect the relationship between the use of SMN apps and mental health.

### Data Collection

The data collection is divided into two key parts: a self-administered survey and semi-structured interviews. These two methods are integrated to aim for overarching understanding of social media usage trends and mental health outcomes, while interviews complement the survey by exploring complex processes in greater depth. This question was part of the survey, which aims to obtain data on social media use, mental health status, and demographic variables. The survey circulated across social media and university networks in Pakistan to get responses from a broad sample of youth in urban and rural settings. The survey also asks about the frequency and duration of diverse types of social media use, the participants' experiences with cyberbullying (online harassment by peers) and sleep disturbances, as well as their perceptions upon how they compare mentally or emotionally to others using the internet. In this regard, we measured mental health using the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21), a validated instrument widely used to assess symptoms of depression, anxiety, or stress.

Additionally, the survey collects demographic information on age, sex/gender designation, highest educational attainment, and socioeconomic status to explore moderation in how social media use is related to mental health. Besides the survey, semi-structured interviews with a much smaller group of members also gather. These interviews aim to collect qualitative data and gain a more detailed understanding of the subjective experience of young adults concerning their use and the impacts social media has had upon their mental health. This allows the interview to be more flexible so that participants can learn more about assorted topics based on their answers. Interview questions are about why the participants use the social media, what experiences they have had with comparing themselves to others and being cyberbullied upon social media, and how they feel that using social media impacts their psychological well-being. Thus, the interviews also show the cultural context



in which young Pakistanis live with social media and how norms of society play a role in shaping the online activities.

### Sampling Strategy

The purposive sampling is used for both the survey and interviews. Participants were selected from online platforms and university networks to introduce sufficient diversity, including geographical areas, socioeconomic status strata, and education levels used in current research study. This is to ensure that the resulting sample represents young adults across Pakistan. Survey responses are then used to select such change agents from the survey, concentrating on those who experience severe mental health issues that they link with social media. In this drive, including diverse participants, the perspectives are ensured by the targeted sampling strategy we use to conduct these community leader interviews.

### Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. This collected survey data is then analyzed in statistical software (SPSS) to help identify associations and patterns amid use of social media technologies and negative mental health outcomes. Data are summarized using descriptive statistics, and analytical statistics (i.e., correlation analysis, regression analyses) lead to exploring these relationships. The paper will also explore potential moderators (e.g., gender, income group, region of the state) that influence whether and how social media use contributes to mental health problems. Analysis of qualitative data. The thematic analysis is method for analyzing the interview findings, which includes identifying patterns among themes across data. A thematic analysis approach is highly relevant for this research study as it captures rich data while exploring complex & subjective experiences surrounding social media usage and mental health. The analysis includes four steps: getting to know data, coding, developing themes & interpretation. These themes are applied to quantitative outcomes and expand, offer depth to issues that would not be explained by survey data alone.

## RESULTS OF STUDY

The findings of this study can give a comprehensive insight into how social media affects the mental health of young adults in Pakistan. The data we collect from surveys and semi-structured interviews allow us to gain clues regarding intricate dynamics of social media impacts on mental well-being within this population.

### Quantitative Findings

#### Social Media Usage Patterns

The survey data suggests widespread young adult use of social media in Pakistan: great proportion (most) attested to spending between 2 and 4 hours on online platforms daily. The most common applications are Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter, as per information-conveyor platform used last time, for instance, which is popular among the 18 to 22 age group. In this connection, the data also shows that the use of social media is not limited to free time, with many users indicating

they use social media while studying and even before falling asleep, many times when users are ending their day.

### **Link between Social Media Use & Mental Health**

Most importantly, study shows a significant relationship amid social media use and mental health problems. About DASS-21 scores, they were higher in those who reported spending more than 3-hours per day using social media for symptoms of Anxiety ( $p=0.004$ ), Depression developed well ( $p=0.003$ ), and Stress ( $p<.001$ ). These participants reported high anxiety and stress scores; spending more time on social media may worsen signs of anxiety, leaving people less equipped to cope with everyday stresses.

### **Social Comparison-Self-Esteem**

The survey data also demonstrate that just how social comparison is a massive driver of our mental health. More than a third of respondents said they compare their lives with people on social media, especially regarding looks (38 per cent), lifestyle choices (37 per cent), and achievements so far in life. The research showed that people who compared more frequently scored lower self-esteem and were less satisfied with their lives. This justified the earlier literature about how social comparison on a platform like Facebook can make us feel inadequate and contribute to our symptoms of stress and depression.

### **Cyberbullying & Its Impact**

The study also identified cyberbullying as a further major cause of the difficulty in mental health. About 30% of the participants noted that they were victims of cyberbullying, such as stalking and slanderous behaviour in online communities. The cyberbullying has devastating effects on mental health and could leave its victims in a higher state of anxiety and depression, even leading towards suicidal ideation. Based on the information above, it strikes me that mental health in young adults is quickly declining, coupled with increased cyberbullying and no proper resources of support for them in Pakistan.

### **Sleep Disturbances**

One interesting discovery is the correlation between social media use and sleeping patterns. One important thing was quite the few reported problems with falling asleep and unsatisfactory sleep quality, which they attributed to using social media late into the night. In this linking, the research identified the fear of missing out (FOMO) and the exciting quality of social media content as causes of these sleep disruptions. The people who had trouble sleeping were more likely to feel fatigued, irritable, and have problems concentrating. three factors that contribute in a big way towards poor mental health.

### **Qualitative Insights**

The qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews helps to add context and insight into lived experiences of how, why, and when social media affects mental health from different and leading aspects that provides significant information through different themes towards the desired leading outcomes.



### Perceptions of Social-Media

Interviews in Pakistan showed that young adults held a more nuanced view of social media. While there were numerous important points raised about downside of social media, i.e., it causes immense pressure and anxiety for some, that they are pleased to fit their opinions into 280 characters or less (ironic), those comments are somewhat out-numbered with users seeing a benefit in engaging on the platforms still. Social media was described as a "double-edged sword" where it may provide mental health benefits in some cases but be harmful to others. Moreover, applicants expressed that the role of social media is to provide fonts to express themselves, gather connections with friends and family or any kind of organizational unit) and allow the chance to get desired information and follow up on available resources.

### Step Two: Recognizing Social Comparison & Peer Pressure

A stereotype often reinforced by multiple interviewees was the pressure always to present a perfect image of oneself on social media, causing ramifications in stress and anxiety. The myriad of ideally constructed snapshots of success and happiness only induced a lack, especially when recipients felt they were worsening compared to others. In this connection, it also felt like all the eyes were on me, particularly in cultural context of Pakistan, where societal norms and family honor are still heavily dependent upon a person to dictate how they think or feel. The social comparison on social media was thus not just a ritual of maintaining the appearances but performing well in the eyes of family as well as society.

### Coping Mechanisms

In addition to exploring the challenges related to social media behaviour, interviews uncovered the range of add-on strategies young adults use as personal sleights in the mental health dealing. A few participants described taking social media breaks or creating new time controls to decrease stress levels. Other respondents talked about the significance of having a network of supportive friends and family who offered them some dose of the real reality to help them against whatever the media challenges they encountered. Correspondingly, others have also resorted to finding relief in online forums, where they could discuss their encounters and get the emotional backing without the fear of being censored.

### Cultural Impact Body shamming & Cyberbullying Videos

However, the qualitative data also detailed some of the cultural dynamics related to cyberbullying in Pakistan. The participants pointed out damaging effects of cyberbullying, stating that due to the public nature of social media and importance attached to family honor and reputation within such contexts, it is harmful. The victims of cyberbullying were also reported to perceive themselves as isolated individuals with the resultant stigma, feeling ashamed of families. Cyberbullying, because of social ostracization fear instilled in its victims, mental effect that cyberbullied people felt was not easy for them.

### Sleep & Well-being

Regarding sleep patterns, survey results were echoed over interviews, most participants admitted that stakeholder stalkers created a disturbance in their sleep due to staying up at night using social

networks. Still, the interviews suggested a way rooted in a more profound understanding of how and why young adults might choose cereal oversleeping. For many others, social media became outlet for zoning out to easy, mindless content before bedtime. Others prioritize continuing to connect and be informed oversleep, emphasizing how embedded social media is in daily rhythms (Centofanti, Lushington, Wicking, Wicking & Dorrian, 2024). The findings of this study emphasize the intricate nature and direction between social media use and mental health amid the young adults endorsing Pakistani culture. They stress large effect of social comparison, cyberbullying, and sleep problems on mental health, seeing some advantages that are related to it for such communication tools as online media. The cultural landscape in Pakistan heavily fixes these intricacies, and this impacts how young adults interact with social media, its implications on their mental health. Moreover, this knowledge will underpin the implementation of relevant interventions and public health strategies to lead toward adaptable use of social media, can aid in equitable mental health care provision for young Pakistani adults.

### DISCUSSION

The study findings revealed that social media usage and the mental health of the young adults are complex dynamics displaying multiple facets in Pakistan. In this linking, some social networking use patterns indicate a balance of positive and negative aspects, affirming multiple understandings regarding the role that online platform can play in our lives as places where we connect with others and express ourselves but also experience hardship or struggle. Thus, this discussion may explore the implications of these findings against existing literature together within our cultural context in the Pakistan's perspectives.

#### How Social-Media Affects Mental Health

The results of the study provide quantitative data that reveals a significant relationship between elevated levels of social media use and various other health hazards, with anxiety, depression, and stress being potentially worst hit on one end, which is compared to fewer or no indicators at all. This is reflected by similar associations found in countless other studies around the globe. For example, a similar study on effect of excessive social media use across several populations has been reviewed by Khalaf (2023), who outlined that it results in more symptoms of both anxiety and depression. We examine the mechanisms underlying this relation based on the theories such as social comparison, exposure to cyberbullying, and sleep disturbances. These findings align with one of the main themes that social comparison plays a role in negative mental health outcomes (Coyne, Rogers, Zurcher, Stockdale & Booth, 2019). Of course, certain social media platforms likewise Instagram, strongly underline the visual and inspire users to display the pristine collections of their lives. Consequently, that alone can foster the feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem in users when they compare themselves to others.

This is reiterated via qualitative interviews, in which contributors voice how being uncovered all hours of the day to others' fantasy lives upon social media, in simple terms, serves to underline their feelings. This corresponds with social comparison theory, which claims that individuals determine their social and personal worth based on how they stack up against others (Popat, 2023). Another genuine issue suggested by results of study is cyberbullying. Given the anonymity of social media

and their unlimited reach, cyberbullying emerged as decisive factor in affecting the mental health of the target individual. Some cyberbullying victims reported severe psychological distress in their experience, claiming depression, anxiety & even suicidal thinking (Bekalu, McCloud & Viswanath, 2019). The Pakistani context only worsens the situation, as societal expectations and family honor are critical determinants of individual behaviour. Cyberbullying victims stand in fear of bringing disgrace to their families, which often makes them reluctant to seek help, manifesting the presented psychological outcomes. The study also revealed the connection between sleep disturbance and the social media use.

Many participants experienced FOMO driven by the social media use before sleep, which deprived them of sleep disturbance and contributed to increased stress levels, irritability, and focus deficit. Such outcomes are widespread, given that previous researchers also identified association between screen time, especially before bed, and sleep quality (Karim, Oyewande, Abdalla, Ehsanullah & Khan, 2020; Gupta, Jogdand, Kumar, 2022). It has become a brilliant platform to spread awareness of mental issues. Hashtags like #MentalHealthAwareness & #BellLetsTalk were instrumental in reaching millions of people over social media streams to erase stigma surrounding mental health, promoting open talks about the mental wellness. For young adults living in a country like Pakistan, where mental health is unspeakable crisis and very few dare to talk about it openly, social media might be that missing link that make research leaser. Social media allows for additional perspective that might not be offered to young adults. It gives them a place to express their thoughts, ideas, and creativity globally. Belong, knowing can link others with like-minded minds makes for self-esteem and feeling a part.

### Impact of Cultural Context

One of the major cultural contexts in Pakistan is an essential aspect of how social media use affects mental health. It is particularly harsh in a society where the value of the family honor, the societal expectations, and religious values are extremely high. Social comparison and societal norms exert immense pressure on people to perpetuate a specific image online, which could drive some into complete meltdown as they struggle to meet this standard. Nowhere is this truer than with young adults at a stage of life who do the most identity exploration and whose brains are also particularly tuned in to social feedback and spread information on where support help can be found (Winstone, Mars, Haworth & Kidger, 2021). Further, a dearth of proper mental health awareness and services in the Pakistan may restrict young adults from being able to identify or assess their possible mental challenges related to the social media use. The stigma of mental health and a strong fear of being isolated from society can stop patients from looking for support, making them suffer even more. That underscores the standing of contextually relevant intervention targeting distinct problems youths in Pakistan face.

### Policy & Practice Recommendations

The implications for policy and practice study findings have substantial implications for policy and practice. Once again, use of social media also plays into this, and need to find effective strategies for responsible ingesting while fostering mental health. Educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals should focus more on digital literacy as something that helps people develop critical

thinking skills to navigate the maze of social media. Furthermore, we need more promotion of social media norms, should be done so that they are based on good online behaviour to grow a healthier digital domain where individuals, regardless of sex, will not fall victim to cyberbullying, aggressive forums. Similarly, reach of forces such as social media should be used in public health campaigns to message mental illness and spread information on where support help be found. Pakistan already has a difficult culture of mental health, and involvement of social media only makes things worse. When we focus on an attitude of transparency, empathy, empathy and willingness to talk about the mental health, it will be easier for people to approach the matter in steady conversation rather than being stigmatized.

Despite an overall negative association, bidirectionality was observed, which indicates a complex and two-fold connection with social media at one end has the potential to impair mental health among young adults in Pakistan. Social media has a plethora of amazing aspects, such as the fact that it allows you to stay in touch with friends and family; people are using social networking sites for self-expression, read news stories, subscribe to feeds, collect multiple sources of information, but at the same time is detrimental when we talk about mental well-being. Not to mention, the pressure from social comparison, the risk of cyberbullying, and changes in sleep cycle are just a few areas that come along with using any kind of social media. However, with an awareness of these risks and guidance toward healthy social media use, we may reduce harm and intensify benefits from young adults' mental health by using social networks. Second, the Pakistani cultural fabric makes this relationship multi-faceted by introducing yet another dimension concerning culturally relevant interventions sensitive enough not only to basic in-person or the online communication but also to address challenges they face upon entering young adulthood, something that deserves a separate blog post for itself).

### CONCLUSION

The complex interplay of social media use and mental health in young adults provides the glimpse into numerous difficulties as well as pots for future opportunities among the youth in Pakistan. The complex interplay between social media as a vehicle for the connectivity and emotional distress is illustrated in this study. Together, the findings from this research emphasize positively using social media as much as possible to benefit connectivity & self-expression while mitigating negative use (e.g., excessive use), social comparison, cyberbullying, and sleep disturbances. Statistical analysis of survey's quantitative data details how higher levels of social media use are independently related to more negative mental health outcomes It can worsen mental health problems, as it is associated with lower self-esteem and higher feelings of inadequacy. Moreover, this study shows concerningly strong association between practice of cyberbullying and poor mental health among young adults from both quantitative survey data and in our qualitative interview analysis; hence, underscore yet further reasons for more robust policies to provide the necessary protections against online abuse effectively. Another important discovery was that sleep disturbances are linked to the social media usage patterns, demonstrating how entrenched impact of social networks is in our daily lives and sense of well-being.

Factors such as FOMO (fear of missing out) compel states to stay up at night participating in social media, which can damage sleep cycle and lead to slew of reported existing mental health disorders like increased stress. Irritability, cognitive impairments. This result is more important, especially in this case when results of social media use on sleep and mental health may be magnified by cultural and societal forces such as Pakistan. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that social media is not evil. Instead, it provides many advantages that foster good mental health if responsibly used. Social media offers important social chances for young people to connect with friends, creatively express themselves, access support networks, especially if they feel isolated & marginalized offline. In addition, social media's popularity has created a space for mental health awareness and access to resources that would otherwise be difficult or inaccessible. In a culture where family is everything, social expectations are unwritten dictates, and religious piety is the normative background against that all models of behaviour play out in individual lives, social media have especially seismic effect. Understanding cultural dynamics are vital to develop practical solutions that target young adults strategically in Pakistan.

Hereafter, any educator, policymaker, or mental health professional should focus on digital literacy and healthy social media consumption. Therefore, interventions should address the need to develop critical thinking skills to make it easier for young adults to maneuvers through an inundation of the information and imagery on social media. Further, there must be a much bolder and wider call for mental health education in schools that makes young adults aware of what symptoms they need to look out for so that when things are not right with them upstairs, it become less taboo. In addition, we must prioritize building safer online spaces that safeguard users from cyberbullying and other types of harassment. This might include tech-based solutions, such as better reporting and blocking capability at popular social media platforms and legal changes to ensure rights for cyberbullying victims. So, like anything else in life, there is another side to health-related social media behaviour regarding our mental well-being, namely the possibility of healthier relationships and interactions within these online communities. The trick is to traverse this complicated terrain in a manner that extracts the most value while reducing as much threat as possible. By encouraging healthy social media and debuting requisite support cope, it is possible to improve the mental well-being of kids in Pakistan worldwide.

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