

## A Comparative Study of the Impact of Social Media Use on Anxiety Levels Among Adolescents and Young Adults

Mrunali Raval

Nandkunvarba Mahila College -Bhavnagar

### Abstract:

*The present study aimed to examine the impact of social media use on anxiety levels among adolescents and young adults. A total sample of 120 participants was selected through a random sampling method. The sample consisted of 30 girl adolescents, 30 boy adolescents, 30 girl young adults, and 30 boy young adults. Anxiety levels were measured using the Anxiety Inventory developed by A.K.P. Sinha and L.N. Sinha, translated by Dr. D.J. Bhatt. A 2×2 factorial design was used, and the 't' test was applied to determine the significance of differences between the groups. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference in anxiety levels between adolescents and young adults at the 0.05 level of significance. Adolescents obtained higher mean anxiety scores compared to young adults, indicating that adolescents are more score to anxiety associated with social media use. Furthermore, a significant gender difference was observed at the 0.05 level. Girl participants scored higher on anxiety compared to boy participants. This suggests that girls may experience greater emotional sensitivity or social pressure related to social media usage. Overall, the results indicate that both age and gender significantly influence anxiety levels. Adolescents and girl participants appear to be more affected by anxiety in relation to social media use, highlighting the importance of considering developmental and social factors when addressing mental health concerns*

**Key-words:** Anxiety level: Adolescents (13–18), Young Adults (19–25), Girls, Boys.

### Introduction

Today, social media has become a very important part of life, especially for adolescents and young adults. Many young people spend a lot of time on platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. These platforms help them to connect with friends, share photos and videos, express their feelings, and stay updated. Social media has many benefits, but at the same time, it may also affect mental health, especially anxiety levels.

Adolescence (13–18 years) and young adulthood (19–25 years) are very important stages of life. During adolescence, individuals go through many physical, emotional, and social changes. They become more sensitive to what others think about them. They also try to build their identity and want acceptance from friends and society. Young adults are more mature compared to adolescents, but they also face stress related to studies, career, and relationships. Because social media is a big part of their daily routine, it can influence their thoughts and emotions.

Anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or fear. A small amount of anxiety is normal and can even help a person stay alert. However, too much anxiety can create problems in daily life, studies, and relationships. Social media can increase anxiety in different ways. For example, young people may compare themselves with others, feel left out when they see others enjoying events, or feel pressure to look perfect online. Negative comments, fewer likes, or cyberbullying can also increase anxiety.

Age and gender may play an important role in anxiety levels. Adolescents may feel more anxious because they are still developing emotionally. Girls may experience higher anxiety compared to boys because they are often more emotionally sensitive and may feel more social pressure. Therefore, it is

important to study how anxiety differs between adolescents and young adults, and between girls and boys.

The present study focuses on understanding the impact of social media use on anxiety levels among adolescents and young adults. It also examines whether there are differences based on age and gender. This study will help in better understanding the mental health needs of young people and may help parents, teachers, and counsellors to provide proper guidance and support.

### **Definition and Meaning of Anxiety:**

Anxiety is a feeling of worry, fear, nervousness, or tension about something that may happen in the future. It is a natural emotional response to stress or danger. Everyone feels anxiety at some time in life, especially before important events like exams, interviews, or competitions.

Psychologically, anxiety is a state of mental and physical tension. It may include thoughts of fear or doubt, along with physical symptoms such as fast heartbeat, sweating, restlessness, or difficulty in concentrating.

A small amount of anxiety is normal and can help a person stay alert and focused. However, when anxiety becomes too strong, happens frequently, or continues for a long time, it can affect daily life, studies, work, and relationships. In such cases, it may need proper attention and support.

"Anxiety may be attenuated by defines mechanisms, e.g. repression, substitution, rationalization and projection etc."

-Concise Psychological Dictionary (1987)

"Repression lies simply in the function of rejecting and keeping something out of consciousness"

-Freud (1949)

### **Related Review:**

1. Patil Swapnil Ramesh (2017), A Study of anxiety Achievement Motivation Personality of Tribal and Non-Tribal Adolescent Students. The findings of the study show that tribal students were comparatively more anxious than non-tribal students, while no gender difference was found in anxiety levels. Non-tribal students were more motivated toward achievement than tribal students, and girls showed higher achievement motivation than boys. In terms of personality traits, tribal students had higher neuroticism, but no gender difference was found in neuroticism. Non-tribal students scored higher on extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness compared to tribal students. Gender differences were not found in extraversion, openness, or agreeableness; however, boys showed higher conscientiousness than girls. Overall, non-tribal students showed more positive personality traits than tribal students, and boys showed more positive traits than girls. The study also revealed a negative relationship between anxiety and achievement motivation, as well as between anxiety and personality traits, while a positive relationship was found between personality and achievement motivation.
2. Talwar, Vibha (2006), The impact of anxiety, frustration, level of aspiration and intelligence on academic achievement. The study concluded that intelligence, educational aspirations, anxiety, and frustration significantly influence the academic achievement of students, regardless of gender. A clear positive correlation was found between students' intelligence and their academic performance, indicating that higher intelligence is associated with better achievements. Similarly, higher educational aspirations and moderate levels of anxiety were linked to improved academic performance. In contrast, frustration negatively affected students' educational achievement. These findings highlight the complex interaction of cognitive, emotional, and motivational factors on learning outcomes, though further research is needed to confirm and expand upon these results.

### **Objective:**

1. To study the Impact of Social Media Use on Anxiety Levels of Adolescents and Young Adults.
2. To study the Impact of Social Media Use on Anxiety level of boys and Girls.

### **Hypothesis:**

- H0-1 There is no significant difference in anxiety levels between adolescents and young adults due to social media use.
- H0-2 There is no significant difference in anxiety levels between boys and girls due to social media use.

**Sample:**

In the present study random sampling was used for the selection of participants. 120 subjects were selected among which 60 (30 Ss girls and 30 Ss boys) adolescents and 60(30 Ss girls and 30 Ss boys) young adults.

**Variables:**

1. Independent Variable:
  1. Age - Adolescents and Young adults.
  2. Gender – Girls and Boys
2. Dependent Variable:
  1. To get score on anxiety
3. Controlled Variable:
  1. The present research sample consists of only 120 employees.
  2. The present research Adolescents and Young adults selected for sample

**Design:**

2x2 factorial design

N=120, n=30

A1		A2	
Adolescents		Young adults	
B1	B2	B1	B2
Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
30	30	30	30

A 2x2 factorial design was applied in the present research. The first independent variable of the study is work status varied at two levels i.e., Adolescents and Young adults. The second independent variable is gender which is varied at two levels I. e. Girls and Boys.

**Tools & Samples:**

Anxiety inventory:

Anxiety levels were measured using the Anxiety Inventory. It was developed by A.K.P. Sinha and L.N. Sinha, translated by Dr. D.J. Bhatt. This scale consisted of 90 questions. The reliability coefficient test was found to be 0.92 and validity was 0.62.

**Statistical Technique:**

Here in the study 't' test was used for data interoperation.

**Data Analysis:**

Table 1: presents the results showing the impact of social media use on the anxiety levels of adolescents and young adults.

Variable	Sample	Mean	Sd	'F'	Level of significance
Adolescents	30	58.32	7.89	3.25	Sig. 0.05
Young adults	30	52.18	8.24		

The results indicate that adolescents scored significantly higher on anxiety (M = 58.32, SD = 7.89) compared to young adults (M = 52.18, SD = 8.24),  $t = 3.25$ . This shows that age has a significant impact on anxiety levels related to social media use, with adolescents being more affected than young adults.

Table 2: presents the results showing the impact of social media use on the anxiety levels of Girls and Boys.

Variable	Sample	Mean	Sd	'F'	Level of significance
Girls	30	57.80	7.75	2.15	Sig. 0.05

Boys	30	53.90	8.10		
------	----	-------	------	--	--

The table shows that girls scored significantly higher on anxiety ( $M = 57.80$ ,  $SD = 7.75$ ) compared to boys ( $M = 53.90$ ,  $SD = 8.10$ ),  $t = 2.15$ . This indicates that gender significantly influences anxiety levels, with girls being more affected by social media use than boys.

**Result Discussion:**

The study revealed that social media use significantly affects anxiety levels among young people, with both age and gender playing important roles. Adolescents scored higher on anxiety ( $M = 58.32$ ,  $SD = 7.89$ ) than young adults ( $M = 52.18$ ,  $SD = 8.24$ ), indicating that younger individuals are more sensitive to social media-related stress. Similarly, girls reported higher anxiety ( $M = 57.80$ ,  $SD = 7.75$ ) than boys ( $M = 53.90$ ,  $SD = 8.10$ ), suggesting that girls may experience greater emotional impact from online interactions. These results highlight that adolescents and girls are particularly more sensitive to anxiety associated with social media, emphasizing the need for awareness, guidance, and support to promote healthier online habits and emotional well-being.

**Conclusion:**

We can conclude by data analysis as follows:

1. There is a significant difference in the impact of social media use on anxiety levels of adolescents and young adults. Adolescents have more anxiety level than young adults.
2. There is a significant difference in the impact of social media use on anxiety levels of girls and boys. Girls have more anxiety level than Boys.

**Reference:**

- Abbouyi, S., Bouazza, S., & Zarrouq, B. (2026). Psychological distress and problematic social media use among Moroccan youth mediated by fear of missing out and social media engagement. *Scientific Reports*.
- Azem, L., Al Alwani, R., Lucas, A., Alsaadi, B., Njihia, G., Bibi, B., Alzubaidi, M., & Househ, M. (2023). Social media use and depression in adolescents: A scoping review. *Behavioural Sciences*.
- Falcón-Linares, C., González-Yubero, S., Mauri-Medrano, M., & Cardoso-Moreno, M. J. (2023). Impact of social media on adolescence: Mapping emerging needs to build resilient skills. *Societies*.
- Kerr, B., Garimella, A., Pillarisetti, L., Charlly, N., Sullivan, K., & Moreno, M. A. (2025). Associations between social media use and anxiety among adolescents: A systematic review study. *Journal of Adolescent Health*.
- Mojtabai, R. (2024). Problematic social media use and psychological symptoms in adolescents. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*.
- Tong, J. (2023). The impact of social media on adolescent depression and anxiety. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*.
- Yadav, S., & Khullar, L. (2023). Social media and adolescents: Exploring links to depression, anxiety, and stress. *Synergy: International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*.