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Prevalence of Social Media Needs and Quality of Life among Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Social media has gained widespread popularity across all age groups and serves various purposes. In Nepal, numerous studies have explored social media, but there is a lack of research focusing on social media needs, usage, and their effects on the quality of life. This study addresses this gap, aiming to investigate the prevalence of social media use (SMU) and its influence on the quality of life (QOL) among secondary school students.

Methods: This cross-sectional study examines the relationship b/t social media (SM) usage and the QoL of secondary school students. The research was carried out in three schools in Kathmandu, with a focus on students in grades 8, 9, and 10. Data was collected on socio-demographic profiles, SM use, and QoL using standardized scales. The study included testing for the reliability and validity of the scales used. Ethical considerations were strictly followed, and data analysis was conducted using SPSS, encompassing descriptive and non-parametric analyses.

Results: Most participants were ≤ 15 years old, with balanced gender distribution. High mobile-based SMU on platforms like Facebook and Messenger was observed, and the majority reported "good" QoL. Social media needs included both negative and positive diversion needs. Notably, no significant associations were found between demographic variables and quality of life.

Conclusion: The study identified diverse SMU among participants, with positive and negative aspects. Most students reported a "good" quality of life. Recommendations include larger samples, longitudinal studies, mixed methods, promoting responsible SMU, and enhancing digital literacy and mental health awareness through public health initiatives. These are crucial for educational institutions and parents dealing with adolescent SMU complexities.

Keywords: Prevalence; Quality of life (QOL); Social media use (SMU).

INTRODUCTION

The rise of SM, (Government of Nepal, 2019; Willnat, 2014) has deeply affected the lives of youth globally (Ahmed & Farooq, 2021; Willnat, 2014), including in Nepal (Thapa B, Adhikari K, 2023). This study examines how students in Nepal use SM and its effects, proving essential elements in the digital experiences. In the digital era, youth dedicate a significant share of their lives to SM, yet the repercussions on their overall WB raise concerns (Juárez et al., 2023; Thapa, Adhikari, et al., 2023). Understanding the strengths and weaknesses in the relationship b/t SM usage and the QoL of students is pivotal for both educational and societal reasons (Tanil & Yong, 2020; Thapa B, Adhikari K, 2023; Wang et al., 2023). The findings from this study can inform educators and policymakers, enabling them to craft strategies that promote responsible and balanced SMU among students, ultimately fostering their holistic development (Palladino & Thapa, 2023; Tanil & Yong, 2020; Thapa, M., et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). The main aim of this study is to discover the prevalence of SM needs among students in Nepal and evaluate how these needs influence their QoL. Through these understandings, we pursue delivering direction for the expansion of educational and support programs to boost the digital WB of youth, ensuring their complete growth.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed an analytical cross-sectional study strategy to evaluate the needs of SM and its effect on the QoL among secondary school students. Analytical cross-sectional study, as per collects data at a single point in time, likening outcomes b/t exposed and unexposed individuals. The study emphasizes on Amar English Secondary, Bindhyabasini Secondary Boarding School, and Oasis Public School, all situated in Tokha, Kathmandu. The sampling frame is composed of students in grades 8, 9, and 19, with a calculated sample size of 168 using Cochran's formula and stratified sampling.



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Instrument of the study

Section A: Sociodemographic Profile In this section of the questionnaire, respondents need to answer the questions by selecting the appropriate options. This section includes four independent variables: age, gender, type of family, and average monthly family income.

Section B: Social Networking Sites Uses and Needs Scale (SNSUN Scale): The purpose of the questionnaire is to assess social media usage and needs among the target population. The questions were adapted from the SNSUN Scale developed by (Ali et al., 2019). Twenty-seven items were derived from the questionnaires: eight items pertain to social media use, while nineteen items relate to social media needs (Ali et al., 2019). In the study, cognitive needs (CN), affective needs (AN), personal integrative needs (PIN), and social integrative needs (SIN) were assessed (Ali et al., 2019). Elements falling below 50 were regarded as low, while those above 50 were considered high. Meanwhile, diversion needs were classified as negative below 50 and positive above 50. This evaluation also encompassed site validity and reliability

Diversionary Needs (3 Items) of SM: E.g.: 1.Social media combats loneliness, 2.Dismisses boredom, and 3.Provides an escape from worries.

Cognitive needs (4 items) of Social Media: For example, 1.participants expressed 2.social media assisted in their research, 3.knowledge acquisition, and 4.obtaining information about others.

Affective needs, consisting of (3 items), reflect social media users' preferences. 1. Users primarily utilize social media for emotional expression, 2.building relationships, and 3.Sharing their problems.

Personal Integrative Needs (4 items) encompass a variety of aspects: e.g. 1.Social media is integral to my self-image.2.It projects a curated image to others, 3.Allows people to form judgments and 4.Used to seek approval and validation from friends.

Social Integrative Needs (5 items) reflect a SM: e.g.1.Social media fosters communication with friends; 2.It maintains connections with family, 3.Facilitates adding new friends. And 4.Helps discovers intriguing people beyond real-life circles.

For the eight items in social media use: The questions are in numeric open-ended format, while the remaining five items offer various response options.

Section C: WHOQOL-BREF (Quality of Life) this section of the questionnaire pertains to the quality of life among students. The questions in this section were adapted from WHOQOL-BREF (WHO, 2012). There are four domains with a total of 24 items included: the physical domain contains 7 items, the second domain includes 6 items, the social domain comprises 3 items, and the environmental domain includes 8 items (World Health Organization, 2012).

Reliability and Validity Test

Section B: Social Networking Sites Uses and Needs Scale (SNSUN Scale): The questionnaires have undergone psychometric testing, demonstrating good reliability and validity (Ali et al., 2019). The Content Validity Index (CVI) for relevancy is 91.21%, and for clarity, it is 84.53% (Ali et al., 2019).

SNSUN scale (19 Items) Factor Analysis: The study's data quality was evaluated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy, indicating reasonable adequacy (KMO = 0.604). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (Chi-Square: 530.953, df = 153, p<0.001), supporting the factor analysis in this study. The communalities from factor analysis indicate the instruments are moderately reliable. Items reflecting social interaction and self-images show stronger communalities, suggesting their suitability for the study. Extraction Methods: principal Component Analysis.

Section C: WHOQOL-BREF: The scale exhibits excellent internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.95 for domain physical, 0.93 for domain psychological, 0.89 for domain social, and 0.95 for Domain environmental. It also demonstrates good construct validity (World Health Organization, 2012).

Inclusion criteria included students in grades 8, 9, and 10 willing to participate, while exclusion criteria apply to those with mental health issues that are unavailable during data collection. Ethical consideration encompasses obtaining from the Institute Review Committee (IRC) the Yeti Health Sciences Academy (YHSA), which recognizes the Nepal Health Council in Nepal. Additionally, permission was granted from school authorities, informed consent was obtained from participants, and privacy and confidence were maintained. Data processing and analysis employed using SPSS, descriptive analysis, and inferential static analysis.



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RESULTS

The demographic variables were assessed. Age groups were predominately ≤ 15 years (76.8%), with a mean age of 14.48. The gender distribution shows 56% male and 44% female. Family types consisted of 58.3% unclear and 41.7% joint. Monthly family income varied: 31% felt within the 10–24 thousand range, 41.1% felt within the 25–49 thousand, and 28% felt above the 49 thousand. (Table 1)

Table 1 Socio-demographic characteristics among participants

Variables (n=168)	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group		
≤ 15 Years	129	76.8
≥ 16 Years	39	23.2
Mean: 14.4762; Std. Deviation: 1.19356; Minimum: 12.00; Maximum: 17.00		
Gender Group		
Male	94	56
Female	74	44
Types of Family Group		
Nuclear	98	58.3
Joint	70	41.7
Average Monthly Family Income		
10-24 Thousand	52	31
25-49 Thousand	69	41.1
Above 49 Thousand	47	28

Table 2 Illustration of Social Media Use among Participants

The results for leisure activities and social media use (SMU). The favorite leisure activity indicated that 33.3% prefer using social media, 24.4% watch videos, 31.5% play games and 10.7% read books. In terms of SMU, 77.8% use it daily, 11.4% occasionally, 9.6% rarely, and only 1.2% do not use it. Mobile devices are the most commonly used social media (73.2%), followed by laptops (22%), and tablets (4.8%). (Table 2)



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Variables (N=168)	Frequency	Percentage
Favorite Leisure Activity		
Using Social Media	56	33.3
Watching Videos	41	24.4
Playing Games	53	31.5
Reading Books	18	10.7
Use of social media		
Yes	130	77.8
Occasionally	19	11.4
Rarely	16	9.6
No	2	1.2
Device use for social media		
Mobile	123	73.2
Laptop	37	22
Tablets	8	4.8

Table 3 Illustration of the Most Frequently Used Social Networking Sites among Participants

Variables (n=168)	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook		
Everyday	50	29.8
3-5 times a week	62	36.9
Occasionally (a few times in a month)	30	17.9
Rarely (a few times in a year)	9	5.4
Never	17	10.1
Messenger		
Everyday	70	41.7
3-5 times a week	60	35.7
Occasionally (a few times in a month)	24	14.3
Rarely (a few times in a year)	5	3
Never	9	5.4
Instagram		
Everyday	20	11.9
3-5 times a week	26	15.5
Occasionally (a few times in a month)	21	12.5
Rarely (a few times in a year)	10	6.0
Never	91	54.2
YouTube		
Everyday	108	64.3
3-5 times a week	32	19
Occasionally (a few times in a month)	20	11.9
Rarely (a few times in a year)	4	2.4
Never	4	2.4
TikTok		
Everyday	58	34.5
3-5 times a week	55	32.7
Occasionally (a few times in a month)	12	7.1
Rarely (a few times in a year)	13	7.7
Never	30	17.9



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Social media platform usage patterns are detailed. On Facebook, 29.8% use it every day, 36.9% 3-5 times a week, 17.9% occasionally, 5.4% rarely, and 10.1% never. Messenger shows similar patterns, with 41.7% every day, 35.7% 3-5 times a week, 14.3% occasionally, 3% rarely, and 5.4% never. For Instagram, 11.9% use it daily, 15.5% 3-5 times a week, 12.5% occasionally, 6% rarely, and 54.2% never. YouTube is popular, with 64.3% daily use, 19% 3-5 times a week, 11.9% occasional, 2.4% rare, and 2.4% never. TikTok shows 34.5% every day, 32.7% 3-5 times a week, 7.1% occasional, 7.7% rare, and 17.9% never. (Table 3)

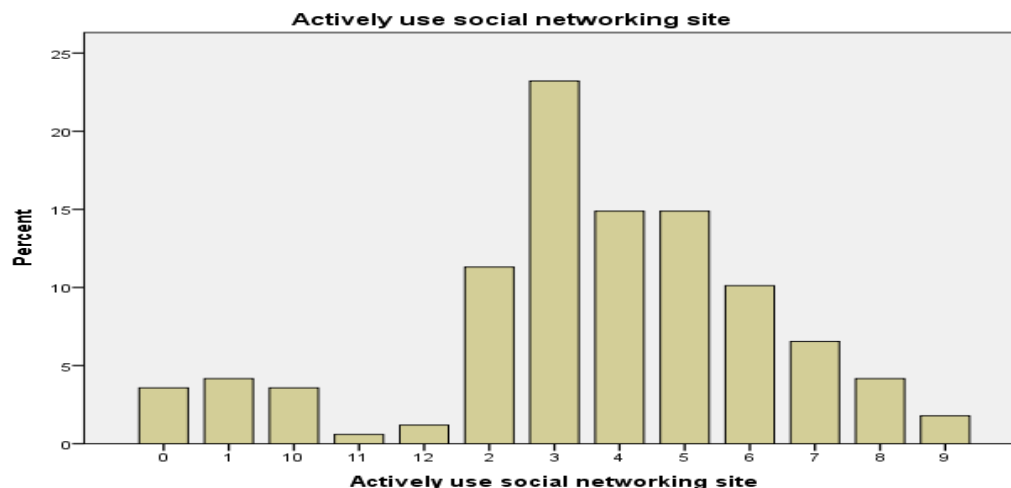


Figure 1

The bar chart outcomes revealed that; Frequency of Active SNSU among Participants: Most Participants Use Social Media Sites with a Frequency of 3 (23.2%) and 4 (14.9%).

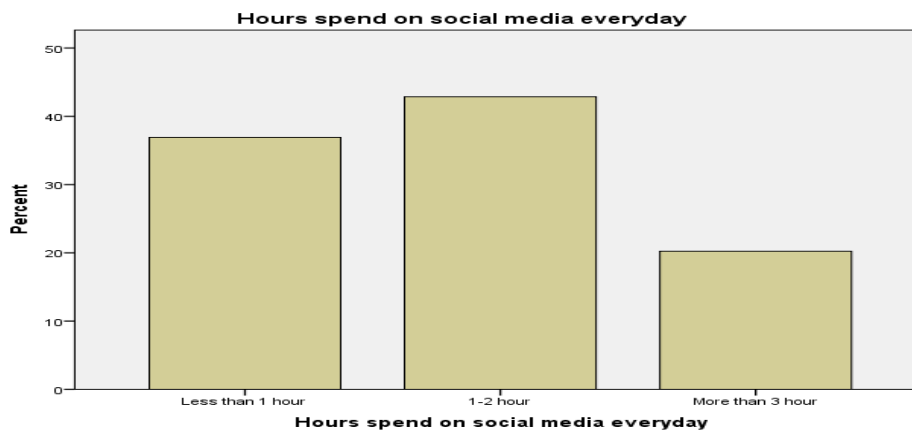


Figure 2

In this bar chart, the outcome revealed that the daily hours spent on SM were: 36.9% spent less than 1 hour, 42.9% spent 1-2 hours, and 20.2% spent more than 3 hours.



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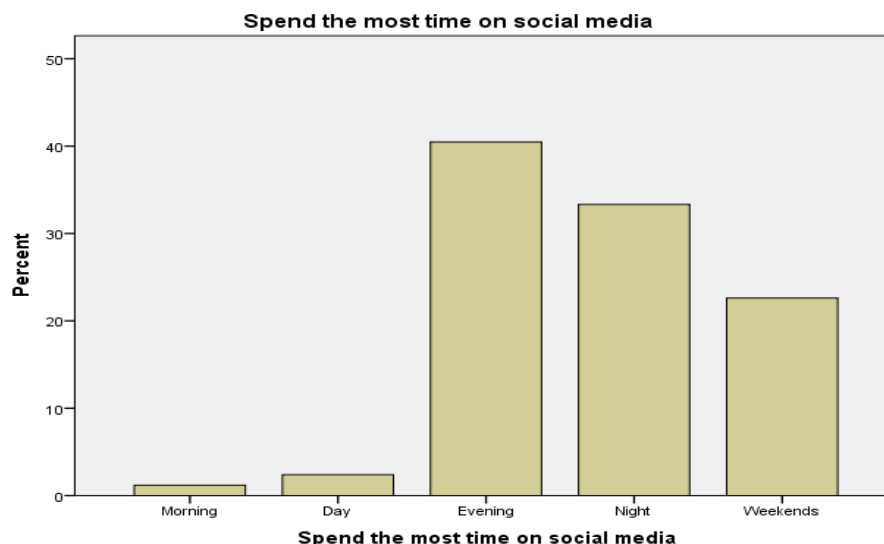


Figure 3

In this bar chart, results revealed that when participants spend the most on SM, it is 40.5% in the evening, 33.3% at night, and 22.6% on weekends.

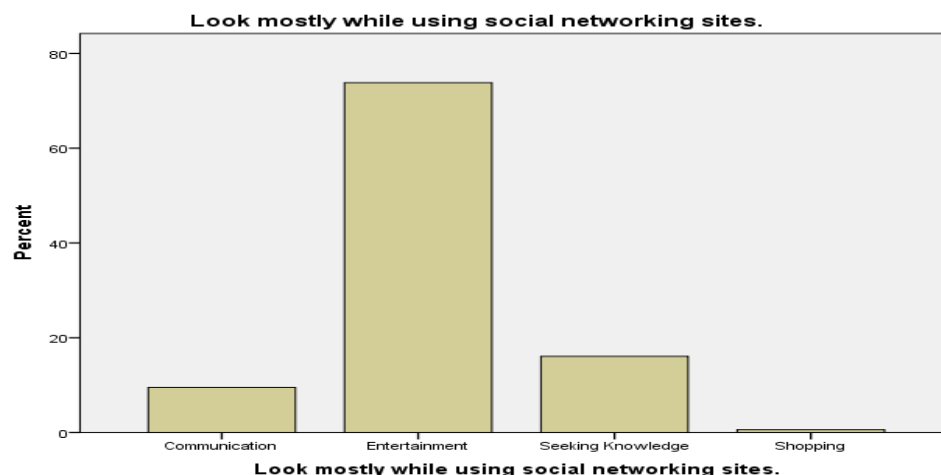


Figure 4

In this bar chart, results demonstrated that participants mostly use social networking sites for entertainment (73.8%), followed by seeking knowledge (16.1%), and communication (9.5%). Shopping is less common at 0.6%.

Table 4 Prevalence of Quality of Life among Participants

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good (76-100%)	36	21.4
Good (51-75%)	128	76.2
Medium/Fair (26-50%)	4	2.4
Poor (0-25%)	0.0	0.0



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The results indicate the overall performance assessment: 21.4% achieved a "Very Good" score (76-100%), 76.2% were rated as "Good" (51-75%), 2.4% received a "Medium/Fair" rating (26-50%), and no respondents scored "Poor" (0-25%). (Table 4)

Table 5 Needs of Social Media Use among Participants

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Diversion Needs		
Negative	108	64.3
positive	60	35.7
Cognitive Needs		
Low	89	53.0
High	79	47.0
Affective Needs		
Low	87	52.1
High	81	47.9
Personal Integrative Needs		
Low	115	68.5
High	53	31.5
Social Integrative Needs		
Low	94	56.0
High	74	44.0

In Table 5, respondents' needs are presented. For Diversion Needs (DN), 64.3% had negative needs, and 35.7% had positive needs. Cognitive Needs (CN) were low for 53% and high for 47%. Affective Needs (AN) were low for 52.1% and high for 47.9%. Personal Integrative Needs (PIN) was low for 68.5% and high for 31.5%. Social Integrative Needs (SIN) was low for 56% and high for 44%.



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Table 6 Association between selected demographic variables and QoL among participants

Variables		Level of QoL			Chi square	df	P-Value
		Very Good	Good	Medium/Fair			
Age	≤15 Years	21.7%	76.7%	1.6%	1.652 ^a	2	.438
	≥16 Years	20.5%	74.4%	5.1%			
Gender	Male	25.5%	73.4%	1.1%	3.449 ^a	2	.178
	Female	16.2%	79.7%	4.1%			
Types of Family	Nuclear	18.4%	78.6%	3.1%	1.661 ^a	2	.436
	Joint	25.7%	72.9%	1.4%			
Average Monthly Family Income	10-24 Thousand	17.3%	82.7%	0.0%	4.012 ^a	4	.404
	25-49 Thousand	20.3%	76.8%	2.9%			
	Above 49 Thousand	8.3%	31.5%	1.2%			

The association between selected demographic variables and participants' quality of life (QoL). None of the variables, including age ($p = .438$), gender ($p = .178$), types of family ($p = .436$), and average monthly family income ($p = .404$), exhibited statistically significant associations with QoL. (Table 6)

DISCUSSION

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics: The findings in Table 1 illustrate the socio-demographic profile of the participants. The majority were ≤ 15 years old (76.8%), with a mean age of 14.48. The gender distribution showed a near balance, with 56% male and 44% female. In terms of family types, 58.3% belonged to nuclear families, and 41.7% were part of joint families. Monthly family income exhibited variation, with 31% in the 10–24 thousand range, 41.1% in the 25–49 thousand range, and 28% with incomes above 49 thousand. These results align with previous research on diverse socio-demographic profiles among participants. Table 2: Social Media Use: Table 2 presents insights into social media use among participants. A significant portion (33.3%) reported that using social media was their preferred leisure activity, while 77.8% used social media daily. Mobile devices were the preferred medium for social media use (73.2%). These results align with previous research findings highlighting the popularity of social media, especially among the younger generation, and the prevalence of mobile devices as the primary platform for usage (Chemnad et al., 2023; Morningstar et al., 2023; Thapa B, Adhikari K, 2023).

Table 3: Social Networking Sites: The findings in Table 3 offer an overview of the frequency of usage across different social networking sites. Facebook and Messenger were the most frequently used platforms. These findings support earlier studies that have reported the widespread use of platforms like Facebook and Messenger (Chemnad et al., 2023; Government of Nepal, 2019; Thapa B, Adhikari K, 2023; Willnat, 2014).

Table 4: Quality of Life: Table 4 evaluates the quality of life among participants. The majority achieved a "good" quality of life score (76.2%), with 21.4% in the "very good" category. This aligns with prior research that has assessed quality of life and found that a SM, part of virtual media, plays a pivotal role in ICT. While it serves various psychological functions, excessive use may heighten anxiety. Motivations for using it include coping and boredom. Its impact on WB, both positive and negative, raises questions about its role in online activity during crises like pandemics or climate awareness (Kowal & Klebaniuk, 2022). Additionally, a study by Gander T et al. (2019) revealed that a majority of participants rated their QoL as equal (Gander et al., 2019).



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Table 5: Social Media Needs: Table 5 explores the findings support with previous research on individual needs, highlighting diverse preferences across diversion, cognitive, affective, and personal integrative, and social integrative dimensions. These results offer insights into the delicate nature of human needs and can inform designer interventions and support systems (Ellison et al., 2009; Erfanian et al., 2013; Mensah & Nizam, 2016).

Table 6: Association with Quality of Life: Table 6 examines the association between selected demographic variables and quality of life (QoL). Surprisingly, none of the variables, including age, gender, types of family, and monthly family income, exhibited statistically significant associations with QoL. These results challenge previous research findings that suggested potential associations between demographic variables such as age, (Acharya Samadarshi et al., 2021; Robson et al., 2021; Thapa B, Adhikari K, 2023) and QoL. Further research is needed to delve into the intricate relationships between these variables.

Limitation

In this study, several limitations are acknowledged. First, the sample size was constrained due to financial and time constraints. Second, self-reported data may be influenced by recall and social desirability biases. Third, the study utilized a cross-sectional design, limiting causal inferences. Fourth, the absence of qualitative data hinders a deeper understanding of social media's impact on quality of life. Finally, the non-significant associations found in this study raise questions about the comprehensiveness of the selected demographic variables in capturing influences on quality of life.

Recommendations based on the findings of this study include:

By implementing these recommendations, future research and initiatives can further our understanding of the intricate relationship between social media use, quality of life, and demographic factors, ultimately contributing to the well-being of individuals in the digital age.

Increase Sample Size: Future research should use larger sample sizes to enhance result generalizability.

Longitudinal Studies: Employ longitudinal study designs to better understand how social media use affects quality of life over time, enabling more robust causal inferences.

Mixed-Methods Approach: Consider a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain deeper insights into the impact of social media use.

Promote Responsible Social Media Use: Encourage responsible and mindful social media use, particularly among younger individuals, to mitigate potential negative impacts on their quality of life.

Public Health Initiatives: Develop campaigns aimed at enhancing digital literacy and mental health awareness in the context of social media use.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the impact of social media on quality of life is crucial for informed educational and policy decisions. This study employed an analytical cross-sectional approach with 168 participants from secondary schools in Kathmandu. The majority were adolescents, and mobile devices were the primary medium for daily social media use, with Facebook and Messenger being the most frequently accessed platforms. Quality of life assessments showed the majority reported "good." Social media needs included both negative and positive diversion needs, but no significant associations with quality of life were found among demographic variables. Despite valuable insights, limitations such as a small sample size and the absence of qualitative data should be considered. To advance research and promote well-being in the digital age, we recommend larger sample sizes, longitudinal studies, mixed qualitative and quantitative approaches, responsible social media use, and public health initiatives. These steps aim to provide a holistic understanding of social media's impact on quality of life while fostering healthier digital engagement.

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Conflict of Interest: None



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