Research Paper

Social Media Addiction and Family Support among Adolescents: A Literature Review

Nandini Barman

PhD Research Scholar
(Dept of Education, Sikkim University)

ABSTRACT: *Adolescence is marked by drastic changes in physical, mental, emotional and social domains. It is a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, mostly influenced by external factors, and social media is one of them. Social media is provide platform to connect, entertain, and share information with each other. But its excessive use leads to maladaptive behavior such as addiction. Social media addiction has emerged as a pressing concern among adolescents due to its negative impacts on mental health, social development and quality of life. Studies suggest that family plays an important role in mitigating social media addiction among adolescents by providing appropriate emotional support and guiding them into healthy social media use. This study aims to understand the role of family support on social media addiction among adolescents through a literature review. The review used articles sourced from Google Scholar, PubMed and ScienceDirect as a database that used the keywords family support, social media addiction and adolescents. Study highlights that perceived support from family acts as a protective factor in problematic social media use among adolescents by enhancing resilience and reducing loneliness compared to friends. Lack of family support, such as emotional support and educational guidance, can lead to unmet psychological needs among adolescents, which increases the risk of social media addiction. According to a study, family support, especially from the mother, is essential in preventing social media addiction among adolescents by educating themselves, maintaining open communication and formulating mutual commitments. Therefore, it is important to understand the role of family support in reducing social media addiction among adolescents.*

KEYWORDS: *Family support, social media addiction, adolescents*

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood (Daniels et al., 2021). A developmental stage mostly influenced by external factors, including social media (Taddi et al., 2024). Social media brings an opportunity for connectivity, entertainment and sharing information. It is an inseparable part of everyday life, particularly among adolescents in the era of technological evolution. It is also notable that social media use mainly developed during early adolescence. They are more vulnerable to social media use. Adolescents are gradually growing into a major population of internet users (Tsai & Lin, 2003) and the rapid expansion of this digital technology integrated their life, education and culture (He, 2022). To seek social support and express loneliness to others, social media can provide a convenient place to engage (Cauberghe et al., 2021). The digital world is influencing their development and shaping their behaviors and experiences. Though it helps them build the ability to socialize, communicate and provides an opportunity to learn from multiple sources through simplicity (Bhargava & Velasquez, 2021; Serlachius et al., 2021), its negative consequences become more serious.

Technology addiction is a general term that includes social media addiction, the most commonly observed addiction among adolescent groups. It is possible to become addicted to social media same as alcohol, tobacco, injectable and other non-injectable substances (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). Social media addiction is a behavioral disorder that refers to the excessive and uncontrollable demand to use social media (Rathi et al., 2022). Most commonly used social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Snapchat, have created a bridge between the virtual world and real-world. Using these platforms for a long period can cause detachment from one's real-world relationships.

Social media addiction is a growing health issue in India, especially among the young population. Inadequate usage of social media can develop addictive behavior (He, 2022). Despite knowing its side effects, people are engrossed by social media content and unable to resist themselves from being addicted to it. Excessive consumption of social media can impact users' psychosocial functioning and well-being (Hussain & Griffiths, 2021; Ponnusamy et al., 2020). A study reported that due to loneliness, social anxiety and poor social support in the real world, user invests themselves in the virtual world (O'Day & Heimberg, 2021). The adverse effects of social media on adolescents' psychological and social development can worsen their quality of life and lead to addiction (Coskun et al., 2024). Excessive or inappropriate use of social media content can harm the social life of the concerned individual, along with their family and community. Social anxiety and loneliness have been observed as important risk factors for social media addiction (Singh, 2024). Some researchers even stated that social media addiction is as dangerous as substance-related addictions (Hofmann et al., 2012). Furthermore, spending long hours on social media contributes to sleep displacement (Scott et al., 2019). Adolescent sleeping disorder is a significant public health concern, as insufficient sleep can impact overall well-being (Owens et al., 2014).

Parental attitude and family functioning play an important role in the psychosocial development of children and adolescents (Wartberg et al., 2014). They provide emotional support, educational guidance, life care, behavior control and problem-solving ability, which help adolescents fulfill their physiological, psychological and social needs (Qi, 2024). Availability of needful support from family members fosters good habits by setting boundaries and encouraging physical activities to prevent adolescents from being addicted to social media. Healthy practices by parents can prevent the development of internet addiction among adolescents (Van Den Eijnden et al., 2010). Fewer studies are focusing on adolescent's social media addiction and its prevention. Therefore, the present study is conducted to understand and explore the family's role in preventing adolescents' social media addiction through reviewing various literature mindfully.

1.1 Status of social media addiction among adolescents
The Pew Research Center (2025) report highlights that the percentage of teens rose from 36% in 2022 to 45% in 2025, who admitted that they overuse their social media. The National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) revealed that 27% of Indian adolescents are facing reduced focus, poor academic performance and mental health issues due to uncontrolled social media dependency (Jain, 2024). The CDC reports that 77% of U.S. high school students used social media at least several times a day, based on the 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Jones et al., 2024). As per the survey by LocalCircles in 2022, 40% of Indian parents noted that their children aged 9 to 17 are addicted to videos, gaming and social media (Singh, 2022). The survey indicates that adults and adolescents check their smartphones around 150 times a day, emphasizing the widely observed negative effects of excessive smartphone use of smartphones on well-being. A survey by the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) from the WHO Regional Office for Europe found that the problematic use of social media grew from 7% in 2018 to 11% in 2022 (WHO, 2024).

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
The present study is grounded on two key theories: Media Systems Dependence Theory and Social Support Theory.

2.1 Media Systems Dependence Theory
The Media System Dependence Theory (MSDT), developed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur (1985), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the relationship between media, users, and social systems. The theory explains the interlinks among mass media, users and the social system and its influence on each other. The theory emphasizes that individuals actively choose media to satisfy specific needs and develop a dependency on media. Excessive reliance on media can lead to addictive behaviors and negative consequences among users, such as depression and poor sleep quality, harming one's social life (Ball-Rokeach, 1985).

The theory highlights how excessive dependency on social media platforms can negatively impact on adolescent's health.

2.2 Social Support Theory
Social support theory, as formulated by Peggy A. Thoits (2011), posits that social support plays an important role in buffering individuals against stress and promoting overall well-being. According to Thoits, social support can be emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal-based, each offering a different form of support. Thoits emphasizes that support from close relationships and community networks strengthens a person's ability to cope with life's challenges by providing resources. This theory also suggests that perceived social support- the belief that support is available if needed can be just as influential as actual support received. Thoits

identifies two sources of support, primary and secondary. Primary groups consist of close relationship which are family and friends and secondary groups consist of more formal and hierarchical relationships, such as those found in schools or religious organizations. This theory emphasizes that both types of support are essential in enhancing an individual's ability to cope with life challenges (Thoits, 2011).

Thoits theory helps highlight how the family, as a primary source of support, provides the necessary assistance to adolescents that can help them through the complexities that come during adolescence. For adolescents, the belief that support is available can significantly impact their ability to cope with stressors.

i. ROLE OF FAMILY SUPPORT ON SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS

Successful and harmonious adolescent development needs not only a physically fit body but also an appropriately maintained socio-emotional support provided by family, peers, teachers, and the larger community (Alshammari et al., 2021). Family system and the relationship between parents and adolescents play a significant role in the development of social media addiction in adolescents (Lin et al., 2023). Wartberg et al. (2014) also emphasize the importance of family functioning for the occurrence of problematic internet use in adolescents. Adolescents without sufficient family support are more likely to grow negative emotions such as loneliness and anxiety and seek comfort on social media, leading to addiction. A supportive environment provided by family members can optimize their development and help them to learn proper use of social media (Tsai & Lin, 2003). Lack of social support is associated with depression and increases the risk of developing internet addiction (Nalwa & Anand, 2003). Higher parent-adolescent conflict and lower family function were predictive of adolescent Internet addiction (Yen et al., 2007). Tsitsika et al. (2011) revealed that around 7% adolescents have experienced dysfunctional family relationships as a factor contributing to their social media addiction. Similarly study done by Siomos et al. (2012) and Macur & Pontes (2021) found lack of parental control and supervision is an important contributing factor to the development of internet addiction. Whereas Chang et al. (2015) reported that lower levels of parental attachment relate with adolescent's internet addiction and higher levels of parental restriction lessen the internet addiction among adolescents. In other words, higher levels of social support offline can provide greater benefits of social media use (Luchtefeld & Jordan, 2022). Studies have found that lack of emotional support and educational guidance and poor life care can cause adolescents' unmet psychological needs, lower self-efficacy and negative coping styles, which are significant factors of social media addiction (Qi, 2024). Bloemen and De Coninck (2020) discovered that parental support and their control over social media usage act as a mediator between family and internet addiction. Research by Kusumawaty et al. (2022) suggested that mothers play a crucial role in preventing their children from getting involved in the troubling issue of social media addiction.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The growing prevalence of social media addiction among adolescents has become a significant concern in recent periods. The increasing dependency on social media underscores the need for targeted interventions to manage social media use among adolescents. Studies indicate adolescents are in trouble due to excessive use of social media platforms, which leads to a negative impact on their academic performance, mental health and overall well-being. The above discussion focuses on the importance of family promoting healthy digital habits and mental well-being through preventing social media addiction among adolescents. Therefore, in order to prevent and intervene in social media addiction, it is necessary to improve the family function to enhance the psychological quality of adolescents.

REFERENCES

[1] Amudhan, S., Prakasha, H., Mahapatra, P., Burma, A. D., Mishra, V., Sharma, M. K., & Rao, G. N. (2022). Technology addiction among school-going adolescents in India: Epidemiological analysis from a cluster survey for strengthening adolescent health programs at district level. *Journal of Public Health*, *44*(2), 286–295. https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdaa257

[2] Azizi, S. M., Soroush, A., & Khatony, A. (2019). The relationship between social networking addiction and academic performance in Iranian students of medical sciences: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Psychology*, *7*(1), 28. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-019-0305-0

[3] Basu, S., Sharma, R., Sharma, P., & Sharma, N. (2021). Addiction-like behavior associated with social media usage in undergraduate students of a government medical college in Delhi, India. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, *63*(1), 35–40. https://doi.org/10.4103/psychiatry.IndianJPsychiatry_153_20

[4] Bayraktar, F., & Gün, Z. (2007). Incidence and Correlates of Internet Usage Among Adolescents in North Cyprus. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, *10*(2), 191–197. https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2006.9969

[5] Bhargava, V. R., & Velasquez, M. (2021). Ethics of the Attention Economy: The Problem of Social Media Addiction. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *31*(3), 321–359. https://doi.org/10.1017/beq.2020.32

[6] Bloemen, N., & De Coninck, D. (2020). Social Media and Fear of Missing Out in Adolescents: The Role of Family Characteristics. *Social Media + Society*, *6*(4), 2056305120965517. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120965517

[7] Chang, F.-C., Chiu, C.-H., Miao, N.-F., Chen, P.-H., Lee, C.-M., Chiang, J.-T., & Pan, Y.-C. (2015). The relationship between parental mediation and Internet addiction among adolescents, and the association with cyberbullying and depression. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, *57*, 21–28. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.comppsych.2014.11.013

[8] Cheng, C., Lau, Y., Chan, L., & Luk, J. W. (2021). Prevalence of social media addiction across 32 nations: Meta-analysis with subgroup analysis of classification schemes and cultural values. *Addictive Behaviors*, *117*, 106845. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2021.106845

[9]   Coskun, T., Tapci, A. E., & Sac, R. U. (2024). Assessment of the Relationship Between Social Media Addiction and Quality of Life in Adolescents. *Eurasian Journal of Family Medicine*, *13*(2), 50–60. https://doi.org/10.33880/ejfm.2024130202

[10]   Daniels, M., Sharma, M., & Batra, K. (2021). Social Media and Substance Use Among Adolescents: Implications for Research. *Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education (JADE)*, *65*(1), 9–21.

[11]   Davis, R. A. (2001). A cognitive-behavioral model of pathological Internet use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *17*(2), 187–195. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0747-5632(00)00041-8

[12]   Fioravanti, G., Casale, S., Benucci, S. B., Prostamo, A., Falone, A., Ricca, V., & Rotella, F. (2021). Fear of missing out and social networking sites use and abuse: A meta-analysis. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *122*, 106839. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.106839

[13]   He, Q. (2022). *The Relationship between Family and Social Media:* 2022 3rd International Conference on Mental Health, Education and Human Development (MHEHD 2022), Dalian, China. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220704.058

[14]   Jones, C. M., Njai, R. Q., & Goings, T. A. (2024). Frequent social media use and experiences with bullying, persistent sadness or hopelessness, and suicidal ideation among U.S. high school students — Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2023. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 73*(44), 999–1005. **https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7344a3**

[15]   Kuss, D., & Griffiths, M. (2017). Social Networking Sites and Addiction: Ten Lessons Learned. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *14*(3), 311. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph14030311

[16]   Kusumawaty, I., Fadly, Basuki Kurniawan, T., & Yunike. (2022). How to support teenagers in social media utilization: Based on mother's experience. *International Journal of Advanced Health Science and Technology*, *2*(3), 214–219. https://doi.org/10.35882/ijahst.v2i3.14

[17]   Lin, S., Mastrokoukou, S., & Longobardi, C. (2023). Social relationships and social media addiction among adolescents: Variable-centered and person-centered approaches. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *147*, 107840. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2023.107840

[18]   Lin, S., Yuan, Z., Niu, G., Fan, C., & Hao, X. (2024). Family Matters More Than Friends on Problematic Social Media Use Among Adolescents: Mediating Roles of Resilience and Loneliness. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, *22*(5), 2907–2925. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-023-01026-w

[19]   Luchtefeld, C., & Jordan, K. D. (2022). Individual differences influencing the relationship between online social support and addictive use of social media. *Telematics and Informatics Reports*, *8*, 100025. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teler.2022.100025

[20]   Masthi, R. N. R., Godwa, P. S., & Mallekavu, P. (2018). A comparative study on social media usage and health status among students studying in pre-university colleges of urban Bengaluru. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, *43*(3), 180. https://doi.org/10.4103/ijcm.IJCM_285_17

[21]   Meshi, D., Freestone, D., & Özdem-Mertens, C. (2021). Problematic social media use is associated with the evaluation of both risk and ambiguity during decision making. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, *10*(3), 779–787. https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.2021.00047

[22]   Nalwa, K., & Anand, A. P. (2003). Internet Addiction in Students: A Cause of Concern. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, *6*(6), 653–656. https://doi.org/10.1089/109493103322725441

[23]   O'Day, E. B., & Heimberg, R. G. (2021). Social media use, social anxiety, and loneliness: A systematic review. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, *3*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2021.100070

[24]   Peng, S., & Peng, Y. (2025). Family Function and Problematic Social Media Use Among Adolescents in Vocational Schools: A Moderated Mediation Model. *The Journal of Psychology*, *159*(1), 56–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2024.2368231

[25]   Pew Research Center. (2025). *Teens, social media and mental health.* **https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2025/04/22/teens-social-media-and-mental-health/**

[26]   Qi, X. (2024). An analysis of the relationship between social media addiction and family functioning in adolescents. *Applied & Educational Psychology*, *5*(5). https://doi.org/10.23977/appep.2024.050515

[27]   Safarina, N., & Halimah, L. (2019). Self-control and online game addiction in early adult gamers. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, *1375*(1), 012094. https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1375/1/012094

[28]   Serlachius, A., Boggiss, A., Lim, D., Schache, K., Wallace-Boyd, K., Brenton-Peters, J., Buttenshaw, E., Chadd, S., Cavadino, A., Cao, N., Morunga, E., & Thabrew, H. (2021). Pilot study of a well-being app to support New Zealand young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Internet Interventions*, *26*, 100464. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.invent.2021.100464

[29]   Singh, A. (2024). Behavioral Issues Related to Excessive Usage of Social Media among School-going Adolescents: A Study from Sonitpur District of Assam, India. *Annals of Indian Psychiatry*, *8*(4), 312–316. https://doi.org/10.4103/aip.aip_114_23

[30]   Siomos, K., Floros, G., Fisoun, V., Evaggelia, D., Farkonas, N., Sergentani, E., Lamprou, M., & Geroukalis, D. (2012). Evolution of Internet addiction in Greek adolescent students over a two-year period: The impact of parental bonding. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *21*(4), 211–219. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-012-0254-0

[31]   Sun, Y., & Zhang, Y. (2021). A review of theories and models applied in studies of social media addiction and implications for future research. *Addictive Behaviors*, *114*, 106699. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106699

[32]   Taddi, V. V., Kohli, R. K., & Puri, P. (2024). Perception, use of social media, and its impact on the mental health of Indian adolescents: A qualitative study. *World Journal of Clinical Pediatrics*, *13*(3). https://doi.org/10.5409/wjcp.v13.i3.97501

[33]   Taş, İ. (2023). The Relationship Between Social Ignore and Social Media Addiction Among Adolescents: Mediator Effect of Satisfaction With Family Life. *Youth & Society*, *55*(4), 708–729. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X211055210

[34]   Tsai, C.-C., & Lin, S. S. J. (2003). Internet Addiction of Adolescents in Taiwan: An Interview Study. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, *6*(6), 649–652. https://doi.org/10.1089/109493103322725432

[35]   Tsitsika, A., Critselis, E., Louizou, A., Janikian, M., Freskou, A., Marangou, E., Kormas, G., & Kafetzis, D. A. (2011). Determinants of Internet Addiction among Adolescents: A Case-Control Study. *The Scientific World JOURNAL*, *11*, 866–874. https://doi.org/10.1100/tsw.2011.85

[36]   Van Den Eijnden, R. J. J. M., Spijkerman, R., Vermulst, A. A., Van Rooij, T. J., & Engels, R. C. M. E. (2010). Compulsive Internet Use Among Adolescents: Bidirectional Parent–Child Relationships. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *38*(1), 77–89. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-009-9347-8

[37]   Wartberg, L., Kammerl, R., Rosenkranz, M., Dipl-Soz, Hirschhäuser, L., Dipl-Paed, Hein, S., Dipl-Paed, Schwinge, C., Dipl-Paed, Petersen, K.-U., & Thomasius, R. (2014). The Interdependence of Family Functioning and Problematic Internet Use in a Representative Quota Sample of Adolescents. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *17*(1), 14–18. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2012.0494

[38]   World Health Organization. (2022). *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study: International report from the 2022 survey.* **https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/361368/9789289061791-eng.pdf**

[39]   Yen, J.-Y., Yen, C.-F., Chen, C.-C., Chen, S.-H., & Ko, C.-H. (2007). Family Factors of Internet Addiction and Substance Use Experience in Taiwanese Adolescents. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, *10*(3), 323–329. https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2006.9948