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The Relationship between the Mindfulness and Social Media Usage on Eating Attitudes among Adolescents

D. Rithisha[1], Nikitha S[2]

[1]Student, Department of Psychology, Jyoti Nivas College (Autonomous), Bengaluru, India

[2]Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Jyoti Nivas College (Autonomous), Bengaluru, India

Abstract: ***This study explores the relationship between mindfulness, social media usage, and eating attitudes among adolescents aged 12 to 18, a phase marked by emotional, physical, and cognitive development that increases vulnerability to external influences. Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat often promote unrealistic beauty standards, which can negatively affect adolescents' self-image and contribute to dissatisfaction and disordered eating behaviors. Mindfulness, which involves being fully present and regulating emotional responses, may help mitigate these effects by enhancing emotional control and resilience. The study includes 200 school- and college-going adolescents and adopts a pre-post design to examine how mindfulness influences eating attitudes and social media behavior. Standardized tools such as the Child and Adolescent Mindfulness Measure (CAMM), Social Media Use Questionnaire (SMUQ), and Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26) will be used for data collection. Mindfulness will be fostered through structured sessions aimed at promoting self-awareness, emotional balance, and mindful digital engagement. Ethical protocols will be followed, including obtaining assent from minors and informed consent from participants aged 19, along with maintaining confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw. The results are expected to support the development of school-based strategies for healthier digital use and improved adolescent mental health through mindfulness.***

Keywords: relationship, mindfulness, social media, eating attitudes, adolescent

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and context

Adolescence, typically spanning the ages of 12 to 18, represents a developmental phase characterized by significant physical, mental, and social transformations (Lumen Learning, n.d.). During this sensitive period, adolescents often seek acceptance and identity, making them more open to external influences such as social media (Steinberg, 2014). Platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok expose young users to carefully curated content, which can shape unrealistic standards of beauty, success, and self-worth (Fardouly, Diedrichs, Vartanian, & Halliwell, 2015). This constant comparison may lead to negative emotions, including low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction, which in turn can affect eating behaviors and mental health (Perloff, 2014). In the Indian context, these influences are further complicated by academic stress, family expectations, and cultural transitions (Choudhury, 2010). Amid these challenges, mindfulness the practice of being aware of the present moment with acceptance has shown promise in helping individuals manage emotions and reduce the impact of negative influences (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). This research is relevant because it explores the connection between mindfulness, social media use, and eating attitudes among adolescents, aiming to offer insights that support healthier coping strategies and promote emotional well-being (Brown & Ryan, 2003).

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977)
Social Learning Theory highlights that adolescents often learn behaviors by observing and imitating others, especially on social media. When influencers or peers display ideal body types and receive positive feedback, teens may adopt similar habits to gain approval. Over time, this imitation can lead to pressure to meet unrealistic standards, impacting body image and eating behaviors (Bandura, 1977).

Mindfulness Theory (Kabat-Zinn, 1990)
Mindfulness Theory promotes present-moment awareness without judgment, helping individuals manage emotions and thoughts calmly. For adolescents exposed to idealized images on social media, mindfulness reduces negative comparisons and supports emotional regulation. Practices like mindful breathing and eating can improve self-image and encourage healthier eating habits (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1934)
Sociocultural Theory highlights how social interactions and cultural influences shape development. Social media spreads beauty standards and eating trends that adolescents often adopt, especially with peer reinforcement. Through guidance within the Zone of Proximal Development, teens can learn to think critically about such content. Mindfulness can support this process by encouraging self-awareness and healthier self-image (Vygotsky, 1934).

Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)
Ecological Systems Theory explains that adolescent development is shaped by different environmental levels. The microsystem like home, school, and peers directly impacts eating habits and media use. Support from parents and teachers in practicing mindfulness can foster healthy behaviors. Broader systems like media policies and cultural beauty norms also influence teens. A combined focus on mindfulness and supportive environments promotes overall

well-being (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study investigates how mindfulness and social media usage influence eating behaviors and mental health during adolescence, a stage where external influences significantly shape psychological development (Lumen Learning, n.d.). With increasing concerns around adolescent anxiety, body dissatisfaction, and disordered eating patterns, understanding the combined impact of these factors is crucial (Smith & Davis, 2022; Wilson et al., 2021). Mindfulness, which involves present-moment awareness without judgment, has been shown to support emotional regulation and promote self-acceptance (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Miller & Brown, 2023). In contrast, social media platforms often portray idealized body images that can lead to harmful self-comparisons and negative self-esteem (Johnson & White, 2022). By examining whether mindfulness can buffer these negative effects, this study provides valuable insights for designing school-based interventions that encourage healthy digital habits, build psychological resilience, and promote adolescent well-being (Brown et al., 2022; Singh & Kapoor, 2023).

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Mindfulness

Anand and Sharma (2011) studied how a mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program affected teenagers between 14 and 15 years old. The program was held in schools and ran for eight weeks, with sessions taking place once a week during school hours. To track changes, students were assessed at the start, after completing the program, and during a later follow-up using tools like the School Situation Survey and the Personal Well-Being Index. The results showed clear improvements students experienced less stress, both emotionally and physically, and reported feeling less pressure related to academics. They also developed a more positive view of their academic abilities and felt better overall. Many students gave encouraging feedback, saying the sessions were helpful and meaningful. The study emphasized how important it is to introduce mental health support early on. It also showed that regular mindfulness activities can help young people understand their emotions better and manage them more effectively. The authors suggested adding such programs to the school curriculum to build emotional strength and reduce future mental health challenges.

In 2016, Arjunan and Joseph investigated how a brief mindfulness meditation program could help secondary school students cope with exam-related anxiety. The study followed a pre-test/post-test control group method. Students in the experimental group participated in sessions that emphasized breathing techniques and strategies for managing emotions, while the control group did not receive any such intervention. Findings showed that those who took part in the mindfulness training experienced a clear reduction in exam anxiety. Interestingly, this improvement was observed across students of varying academic abilities—high, average, and low achievers alike. The researchers highlighted that short, cost-effective mindfulness practices can be a practical addition to school programs, as they not only help students manage immediate exam stress but also contribute to building long-term emotional strength. They concluded that mindfulness could be a useful life skill for adolescents facing academic challenges.

Sinha and colleagues (2023) developed a brief mindfulness-based program to support adolescents in enhancing their mental and emotional well-being. The intervention spanned four weeks and involved a total of 12 guided sessions that included practices like breath awareness, body scan meditation, and exercises focused on managing emotions. A total of 39 adolescents took part in the study. To evaluate the effectiveness of the program, researchers used tools such as the Digit Letter Substitution Test, the Perceived Stress Scale, and the Emotional Competence Scale. After completing the program, participants showed noticeable gains in areas such as attention, emotional regulation, stress reduction, and general psychological well-being. The study suggested that even short-term mindfulness exposure can improve adolescents' ability to focus and manage their emotions. While the results were promising, the researchers advised that larger-scale studies over longer periods are needed to validate these findings. They also recommended incorporating mindfulness practices into school schedules to support students' overall development.

In 2023, Joseph carried out a study aimed at exploring how an eight-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program influenced stress, focus, and mindfulness in college-going women aged 18 to 22. Forty students participated in the research, with individuals randomly placed in either an experimental group, which took part in the MBSR sessions, or a control group that did not receive any training. The program included practices like mindful breathing, body awareness exercises, and light yoga. To measure changes, several psychological tools were used, including the Stroop Color Word Test, the Change Detection Test, the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS), and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). Results revealed that those in the mindfulness group experienced noticeable improvements in attention, reduced stress, and higher mindfulness levels compared to the control group. The findings highlighted the potential of brief mindfulness programs in enhancing emotional stability and cognitive adaptability. Joseph concluded by recommending future studies with broader samples and extended follow-up to better assess the long-term benefits of such interventions.

Anila and Dhanalakshmi (2016) examined how an eight-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program influenced anxiety levels, self-discipline, and academic performance among adolescents aged 15 to 18. The study involved 300 randomly selected students, with the experimental group receiving mindfulness training and the control group receiving no intervention. Evaluation tools included the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, the Self-Control Scale, and academic performance records. Findings revealed that students who participated in the MBSR sessions showed significant reductions in anxiety, improvements in self-regulation, and better academic outcomes. The researchers concluded that incorporating mindfulness practices into the

school curriculum could be a valuable approach to enhancing students' emotional stability and academic success.

2.2 Social Media Usage

A cross-sectional study by Singh (2024) in Assam, involving 943 school-going adolescents, revealed a strong association between significant social media addiction, prevalent in 30.5% of participants, and increased instances of emotional problems, conduct issues, hyperactivity, and difficulties in peer relationships. Instagram was identified as the most frequently used platform, with daily usage often extending beyond four to six hours, leading to disruptions in sleep patterns and academic performance. The study also highlighted that male student and those residing in semi-urban areas exhibited higher social media usage. A notable finding was the observation that adolescents frequently experienced irritability and frustration when deprived of social media access. This research underscored the critical need for interventions within school settings, advocating for collaborations with mental health professionals to facilitate early identification and prevent the escalation of these behavioral issues into more serious mental health problems.

A study by Cohen et al. (2023) explored how social media use affects adolescents receiving outpatient treatment for eating disorders in Spain. In a cross-sectional survey involving 65 participants, Instagram emerged as the most frequently used platform, favoured by 54% of the respondents, followed by TikTok (34%) and YouTube (6%). Notably, 68% of the adolescents reported checking Instagram daily, with nearly a third (31%) spending one to three hours per day on it. The results underscored Instagram's potential impact on the development or maintenance of disordered eating behaviors. The authors emphasized the importance of further research to better understand the link between social media exposure and eating disorders in young populations.

Patil and Kulkarni (2021) examined social media usage among 160 college students in Karnataka and uncovered several concerning patterns. Students who consumed between 1 and 3 GB of data daily—mainly on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp were more likely to report lower academic performance, poor sleep quality, and difficulties in maintaining healthy relationships. Many participants admitted to secretly accessing social media and often surpassed their intended usage limits. The study found a clear negative association between excessive social media use and mental health, with increased usage linked to heightened emotional distress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. Although social media offers instant gratification and connection, the researchers pointed out its potential to encourage avoidance behaviors, loneliness, and reduced self-worth. As a response, they proposed actionable strategies such as digital wellness workshops and structured time-management plans to help students regain balance in their online habits.

Kaur and Sharma (2023) conducted a study involving 300 adolescents from selected schools in Ludhiana, Punjab, to evaluate the prevalence of internet addiction. The results indicated that 55% of students showed mild signs of addiction, 27% demonstrated unusual patterns, 17.67% had moderate levels, and only 0.33% were found to be severely addicted. Reported consequences included disturbed sleep patterns, strained vision, increased irritability, and decreased academic performance. The researchers also found meaningful links between internet addiction and factors such as gender and household income, with male students reporting slightly higher addiction rates. The study highlighted the rising issue of digital overuse among teenagers and recommended interventions such as awareness programs in schools, greater parental supervision, and encouraging involvement in offline hobbies and social activities to reduce the growing reliance on internet use.

Chakraborty and Singh (2024) carried out research involving 92 young adults in Kolkata to explore the connection between social media usage, symptoms of anxiety and depression, and attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help. Their analysis revealed no meaningful link between time spent on social media and a willingness to pursue counseling services. Likewise, elevated levels of anxiety or depression did not appear to influence individuals' openness to seeking professional support. However, the study did find a strong positive association between anxiety and depression, aligning with prior research that highlights the frequent overlap of these two conditions. The authors noted that even with the rising visibility of mental health topics on social platforms, hesitation and stigma around therapy continue to be barriers. To address this issue, the study recommended incorporating mental health education into school and college programs and launching public initiatives aimed at reducing the stigma attached to counseling.

2.3 Eating Attitudes

Patel et al. (2024) conducted a study involving 700 MBBS students in Mumbai to examine the connections between eating behaviors, body image perception, and self-esteem. Data were collected using online surveys that included sociodemographic questions along with standardized tools to assess each of the three variables. Statistical techniques such as Chi-square, t-tests, and Spearman's correlation were used for analysis. Findings revealed that students with a higher Body Mass Index (BMI) were more likely to experience disordered eating patterns, negative body image, and reduced self-esteem. Those identified as being at risk for eating disorders also reported greater dissatisfaction with their appearance and lower levels of self-worth. Interestingly, some students showed distorted body image concerns even when their weight was within a healthy range, indicating a mismatch between perception and reality. The researchers emphasized the importance of early support to address body image concerns and self-esteem issues, as these could be key in preventing the onset of eating disorders. The study concluded by recommending mental health initiatives within medical colleges aimed at promoting body positivity and strengthening emotional well-being among students.

Rao and Fernandes (2024) carried out a cross-sectional study in urban Bengaluru to examine the extent of mindful eating

among adolescents aged 12 to 15. The sample consisted of 130 students, selected using quota sampling from both government and private schools. Participants' nutritional status was assessed using WHO criteria, and levels of mindful eating were evaluated with the Mindful Eating Questionnaire (MEQ). Findings showed that almost half of the adolescents displayed moderate levels of mindful eating, while approximately one-third had low levels. A notable portion of the sample (47.7%) fell into the underweight category, reflecting the complex issue of malnutrition, which includes both undernutrition and obesity. A significant variation in mindful eating practices was found across different BMI categories ($p < 0.05$). The researchers pointed out that factors like physical inactivity, poor eating awareness, and the widespread availability of processed foods were contributing to unhealthy weight patterns. Based on their findings, Rao and Fernandes advocated for the inclusion of mindful eating education in school health initiatives, suggesting it could be an effective approach to address nutritional challenges among adolescents in India.

Krishna and Narayan (2024) conducted a cross-sectional study to explore the factors influencing food preferences and eating behaviors among 564 adolescents from schools in Pondicherry and Trichy, regions in South India. Data were gathered using a standardized food-choice questionnaire that evaluated adolescents' meal, snack, and beverage selection patterns. The study found that most participants adhered to three main meals daily and typically consumed snacks once per day. Notably, around two-thirds of the adolescents reported no fruit consumption during the previous week. Additionally, approximately 74% indicated that their food decisions were self-directed, with minimal parental input. The researchers pointed out that mid-adolescence represents a critical window for establishing long-term dietary habits, which can influence health into adulthood. They proposed the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior to guide interventions aimed at fostering nutritious eating. The study concluded with a call for collective efforts from families, educational institutions, and communities to promote healthier food choices among youth, suggesting the development of culturally relevant nutrition education programs within Indian schools.

Nair and Bhatia (2024) investigated the relationship between self-esteem and disordered eating patterns in adolescent girls aged 16 to 17 years. The study involved a sample of 60 participants, assessed using standardized tools measuring self-esteem and eating attitudes. Findings revealed a significant inverse correlation between the two variables, with lower levels of self-esteem being strongly associated with more disordered eating behaviors ($t = 3.23$, $p < .001$). The research underscored that adolescent females are especially at risk of developing negative body perceptions due to societal beauty norms and media influences. Additionally, cultural and religious contexts were identified as contributing factors shaping adolescents' views on food and body image. Based on these insights, Nair and Bhatia recommended developing targeted interventions aimed at strengthening self-esteem to help prevent eating disorders. They also emphasized the need for early education on body positivity and acceptance and encouraged future studies to explore the cultural dimensions of disordered eating among Indian youth.

Golden et al. (2003) explored the rising incidence of eating disorders among adolescents, concentrating on conditions such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and eating disorder not otherwise specified (EDNOS). Rather than collecting new data, the study reviewed existing literature and clinical practices to evaluate how evidence-based diagnostic and treatment approaches could be adapted for adolescent populations. Although the study did not detail a specific sample size, it underscored the complexities introduced by adolescent developmental differences, which can make accurate diagnosis more challenging. The researchers highlighted the value of tailored, research-informed interventions and stressed the need for continued investigation to improve both diagnostic precision and therapeutic outcomes. Their conclusions support enhancing clinical strategies for identifying and managing eating disorders during this critical developmental stage.

2.4 Critical Analysis

The research examining how mindfulness, social media use, and eating attitudes interconnect among adolescents offers valuable insights but also has some limitations to consider. For instance, Tiggemann and Slater (2014) found that adolescents who are frequently exposed to appearance-centered content on platforms like Instagram tend to develop more negative attitudes towards eating, such as body dissatisfaction and restrictive dieting. However, their study mainly focused on a specific demographic and didn't explore how mindfulness might influence these outcomes. Conversely, Brown et al. (2016) pointed out that mindfulness can help improve eating attitudes by promoting emotional regulation and staying present in the moment, but their research was based on a clinical sample, which may not fully represent the wider adolescent population. Also, George and Ritu (2020) identified a notable link between high social media use and disordered eating behaviors among Indian teens, yet they didn't consider whether mindfulness could be a protective factor in these situations. Linardon et al. (2019) provided evidence that mindfulness-based interventions improved eating behaviors and attitudes, although their research primarily focused on adults, limiting its generalizability to younger age groups. Yang Liu and Liu (2022) showed that mindfulness reduced social media-related pressure and addictive behaviors, indirectly supporting healthier eating attitudes. However, their reliance on self-reports and short-term follow-up restricts the strength of their conclusions. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2023) revealed that adolescents with problematic eating attitudes predominantly used image-based platforms like Instagram, but mindfulness was not assessed, leaving a gap in understanding how internal coping strategies might mitigate social media's effects.

2.5 Literature Gap

Despite increasing attention on adolescent mental health, there is a significant lack of research examining how mindfulness and social media usage together influence eating attitudes among adolescents. Most existing studies focus on these variables in isolation— mindfulness is often

recognized for promoting emotional regulation and present-moment awareness, which can contribute to healthier eating habits (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Brown et al., 2016), while social media usage, particularly on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, has been linked to body dissatisfaction and negative eating attitudes due to exposure to unrealistic beauty standards (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014; Smith et al., 2023). However, few studies investigate how mindfulness may buffer the effects of social media on adolescents' perceptions of food, body image, and self-worth (Yang Liu & Liu, 2022; Stewart & Lee, 2017). Additionally, much of the existing literature lacks longitudinal design and focuses on limited or culturally narrow adolescent populations, making it difficult to generalize findings across diverse youth groups (George & Ritu, 2020; Cohen et al., 2023). This gap emphasizes needing more integrated research to explore how mindfulness practices and digital exposure together shape eating attitudes during adolescence.

2.6 Research Rationale

The research rationale this study is important is because it looks at how mindfulness exercises and social media use mix to influence how teens, aged 12 to 18, think about eating especially in schools and colleges. Teens at this age are super receptive to outside influences, and with issues like anxiety, depression, and eating disorders becoming more common, it's more critical than ever to understand what's really going on. By digging into how mindfulness and social media together affect young people's mental health, we hope to get a clearer picture of what helps and what hurts. The goal is to come up with ideas that build resilience, cut down the negative effects of social media, and tap into the protective power of mindfulness to help teens feel better overall. We really believe this research could make a big difference in schools, colleges, public health programs, and efforts focused on supporting teen mental health.

3. Rationale of the Study

3.1 Research Gap

This study wants to fill a gap in what we know about teen mental health. There's plenty of research out there on how social media impacts young people, and others exploring mindfulness as something positive. But not many studies connect these two ideas. Most papers look at either how mindfulness can help or how social media might be harmful. What we really need is to understand how these two factors mix and influence teens eating habits and mental wellness overall. So, we're looking into how regular mindfulness practices and different levels of social media use come together to shape how teens see food and their bodies. By exploring this connection, we aim to understand how everything interacts, especially regarding mental health. This approach will help us find better, more targeted ways to support teens as they grow up in today's digital world.

3.2 Background of the Problem

Adolescence, which lasts from about age 12 to 18, is a crucial time for growth and change. Young people go through significant emotional, mental, and physical changes that make them open to outside influences. Among these influences, social media platforms and the growing trend of mindfulness practices have a strong impact on adolescent experiences. The rise in reported mental health issues like anxiety, depression, and eating disorders highlights the urgent need to understand how these modern factors interact. Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok often expose teens to unrealistic beauty standards that can be damaging. In contrast, mindfulness practices offer a different approach. They encourage being present and managing emotions, which can help lower stress and promote mental health. Although there is a lot of research on how social media negatively impacts mental health and how mindfulness can provide support, we still lack understanding of how these two factors together affect eating behaviors in adolescents. This study aims to address that gap and provide a clearer view of their combined effects.

3.3 Significance

This study is important because it addresses a clear gap in understanding of how mindfulness, social media use, and eating attitudes are connected, especially among adolescents in school and college settings. By examining these relationships in detail, the research aims to provide new insights that can lead to better strategies for improving resilience among young people. It can help us create ways to lessen social media's negative effects and promote the positive benefits of mindfulness. Ultimately, the findings could aid in developing tailored programs and curricula for schools and colleges, shape public health initiatives, and contribute to efforts aimed at improving mental health and overall well-being for adolescents.

3.4 Population or Context

The sample for this study includes about 200 schools and adolescents in college. This group is important because it represents a key developmental stage filled with emotional, physical, and mental changes. By focusing on this population, we can better understand how mindfulness and social media use affect their views on eating. Data collect through surveys conducted in schools. This method provides a practical way to explore how these factors impact mental health and overall well-being during this crucial period of growth.

3.5 Expected Contribution

This study aims to shed new light on how mindfulness the practice of staying present and aware and social media use influence the mental health of young people, especially regarding their attitudes towards eating. By understanding these connections, we hope to identify practical strategies that can be adopted in schools and colleges. The ultimate goal is to help adolescents develop resilience the ability to bounce back from challenges reduce some of the negative effects linked to social media, and strengthen the protective benefits of mindfulness. The insights gained from this research will are valuable guidance for future studies, inform practical interventions in educational settings, and support public health initiatives aimed at improving adolescent mental health.

3.6 Social or Practical Implications

The findings from this study have the potential to significantly benefit individuals, communities, and society by providing evidence-based strategies to address the mental health challenges adolescents face. Research-informed approaches could bolster resilience in young people, actively reduce the negative impacts of social media on their well-being, and generally promote a healthier overall state of mind. This means we could see improved mental health outcomes for teens, a decline in problematic eating attitudes, and a deeper understanding of how-to best support adolescents during this crucial developmental period, leading to more effective interventions in homes, schools, and broader society.

4. Research Questions

RQ1. Is there a significant relationship between mindfulness and social media on eating attitudes among adolescents?
RQ2. Is there a gender difference on mindfulness and social media usage on eating attitudes among adolescents.

5. Research Objectives

RO1. To investigate the relationship of mindfulness and social media usage on eating attitudes among adolescents.
RO2. To investigate gender difference on mindfulness and social media usage on eating attitudes among adolescents.

6. Researcher hypothesis

H1. There is a significant relationship between mindfulness and social media on eating attitudes among adolescents.
H2. There is a gender difference between on mindfulness and social media usage on eating attitudes among adolescents.

7. Methodology

7.1 study design

This study is a quantitative study using a correlational design. Data will be collected using self-administered standard questionnaires along with a detailed socio-demographic profile sheet. The chosen design is justified as it allows for the examination of the relationships between mindfulness and social media usage on eating attitudes among adolescents.

7.2 Operational Definitions

Mindfulness Practice
Mindfulness Defines to a person's natural inclination to simply observe their thoughts and emotions, act purposefully instead of automatically, and embrace their internal experiences without judgment. It's about being present and accepting of one's inner world, independent of formal meditation.

Social Media Usage
Social Media Usage Define an individual's regular habits of interacting with social media, including how frequently and for how long they're online. It also encompasses feelings of distress or anxiety when unable to access social media (a "withdrawal" aspect) and a strong, sometimes uncontrollable urge to use it (a "compulsive" aspect).

Eating Attitudes
Eating attitudes describe a person's entire outlook on food, dieting, and their body weight. This includes their thoughts, what they believe to be true, their feelings, and how they behave around eating. These attitudes exist on a broad scale, from habits that promote healthy eating to patterns that are considered disordered. This can include things like strictly limiting food, constantly worrying about body shape, eating large amounts of food uncontrollably (binge eating), or trying to make up for eating by, for example, excessive exercise. Professionals often assess these attitudes with tools such as the Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26). This test examines concerns about food, the methods used to manage weight, and the psychological factors that influence eating habits.

7.3 Study Population, Sample, and Procedures

Study Population
The study looks at adolescents aged 12 to 18 who actively seek counseling in school and college settings. This group matters because this period is marked by rapid and significant development. During these years, young people experience major emotional changes, cognitive growth, and physical changes. These factors make them particularly open to outside influences, whether good or bad. Their participation in counseling shows a clear need for support, providing valuable insights into how social media and mindfulness practices affect their mental health and overall well-being. Focusing on this age group in educational settings allows for the collection of relevant data, which can help create personalized support programs and interventions.

Sample
The research gathered insights from about 200 students currently in school or college. Data collected data through surveys conducted in these educational environments, focusing on young people aged 12 to 18. To ensure we included the right participants, we used a purposive sampling method, selecting individuals who met specific criteria that matched the study's goals.

Inclusion Criteria
- Adolescents within the age range of 12 to 18 years
- Using social media for last 6 months
- Who practices mindfulness for last 6 months

Exclusion Criteria
- Who are diagnosed with any other mental health conditions.
- Currently working

Procedures
This study follows a carefully designed process to ensure ethical standards are upheld and data collection is effective. First, it will obtain knowledgeable consent from all participants and their guardians, making sure they

understand the purpose of the study, what it involves, and any possible risks or benefits. It will give guarantee that everyone participates voluntarily. Throughout the process, it will strictly protect participants' privacy and confidentiality. Data will be collected through self- administered questionnaires and a simple socio- demographic profile sheet. The conducts are regular check- ins to address any questions or concerns that might come up. The commitment to ethics also means will do our best to minimize any discomfort or potential harm, and after the study, it will hold debriefing sessions to share the process and findings with participants.

7.4 Instruments

Child and Adolescent Mindfulness Measure (CAMM)

The Child and Adolescent Mindfulness Measure (CAMM), is developed by Greco, Baer, and Smith (2011), in this there is 10-item where this scale can be used for the children and adolescents in the age of 10 to 17 to assess Minfulness. Items are rated on a 0-4 Likert scale, with total scores ranging from 0 to 40, where lower scores indicate greater mindfulness (as it is reverse-scored), and it typically takes 5-10 minutes to complete. Scores above 25- 30 suggest difficulties with mindfulness, 15-25 indicates moderate traits, and below 15 points to strong abilities. The CAMM demonstrates high reliability (Cronbach's Alpha 0.81-0.87) and good test-retest stability. Its validity is strong, showing good correlation with psychological flexibility and emotional regulation (convergent validity) while being unrelated to constructs like IQ (divergent validity), and lower scores predict reduced anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems (predictive validity), making it a valuable tool, including for the Indian population.

Social Media Use Questionnaire (SMUQ)

The Social Media Use Questionnaire (SMUQ) was introduced by Xanidis and Brignell in 2016 to assess social media engagement. It consists of nine items rated on a five-point Likert scale (0 = never to 4 = always), with total scores ranging from 0 to 36, where higher scores indicate more intensive or problematic use. It measures two components: Withdrawal (distress when unable to access social media) and Compulsion (uncontrollable urge to use social media). The SMUQ has strong internal reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 overall, 0.83 for Withdrawal, and 0.82 for Compulsion, and studies have confirmed its consistency (α = 0.86). It also has good construct validity, as it has been widely used to examine social media's impact on sleep quality and cognitive function. This scale has also been used within the Indian population, emphasizing its effectiveness in evaluating social media engagement and understanding its psychological impact on Indian users.

Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26)

The Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26) was developed in 1982 by David M. Garner and his team as an update to the original EAT-26 from 1979. This test is widely used to screen for symptoms and issues related to eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder. It consists of 26 self-report items scored on a 6-point Likert scale. Here, 'Always' equals 3, 'Usually' equals 2, 'Often' equals 1, and 'Sometimes/Rarely/Never' equals 0. To find the total score, you add up the responses. A score of 20 or higher suggests potential risk for an eating disorder, which requires further assessment. The questionnaire has three subscales: Dieting, which looks at worries about body weight and restricted eating; Bulimia & Food Preoccupation, which evaluates binge eating tendencies; and Oral Control, which measures self-control around food and social influences. While the EAT-26 is not meant to diagnose eating disorders, it is a useful tool for spotting concerning eating behaviors in clinical, research, and educational settings. Its reliability is well established, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90, and it shows good validity. Additionally, the scale has been adapted for use in India, showing it can effectively identify disordered eating patterns across different populations.

7.5 Data Analysis

The study analyzed data using descriptive statistics to clearly show the participants' demographics and key variables. These variables included mindfulness levels, social media habits, and eating attitudes among adolescents. The statistics helped to understand how the sample was distributed and established a baseline for important traits and behaviors. To explore the main research question, used correlation analysis to examine the relationships between mindfulness, social media use, and eating attitudes. This approach helped us see if there are important connections between these variables and understand how strong those connections are. We specifically looked at whether higher mindfulness relates to healthier eating attitudes and if more social media use connects to more negative eating attitudes. To gain a clearer understanding of how these factors interact, we conducted a mediation analysis. This analysis aimed to find out if mindfulness could serve as a buffer, possibly lessening the negative effects of social media use on eating attitudes in adolescents. Lastly, we did a moderated regression analysis to see if these relationships changed based on demographic factors like gender or age group. This helped us find out if certain subgroups are more vulnerable to social media influences or less influenced by mindfulness practices.

7.6 Ethical Considerations

1) Informed consent was obtained from all participants and their guardians before the study started.
2) Participants were given the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty.
3) Privacy and anonymity of the participants were strictly maintained to ensure confidentiality.
4) A debriefing session was conducted after the study to explain the purpose, procedures, and outcomes to the participants.
5) Minimal deception was used only when necessary to preserve the validity of the study, followed by complete debriefing.
6) Researchers declared any potential conflicts of interest to ensure objectivity and uphold ethical standards.

8. Results

Table 1: Normality scores, means and standard deviation for all the variable used in the study School going adolescence students (N=200)

Variables	Mean	SD	Statistics	Sig
CAMM	25.69	9.080	.968	<.001
SMUQ	10.39	7.552	.941	<.001
EAT-26	8.46	7.801	.885	<.001

The data for CAMM, SMUQ, and EAT-26 were analyzed to test for normality using SPSS Shapiro-Wilk. The p- values for all three variables (CAMM = <.001, SMUQ = <.001, and EAT- 26 = <.001) are less than 0.05, indicating that the distributions of these variables significantly deviate from normality. The results suggest that, on average, adolescents scored moderately high on the mindfulness measure (CAMM) with a mean of 25.69 and standard deviation of 9.080, showing a fair spread of responses. Social media usage (SMUQ) had a lower mean of 10.39 (SD = 7.552), reflecting variability in usage among students. Eating attitudes (EAT-26) showed a mean of 8.46 (SD = 7.801), suggesting a tendency toward disordered eating attitudes in some participants. The variability in responses was moderate across all three variables. The significant deviation from normality suggests that non-parametric tests may be more appropriate for further statistical analysis. These findings highlight differing levels of mindfulness, social media usage, and eating attitudes among adolescents, underlining the need for focused mental health interventions in school settings.

Table 2: Correlation coefficient mindfulness, social media usage, and eating attitudes

Variables	1	2	3
CAMM	1	-.428	-.422
SMUQ	-.428	1	.306
EAT-26	-.422	.306	1

**P<0.01

The Spearman correlation coefficients show that mindfulness (CAMM) is significantly and negatively correlated with social media usage (SMUQ; $\rho = -0.428$, $p < 0.01$) and eating attitudes (EAT-26; $\rho = -0.422$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher levels of mindfulness are associated with reduced social media engagement and fewer disordered eating tendencies among adolescents. Additionally, there is a significant positive correlation between social media usage and disordered eating attitude ($\rho = 0.306$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that higher social media usage is related to an increase in disordered eating behaviors. Although the correlations are moderate, they offer meaningful insights into how mindfulness may buffer the negative effects of social media use on adolescent eating patterns, and they provide a foundation for further studies examining protective psychological factors.

Table 3: Summary of relationship between mindfulness and social media usage on eating attitudes among adolescents

Variables	Groups A	Group B	U
	Median	Median	
CAMM	27.00	24.00	4092.500
SMUQ	10.00	9.00	4679.500
EAT - 26	7.00	6.00	4962.000

Based on the Mann-Whitney U test results (Table 3), which examined gender differences in adolescents, a significant difference was found only in mindfulness (CAMM), where one gender group (Group A) had a higher median of 27.00 compared to the other (Group B's median of 24.00), with a U value of 4092.500 and a p-value of 0.026 ($p<0.05$), indicating a significant difference in mindfulness levels between males and females. However, despite Group A showing slightly higher medians for social media usage (SMUQ, 10.00 vs. 9.00, U = 4679.500) and eating attitudes (EAT-26, 7.00 vs. 6.00, U = 4962.000), no significant gender differences were observed for these variables, as their p-values were 0.433 and 0.926 respectively, both exceeding the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that while gender appears to influence mindfulness, it does not significantly affect social media usage or disordered eating attitudes among adolescents in this sample.

9. Discussion

The study examined the associations between mindfulness, social media engagement, and eating behaviors among adolescents. Findings indicated that individuals demonstrating greater mindfulness reported reduced use of social media and exhibited fewer tendencies toward disordered eating. In contrast, increased time spent on social networking platforms was linked to more problematic eating attitudes. These observations are consistent with psychological frameworks suggesting that mindfulness enhances emotional regulation and body awareness, which may act as protective factors against harmful eating habits. Conversely, social media often fosters unrealistic appearance standards, potentially leading to body dissatisfaction. While some variations in results hinted at possible gender differences, the absence of explicitly categorized groups and statistically significant values limited the ability to confirm these trends. To gain clearer insight into gender-specific influences, future research should incorporate well-defined gender comparisons and complete statistical reporting.

10. Conclusion

In summary, addressing adolescent mental health in today's digital world calls for an approach that balances mindfulness with media literacy education. This study clearly shows that encouraging mindfulness acts as an important protective factor—there's a noticeable link: as young people become more mindful, their social media use and risk of disordered eating tend to decrease. On the other hand, higher social media activity is associated with more subclinical disordered eating attitudes, a connection that aligns with Social Comparison Theory, which explains how idealized online images can fuel body dissatisfaction. Overall, the findings suggest that developing present-moment awareness can promote more mindful digital habits and lead to better mental well-being. While these correlations aren't strong enough to prove causation, they do offer important insights into how these factors interact. This really emphasizes how important it is to help young people build their resilience and encourage healthier online habits and body image views.

11. Future Scope

This study presents valuable insights into enhancing adolescent mental health, especially concerning the pressures linked to social media and body image concerns. The evidence suggests that mindfulness plays a protective role by helping young individuals manage emotional stress and maintain healthier eating habits. As higher levels of mindfulness were linked to lower levels of harmful social media use and disturbed eating patterns, it becomes clear that teaching mindfulness can support better coping skills in teenagers. Schools can serve as ideal spaces to introduce mindfulness-based activities, helping students build emotional strength, regulate their feelings, and develop a positive body image in response to online influences. Strengthening media literacy is also essential; adolescents must be taught to analyze and question the perfection shown online, recognize filtered content, and understand how social comparisons impact their self-worth. While this research uncovers strong associations, it doesn't confirm cause-and-effect relationships. Therefore, future studies should follow adolescents over time to better understand how mindfulness levels influence behavior and mental health in the long term. Research should also explore how self-kindness, attention control, and emotional balance play roles in reducing the negative effects of online exposure. Additionally, examining gender-specific responses will help design support systems that are inclusive and culturally aware. Moving forward, future research should include larger and more diverse groups, use methods like interviews to hear adolescents' personal experiences, and explore how different kinds of social media content like beauty or fitness posts impact mental health. Finally, testing the effectiveness of structured school programs on mindfulness will be key in developing strategies that protect and support adolescents in today's media-driven world.

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