

The Impact of Social Media on Mental Health among Employees in the Hotel Industry

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Abstract: Social media plays an important role in communication, entertainment and information sharing. However, excessive or inappropriate use may be associated with stress, anxiety, sleep disturbances and changes in self-esteem. The present study examined social media usage patterns and perceived mental health experiences among 20 adult respondents in the intended hotel-industry context. A descriptive survey design was adopted using a structured questionnaire. Quantitative data were analysed using frequencies and percentages, while qualitative responses were grouped into recurring themes. The findings indicated that 55% of respondents spent three to four hours daily on social media, 50% experienced stress or anxiety due to online content, and 65% desired to maintain a perfect online image. Sleep disturbances were reported by 35%, while 30% experienced sadness after scrolling. However, 40% perceived a positive contribution of social media to their mental wellbeing. Qualitative responses highlighted nighttime usage, eye strain, tiredness, negative comments and time-management difficulties. The findings suggest that social media may be associated with both positive and negative psychological experiences. Responsible usage and digital self-regulation may support well-being. The small sample and descriptive design limit generalizability and do not establish causation.

Keywords: Social media, mental health, hotel industry, stress, anxiety, self-esteem, sleep disturbances, digital well-being.

1. Introduction

Mental health refers to emotional, psychological and social well-being. It influences how individuals manage stress, maintain relationships and respond to everyday challenges. For employees, psychological well-being is important for concentration, interpersonal relationships and professional functioning.

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube enable communication, entertainment, information sharing and social connection. They may help employees relax, maintain relationships and access supportive online communities. However, exposure to distressing content, negative comments and idealized lifestyles may contribute to emotional discomfort. Prolonged screen use, particularly at night, may also interfere with sleep.

Research indicates that the relationship between social media and mental health is complex. Ahmed et al. (2024) examined associations between social media use, mental health and sleep, while Valkenburg et al. (2022) highlighted inconsistent findings and individual differences in the effects of social media. Employees in the hotel industry may experience demanding service environments and varying work schedules, making digital well-being a relevant area of preliminary investigation.

The present study examines social media usage patterns and perceived mental health experiences among 20 adult respondents in the intended hotel-industry context.

1.1 Objectives

- 1) To identify daily social media usage patterns and purposes of use.
- 2) To examine perceived emotional and psychological experiences associated with social media.

- 3) To assess pressure to maintain an ideal online image.
- 4) To explore perceived sleep disturbances, loneliness, self-esteem changes and sadness.
- 5) To identify positive contributions of social media to mental well-being.
- 6) To suggest strategies for responsible social media use.

2. Review of Literature

Social media provides opportunities for communication, self-expression and social support, but it may also expose users to unrealistic comparisons and negative feedback. Social comparison theory offers one explanation for how online representations of appearance, achievements and lifestyles may influence self-esteem.

Valkenburg et al. (2022), in an umbrella review of research on adolescent mental health, reported mixed and inconsistent evidence regarding social media's psychological effects. Ahmed et al. (2024) examined social media use in relation to mental health and sleep, highlighting the importance of distinguishing general use from problematic usage patterns. Koh et al. (2024) reviewed social media use and its impact on adults' mental health and well-being, providing a relevant foundation for understanding both potential benefits and concerns. Although existing research addresses social media and psychological well-being, examining experiences within specific occupational contexts may provide additional insights. The present study offers preliminary descriptive findings concerning perceived social media habits and mental health experiences in the intended hotelindustry context.

3. Methodology

Research Design and Participants

The study adopted a descriptive survey design involving 20 adult respondents. The intended population consisted of

individuals associated with the hotel industry, and the survey description identified age groups of 20–30 and 30–40 years. Detailed occupational information and the exact demographic distribution were unavailable. Therefore, the results are treated as preliminary observations rather than representative findings about all hotel employees.

Research Instrument and Analysis

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire covering social media usage, emotional experiences, perceived mental health effects and digital well-being strategies. Open-ended questions explored challenges and suggestions for managing social media use.

Quantitative responses were analysed using frequencies and percentages, calculated as:

$$\text{Percentage} = (\text{Frequency} \div \text{Total respondents}) \times 100$$

Qualitative responses were grouped into recurring themes, including sleep concerns, eye strain, tiredness, time management, negative comments and perceived excessive use. The study relied on self-reported responses and did not use standardized clinical measures. Consequently, the reported experiences were not treated as clinical diagnoses.

4. Results

Quantitative Findings

Table 1: Social Media Usage and Perceived Mental Health Experiences (N = 20)

Variable	Finding	Percentage
Daily usage	3–4 hours	55%
Main purpose	News, communication and entertainment	35%
Social comparison	Never compared themselves with others	85%
Stress or anxiety	Experienced due to online content	50%
Online image management	Desired a perfect online image	65%
Loneliness	Never felt lonely or isolated after use	65%
Sleep disturbances	Reported disturbed sleep	35%
Self-esteem	Reported increased self-esteem	40%
Sadness after scrolling	Reported sadness or depressive feelings	30%
Positive contribution	Perceived benefits to mental well-being	40%

Eleven respondents (55%) spent three to four hours daily on social media, five (25%) spent one to two hours, and two respondents each (10%) reported less than one hour and five to six hours. Seven respondents (35%) identified news, communication and entertainment as their main purpose of use.

Seventeen respondents (85%) reported never comparing themselves with others online, whereas three (15%) reported occasional comparison. Nevertheless, 13 respondents (65%) desired to maintain a perfect online image, indicating that online self-presentation may be distinct from direct social comparison.

Ten respondents (50%) experienced stress or anxiety due to online content. Thirteen (65%) never felt lonely or isolated after social media use, while four (20%) experienced such feelings and three (15%) experienced them rarely.

Seven respondents (35%) reported sleep disturbances, and six (30%) experienced sadness or depressive feelings after scrolling. Eight (40%) reported increased self-esteem, while the remaining respondents reported either no change or a decline; separate percentages were unavailable. Eight respondents (40%) perceived a positive contribution to mental well-being, while the remaining responses were neutral or negative.

Qualitative Findings

Four recurring themes emerged from the open-ended responses:

- **Sleep and physical discomfort:** Nighttime phone use, eye strain and tiredness were identified as concerns.
- **Time management:** Respondents described prolonged scrolling as timeconsuming and potentially disruptive to productive activities and offline interaction.

- **Negative interactions and excessive use:** Negative comments were associated with sadness, while some respondents perceived their social media use as difficult to control.
- **Coping strategies:** Suggestions included setting application time limits, reducing nighttime use, limiting phone use and focusing on positive content.

These responses reflect participants' perceptions rather than clinical assessments of problematic use or addiction.

5. Discussion

The findings indicate varied perceived experiences associated with social media use. More than half of the respondents spent three to four hours daily on these platforms, suggesting that social media formed a substantial part of their routines. However, usage duration alone does not establish whether use is harmful; its purpose, timing and effects on daily functioning are also important.

Half of the respondents reported stress or anxiety due to online content, while 65% expressed a desire to maintain a perfect online image. At the same time, 85% reported never engaging in social comparison. This difference suggests that managing one's online presentation and comparing oneself with others may represent distinct experiences.

Sleep disturbances were reported by 35% of respondents, and nighttime phone use emerged as a qualitative concern. These findings highlight the importance of healthy digital habits and sleep routines, although the study cannot establish a causal relationship.

Experiences involving self-esteem and loneliness also varied. Some respondents reported increased self-esteem, while most did not report loneliness after using social media. Furthermore, 40% perceived a positive contribution to their mental well-being.

These findings are consistent with research suggesting that social media can provide connection and support while also presenting potential psychological challenges (Koh et al., 2024; Valkenburg et al., 2022).

Overall, the findings suggest that social media may be associated with both positive and negative experiences. The small sample, self-reported data and descriptive design limit generalizability and causal interpretation.

6. Conclusion

The study examined social media usage and perceived mental health experiences among 20 adult respondents in the intended hotel-industry context. The findings showed that 55% spent three to four hours daily on social media, 50% experienced stress or anxiety due to online content, 65% desired to maintain a perfect online image, and 35% reported sleep disturbances. Meanwhile, 40% perceived a positive contribution to their mental well-being.

The results indicate that social media experiences were not uniformly positive or negative. Responsible use, screen-time management, healthy sleep routines, positive online interactions and a balance between online and offline activities may support digital well-being. Workplaces could also consider providing awareness programmes on healthy digital habits.

The findings should be interpreted cautiously because of the small sample, limited occupational details and absence of standardized clinical measures. Future studies should involve larger and more representative samples of hotel-industry employees, clearer demographic and occupational information, and validated assessment tools.

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