

**A STUDY ON SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE, MENTAL HEALTH AND  
FAMILY FUNCTIONING AMONG MIDDLE AGED  
INDIVIDUALS**

**Dissertation Submitted to  
Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Specializing in  
MEDICAL AND PSYCHIATRY**

**Submitted by  
ANAGHA ALIYAS  
Reg. No. 210011034043**

**Under the guidance of  
Dr. Reshma K S**



**Bharata Mata School of Social Work Thrikkakara, Kochi-21  
(Affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam)  
(2021-2023)**

**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this dissertation titled “A STUDY ON SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE, MENTAL HEALTH AND FAMILY FUNCTIONING AMONG MIDDLE AGED INDIVIDUALS” is a record of genuine and original work done by ANAGHA ALIYAS (210011034043) of 4<sup>th</sup> Semester Master of Social Work course of this college under my guidance and supervision and it is hereby approved for submission.

Dr. Reshma K S  
Research Guide  
Assistant Professor  
Bharata Mata School of Social  
Work, Thrikkakara.

Dr. Sheena Rajan Philip  
Head of the Department  
Bharata Mata School of Social  
Work, Thrikkakara

Dr. Johnson K M

Principal

Bharata Mata College

Thrikkakara



**Estd.1965**

**Submitted to Viva-voce Examination on.....**

**External Examiner.....**

**DECLARATION**

I Anagha Aliyas hereby declare that the research work titled “A STUDY ON SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE, MENTAL HEALTH AND FAMILY FUNCTIONING AMONG MIDDLE AGED INDIVIDUALS” submitted to the MG University, Kottayam is a record of genuine and original work done by me under the guidance of Dr. Reshma K S, Assistant professor, Bharata Mata School of Social Work, Thrikkakara, and this research work is submitted in the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Social Work Specializing in Medical and Psychiatry.

I hereby declare that the results obtained in this research have not been submitted to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma, to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Place: Thrikkakara

Date:

Anagha Aliyas

## **ABSTRACT**

Social media usage has increasingly become a significant aspect of modern-day life, creating new opportunities and challenges. The use of social media amongst middle-aged individuals is of interest not only due to its prevalence but also because it can affect mental health outcomes. Studies have investigated the influence of social media usage on mental health outcomes, yet little is known about the patterns of social media usage, in particular for middle-aged individuals. Therefore, this study aims to examine the frequency and pattern of social media usage amongst middle adulthood. It will address questions such as; what is the frequency and duration of social media usage? What is the type of social media platforms used by middle-aged individuals, and for what purpose? How does social media usage vary across genders, marital status, and employment status? It is expected that this study would provide valuable insights into the frequency and pattern of social media usage amongst middle-aged individuals, which could have implications for future research and public policy. This paper aims to explore the influence of social media usage on the mental health of middle-aged individuals. By examining existing research, trends, and psychological theories, we seek to understand the potential positive and negative effects of social media on this specific age group.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am extending my sincere gratitude to the almighty for giving me the spiritual-moral and physical strength to pursue my academic goal. I take this privilege to acknowledge all those people who have made this thesis possible and because of whom my research experience has been one that I will cherish forever. I thank the following member for their support. First, I would like to thank the management, Bharath Mata College, headed by **Rev. Fr. Abraham Oliapurath** and Principal **DR. Johnson K M**, for supporting me to complete my work as part of my curriculum.

I am highly indebted and thankful to my guide **Dr. Reshma K S**, faculty at Bharata Mata School of Social Work, Thrikkakara, Ernakulam, for his valuable advice, guidance, and inspiring encouragement at all phases and till the fruitful completion of the dissertation.

I sincerely express my sense of gratitude to the faculty members of the Department of Social work, Bharata Mata School of Social Work, Thrikkakara, for their valuable suggestions during my work. My heartfelt thanks to my dear friends, for their great motivation and cooperation, I am grateful to my parents for their encouragement and support during the research. Last but not least I thank all my participants for their wholehearted cooperation without which I could not have conducted such a study. I'm thankful to all those who have helped me in this work, directly or indirectly.

Most importantly, none of this would have been possible without my family's love, patience, and monetary support. I express my heartfelt gratitude to my family for all their encouragement.

**LIST OF CONTENTS**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
Title page	i
Certificate	ii
Declaration	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgement	v
List of contents	vi
List of Tables	vii
List of Illustrations	viii
Chapter 1– Introduction	1-15
Chapter 2 – Review of Literature	16-38
Chapter 3 – Research Methodology	39-49
Chapter 4 - Analysis and Interpretation	50-70
Chapter 5 –Findings , Recommendations , Implication for professional social work practice	71-77
Conclusion	78-79
Bibliography	
Appendix	

**LIST OF TABLES**

<i>Number</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Page no</i>
Table4.2.1	Education qualification of respondent	54
Table4.2.2	Social networking addiction scale	59
Table4.2.3	Depression among middle aged individuals	61
Table4.2.4	Anxiety among middle aged individuals	62
Table4.2.5	Stress among middle aged individuals	63
Table4.2.6	Correlation between depression and social media	64
Table4.2.7	Correlation between anxiety and social media	65
Table4.2.8	Correlation between stress and social media	66
Table4.2.9	Correlation between family functioning and social media	67
Table4.7.1	T –test between gender and social media	68
Table4.7.2	T –test between gender and mental health	69
Table4.7.3	T –test between gender and family functioning	70

**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

<i>Number</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Page no</i>
Illustration 4.2.1	Age of respondents	52
Illustration 4.2.2	Gender of respondents	53
Illustration 4.2.3	Education qualification	54
Illustration 4.2.4	Marital status	55
Illustration 4.2.5	Social media usage	56
Illustration 4.2.6	Social media platforms used	57
Illustration 4.2.7	Hours spend on social media platforms	58



# **CHAPTER 1**

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, the advent of social media platforms has revolutionized the way people communicate, connect, and share information. Social media platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for individuals of all ages to engage in various online activities, build networks, and access a vast amount of information. However, the increasing prevalence of social media usage has raised concerns about its impact on mental health, particularly among middle-aged individuals.

Middle age is a significant phase of life characterized by unique challenges and transitions, such as career advancements, family responsibilities, and changes in physical and psychological well-being. As this demographic increasingly embraces social media, it is crucial to examine how these online platforms affect their mental health. The impact of social media on mental health can be multifaceted. On one hand, social media provides opportunities for social connection, support, and information sharing, which can promote positive mental health outcomes. Middle-aged individuals may find solace in online communities, gain social support during difficult times, and access resources related to mental health awareness and self-care. On the other hand, excessive social media usage can lead to negative mental health consequences. Middle-aged individuals may be susceptible to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and depression when constantly exposed to carefully curated and idealized representations of others' lives. Moreover, the addictive nature of social media can lead to compulsive behaviour, sleep disturbances, and decreased real-life social interactions. The constant exposure to the virtual world may also contribute to feelings of isolation and disconnection, ultimately impacting the overall mental well-being of middle-aged individuals. Understanding the influence of social media usage on mental health is crucial for developing strategies to mitigate potential negative effects and enhance the positive

aspects. By examining the existing literature, identifying key psychological mechanisms, and considering individual differences, we can gain insights into how social media can impact the mental health of middle-aged individuals.

## **1.1 SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media refers to online platforms and websites that enable users to create, share, and interact with content, as well as connect with other individuals or communities. These platforms allowing them to communicate, express themselves, stay informed, and engage with a wide range of topics and interests. Some popular social media platforms as of my knowledge cut off in september 2021 include:

- i. Facebook: founded in 2004, facebook is one of the most widely used social networking platforms globally. It allows users to create personal profiles, connect with friends and family, join groups, and share various forms of content.
- ii. Instagram: focused primarily on photo and video sharing, instagram, launched in 2010, interact through likes, comments, and direct messages.
- iii. Twitter: twitter, launched in 2006, is a micro blogging platform that limits posts to 280 characters. It enables users to share updates, news, opinions, and engage in conversations using hash tags and mentions.
- iv. LinkedIn: linkedin is a professional networking platform launched in 2003. It is primarily used for connecting with colleagues, finding job opportunities, and sharing industry-related content.
- v. Youtube: while technically a video-sharing platform, youtube has developed into a significant social media platform. Users can upload, watch, and

comment on videos, subscribe to channels, and engage with content creators.

- vi. Tiktok: tiktok, introduced in 2016, is a social media platform focused on short-form videos. It allows users to create and share 15 to 60-second videos featuring various creative content, including lip-syncing, dancing, comedy skits, and more.

## **1.2 MIDDLE AGED ADULTS**

Middle age is an important developmental stage in our lives that is associated with changes in mental health and wellbeing. While middle age is often considered to be a time of stability, it is also a period of heightened stress and vulnerability. The impact of life events, such as divorce, death of family members, financial stress, and caregiver burden, can have a significant impact on a middle-aged individual's mental health their life stage is often characterized by various challenges, experiences, and responsibilities. Here are some common aspects associated with middle-aged adults:

- i. Career and professional life: middle-aged adults are typically established in their careers and may hold positions of authority or leadership.
- ii. Family and relationships: many middle-aged adults are married or in long-term committed relationships. They may have children who are growing up or have left the family home. They often balance their roles as partners, parents, and caregivers for aging parents.
- iii. Physical and mental health: middle age is a time when individuals may start to face age-related health concerns. Maintaining physical health through exercise, proper nutrition, and regular medical check-ups becomes

increasingly important. Mental health and emotional well-being are also crucial during this stage.

- iv. Financial responsibilities: middle-aged adults typically have significant financial responsibilities. They may be paying off mortgages, saving for retirement, and supporting their children's education. They may also be dealing with financial planning and investments for their future.
- v. Life transitions: middle age is often a period of various life transitions. Some adults may experience the empty nest syndrome when their children leave home, while others may become grandparents for the first time. Some may choose to change careers or pursue new interests and hobbies.
- vi. Self-reflection and midlife crisis: middle age can be a time of introspection and self-evaluation. Some individuals may experience a midlife crisis, questioning their life choices, goals, and purpose. They may seek personal fulfilment and reassess their priorities.
- vii. Community and social involvement: middle-aged adults often play active roles in their communities and may engage in volunteer work or civic activities. They may join social groups or organizations that align with their interests or causes.

### **1.3 SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS INFLUENCE AMONG MIDDLE AGED ADULTS**

Social media has become an integral part of modern society, with people of all ages using various platforms to connect, share information, and engage with others. Middle-

aged individuals, typically ranging from their late 30s to early 50s, have also embraced social media and incorporated it into their daily lives. Middle-aged individuals are often part of the generation x or early members of the millennial generation, making them more familiar with technology and digital communication compared to older generations. While they may not have grown up with social media, many have adapted to its prevalence and recognize its benefits. One key aspect of social media usage among middle-aged individuals is its role in maintaining social connections. As people reach their middle years, they may find themselves physically distanced from friends and family due to various responsibilities, such as work, parenting, or caring for elderly parents. Social media platforms enable them to bridge these gaps by providing a means to stay connected, share updates, and engage in conversations with loved ones. Additionally, middle-aged individuals often use social media for professional networking and career advancement. Platforms like linkedin have become essential tools for building and maintaining professional connections, exploring job opportunities, and showcasing skills and expertise. These individuals recognize the value of online networking in a digitally driven world, allowing them to stay relevant in their respective fields. Middle-aged individuals also leverage social media as a source of information and entertainment. They follow pages, groups, and influencers aligned with their interests, hobbies, and personal development goals. They engage with content related to health and wellness, parenting, personal finance, travel, and more. Social media serves as a platform for accessing a diverse range of information, staying up-to-date with current events, and discovering new trends and ideas. However, it's worth noting that while middle-aged individuals actively use social media, their usage patterns may differ from younger generations.

## **1.4 MENTAL HEALTH**

Mental health encompasses a state of well-being where individuals possess self-awareness, problem-solving skills, productivity, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Currently, there is an ongoing debate concerning the effects of social media on mental health, considering both its benefits and potential drawbacks. Social connections play a vital role in safeguarding our mental well-being, as both the quantity and quality of these relationships impact mental health, health behaviours, physical well-being, and even mortality risk.

The displaced behaviour theory offers insight into the association between social media usage and mental health. According to this theory, individuals who spend more time engaging in sedentary behaviours, such as using social media, may have less time for face-to-face social interactions, which have been shown to have protective effects against mental disorders. Additionally, social theories explore how social media usage influences people's perception, maintenance, and interaction with their social networks. Studies have investigated the impact of social media, particularly platforms like facebook, and have indicated a potential correlation between prolonged use and negative indicators of depression, anxiety, and stress.

Depression is a common illness characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that one normally enjoys, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, for at least two weeks. (World health organization: who, 2020). Stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation (*stress*, 2022). Anxiety disorders are characterised by excessive fear and worry and related behavioural disturbances (world health organization: who, 2022a) Human beings are inherently social creatures, they depend on companionship to flourish and

progress in life. As a result, nurturing social connections with others can alleviate the burden of stress, anxiety, and sadness. Conversely, a deficiency in social connection can pose substantial risks to mental well-being. The impact of social media usage on mental health can vary among individuals of different age groups, including middle-aged individuals. While social media platforms offer opportunities for connection and information sharing, they can also present challenges and potential negative effects on mental well-being. Here are some key points regarding the relationship between social media usage and mental health in middle-aged individuals:

- i. Increased risk of social comparison: social media often presents an idealized version of people's lives, showcasing only the positive aspects. Middle-aged individuals may compare their own lives to these carefully curated representations, leading to feelings of inadequacy, envy, and low self-esteem.
- ii. Isolation and loneliness: despite the name "social" media, excessive usage can actually contribute to feelings of isolation and loneliness. Middle-aged individuals may spend excessive time scrolling through social media feeds rather than engaging in meaningful face-to-face interactions, which can negatively impact their mental health.
- iii. Negative effects on body image: social media platforms frequently promote unrealistic beauty standards, which can negatively impact body image perception. Middle-aged individuals may feel pressure to conform to these standards, leading to body dissatisfaction and decreased self-confidence.
- iv. Cyber bullying and online harassment: middle-aged individuals may experience cyber bullying and online harassment, which can significantly



impact their mental health. Negative interactions and hurtful comments on social media platforms can contribute to stress, anxiety, and depression.

- v. Information overload and stress: middle-aged individuals may find it challenging to navigate the vast amount of information on social media, leading to feelings of overwhelm and stress. The constant exposure to news, opinions, and divisive content can contribute to anxiety and heightened emotional reactions.
- vi. Digital addiction: excessive social media usage can lead to addictive behaviours, where individuals feel compelled to constantly check their accounts, leading to neglect of other responsibilities and activities. This can negatively impact mental health, productivity, and overall well-being.

Middle-aged individuals may face unique challenges and stressors related to this life stage, including career pressures, financial responsibilities, caring for aging parents, and parenting adolescents. Excessive social media usage and the potential negative consequences, such as social comparison, feelings of inadequacy, and fear of missing out, could contribute to increased stress levels, anxiety, and depression among middle-aged individuals. Furthermore, the influence of social media on family functioning in this age group warrants examination. Middle-aged individuals often play a pivotal role in their families, balancing the needs of their children, spouse or partner, and extended family members. Excessive social media usage may lead to reduced face-to-face interactions; decreased quality time spent with family members, and disrupted communication patterns. These factors have the potential to impact family cohesion, emotional support, and overall satisfaction with family life.

Understanding the influence of social media on the mental health of middle-aged individuals is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it can provide insights into the specific challenges faced by this age group and inform targeted interventions and support systems. Secondly, it can guide the development of guidelines and strategies to promote healthy social media usage habits among middle-aged individuals, ensuring a balance between online and offline interactions. Lastly, addressing this issue can contribute to overall well-being and strengthen family dynamics, which are vital for the mental health and overall satisfaction of middle-aged individuals. Therefore, conducting research and investigation into the influence of social media usage on the mental health of middle-aged individuals is essential for a comprehensive understanding of this topic and to develop effective interventions and strategies. Overall, the relationship between social media and mental health is complex, with varying effects observed across studies. Further research is needed to better understand the mechanisms at play and develop a comprehensive understanding of how social media usage can influence mental well-being.

## **1.5 FAMILY FUNCTIONING**

Family functioning refers to the way in which families work together to meet their needs, communicate, and resolve conflicts. As individuals enter middle age, they often experience significant changes in their family roles, as their children leave home, their parent's age, and they become caregivers to their own family members. These changes can have a significant impact on family functioning of the middle-aged individual. As social media has become increasingly pervasive in modern society, it is essential to examine the potential impact it has on the family functioning of middle-aged individuals. Middle-aged individuals, typically in their late 30s to early 50s, are at a

stage in life where they face various personal and familial responsibilities, making their mental well-being and family dynamics crucial aspects of their overall quality of life.

Social media and family functioning is connected in different aspects it includes both positive as well as negative .some of the positive aspects were social media platforms provide a convenient and accessible way for middle-aged individuals to stay connected with their family members, regardless of distance or time constraints. They can easily communicate, share updates, and maintain relationships with their loved ones, fostering a sense of belonging and closeness. It allows middle-aged individuals to share important family-related information, such as upcoming events, celebrations, or achievements. It enables them to disseminate information quickly to multiple family members simultaneously, reducing the need for individual phone calls or messages. They can find emotional support and encouragement from their family members through social media platforms. They can share personal challenges, seek advice, and receive positive feedback from their family network, which can enhance their overall well-being and resilience. Social media provides a platform for middle-aged individuals to document and preserve their family history. They can share old photographs, memories, and stories, creating a digital archive those future generations can access and cherish .negative aspects of social media usage on family functioning among middle-aged individuals were excessive use of social media can lead to time distractions and reduced engagement with family members. Social media interactions can sometimes be superficial and lack the depth of face-to-face communication. Middle-aged individuals may engage in casual chats, liking or commenting on posts, without engaging in more meaningful conversations that contribute to building strong family bonds. It can create a platform for middle-aged individuals to compare their family lives to others, leading to feelings of envy, inadequacy, or discontent. Sharing personal information on social

media platforms can raise privacy concerns for middle-aged individuals and their families. Over sharing or inadvertently revealing sensitive details can compromise their privacy and potentially lead to unintended consequences. Misinterpretation of messages or comments on social media can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts within families. The absence of non-verbal cues and tone of voice in online communication can sometimes result in miscommunication or unintended offense. The impact of social media on family functioning can vary greatly among individuals and families. It depends on factors such as the frequency and manner of social media usage, individual personality traits, family dynamics, and the ability to balance online and offline interactions effectively.

Social media has revolutionized the way we communicate and connect with others, affecting all aspects of our lives, including our relationships with family members. Middle-aged individuals, in particular, are at an interesting phase. In their lives where their children may be leaving home while their aging parents may need more attention and care. Social media can, therefore, play a significant role in their ability to stay connected, communicate and resolve conflicts within these family relationships. However, social media can also have adverse effects on family relationships, such as contributing to a lack of face-to-face communication, leading to misunderstandings, and even increasing the risk of online conflicts and cyber bullying. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of social media on family relationships of middle-aged individuals. Specifically, this study will explore the frequency of social media use, the types of platforms used, and the content shared, to determine how these factors impact family relationships. Also focus on how social media impacts family communication, the quality of interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution within families and how they manage stress and resolve conflicts

within their family. The findings of this study will help to inform interventions aimed at improving family relationships of middle-aged individuals and promote the judicious use of social media to enhance communication and connectedness with families.

## **1.6 GLOBAL NATIONAL AND KERALA SCENARIO**

An overview of the global, national, and Kerala scenarios regarding the influence of social media usage on the mental health and family functioning of middle-aged individuals, along with some relevant statistics . A study published in the journal *cyber psychology, behaviour, and social networking* found a significant association between excessive social media use and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress among middle-aged individuals. The royal society for public health (uk) reported that social media platforms such as facebook, instagram, snapchat, and twitter can contribute to increased feelings of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and poor body image among young people. Research conducted by the University of Oxford found that higher levels of facebook usage were associated with conflicts within romantic relationships.

According to a study published in the journal *computers in human behaviour*, heavy social media use by parents was associated with increased levels of parent-child conflict and decreased family satisfaction. The American psychological association (ape) reported that social media use can contribute to feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety among adults. A survey conducted by the royal society for public health (up) and young health movement in the United States found that social media platforms negatively affected the sleep patterns, body image, and mental well-being of young adults. According to a study published in the journal *cyber psychology, behaviour, and social networking*, higher social media use by parents was associated with more conflicts and lower relationship quality with their children. According to a survey by

common sense media in the United States, 44% of parents reported that technology, including social media, has a negative impact on their family's face-to-face interactions. A study published in the journal of marriage and family found that higher levels of technology use, including social media, were associated with lower marital quality and higher levels of depressive symptoms among married couples. As of 2021, there are approximately 4.33 billion social media users worldwide, representing around 55% of the global population. The average daily social media usage per person is around 2 hours and 25 minutes. Facebook remains the most popular social media platform, followed by YouTube and WhatsApp. Middle-aged individuals are increasingly adopting social media platforms. In the United States, for example, the Pew Research Centre reported that 73% of adults aged 50-64 and 45% of adults aged 65 and older use social media.

## **1.7 SUMMARY**

Influence of social media is vast and popular topic but the target people were usually adolescents and older adults so that the researcher is interested in doing it with middle aged individuals. Summary of this chapter is about what are social media and different forms of social media platforms. Study focuses on the understanding the frequency and pattern of social media usage and how its effect the mental health and family functioning of middle aged individuals. In this chapter discuss about the concept of social, mental health and family functioning and also overview of global national and local scenario of this topic.

# **CHAPTER 2**

# **REVIEW OF**

# **LITERATURE**

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The advent and widespread adoption of social media platforms have significantly transformed how people communicate, connect, and interact in the digital age. With millions of users engaging with various social media platforms daily, it has become crucial to understand the potential effects of this phenomenon on mental health and family dynamics, particularly among middle-aged individuals. Middle age is a crucial developmental stage characterized by various life transitions, including career advancement, parenting responsibilities, and changes in social roles. During this phase, individuals are often simultaneously navigating personal growth, relationship dynamics, and technological advancements. As social media continues to shape the modern social landscape, it is essential to examine its impact on the mental well-being and family dynamics of middle-aged individuals. There has been a significant increase in the utilization of social media in recent years. People engage with social media for various purposes, such as entertainment, communication, and seeking information. It is worth noting that teenagers and young adults are dedicating more and more time to online networking sites, e-games, texting, and other forms of social media. Concerns about the potential adverse effects associated with addiction to social media usage have escalated, particularly in terms of psychological well-being. Smartphones can often divert individuals' attention from relationships and social interactions, and excessive social media use may lead to addiction to smartphones, primarily due to the fear of missing out. The use of social media has been linked to anxiety, loneliness, depression, and feelings of social isolation. Additionally, "phubbing, refers to the act of ignoring someone you are with and giving attention to your mobile phone instead" (Phubbing, 2023) .Nevertheless, the use of social media also contributes to fostering a sense of connection with relevant individuals, which can alleviate feelings of social isolation.



Indeed, social media offers various means of interaction with both close connections, such as family, friends, and relatives, and weak connections, including colleagues, acquaintances, and strangers. It plays a significant role among people of all age groups, enabling them to foster a sense of belonging within different communities.

Middle aged individuals can utilize social media platforms to establish connections without constraint of time and location, thereby considerably diminishing feelings of loneliness and enhancing their overall quality of life and mental well-being. According to a study conducted by the Pew Research Centre in 2018, social media usage was prevalent among elders in the United States, with 64% of individuals aged 40 to 60 and 37% of those aged 65 and above engaging in such activities. However, it is important to acknowledge that excessive and addictive usage of social media can have detrimental effects on mental health. In a survey conducted by Meshia, Cotten, and Bender, 213 elders above the age of 40 were assessed for perceived social isolation and depression, while also providing data on their daily social media usage. The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale was employed to gauge addictive tendencies. The study revealed that although the amount of time spent on social media did not directly correlate with social isolation, problematic usage was strongly linked to higher levels of social isolation, leading to potential depressive symptoms. Thankfully, the prevalence of social media addiction among middle aged adults is significantly lower compared to teenagers. According to a CBS survey in 2017, only 2% of individuals aged 65 and above reported feelings of addiction, whereas 28.7% of Dutch social media users aged 18 to 24 admitted to such sentiments. Furthermore, a Statistical survey in 2019 indicated that 22% of Americans aged 55 to 64 experienced addictions to social media, while 45% of those aged 18 to 22 had similar issues. The daily life of middle-aged individuals is greatly influenced by social media. Individuals in the age group of

40 to 60, who typically have stable families and careers, rely on smart phones to communicate with their family and colleagues. Hence, social media not only serves as a source of entertainment for middle-aged people, but also helps them in their professional endeavours and strengthens their family bonds. Moreover, a study aimed at investigating the impact of smartphones on job-related stress found that smartphones are essential tools for managing workload. However, this also leads to a new form of pressure, as individuals feel the need to virtually connect with friends and family through social media on their smartphones, causing added stress. Interestingly, the study suggests that stress is linked to personal use of smartphones rather than work-related activities. This observation highlights the ironic contradiction between the intended purpose of social media, which is to bring people closer, and the unintended stress it may cause. On the other hand, excessive use of social media can contribute to feelings of loneliness and isolation, exacerbating mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. While social media can provide benefits for the elderly, such as facilitating connections with others, limitations in physical abilities and mobility make it challenging for them to engage in social activities. Consequently, this lack of social interaction can lead to feelings of loneliness and dissatisfaction with life. In fact, a staggering 43% of surveyed individuals aged over 65 reported experiencing loneliness, which is associated with a decline in health and an increased mortality rate. Several studies explored the social media use patterns and attitudes of middle-aged adults. It found that while this group is increasingly engaging with social media platforms, their attitudes and behaviours differ from younger users. Middle-aged individuals tend to be more cautious about privacy and more inclined to use social media for information gathering rather than self-expression. Researchers examined the relationship between social media use and mental health in middle-aged individuals. The research suggested

that excessive use of social media might lead to feelings of loneliness and dissatisfaction, particularly among middle-aged adults who perceive themselves as less socially connected. Studies found that social media platforms play a crucial role in shaping health behaviours, including diet, exercise, and healthcare decision-making, among middle-aged adults. *Social Media and Parenting among Middle-Aged Adults* (Johnson, 2018) explored how middle-aged parents use social media and how it affects their parenting practices. The research revealed that social media provides a platform for parents to connect, seek advice, and share experiences, but it also presents potential challenges in terms of privacy and boundaries. *Social Media and Political Engagement in Middle-Aged Adults* (Roberts, 2019) delved into the role of social media in influencing political engagement among middle-aged individuals. The study found that while social media can enhance political awareness, it may also contribute to political polarization and filter bubble effects. *Social Media and Professional Networking* (Brown, 2020) examined how middle-aged professionals use social media for networking and career advancement. The research highlighted that platforms like LinkedIn play a significant role in maintaining professional connections and exploring new job opportunities. *Social Media and Financial Decisions among Middle-Aged Adults* (Johnson, 2021) investigated the influence of social media on financial decision-making among middle-aged individuals. The research showed that social media can impact investment choices and consumer behaviour in this age group.

## **2.1 AN OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media is a digital technology makes it possible to share text and multimedia content through online networks and communities. More than 4.7 billion people use social media globally. Global social media usage increased by 137 million users, or almost 3%, in 2022.

The biggest social media networks include We Chat, WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp. User-generated material and personalised profiles are common on social media platforms, which encourage interaction through likes, shares, comments, and discussions.”Social media originated as a way to interact with friends and family but soon expanded to serve many purposes. In 2004, MySpace was the first network to reach one million monthly active users. Social media participation exploded in the years that followed with the entry of Facebook and Twitter. On average, global users spent 2.24 hours each day on social networks in 2020, the highest across almost any media type. According to Global Web Index, 46% of internet users worldwide get their news through social media platforms. That compares to 40% of users who view news on websites. Gen Z and Millennials were most likely to view news on social media sites versus other generations. Social media platforms can be categorized according to the interests of their users and their purposes. There are platforms that appeal to video game players, social gamers, video sharers, professional business networks, virtual worlds, review platforms, and beyond. People use various social media applications to network career opportunities, find others across the globe with like-minded interests, and share their political views. Entertainers and politicians use social media to engage with constituents and voters. For businesses, social media has become a key tool. Companies use the platforms to find and engage with customers, drive sales through advertising and promotion, gauge consumer trends, and offer customer service or support” (Dollarhide, 2023) .With 2.96 billion members, Facebook is the most popular social networking platform on the planet. As of January 2023, statistics for the most prominent social media platforms (2.51 billion users of YouTube), (2 billion users) WhatsApp, (2 billion users) Instagram, 1.31 billion people use WeChat , (1.05 billion users) Tik tok with 635 million users, Snapchat.“ Females generally use social media

sites more than males (Duggan et al., 2015, Lenhart, 2015). Duggan et al. (2015) reported 77% of female Internet users used Facebook compared to only 66% of male Internet users. They found that this gender differences was even greater for the more visually-oriented social networking sites, such as Pinterest (42% female internet users, 13% male internet users), whereas the opposite was true for Twitter (21% female internet users, 24% male internet users). Moreover, females spend more time using social media sites than males. (Denti et al, 2012) found that females spend 84 min a day on Facebook, compared to 64 min for males. Furthermore, there are gender differences in social media use. Females use social media for communicating and connecting with others, whilst males use social media for gathering information (Smith, 2011). In addition, there are gender differences in language use on social media. (Thelwall, 2009) investigated gender differences in the use of emotional language in MySpace comments. Compared to males' comments, females' comments contained more instances of positive emotion and support. (Wang, 2013) explored gender differences in of Facebook status updates. Females shared more personal topics, whilst males discussed more public topics. (Walton and Rice, 2013) analyzed 3751 tweets and found that females were more positive, disclosed more information and disclosed more private information than males. Finally, (Brandtzaeg, 2015) investigated Facebook liking practices regarding expressions of civic engagement among 21,706,806 Facebook users in 10 countries and found distinct gender differences concerning those practices” (Joiner et al., 2016) .The rapid growth and widespread adoption of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have given rise to numerous theories that aim to understand the impact and dynamics of social media on individuals and society as a whole. These theories provide valuable insights into the psychological,

sociological, and cultural aspects of social media usage. Some of the key theories that shed light on the various dimensions of social media and its effects were

” Blumler and Katz’s uses and gratification theory suggests that media users play an active role in choosing and using the media. Users take an active part in the communication process and are goal oriented in their media use” (Caldwell, n.d.) This theory suggests that individuals actively choose and use media, including social media, to satisfy specific needs or gratifications and he stated that different people could utilise a communication message for various objectives. Middle-aged individuals may turn to social media to fulfill various needs, such as seeking information, entertainment, social interaction, or identity expression. This theory emphasizes the active role of users in selecting and using social media platforms based on their motivations. This theory suggests that individuals actively choose and utilize media platforms to satisfy their specific needs and desires. Middle-aged individuals may use social media to gather information on various topics such as health, parenting, finance, and current events. They can access news articles, blog posts, and expert opinions shared by others within their network. Social media platforms allow them to stay informed, learn about new trends, and seek advice or recommendations from their peers. Middle-aged individuals often value social connections and may use social media to maintain and strengthen relationships with family, friends, and acquaintances. These platforms provide a convenient way to stay connected, engage in conversations, share updates, and express support or solidarity. Social media offers a sense of community and social interaction, especially for those who may have limited opportunities for face-to-face interactions due to work or other commitments. Middle-aged individuals may turn to social media to seek emotional support and validation from their online network. They can share personal challenges, seek advice, and receive empathy and encouragement from others.

Social media platforms provide an outlet for expressing emotions, finding like-minded individuals, and receiving support during difficult times. Social media serves as a source of entertainment and relaxation for middle-aged individuals. They can access humorous content, watch videos, listen to podcasts, and engage in recreational activities such as online gaming. Social media platforms offer an escape from daily stressors and provide an avenue for leisure and entertainment.

The life course perspective theory suggests that an individual's life experiences, transitions, and social contexts shape their behaviours and choices. Middle-aged individuals are often in a distinct life stage characterized by various transitions, such as career advancements, parenting, and empty-nesting. Social media provides a platform for them to connect, share experiences, seek support, and engage in self-expression during these transitions. Understanding how middle-aged individuals utilize social media within their unique life course contexts can shed light on their motivations and the impact of social media on their well-being and identity development.

“SST is the dominant theory in the field of emotional and social aging. This theory posits that as people grow older and their time starts to be perceived as limited, their motivational orientation begins to change”. (Ziaei & Fischer, 2016). Middle-aged individuals may turn to social media to fulfil their socio emotional needs by seeking social connections, emotional support, and maintaining relationships. This theory suggests that social media platforms offer opportunities for middle-aged individuals to engage in meaningful interactions, reminisce, and strengthen existing relationships, thereby promoting their emotional well-being.”Social identity theory, in social psychology the study of the interplay between personal and social identities. Social identity theory aims to specify and predict the circumstances under which individuals think of themselves as individuals or as group members” (Ellemers, 2017)

theory also applies to middle-aged individuals' engagement with social media. These platforms provide opportunities for middle-aged individuals to explore and express their identities, engage with like-minded communities, and participate in collective discussions. Social media can help middle-aged individuals form new social connections based on shared interests, hobbies, or life experiences. Exploring how middle-aged individuals navigate and construct their identities on social media can provide insights into their motivations, social interactions, and the formation of virtual communities. Privacy and self-disclosure theories examine how individuals manage the presentation of personal information in online environments. Middle-aged individuals may approach privacy concerns differently due to their life stage and generational characteristics. They may have distinct preferences regarding privacy settings, information sharing practices, and concerns about data security. Understanding middle-aged individuals' privacy behaviours and self-disclosure patterns on social media can shed light on their online experiences and help develop strategies to address their unique needs. Social media platforms often facilitate social comparison, where individuals compare themselves to others. Middle-aged individuals may engage in upward or downward social comparisons, leading to various outcomes. Upward social comparison may result in feelings of inadequacy or increased motivation to improve, while downward social comparison may boost self-esteem. The influence of social comparison on self-perception and well-being is relevant to middle-aged individuals' social media usage. Social media provides a platform for individuals to express their identities and connect with like-minded individuals. Middle-aged individuals may use social media to explore and reinforce their social identities, such as being a parent, professional, or hobbyist. Social media usage can contribute to the formation and maintenance of social identities, as well as foster a sense of belonging and social



support among middle-aged individuals. These theories offer valuable perspectives on the complexities of social media and its impact on individuals and society. They highlight the social, psychological, and cultural dynamics that shape social media use, adoption, and effects. By understanding these theories, we can gain deeper insights into the motivations, behaviours, and consequences associated with social media engagement. Moreover, these theories provide a foundation for future research and offer guidance for policymakers, platform designers, and users themselves in harnessing the potential benefits of social media while mitigating its potential risks.

## **2.2 MENTAL HEALTH**

Mental health is a crucial aspect of human wellbeing, despite this, it is frequently disregarded and stigmatised. Adults in their middle and later years, particularly the elderly, are populations with a higher frequency of psychological issues.” According to the World Health Organization, the prevalence of mental health problems is increasing at a rate of 13% per year. Anxiety and depression are the most common mental health issues, affecting 264 million and 280 million people worldwide, respectively. In addition, an estimated 269 million people were struggling with drug and substance abuse by the end of 2018. These numbers are likely to continue to rise due to a variety of factors. One factor that has been identified as contributing to the increase in mental health challenges is the use of technologies, including social media” (Beyari, 2023). Social media applications are those that let users communicate with one another through the creation and transmission of media, text, and voice calls over a network. Social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. Private conversations, group chats, browsing postings, advertisements, media sharing, calls, likes and comments, and pages are some of the key social media aspects taken into account in this study. Social media has been connected to anxiety, sadness, and

disrupted sleep patterns. It is widely used in Saudi Arabia, where 29.5 million individuals, or 82.3% of the population, will use it in 2022. The majority of social media users in Saudi Arabia are young people, who make up 36.74% of the population. 98.43% of young people employ social networking sites. Keeping in touch with friends and family, utilising leisure time, and discovering things to buy are the top three reasons Saudis cite for using social media. In the KSA, mental health problems are thought to affect 20.2% of people. With 21% of the population affected, depression is the most prevalent mental health problem, followed by anxiety (17.5%) and stress (12.6%). “Excessive use of the Internet can also effectively predict individual psychosocial health such as loneliness, rejection sensitivity, delay, and impulsivity. In-depth analysis also found that online socializing, entertainment and business activities have a significant alleviating effect on the level of depression, but online study and work did not have a significant impact on the level of depression. Because playing online games, watching short videos, listening to music and other online entertainment activities and online business activities such as shopping can bring direct and high-frequency mental stimulation to middle-aged and older adults, as well as instant audio-visual satisfaction, so that they can quickly vent their emotions and release pressure” (Zhang et al., 2022). Social media use becomes almost like a daily ritual if it becomes ingrained in a person's lifestyle. Social media use has been related in numerous studies to anxiety and obsessive behaviour. 45% of British individuals reported feeling uneasy or frightened when they were unable to access their SNSs or email. A new medical term called phantom vibration syndrome (PVS), which is defined as perceived vibration from a mobile phone that is not vibrating, has emerged as a result of this constant connectedness. PVS is a frequent condition and is probably a consequence of the anxiety that mobile devices cause in people who are fixated on going in to their social

media accounts. Approximately 1.16 billion people in India are currently mobile phone users, making up about 66% of the world's population. The amount of time spent using a Smartphone is found to be positively connected with PVS. According to studies, prolonged use of smart phones might cause symptoms including headaches, severe irritability, a rise in carelessness and forgetfulness, a slowing down of reflexes, and ear clicking. A new type of psychiatric disease known as phantom syndrome, which is characterised by a frequent false sense of ringing and vibration from smart phones, has emerged as a result of people's relationship with their smart phones.

There are several theories that have been proposed to explain the influence of social media usage on mental health among middle-aged individuals. According to Social Comparison Theory, individuals engage in upward or downward comparisons with others to evaluate their own abilities, appearance, and achievements. Middle-aged individuals may compare their lives and accomplishments with others on social media, leading to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and depression if they perceive themselves as falling short. According to Social Support Theory Social media platforms offer opportunities for social interaction and connection, which can provide social support. Middle-aged individuals who primarily rely on social media for social interactions may feel lonely, isolated, and disconnected, negatively impacting their mental health.

### **2.2.1 SOCIAL MEDIA AND DEPRESSION**

“Depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act” (*What Is Depression?*, n.d.). It is a widespread mental health condition that has an impact on both physical and psychological well-being. The third greatest cause of disability in

2017 was depression, which affects more than 264 million people worldwide of all ages. Depression is a risk factor for disability, higher mortality, and more comorbidity in the ageing population. The reported prevalence of depressive symptoms among people in China ranges from 6.9 to 37.9%. The prevention, early detection, and treatment of depression in middle-aged and older persons have grown more crucial as China's population ages. Social media has gained a new dimension since the emergence of Internet technology, altering the population's mental health.

Social media's impact on mental health has pros and cons. Increased social contacts, improved social support, access to health information, health promotion, and perceived emotional support are just a few of the apparent benefits of utilising social media. Contrarily, using social media was also linked to adverse effects, including poor sleep, increased despair, anxiety, and fear, feeling tired, using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and a sense of isolation. The majority of recent research used social media platforms like Face book, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, which are common in Western nations. “A national survey of U.S. young adults, found that compared with individuals who use 0 to 2 social media platforms, individuals who use 7 to 11 social media platforms have substantially higher odds of getting increased levels of depression and anxiety symptoms. In a sample of adolescents and their parents throughout the U.S., social media use was moderately and positively associated with adolescent-reported fear of missing out and loneliness, as well as with parent-reported hyperactivity/impulsivity, anxiety, and depression” (Srivastava et al., 2019).

“Excessive use of Social media leads individual todisastrous results that starts with anxiety and leads to the depression. In (Pantic et al., 2012) It is revealed that depression and time spent on Facebook by middle aged adults is positively correlated.( Rosen et al., 2013), mirrored these findings and revealed that symptoms of major depression has

been found among the individuals who spent most of their time in online activities and performing image management on social networking sites. Similarly (Lou etAl., 2012) asserted that students who use Facebook intensely reports enhanced loneliness. It is also found that social media usage also enhances the psycho-social problems like adjustment& self-esteem (Kalpidou et al., 2011)” (Bashir & Bhat, 2017).

### **2.2.2 SOCIAL MEDIA & STRESS**

“In present era addiction of social media is incredibly increased, once an individual gets on, it is difficult to refrain from its use. Comments and likes acts as positive reinforcement and making it more difficult to stop it. Certain people compare their lives with the immaculate lives of their friends. (Dick , 2013) reported with the use of free social networking services (Facebook & Twitter) people remain connected with friends and read productive content but at the same time lose a lot of discretion and privacy. In present world Anxiety is one of the fundamental mental health problems. People fret about the likes and comments of their uploaded pictures and videos. In the present era hardly any person is immune in context of social media. (The Hearty Soul, 2016) asserts that longer time you spend on social media more you are depressed, further it also reported that usage of social networking applications like Facebook and Twitter are less helpful to students in remaining more focused and less stressed. (Kaur, 2015) explored both positive and negative effects of social media on mental health of adolescents, positive effects include socialization, enhanced communication, learning opportunities and access to health information. While negative aspects include depression, online harassment, cyber-bulling, sexing, fatigue, stress, suppression of emotional and decline of intellectual ability. In present world almost every individual from age of 11-93 is connected to the social media. According to a research conducted by (Strickland, 2014) young adults are the most active users of social media and predominantly are at risk of

developing mental health issue at a high rate of concern. Another study conducted by (Park, 2014) indicated that Social media application like Facebook is positively associated with acculturative stress of college students. Similarly (Kaur, 2016) made an extensive investigation of stress on mental health of middle aged adults and suggests that stress can negatively affect on mental health of students. Therefore we can conclude that excessive usage of social media can affect on mental health of the younger generation” (Bashir, 2017).“Life satisfaction, as an overall assessment of an individual’s feelings and attitudes toward current life, is also one of the important protective factors for perceived stress, which can effectively buffer the impact of adverse factors on mental health” (Zheng et al., 2019).

Middle-aged individuals may experience increased stress due to the overwhelming amount of information available on social media platforms. The constant stream of news, updates, and notifications can create a sense of information overload, leading to feelings of stress and an inability to keep up with the demands of social media. Middle-aged individuals often juggle multiple responsibilities, including work, family, and personal commitments. Social media can blur the boundaries between work and personal life, making it challenging to maintain a healthy work-life balance. The pressure to be constantly connected and available on social media can contribute to stress levels. Social media platforms can trigger social comparison among middle-aged individuals, leading to feelings of inadequacy and envy. Seeing others' achievements, travel experiences, or lifestyles can create a sense of pressure and stress to measure up to these perceived ideals. Social media can be a significant source of distraction, especially when middle-aged individuals are trying to focus on work or other important tasks. The constant urge to check social media updates and notifications can decrease productivity and increase stress levels. Middle-aged individuals may experience stress

related to privacy and security concerns on social media. The potential risk of personal information being shared or hacked can lead to heightened stress and a sense of vulnerability

### **2.2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA AND ANXIETY**

Social media can have both positive and negative effects on individuals of all age groups, including middle-aged individuals. When it comes to anxiety, social media use can contribute to feelings of anxiety and stress in middle-aged individuals in several ways: Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) means Middle-aged individuals may compare their lives to those of their peers and feel anxious about not measuring up to perceived social standards. Social Comparison where middle-aged individuals may feel pressured to achieve similar levels of success, happiness, or popularity. This constant comparison can result in feelings of inadequacy and anxiety. Social media platforms can be breeding grounds for negative behaviour such as cyber bullying and trolling. Middle-aged individuals may become targets of online harassment, which can significantly impact their self-esteem and mental well-being, leading to anxiety and stress. Middle-aged individuals may internalize these idealized images and develop unrealistic expectations for them, leading to anxiety and a sense of failure when reality doesn't align with the social media narrative. The impact of social media on anxiety can vary from person to person based on individual characteristics, coping mechanisms, and overall mental health. It's crucial for individuals to be mindful of their social media usage and take steps to manage it effectively, such as setting boundaries, engaging in offline activities, and seeking support when needed.

Several studies have indicated a positive association between social media use and anxiety symptoms among middle-aged individuals. The constant exposure to social

comparisons, unrealistic ideals, and fear of missing out can contribute to heightened anxiety levels. Middle-aged individuals, particularly women, may experience body image concerns and increased anxiety due to the prevalence of highly curate and idealized images on social media platforms. Comparing oneself to others can lead to negative self-perception and anxiety about physical appearance. Middle-aged individuals may experience decreased self-esteem when comparing their achievements, relationships, and lifestyles to those portrayed on social media. This comparison can intensify feelings of inadequacy and trigger anxiety. Social media connects people digitally; it may also contribute to feelings of social isolation among middle-aged individuals. Constant exposure to others' seemingly active and fulfilling social lives can amplify the perception of being left out, potentially leading to anxiety and loneliness. Middle-aged individuals who excessively engage with social media may experience disruptions in sleep patterns. The blue light emitted by screens, combined with the emotional impact of social media content, can interfere with sleep quality, leading to increased anxiety levels. Some studies have explored the ways in which middle-aged individuals cope with social media-related anxiety. Strategies such as active engagement with supportive online communities, self-regulation of social media use, and seeking offline social interactions have been found to alleviate anxiety symptoms.

### **2.3 FAMILY FUNCTIONING**

“Family functioning is defined as the frequency of normal family routines, effectiveness of family communication and problem solving, family cohesiveness, and how well family members get along” (Dharmaraj & Ng, 2021). It plays a crucial role in the well-being of individuals within the family. Middle-aged individuals, typically ranging from their late 30s to early 60s, often find themselves at a significant life stage where they balance multiple responsibilities, including career, raising children, caring



for aging parents, and maintaining personal relationships. Families represent entire complicated social systems in addition to the living spaces in which their members reside. Therefore, family functioning is defined by the family systems theory perspective as the processes and interactions, in which the system's members are involved to meet their needs, make decisions, define their goals, and develop norms for both the system as a whole and for them. A family's capacity to function effectively is characterised by the degree of openness of communication and the healthiness of interactions, which are linked to favourable results for both the individual and the family. By enabling family members to stay in touch, make plans in real-time, ensure children's safety as they allow communications in emergency situations, strengthen family ties, encourage parent-child interactions, promote and facilitate discussions, and more, the use of ICTs can have a positive impact on family relationships as well as family cohesion, adaptability, and open communications. Additionally, the use of ICTs and social media could increasingly guarantee what Castells termed as autonomy in security conditions, since they enable parents to communicate with their kids whenever they want and keep tabs on their whereabouts in both real-world and virtual places. On the other hand, the opportunities for constant communication need to be moderated, and the connection made possible by mobile devices and social media needs to be managed in the times, places, and situations when it is permitted. The phubbing phenomenon, which refers to ignoring someone in a social setting in favour of paying attention to mobile devices instead (for example, interrupting a meal while eating with others to check the phone for messages or a missed call), appears to be connected to the risk arising from the lack of modulation and negotiation about social media and mobile device use, which could impact family relationships and dynamics. Together, the measures required to minimise these risks and regulate when, where, and how mobile

devices are used may lead to conflicts within families. This is because parents who are more concerned about the effects of social media may exert more control over their children's use, which may give adolescents the impression that their parents are overly controlling. Furthermore, because social media represents environments where various social norms and rules can be established and followed by teenagers independently of their parents, this can increase the risks if their use and its effects are not adequately discussed among family members. This is because those norms may influence teenagers' decision-making processes.

Social media has become a pervasive force in our lives, impacting various aspects of family functioning for middle-aged individuals. Social media platforms provide middle-aged individuals with new avenues to connect and communicate with their family members, including extended family and friends. It offers an opportunity to share updates, photos, and milestones, fostering a sense of connectedness. However, it's important to strike a balance between virtual and face-to-face interactions to maintain strong family bonds. Middle-aged individuals often rely on social media platforms to seek support and advice from their peers who may be going through similar life experiences. Online communities, forums, and support groups can provide valuable resources and a sense of belonging. These networks can be beneficial in navigating challenges such as parenting, career advancements, and caring for aging parents. Social media can impact the work-life balance of middle-aged individuals. On one hand, it offers flexibility and opportunities for networking and career growth. On the other hand, excessive use of social media can blur the boundaries between work and personal life, leading to increased stress and potential conflicts within the family. Finding a healthy balance and setting boundaries is crucial for maintaining family functioning. Middle-aged individuals may face unique parenting challenges in the digital age. Social

media can influence parenting styles, parental monitoring of children's online activities, and discussions.

“According to Hertlein’s multitheoretical model , the ecological influences related to social media features (e.g., accessibility, acceptability, accommodation), the changes social media use brings with reference to family structure (e.g., redefinition of rules, roles, and boundaries), and the ones related to family processes (e.g., redefinition of intimacy, new ways of communicating, new rituals) are interconnected and interdependent” (Procentese et al., 2019).

When exploring the influence of social media usage on family functioning among middle-aged individuals, several theories can help provide insights into this topic. According to Social Integration Theory suggests that social media can influence family functioning by either enhancing or disrupting social integration within the family unit. Social media usage can facilitate communication and connection among family members, leading to increased cohesion, support, and positive family dynamics. On the other hand, excessive or problematic social media use may lead to reduced face-to-face interaction, decreased quality time spent together, and potential conflicts, thereby negatively impacting family functioning. Media System Dependency Theory suggests that individuals rely on media, including social media, for various needs, such as information, entertainment, and social interaction. In the context of family functioning, middle-aged individuals may use social media to fulfil their social and emotional needs, seeking validation, support, or a sense of belonging. However, if social media use becomes excessive or displaces important family interactions, it can lead to a decreased sense of cohesion, communication breakdowns, and conflicts within the family .Diffusion of Innovations Theory posits that the adoption and use of new technologies, including social media, occur through a process of diffusion among

individuals and social systems. In the context of family functioning, social media usage among middle-aged individuals may introduce new dynamics, norms, and practices within the family. The impact can vary based on the family's readiness to adopt and integrate social media into their interactions. Factors such as family members' attitudes, communication patterns, and adaptability to change can influence how social media usage affects family functioning. In conclusion, the review of literature on the influence of social media usage on mental health and family functioning among middle-aged individuals highlights several important findings. Overall, the research suggests that social media can have both positive and negative effects on the mental health and family functioning of middle-aged individuals. On the positive side, social media can provide a sense of connectedness and support, allowing middle-aged individuals to maintain and strengthen their social networks. It can also serve as a platform for sharing information and resources related to mental health and family issues, fostering awareness and access to support services. However, the literature also points out several negative effects of social media usage. Excessive time spent on social media can lead to feelings of social comparison, inadequacy, and low self-esteem, which can contribute to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. Social media can also lead to increased conflicts within families, as excessive usage can detract from face-to-face interactions and quality time spent together.

## **2.4 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

Review of literature is an overview of the previously published work on the topic. Researcher explores articles, sites, journals and reached certain assumptions. Also understand overall views of the topic and interpret the review from various researchers.

This chapter gives an introduction about the positive and negative consequences of social media and how its affect the family functioning and mental well being of middle aged individuals with statistics. Theories which connected with variables also mentioned and explored their relationships. From this literature researcher got a better understanding about the relevance of study.

**CHAPTER 3**

**RESEARCH**

**METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

In the contemporary era, the term “social media” signifies the various mediums through which individuals interact with one another by creating, exchanging, and sharing knowledge and concepts among virtual networks and communities. Social media plays a crucial role in today’s society as it facilitates connectivity among people, allowing them to share their ideas, thoughts, and opinions with others in a secure and protected environment. Additionally, it serves as a platform for companies, institutions, and movements to market and promote themselves. It also serves as a resource to keep up with current events and trends. By 2023, social media users worldwide are forecasted to reach a total of 4.89 billion individuals. People aged 35 or older were predominantly adversely influenced by highly visual apps like Snapchat and TikTok. While social media has commonly been linked with anxiety and depression in middle aged adults, fresh evidence demonstrates that platforms such as Instagram and TikTok can also leave middle-aged adults feeling upset.

Research methodology gives an overall idea of research the significance of topic, objectives, definition of concepts, research design, tools of data collection, methods, universe, sampling etc. This paper “A study on Examine the Influence of Social Media on Mental Health and Family Functioning of Middle Aged Individuals” examines the frequency and pattern of social media usage and its effect on mental health and family functioning.

### **3.2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

The influence of social media usage on the mental health and family functioning of middle-aged individuals has become a pressing concern in contemporary society. With

the widespread adoption of social media platforms, middle-aged individuals are increasingly engaging with these platforms, which may have significant implications for their overall well-being and family dynamics. Middle-aged individuals, typically ranging from 40 to 60 years old, often find themselves at a critical juncture in life, balancing multiple responsibilities such as career, relationships, and parenting. Social media platforms offer opportunities for connection, information sharing, and self-expression, but they also introduce potential stressors and challenges that can impact mental health and family dynamics. One aspect of concern is the impact of social media usage on the mental health of middle-aged individuals. Studies have suggested a correlation between excessive social media consumption and various mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy. Middle-aged individuals may be susceptible to these negative effects, as they may compare their achievements, appearance, and lifestyles with those of their peers, leading to increased stress, self-doubt, and dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, social media usage may also affect family functioning among middle-aged individuals. The time spent on social media platforms may detract from face-to-face interactions within the family, reducing quality time and overall communication. This can have consequences for family cohesion, support, and emotional well-being. Additionally, social media can introduce conflicts and disagreements within families, especially when differing opinions and values are exposed through online interactions. Understanding the specific ways in which social media usage influences the mental health and family functioning of middle-aged individuals is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems. Exploring the underlying mechanisms and identifying potential risk factors and protective factors associated with social media use in this population can provide insights for healthcare professionals, policymakers, and



families to promote positive mental health and family well-being in the digital age. Much of the existing research on social media and mental health has primarily focused on adolescents and young adults. There is a lack of comprehensive studies specifically investigating the impact of social media on the mental health and family functioning of middle-aged individuals. Social media use is influenced by various contextual factors, such as cultural norms, socioeconomic status, and family dynamics. There is a need for research that explores how these contextual factors interact with social media usage to impact mental health and family functioning among middle-aged individuals. While much of the research has focused on the negative effects of social media, there is a need to explore the potential positive aspects as well. Social media platforms can provide opportunities for social support, information sharing, and community engagement, which may positively influence mental health and family functioning. Investigating the role of positive social media experiences and their potential protective effects is an important area for future research. The influence of social media on family dynamics among middle-aged individuals is an understudied area. Research examining how social media use impacts parent-child relationships, spousal dynamics, and intergenerational interactions within families is limited. Exploring the potential conflicts, challenges, and opportunities that arise within the family due to social media usage can provide valuable insights for promoting healthy family functioning. Addressing these research gaps can enhance our understanding of the complex relationship between social media use, mental health, and family functioning among middle-aged individuals.

### **3.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

Social media influence among middle adulthood is a topic that is not explored in the Indian context. This study examines to fill the research gap and contributes to practical, educational and policy level implication such as recognizing the potential effects of social media on mental health and family dynamics can lead to increased awareness among individuals, families, and communities. This awareness can pave the way for education initiatives, workshops, and resources that provide practical strategies for healthy social media use. Mental health professionals can play a crucial role in addressing the challenges associated with social media usage. They can provide guidance, counselling, and therapy tailored to the specific needs of middle-aged individuals who are experiencing negative impacts on their mental health or family functioning due to social media use. Communities, schools, and organizations can collaborate to create safe and supportive environments for middle-aged individuals. This can include organizing educational workshops, support groups, and community events that address the challenges of social media use and promote well-being. Policymakers and regulatory bodies may need to address issues related to privacy, online harassment, misinformation, and the overall impact of social media on mental health and family dynamics. This may involve developing guidelines or regulations to ensure the responsible use of social media platforms. The significance of study is to examine the influence of social media usage and its effect on mental health and family functioning of middle aged individuals.

### **3.4. AIM OF THE STUDY**

The study aims to examine the influence of social media usage. Exploring the frequency and pattern of social media usage and to understand briefly about the concepts which affect the mental health of middle-aged individuals. Analysing the relationship of mental health and family functioning with social media.

### **3.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.5.1 General objective**

- To examine the influence of social media usage on mental health and family functioning of middle-aged adults.

#### **3.5.2 Specific objective**

- To identify the patterns and frequency of social media use among middle-aged adults.
- To examine the mental health of middle-aged individuals.
- To study family functioning of middle-aged adults
- To investigate the influence of social media on family relationship of middle-aged individuals.
- To study the influence of social media use on the mental health of middle-aged individuals.

### 3.6. DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

In the study on the influence of social media usage on mental health and family functioning of middle aged individuals, several key concepts are central to understanding the research. Here are the definitions of these concepts:

The study aims to investigate how social media affects mental health and family functioning of middle aged individual's .By examining the relationship between these factors, we can gain insights into the impact of social media on the mental health and family functioning.

#### 3.6.1 Mental health

**Theoretical definition:**” Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community” (World Health Organization: WHO, 2022b).

**Operational definition:** In the present study, mental health refers to depression, anxiety and stress as prescribed by DASS-21 questionnaire.

#### 3.6.2 Middle adulthood

**Theoretical definition:** Middle adulthood (or midlife) refers to the period of the lifespan between young adulthood and old age.

**Operational definition:** Middle adulthood refers to the period of 3 lifespan between 40 to 60. In this research middle aged adult refers to the individuals who had smartphone or tabs and also active in social media of Ernakulam district of Kerala.

### **3.6.3 Family functioning**

**Theoretical definition:** Family functioning is a process in which members interact with each other to meet basic needs, make decisions, establish rules, and define goals, contributes simultaneously to individual and family development.

**Operational definition:** In the present study the influence of social media on family functioning is measured by the scale McMaster model of family functioning to assess the individuals overall level of family functioning.

### **3.6.4 Social media**

**Theoretical definition:** Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

**Operational definition:** It is internet based platforms that is used to create, share and exchange information, idea in a virtual form.

## **3.7. HYPOTHESES**

H1: There is a significant relationship between social media usage and mental health

H2: There is significant relationship between social media usage and family functioning

H3: There is a significant relationship between the socio demographic criteria of gender with mental, family functioning and social media usage through T-Test.

## **3.8. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research follows cross sectional descriptive research. “Descriptive statistics are brief informational coefficients that summarize a given data set, which can be either a representation of the entire population or a sample of a population. (Hayes, 2023)”. This study is descriptive in nature

### **3.9. UNIVERSE**

Individuals who are between the age of 40 and 60 residing in Ernakulam district of kerala who regularly use social media platforms such as Face book, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, LinkedIn, or other similar platforms.

### **3.10. SAMPLING**

Purposive Sampling: purposive sampling is a method of collecting samples by taking samples that are purposefully located around a location or Internet service. The researcher purposively selected 60 respondents from Ernakulam district of kerala who are using social media platforms frequently.

### **3.11. INCLUSION CRITERIA**

- Middle aged individuals both men and women under the age category of 40-60 residing in ernakulam district
- Participants who use social media platforms frequently more than 6 hours.

### **3.12. EXCLUSION**

- Participants who doesn't have smartphones
- Participants who are not active in social media platforms
- Participants with mental illness

### **3.13. TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION**

- Socio demographic questionnaire to understand information respondents.
- DASS-21 scale is designed to measure the emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress.
- McMaster model of family functioning to assess the individuals overall level of family functioning
- Social Networking Addiction scale to assess the usage of social media platforms.

### **3.14. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

The questionnaires were distributed as google forms to the middle aged individuals who residing at Ernakulum district of kerala. The Google form was shared individually to middle aged individuals and also share in the whatsapp group of MSW students. Overall response received was 60.

### **3.15. PILOT STUDY AND PRE-TEST**

Through pilot study, the researcher aims to analyze the feasibility of the study. Researcher discussed the topic with a few experts on the field of research and also discusses the research design, tool of data collection and methods. Researcher identify the standardized questionnaires of three different scales related to the topic and develop hypothesis that is increased used of social media platforms which affects the mental health and decreased family cohesion among middle aged adults. After that conduct a pre-test by sharing the questions to the parents of colleagues who are residing in Ernakulam district. The results show the relevance of topic.

### **3.16. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Data is analysed using version of 23 of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) in which inferential statistics helped to make predictions or interpretations from the data. The data was entered and then interpreted through descriptive statistics, T-Test and correlation functions. Descriptive statistics helped to the data are analysed using the t-test, correlation and the results are pictorially represented using pie-chart, bar diagram and tables and percentage analysis is carried out.

### **3.17. LIMITATIONS**

3.17.1 The time period for carrying out the research was short as a result of which few facts have been left unexplored.

3.17.2 Personal bias of the respondents might have crept in while answering the questions.

3.17.3 The increased number of questions, usage of 3 scales and socio-demographic questions created disinterest in participants.

### **3.18. CHAPTERISATION**

Chapter I- Introduction

Chapter II- Review of Literature

Chapter III- Research Methodology

Chapter IV- Data Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter V- Findings, Recommendation and Implication for professional social work practise



# **CHAPTER 4**

# **ANALYSIS AND**

# **INTERPRETATION**

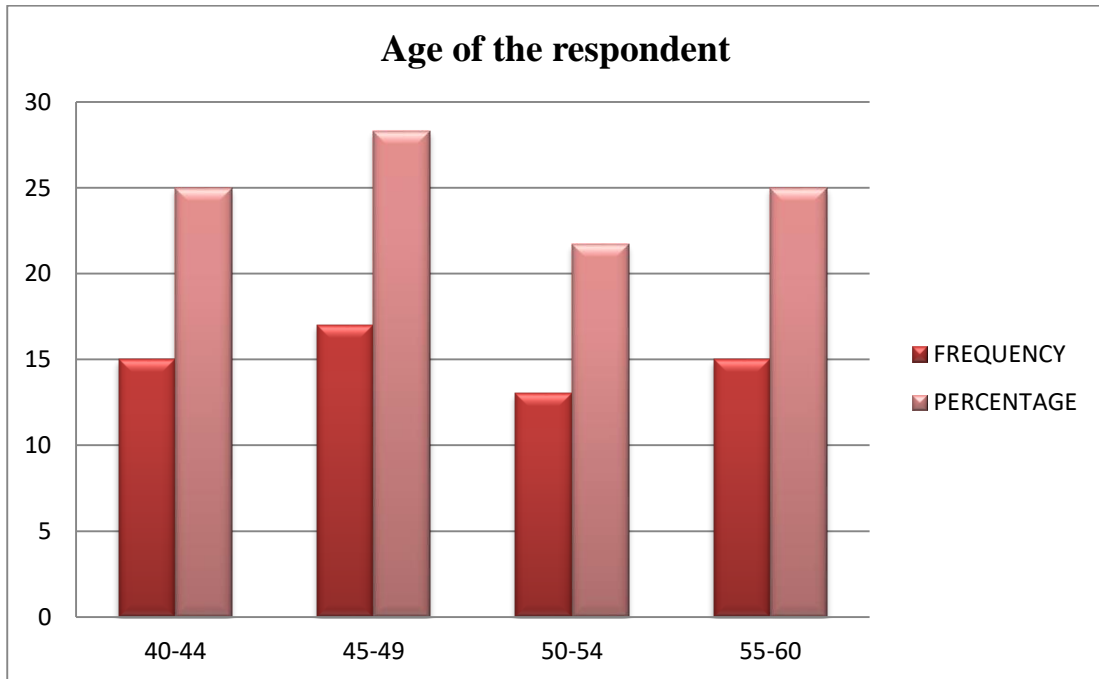
#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the analysis of data and subsequent interpretation based on the objectives and hypothesis. It is represented in the form of tables and graphs. Version 23 of SPSS is used for analysis. Standardized questionnaire is used for data collection. The participants were middle aged adults from 40-60 including both female and male. The sample size of the study is 60. Data collected through Google form and share it with the help of social media platforms and the discussions of results is provided in this chapter

#### **4.2 SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

The socio demographic profile of the middle aged individuals analyzed in terms of variable such as age, gender, education qualification, usage and time spend on different social media platforms. The respondent of the study are both male and female. These details will help to provide a better understanding of the background and characteristics of target population in Ernakulam district.

### 4.2.1 Age of the respondents

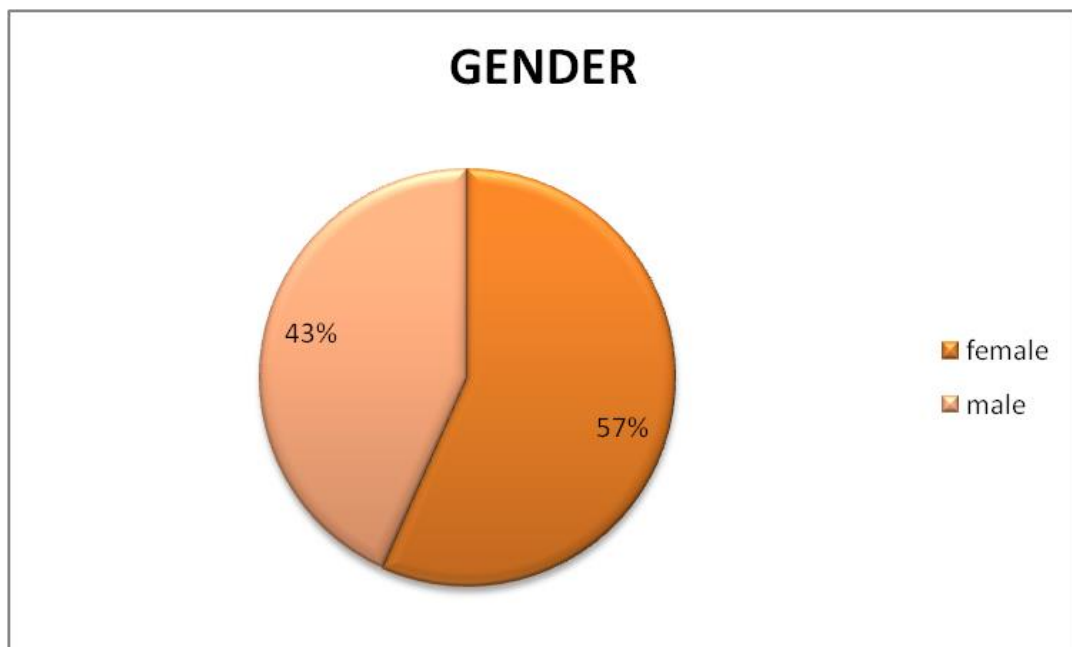


*Illustration 4.2.1 age of the respondent*

Illustration 4.2.1 indicates the respondent's age which is divided into 4 groups: 40-44, 45-49, 50-54 and 55-60. 25% belongs to the category of 40-44 and also we can see the same percentage at the category 55-60. 17% of the respondents which come under the category of 45-49 and remaining 13% is for 50-24.

#### 4.2.2 Gender of the respondents

Gender of the respondent is collected as nominal data. The collected data used for identifying and compare that is using social media platforms more. Illustration 4.2.2 shows the representation of gender using pie charts.



*Illustration 4.2.2 gender of respondent*

The illustration 4.2.2 depicts the gender of the respondents, with 57% of females and 43% of males out of 100%. From this chart we can interpret that usage of social media is more in females than male.

### 4.2.3 Education Qualification

Education qualification of middle aged individuals is represented in both table and illustration.

Education qualification	Frequency	Percentage
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	14	23%
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	19	32%
Under graduation	16	27%
Post graduation	10	17%
Mphil/ PHD	1	1%

Table 4.2.1 education qualification of respondents

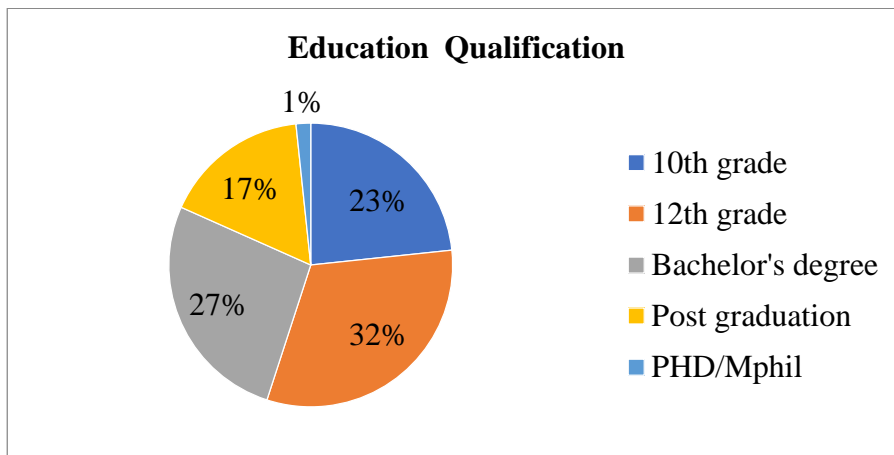
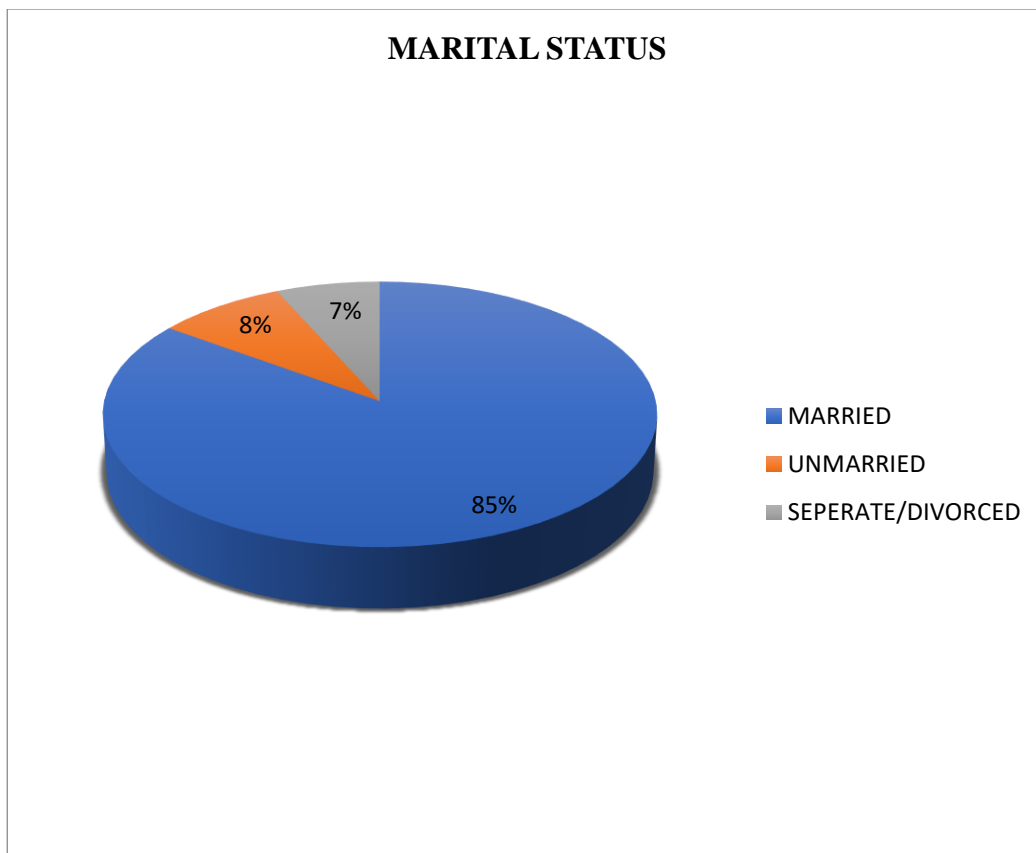


Illustration 4.2.3 education qualification

Table 4.2.1 indicates the education qualification and its percentage. Illustration 4.2.3 shows the picture representation with the help of pie chart. Based on the data 32% of them have higher secondary graduation and 23% have high school level education.

Found that 27% have a bachelor's degree and 17% have post graduation. Only 1% person who have PHD/M Phil.

#### 4.2.4 Marital status

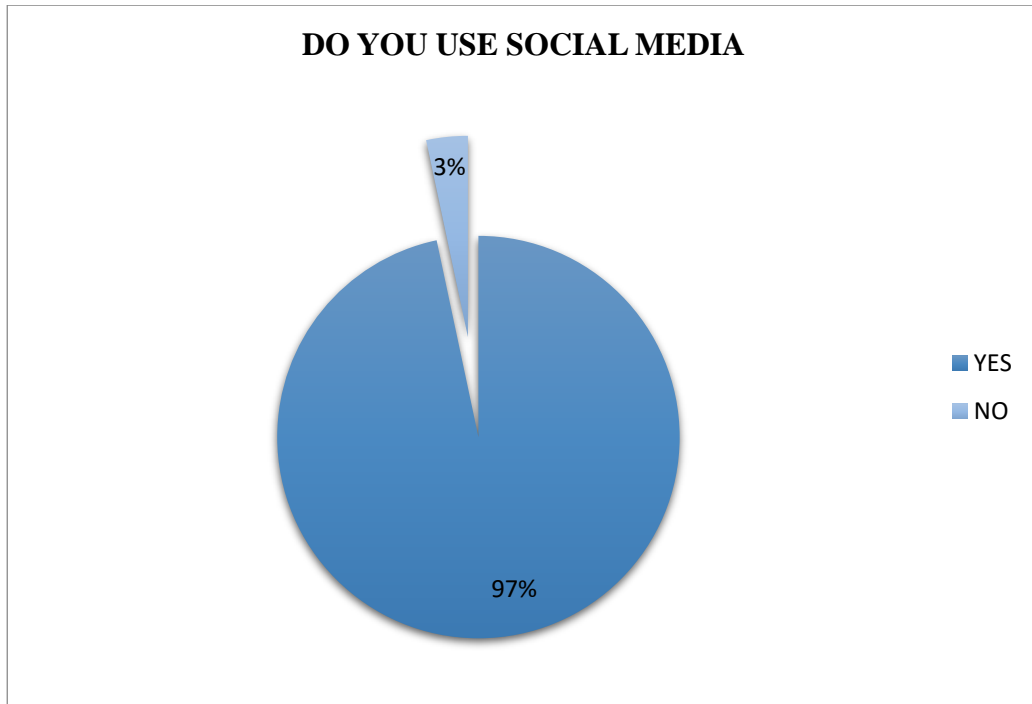


*Illustration 4.2.4 marital status*

Illustration 4.2.4 shows the marital status of the respondents. 85% of the respondents are married and only 8% shows the response of unmarried. Other 7% respondents are come to the category of separated or divorced.

#### 4.2.5 Use of Social Media

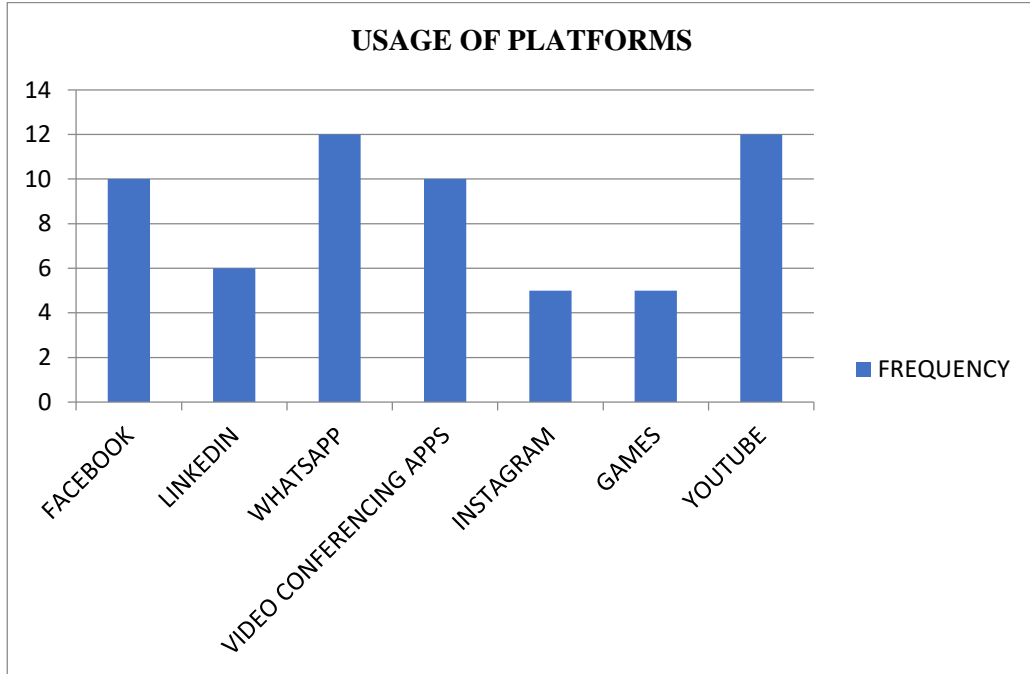
Illustration 4.2.5 depicts the response of question – Do you use social media platforms.



*Illustration 4.2.5 social media usage*

Illustration shows that 97% of the respondents use social media platforms and only 3% were not using these platforms.

#### 4.2.6 Usage of social media platforms

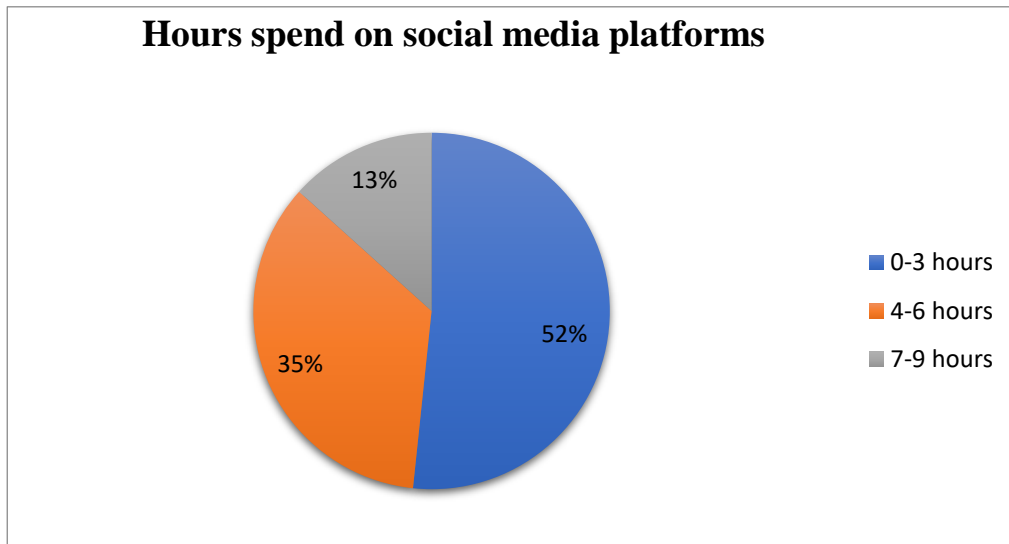


*Illustration 4.2.6 social media platforms*

Illustration 4.2.6 depicts the usage of various social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, Video conferencing apps, Instagram, Games, Youtue and others. From the 60 respondent researchers interpret that use of Youtube and Whatsapp has more influence among middle aged individuals.



#### 4.2.7 Hours spend on social media platforms



*Illustration 4.2.7 hours spend on social media platforms*

Illustration 4.2.7 depicts the hours spend on social media platforms. From this pie chart understands that 52% of the respondents use/ active in social media between 0-3 hours and 35% of the respondents stay in social media around 4-6 hours and only 13% of respondents are active during 7-9 hours.

### 4.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

To identify the frequency and pattern of social media usage among middle aged individuals researcher applied the scale Social Networking Addiction scale by M.G Shahnawaz and Usama Rehman. This scale helps to know whether the respondent's is addicted to social media platform or not.

#### 4.3.1 Social Networking Addiction scale

This scale is used to measure the social media addiction among middle aged individuals. On the basis of this scale there are 21 questions present and its has certain dimensions such as salience, tolerance, withdrawal, relapse, conflict and mood modification. It's a Liker scale of 7 such as Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat disagree, neither agree or nor disagree, somewhat agree, Agree, Strongly agree. Range between 21-80 shows not addicted and above 80 shows addiction.

Social Networking Addiction scale

	Frequency	Percentage
Not Addicted	13	21.7%
Addicted	47	78.3%
Total	100	100%

Table 4.2.2 social networking addiction scale

Table 4.2.2 depicts the usage and frequency of social media platforms. This table clearly shows that 78.3% of the respondents are addicted to these platforms and depend on it. Only 21.7% of the respondents are not addicted to the social media.

#### **4.4 MENTAL HEALTH OF MIDDLE AGED INDIVIDUALS**

To examine the mental health of middle aged individual's researcher applied the scale DASS-21. This scale helps to know the respondent mental health by measuring depression, anxiety and stress.

##### **4.4.1 DASS -21**

This scale is used to measure the mental health of middle aged individuals. On the basis of this scale there are 21 questions present and it has three dimensions such as Depression, Anxiety and Stress. Respondent should pick the number 0, 1, 2 or 3 which indicates how much the statement applied to you over the past week. 0- Did not apply to me at all, 1- Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time, 2-Applied to me to a considerable degree or a good part of time, 3- Applied to me very much or most of the time end too much time on any statement.

DEPRESSION

	Frequency	Percentage
Normal	13	21.7%
Mild	3	5.0%
Moderate	43	71.7%
Severe	1	1.7
Total	60	100%

*Table 4.2.3 depression among middle aged individuals*

Table 4.2.3 which depicts the results of depression in middle aged individuals. Table represents frequency and percentage of the response. 71.7% of the respondents face moderate depression and 21.7% were at normal rate. 5% of them have mild depression and only 1% of respondents face severe depression.

ANXIETY

	Frequency	Percentage
Normal anxiety	9	15%
Mild anxiety	6	10%
Moderate anxiety	10	16.7%
Severe anxiety	34	56.7%
Extremely severe anxiety	1	1.7%
Total	60	100%

*Table 4.2.4 anxiety among middle aged individuals*

Table 4.2.4 which depicts the results of anxiety in middle aged individuals. Table represents frequency and percentage of the response. 56.7% of the individuals faced severe anxiety and 16.7% have moderate anxiety. 15% of the respondent's anxiety rate is normal and 10% have mild. Only 1.7% has extremely severe anxiety.

STRESS

	Frequency	Percentage
Normal stress	25	41.7%
Mild stress	28	46.7%
Moderate stress	7	11.7%
Total	60	100%

*Table 4.2.5 stress among middle aged individuals*

Table 4.2.5 which depicts the results of stress in middle aged individuals. Table represents frequency and percentage of the response. 46.7% of the individuals faced mild stress and 41.7% have normal stress only 11.7% have moderate anxiety.

**4.5 MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

One of specific objective of researcher is to investigate the relationship between social media usage and mental health among middle aged individuals and how the social media influence the mental health of the individuals. Researcher conducts correlation of data with mental health and social media.

#### 4.5.1 Depression with social media

##### Correlation

Relationship	Pearson's correlation	Significance (2- tailed)
Social networking addiction depression	.619**	.000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Table 4.2.6 correlation between depression and social media*

Table 4.2.6 depicts the result of the correlation between depression and social media shows positive relationship.  $r = .619$  and significance of correlation at the .000 level (2-tailed). It indicates that there is a significant relationship between depression and social media.

#### 4.5.2 Anxiety with social media

##### Correlation

Relationship	Pearson's correlation	Significance(2-tailed)
Social networking Anxiety addiction	.519**	.000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Table 4.2.7 correlation between anxiety and social media*

Table 4.2.7 depicts the result of the correlation between anxiety and social media shows positive relationship.  $r = .519$  and significance of correlation at the .000 level (2-tailed).

It indicates that there is a significant relationship between anxiety and social media.



### 4.5.3 Relationship between stress and social media

#### Correlation

Relationship		Pearson's correlation	Significance(2-tailed)
Social networking addiction	Stress	.431	.001

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Table 4.2.8 correlation between stress and social media*

Table 4.2.8 depicts the result of the correlation between stress and social media shows positive relationship.  $r = .431$  and significance of correlation at the .000 level (2-tailed). It indicates that there is a significant relationship between stress and social media.

### 4.6 FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND SOCIALMEDIA

One of specific objective of researcher is to investigate the relationship between social media usage and family functioning among middle aged individuals and how the social media affects the family functioning of the individuals. . Researcher conducts correlation of data with family functioning and social media.

## Correlation

Relationship	Pearson's correlation	Significance(2-tailed)
Social networking Family functioning addiction	.140	.287

*Table 4.2.9 correlation between family functioning and social media*

Table 4.2.9 shows negative correlation between social media addiction and family functioning as the value is greater than 0.05. It indicates that there is no significance between social media and family functioning.

**4.7 T-TEST BETWEEN SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND KEY VARIABLE**

**4.7.1 Independent t-test between gender and social media addiction**

	mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	1.8529	.35949	.06165		-.05376	.37503	1.500	58	.139
2	1.6923	.47068	.09231		-.06288	.38415	1.447	45.430	.155

*Table 4.7.1 T-test between gender and social media addiction*

Table 4.7.1 depicts the t- between socio demographic variables and social media addiction. It clearly explains that sig. (2-tailed) is larger than 0.05 . it indicates that Equal variance is assumed.

**4.7.2 Independent t-test between gender and mental health**

	mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
1	7.7059	2.30322	.39500	-.63164	1.88956	.999	58	.322
2	7.0769	2.56005	.50207	-.65366	1.91158	.985	50.786	.330

*Table 4.7.2 T-Test of gender and mental health*

Table 4.7.2 depicts the t- between socio demographic variables and social media and mental health. It clearly explains that sig.(2-tailed) is larger than 0.05 . it indicates that Equal variance is assumed.

**4.7.3 Independent t-test between gender and family functioning**

	mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	31.2941	3.334419	.57352	.11790	3.85495	2.128	58	.038	
2	29.3077	3.87576	.76010	.07333	3.89952	2.086	49.481	.042	

*Table 4.7.3 T-Test of gender and family functioning*

Table 4.7.3 depicts the t- between socio demographic variables and social media and social media addiction. It clearly explains that sig.(2-tailed) is less than 0.05 . it indicates that Equal variance is not assumed

**CHAPTER 5**  
**FINDINGS,**  
**RECOMMENDATI**  
**ONS &**  
**IMPLICATIONS**  
**FOR**  
**PROFESSIONAL**  
**SOCIAL WORK**  
**PRACTICE**

## **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explains about the main findings, recommendations and implication of professional social work practice put forward by the researcher. Here explains major findings of the study related with specific as well as general objective of the study and also further recommendation for the study.

## **5.2 FINDINGS**

### **5.2.1 Major findings related to socio demographic details**

- The respondents were middle aged individuals of Ernakulam district. On the basis of their age category from middle aged individuals 25% of the respondent's belongs to the category of 40-44 and 55-60.
- 57% of the respondents were females and 43% of males out of 100%. From this it understood the female respondents are most engaged in social media platforms than male respondents.
- It is concluded that majority of the respondents are highly educated. 32% of them have higher secondary graduation and 23% have high school level education. Found that 27% have a bachelor's degree and 17% have post graduation. Only 1% person who have PHD/M Phil.
- Out of 100% respondents 85% of the respondents are married and only 8% shows the response of unmarried. Married individuals are more engage in these platforms
- 97% of the respondents use social media platforms and only 3% were not using these platforms. Most of them are use social media platforms for various purposes.

- Usage of social media platforms is increased day by day .various platforms were Facebook, Linkedin, and Whatsapp, Video conferencing apps, Instagram, Games, Youtue and others. Middle aged adults used apps for learning new knowledge, finding job opportunities, face to face interactions, for relaxation and entertainment. From the 60 respondent researchers interpret that use of Youtube and Whatsapp has more influence among middle aged individuals.
- 52% of the respondents are active in social media between 0-3 hours and 35% of the respondents stay in social media around 4-6 hours and only 13% of respondents are active during 7-9 hours.

### **5.2.2 Major findings related to the key variables**

- By using Social Networking Addiction scale with 21 questionnaire researcher finds the usage and frequency of social media platforms. According to this scale 78.3% of the respondents are addicted to these platforms. Only 21.7% of the respondents are not addicted to the social media. From this researcher finds that majority of the respondents are addicted.
- It is found that 71.7% of the respondents face moderate depression, 56.7% of the respondents face severe anxiety, 46.7% of the individuals faced mild stress.
- The relationship between social media and mental health shows positive correlation and indicates significance.
- The influence of social media on family functioning shows negative correlation and indicates that there is no significance.
- By conducting T-test between gender of the respondent and mental health of the respondent. It shows that Equal variance is assumed.



- T-test between gender and social media addiction of respondent shows that equal variance is assumed.
- T – Test between gender and family functioning of respondent shows that equal variance is not assumed.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following suggestions and recommendations are made, based on the major findings of the study.

- Awareness regarding the social media influence on mental health and family functioning among middle aged individuals is very less in the local scenario. Thus, there is also a lack of indigenous literature on the topic. The researcher would like to recommend that there would be more local policies, programs and practices related to the topic in the Indian context as it is gaining more significance.
- Recognizing the potential effects of social media on mental health and family dynamics can lead to increased awareness among individuals, families, and communities. This awareness can pave the way for education initiatives, workshops, and resources that provide practical strategies for healthy social media use.
- Mental health professionals can play a crucial role in addressing the challenges associated with social media usage.
- Employers may consider implementing policies or guidelines related to social media use during work hours to promote productivity and minimize distractions.
- Communities, schools, and organizations can collaborate to create safe and supportive environments for middle-aged individuals. This can include organizing educational workshops, support groups, and community events that address the challenges of social media use and promote well-being.

## **5.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

The following are the implication for professional social work practice:

- **Education and Awareness:** Social workers can play a crucial role in educating middle-aged individuals and families about the potential impacts of excessive social media usage on mental health and family dynamics. They can provide information on the risks, benefits, and strategies for responsible social media use.
- **Counselling and Support:** Social workers can offer individual and family counselling to help middle-aged individuals and their families cope with the effects of social media on mental health and family functioning. This can involve addressing issues such as addiction, social comparison, cyber bullying, and communication breakdowns within the family.
- **Advocacy and Policy:** Social workers can advocate for policies and regulations that promote responsible social media use and protect the well-being of middle-aged individuals and their families. They can collaborate with other professionals, organizations, and policymakers to raise awareness, develop guidelines, and implement interventions that address the challenges posed by social media.
- **Community Engagement:** Social workers can facilitate community support groups or workshops to bring together middle-aged individuals and families facing similar challenges related to social media use. This can provide a safe space for sharing experiences, exchanging coping strategies, and building social connections offline.

- **Research and Evaluation:** Social workers can contribute to research efforts that explore the relationship between social media use, mental health, and family functioning among middle-aged individuals. By conducting studies and evaluating interventions, social workers can help generate evidence-based practices to guide their work and inform policy decisions.

Overall, social workers can play a vital role in supporting middle-aged individuals and families in navigating the complex interplay between social media usage, mental health, and family dynamics. By providing education, counselling, advocacy, and community engagement, they can help promote healthier digital habits and enhance overall well-being.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

After conducting a comprehensive study on body shaming and its psychological implications, several important conclusions have been drawn. The influence of social media usage on the mental health and family functioning of middle-aged individuals is a significant and complex issue. While social media offers various benefits, including connectivity and access to information, it also poses risks and challenges that can impact individuals and their families. Excessive social media use can contribute to mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. It can also disrupt family dynamics by affecting communication patterns, promoting social comparison, and increasing the potential for conflict. In this study gives findings that social media usage doesn't influence the family function. Relationship between social media usage and family functioning shows negative correlation. Middle-aged individuals, who may already be navigating various life transitions and responsibilities, can be particularly vulnerable to these effects. Social workers have a crucial role to play in addressing these challenges. Through education, counselling, advocacy, and community engagement, they can help middle-aged individuals and their families develop strategies to promote responsible social media use and enhance mental well-being. This includes providing support, facilitating open communication, promoting digital literacy, and advocating for policies that protect individuals and families in the digital age. The influence of social media usage on the mental health of middle-aged individuals is a topic of growing concern. While social media offers opportunities for connection, information sharing, and entertainment, it also presents risks and challenges that can impact mental well-being. Excessive use of social media has been associated with various mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, loneliness, and decreased self-esteem. Middle-aged individuals, in particular, may be susceptible

to these effects as they navigate the unique stressors and life transitions of this stage in life. The constant exposure to carefully curate images and posts on social media platforms can lead to social comparison and feelings of inadequacy. Middle-aged individuals may feel pressure to meet societal expectations and compare their lives with others, resulting in negative self-perception and a diminished sense of self-worth. Based on the study it indicates that the relationship between mental health and family functioning are positive correlated. Social media affects the mental health of middle aged individuals. Social workers have a significant role to play in addressing the impact of social media on mental health among middle-aged individuals. They can provide education and raise awareness about responsible social media use, help individuals develop coping strategies and resilience, and provide counselling to address the emotional challenges that arise from excessive social media use. Moreover, social workers can promote self-care practices, encourage offline connections and activities, and assist individuals in setting healthy boundaries with social media. By fostering a comprehensive approach that considers the individual's unique circumstances and needs, social workers can support middle-aged individuals in navigating the digital landscape while prioritizing their mental well-being.

.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. World Health Organization: WHO. (2022b). Mental health. *www.who.int*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>
2. World Health Organization: WHO. (2020). Depression. *www.who.int*. <https://www.who.int/india/health-topics/depression#:~:text=Depression%20is%20a%20common%20illness,for%20at%20least%20two%20weeks>.
3. *Stress*. (2022, June 17). <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/stress#:~:text=Stress%20can%20be%20defined%20as,and%20threats%20in%20our%20lives>.
4. World Health Organization: WHO. (2022a). Mental disorders. *www.who.int*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-disorders#:~:text=Anxiety%20disorders%20are%20characterised%20by,or%20significant%20impairment%20in%20functioning>.
5. phubbing. (2023). <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/phubbing>
6. Beyari, H. (2023). The Relationship between Social Media and the Increase in Mental Health Problems. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(3), 2383. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20032383>
7. Caldwell, S. (n.d.). *Uses and Gratifications Theory - Mass Communication Context*. <http://www.uky.edu/~drlane/capstone/mass/uses.htm#:~:text=Explanation%20of%20Theory%3A,oriented%20in%20their%20media%20use>.

8. Dollarhide, M. (2023). Social Media: Definition, Effects, and List of Top Apps. *Investopedia*. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-media.asp>
9. Ziaei, M., & Fischer, H. (2016). Emotion and Aging. In *Elsevier eBooks* (pp. 259–278). <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-800935-2.00013-0>
10. Ellemers, N. (2017, August 16). *Social identity theory | Definition, History, Examples, & Facts*. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-identity-theory>
11. Joiner, R., Cuprinskaite, J., Dapkeviciute, L., Johnson, H. L., Gavin, J., & Brosnan, M. (2016). Gender differences in response to Facebook status updates from same and opposite gender friends. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 58, 407–412. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.01.008>
12. Zhang, C., Wang, Y., Wang, J., & Liu, X. (2022). Does internet use promote mental health among middle-aged and older adults in China? *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.999498>
13. Zheng, Y., Zhou, Z., Liu, Q., Yang, X., & Fan, C. (2019). Perceived Stress and Life Satisfaction: A Multiple Mediation Model of Self-control and Rumination. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28(11), 3091–3097. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01486-6>
14. *What Is Depression?* (n.d.). <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/depression/what-is-depression>
15. Srivastava, K., Chaudhury, S., Prakash, J., & Dhamija, S. (2019). Social media and mental health challenges. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, 28(2), 155. [https://doi.org/10.4103/ipj.ipj\\_154\\_20](https://doi.org/10.4103/ipj.ipj_154_20)



16. Bashir, H., & Bhat, S. A. (2017). Effects of Social Media on Mental Health: A Review. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.25215/0403.134>
17. Procentese, F., Gatti, F., & Di Napoli, I. (2019). Families and Social Media Use: The Role of Parents' Perceptions about Social Media Impact on Family Systems in the Relationship between Family Collective Efficacy and Open Communication. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(24), 5006. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16245006>
18. Dharmaraj, B., & Ng, V. L. (2021). Psychosocial Outcomes After Pediatric Liver Transplantation. In *Elsevier eBooks* (pp. 420–430). <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-323-63671-1.00043-4>
19. Hayes, A. (2023). Descriptive Statistics: Definition, Overview, Types, Example. *Investopedia*. [https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/descriptive\\_statistic\\_s.asp](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/descriptive_statistic_s.asp)

## APPENDIX

### **Socio demographic questionnaire**

Name of respondent

Gender

Age

Education qualification

Marital status

Do you use social media

Most frequently used social media platforms

Time frame of usage

Hours spend on these apps

### **Questionnaires**

***To study the social media usage researcher adopt Social Networking Addiction scale by M.G Shahnawaz and Usama Rehman.***

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. The responses will be kept confidential. It is important that you try to answer as honestly as possible. Scale where

1. Strongly Disagree

2. Disagree

3. Somewhat disagree

*Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara, Kochi*

4. Neither agree or nor disagree

5. Somewhat agree

6. Agree

7. Strongly agree

## **Questions**

### Salience

1. While I work/study , my mind remains on social networking sites
2. I go to social networking sites instantly after waking up in the morning
3. I check for updates on social networking sites while studying/ working
4. I check my social networking account before starting any task or activity

### Mood modification

5. I go to social networking sites whenever I am upset
6. Social networking helps me lift my mood
7. I feel relaxed whenever I am on social networking sites

### Tolerance

8. These days I spend more and more time on social networking sites
9. When compared I spend more time on social networking sites now than I did in the past
10. I need to be on social networking sites for longer time than before to be satisfied

### Withdrawal

11. I feel sad when I am unable to log in to social networking sites
12. I become irritable whenever I cannot log into social networking sites
13. I feel frustrated when I cannot use social networking sites
14. I become restless when I do not get time for social networking

Conflict

15. I try to hide the time I spend on social networking
16. I need to lie to my parents and others when they ask about my social networking
17. I ignore my sleep because I have/ want to be on social networking sites

Relapse

18. I have failed to cut down the time I spend on social networking sites
19. I have tried to stop using social networking sites, but have failed
20. I am unable to cut down the time I spend on social networking sites
21. My repeated attempts to reduce the time I spend on social networking sites have failed

***To study the family functioning of middle aged adults using family functioning scale by MC-Master family functioning scale.***

Please circle the number (1-4) which indicates how much you agree or disagree with the 12 statements below concerning your partner or family

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree

3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree

### **Questions**

1. Planning family activities is difficult because we misunderstand each other
2. In times of crisis we can turn to each other for support
3. We cannot talk to each other about the sadness we feel
4. Individuals are accepted for what they are
5. We avoid discussing our fears and concerns
6. We can express feelings to each other
7. There are lots of bad feelings in the family
8. We feel accepted for what we are
9. Making decisions is a problem in our family
10. We are able to make decisions about how to solve problems
11. We do not get along well with each other
12. We confide in each other

***To study the mental health of middle aged adults using DASS-21 scale***

Please read each statement and circle a number 0, 1, 2 or 3 which indicates how much the statement applied to you over the past week. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not skip the rating scale is as follows:

0. Did not apply to me at all
1. Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time
2. Applied to me to a considerable degree or a good part of time
3. Applied to me very much or most of the time and too much time on any statement

**Questions**

1(s) I found it hard to wind down

2 (a) I was aware of dryness of my mouth

3 (d) I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all

4 (a) I experienced breathing difficulty (e.g. excessively rapid breathing,

Breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)

5 (d) I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things

6 (s) I tended to over-react to situations

7 (a) I experienced trembling (e.g. in the hands)

8 (s) I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy

9 (a) I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool

Of myself

10 (d) I felt that I had nothing to look forward to

11 (s) I found myself getting agitated

12 (s) I found it difficult to relax

13 (d) I felt down-hearted and blue

14 (s) I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I

Was doing

15 (a) I felt I was close to panic

16 (d) I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything

17 (d) I felt I wasn't worth much as a person

18 (s) I felt that I was rather touchy

19 (a) I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical

Exertion (e.g. sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)

20 (a) I felt scared without any good reason

21 (d) I felt that life was meaningless

