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SOCIAL MEDIA AND TEENAGERS: A STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

Social Media has become an inseparable component of our everyday existence. It is a forum with numerous pros and cons. Individuals from diverse age brackets employ social media. Every social media platform has its operational method and distinct data. They utilize social networking portals for diverse purposes. This study is conducted to know the knowledge of various social media platforms among the teenagers. It aims to examine the consciousness of teenagers regarding different social networking platforms and their utilization. It also assesses the influence of social media on their psychological well-being. Social media is a title that refers to all the websites and tools born and developed in the space created by modern media such as media networks, the Internet and mobile phones. The impact of emerging phenomena, such as social networks, on human health, especially mental health, is significant. Despite growing evidence about the impact of social media on teen mental health, there is little question about how teens themselves perceive social media specifically as a knowledge resource, or whether they consider social media more broadly.



Keywords: social media, Teenagers, Mental health, Social networking, Punjab.

Introduction

Social media is online communications that allow users to exchange information, thoughts, private messages, and other content (including videos), such as social networking and microblogging websites. Although the terms "social networking" and "social media" can be used interchangeably, social networking is typically understood to refer to people creating communities within those communities, whereas social media is mainly concerned with leveraging social networking sites and associated platforms to create an audience (Britannica, 2023).

Classmates.com and SixDegrees.com were the first businesses to develop social networks based on online technologies. Classmates.com, which was established in 1995, drew visitors to its website through an aggressive pop-up advertising strategy. It founded its social network on the connections that already existed between graduates of high school and college classes, military units, and companies (Britannica, 2023).

Mental health is a condition of mental wellness that helps individuals to manage life's stressors, realise their potential, study and work effectively, and give back to their communities. It is a crucial element of health and well-being that supports both our individual and group capacity to decide, form connections, and influence the world we live in. A core human right is access to mental health. Additionally, it is essential for socioeconomic, communal, and personal growth. The absence of mental diseases is only one aspect of mental wellness. It has variable degrees of difficulty and suffering, is experienced differently by each individual, and may have very diverse social and therapeutic implications. It occurs on a complicated continuum. Mental health issues include psychosocial issues and mental problems (WHO, June 2022).

Adolescents who utilize social media for more than three hours daily have a higher probability of reporting elevated levels of behaviours that could be red flags for mental health problems compared to teenagers who abstain from social media entirely, according to a fresh investigation by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The research, which was issued today in JAMA Psychiatry, scrutinized the length of time



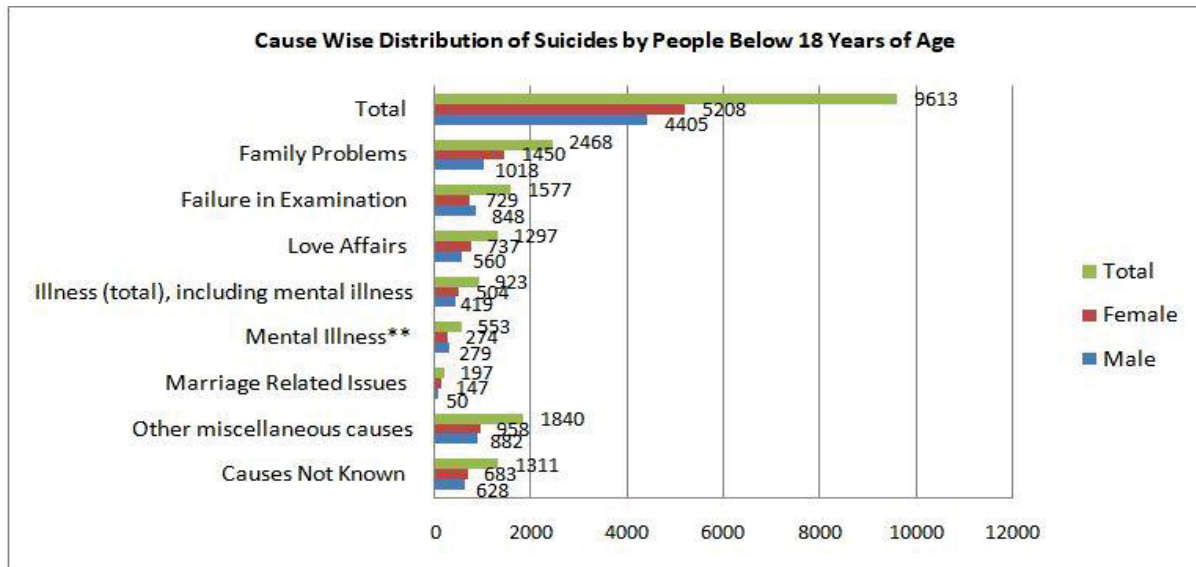
adolescents claimed to spend on social media and behaviours that can be indications of mental health problems: internalizing and externalizing. Internalizing behaviours can involve social withdrawal, directing feelings inward, or difficulty coping with anxiety or depression.

Externalizing behaviours can include aggression, acting out, disobeying, or other observable behaviours. Utilizing social media for any duration was linked to both an increased hazard of reporting internalizing problems alone and simultaneous symptoms of both internalizing and externalizing problems. The study discovered no significant correlation between social media use and externalizing problems alone. Adolescents who utilized social media for more than three hours a day had the most significant risk of reporting internalizing problems alone. (Hoffman, 2009).

A study published in 2017 by The Lancet estimated that one in seven Indians, about 197.3 million people, or 14.3% of the country's total population, suffers from a mental disorder. Since 1990, it has almost doubled, almost the same for men and women. NMHS estimates that approximately 9.8 million young people between the ages of 13 and 17 are in need of active mental health interventions, and that number is even greater when the entire age range of childhood and adolescence is considered. (Vijeta, 2021).

The information available on mental health is currently very inadequate, and interventions are fragmented and ridiculous, especially when it comes to mental health in children and adolescents. There are no strong national epidemiological studies. The National Mental Health Survey focuses primarily on the 13-17-year-old group. But when talking about children's mental health, the results of one study conducted solely to assess the prevalence of mental disorders in children and adolescents in the city of Bangalore better illustrate the context (Vijeta, 2021).

Figure 1: Cause Wise Distribution of Suicides by People Below 18 Years of Age

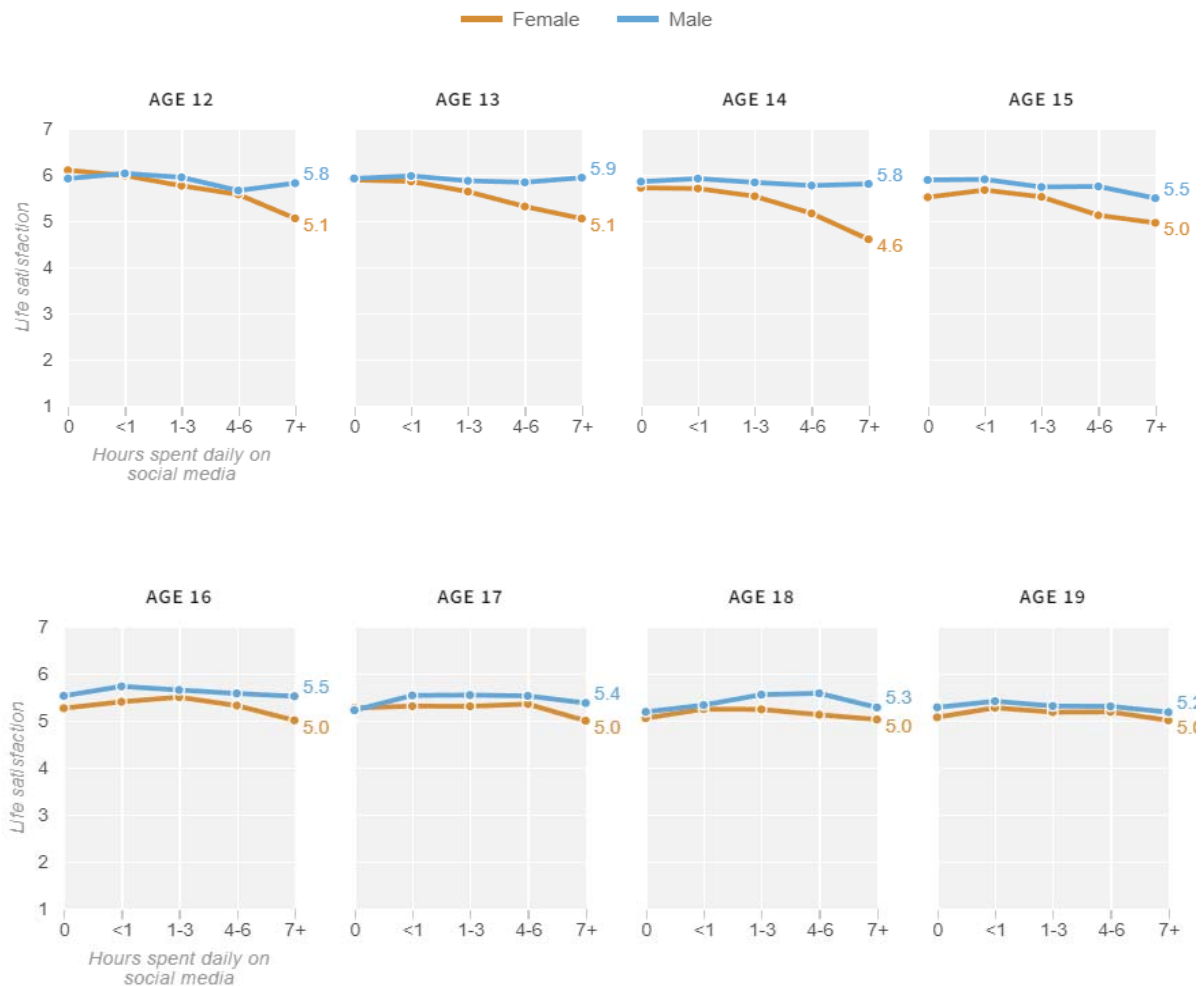


Source: Laxmi Vijeta (2021), *The Kids Aren't All Right: Mental Health And Indian Youth*, Youth Ki Awaaz

Children in India seem hesitant to seek mental health support, according to a survey conducted by UNICEF and Gallup in early 2021 of her 20,000 children and adults in 21 countries. Only 41% of young people aged 15 to 24 in India said they would be happy to receive support for mental health issues, compared to the 21-country average of 83% (Abraham B., 2021). Social Media is a technology with many great benefits. It allows people to share and connect, get news and information, and even meet new people. However, there are also downsides, especially for college-age youth who have grown up in a world of screens. Social media use is associated with depression, anxiety and loneliness. A recent study cited by the Child Minds Institute and the National Center for Health Research found that frequent social media users were more depressed and satisfied with their lives than those who spent more time in non-screen activities (Stabler Christine M., 2021).

Teen social media use and life satisfaction: An analysis of British survey data found a relationship between social media use and lower life satisfaction in certain age/gender groups — for example, among 12-to-14-year-old girls. Life satisfaction ratings are on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 meaning completely happy or satisfied. For social media use, respondents were asked about their habits on a typical weekday (Doucleff M., 2023).

Figure 2: Teen Social Media Use and Life Satisfaction



Source: [Nature Communications](#) (March 28, 2022)

Literature Review

Many recent studies have focused on the problem “Impact of Social Media on Teenagers Mental Health”. The following review of literature studied on this section.

Fersko (2018) in his article ‘Is social media bad for teens’ mental health?’ said that there are risks, but they can be avoided. He stated that Social media platforms have been deliberately designed to hold users' attention for as long as possible, exploiting psychological biases and vulnerabilities related to the desire for confirmation, and our fear of rejection. Excessively passive use of social media – just scrolling through posts – can be unhealthy and is linked to



feelings of jealousy, inferiority and less satisfaction with life. Study even suggested that it can lead to symptoms of ADHD (Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder), depression, anxiety, and sleep deprivation. While violence can be committed digitally, the consequences are tangible. Research shows that victims of cyberbullying are more likely to use alcohol and drugs and drop out of school than other students. They are also more likely to suffer from poor grades, low self-esteem and health problems. In extreme situation.

O'Reilly et al. (2019) explored their views on the value of social media for this purpose. Three themes were identified. First, social media seems to have the potential to promote positive mental health. Second, adolescents frequently use social media and the Internet to find information about mental health. Finally, there are benefits and challenges to using social media in this way. We conclude that despite the challenges and risks of using social media, social media provides a useful way to educate and reach young people to improve mental health.

Barry (2023); In her article 'Social Media Use Is Linked to Brain Changes in Teens, Research Finds, cyberbullying has led to suicide' published in New York Times, gave reference of study by neuroscientists at the University of North Carolina on successive brain scans of middle schoolers between the ages of 12 and 15, a period of especially rapid brain development. The researchers found that children who regularly checked their social media feeds around age 12 showed a distinct trajectory, with their sensitivity to social rewards from Friends increase over time. A team of researchers studied a group of 169 ethnically diverse 6th and 7th graders at a middle school in rural North Carolina, dividing them into groups based on the frequency of reported checking Facebook, Instagram and Facebook, Snapchat feeds.

Anderson M. (2018) et. al., studies on teens, social media & Technology 2018 gave report of Pew Research Center survey which states that smartphone ownership has become an almost universal part of teenagers' lives. 95% of teenagers say they have or have the right to use a smartphone. He also said Facebook is no longer the most popular social media platform for teenagers. About half (51%) of US teens ages 13 to 17 said they use Facebook, a percentage significantly lower than sharing using YouTube, Instagram or Snapchat. The survey also revealed that there is no clear consensus among teenagers about the impact of social media on



the lives of today's youth. A small number of adolescents described this effect as largely positive (31%) or largely negative (24%), but the vast majority (45%) stated that the effect was neither positive nor negative pole.

Boer et al. (2021) conducted a study emphasize the importance of treating social media usage intensity and social media user problems as two separate behaviours, as our findings suggest that the problems of social network users in particular are potentially dangerous for adolescent mental health. The opposite trend was not observed, suggesting that poor mental health does not lead to the development of problems when using social networks. In addition, problems with social media users have been found to increase social comparison and victimization, implying that adolescents have problems with social media users. with many adversities.

Fardouly et al. (2020) in their study finds that YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat users reported more body pictures dietary and pathological concerns than nonusers, but no difference in depression symptoms or social anxiety. Investing only seems to predict depression symptom. Comparison of physical appearance uniquely predicts all aspects of mental health; some associations are stronger for women than for men. Preteens can be encouraged to reduce their chances compare looks and invest less in their social media appearance. Preteens can benefit from social media intervention programs.

Parmar (2017) expressed that young people today spend between 12 and 15 hours per day, on average, on stimulating media, such as phones, computers, workstations, and TVs, in addition to other gadgets, in the 21st century. They use apps like WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other services.

Beeres et al. (2021) study finds that there is little evidence, nevertheless, that increased consumption over time is associated with mental health problems. Teenagers who use social media more often report showing greater symptoms of mental health issues. This suggests that rather than being a risk factor, social media may be a marker of mental illness.

According to this analysis by **Keles et al. (2020)**, there are likely several factors at play when it comes to how social media use affects teenagers' rates of depression, anxiety, and psychological distress. Differentiating between the phrases used to describe the relationship is



crucial. Given that this refers to a socially created reality, it is reasonable to state that there is a "association" between using social media and having mental health issues. But this is not always supported by science. Instead of accepting widely held beliefs as true, objective researchers look at correlations. Not phenomenal, correlation is a statistical concept. Third is causality, which calls for directed proof. Since the latter has not been sufficiently examined in regard to this issue, we must claim that the link is correlating but not necessarily causal.

In addition to more focused Social Media experiences relating to physical appearance, **Choukas et al. (2022)** find and elaborate on more general theoretical elements. The paradigm places a strong emphasis on investigating body image issues as the mechanism behind links between SM usage and concerns about teenage girls' mental health. By doing this, we open up a brand-new line of inquiry into the relationship between teenage girls' usage of social media and mental health and acknowledge the critical significance of body image.

Tibber et al. (2022) stated that whether you like it or not, social media (SM) and digital technology in general are here to stay and have completely changed both our lives and the lives of the patients we treat. We thus hope that this article will, at the absolute least, persuade the reader that careful attention to the online worlds of the young people we encounter therapeutically is necessary if we are to fully comprehend the whole range of the problems that young people face today.

Petropoulos et al. (2021) discovered that social media users may be assessed in a variety of ways, which when combined can produce a complex picture. It was discovered that, albeit subtle, relationships between social media users and mental health may be described by both linear and quadratic functions. In an effort to get a larger picture, our statistics indicate that social media users have both negative and positive effects. According to the research, time spent on social media was the most reliable indicator of a decline in mental health. At the same time, having plenty of mutual friends—both online and off—seems to improve mental wellness. The current findings highlight the necessity for variety in the assessment of social media users and have consequences for the degree, direction, and kind of correlation between various measures of social media users.



Objectives

- i. To study the awareness of teenagers about various social media sites and their use.
- ii. To explore the popularity of social media among teenagers.
- iii. To evaluate the impact of social media on the mental health of teenagers

Research Methodology

This research uses the quantitative survey method. The aim of the research was to find studies that examined the impact of social media on mental health. In this research both Primary and secondary data were used.

Primary data was collected from the questionnaire. A series of questionnaires were developed to elicit responses. A questionnaire was given to teens. Participants gave their opinions in response to several queries about their general social media usage. Closed questions are created according to the purpose of the research. These questions are often used in quantitative research because they help collect quantitative data.

There were two sections to the question. In the first, each person may select just one of the available alternatives, but in the second, each participant may select several options. Teenagers were given the opportunity online via multiple social media platforms; no specific social media platform was chosen. Teenagers without access to mobile devices were provided with a mobile to answer the questionnaire. Various questions were given to check their interest in social media, their purpose to use social media and state of their health. As the responses were collected online, there is no chance of biasness in the results. There are 36.4% responders belonged to age group 13-15, 36.4% between 16-17 and 27.3% are 18-19 age group.

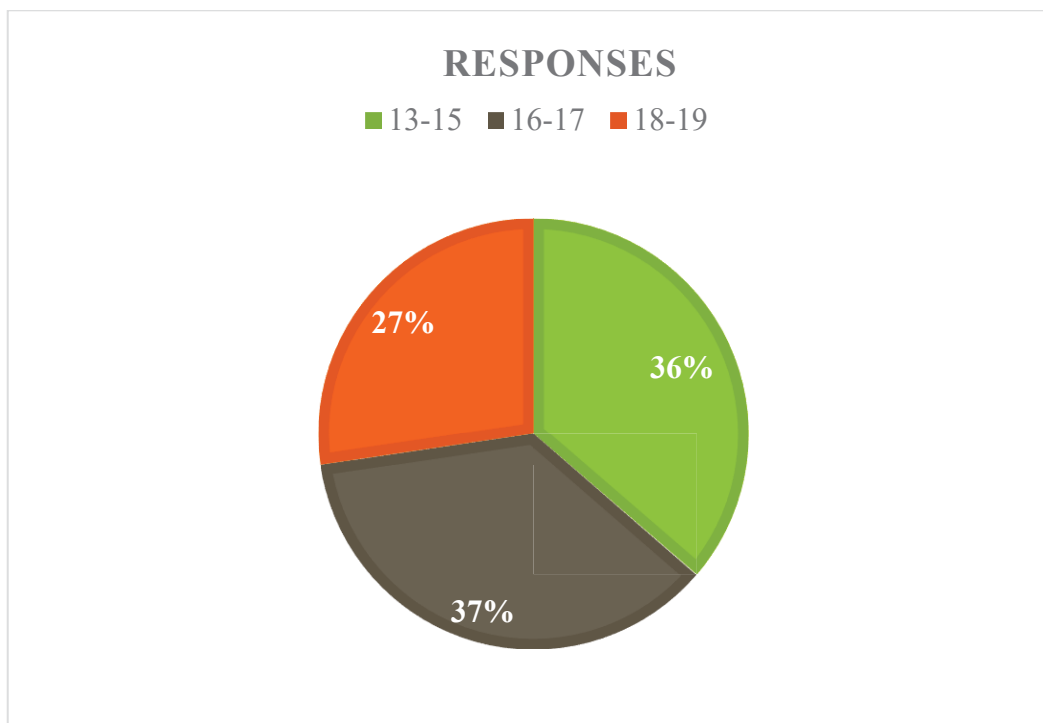
Secondary data was collected from previous researches from Google Scholar, newspaper articles, and journals. The primary database we utilised to discover the pertinent papers was Google Scholar. "Social media," "mental health," "social media" and "mental health," "social networking" and "mental health," social media and mental health" were the search terms utilised. Articles were sorted first by title and then by abstract. In the final stage of screening, the entire article was read and evaluated. The important information for research was



gathered. Eligible items have been merged. In the final stage, a conclusion was found from primary and secondary collected data.

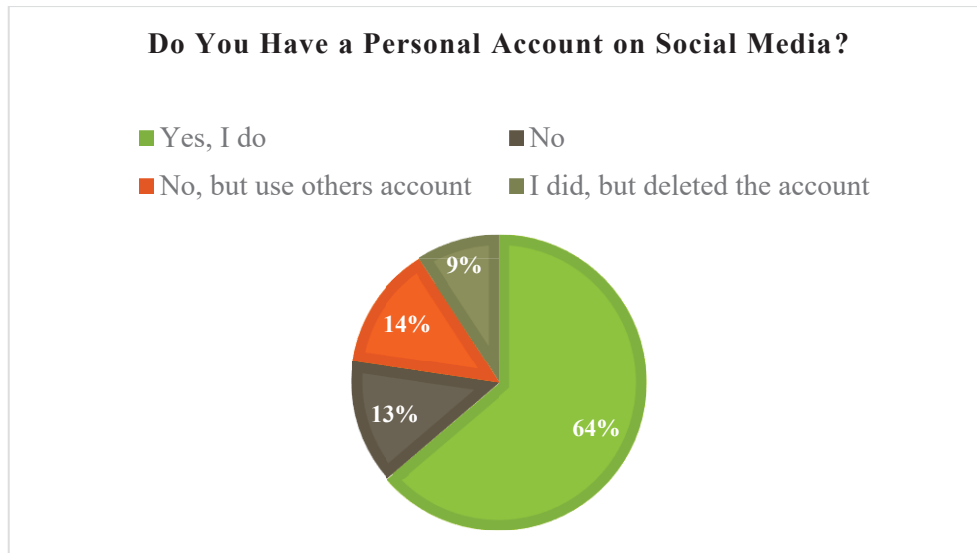
Data Analysis

Figure 3: The Age Category of Respondents



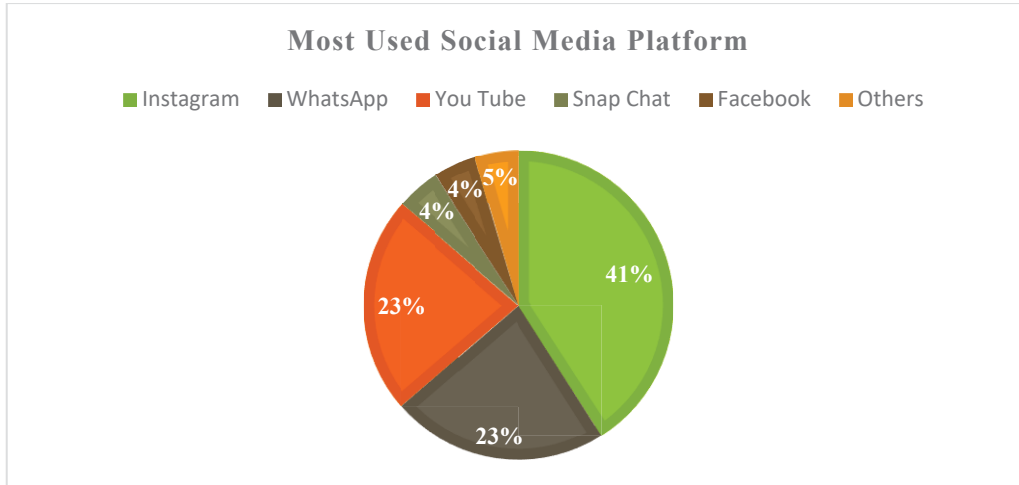
In this questions age of the responders was asked. Only teenagers were eligible to answer the questionnaire. There are three categories of teenagers who gave responses of the questionnaire. 36% responders are of age group 13-15 years. 37% responders are of age group 16-17 years. 27% responders are of age group 18-19 years.

Figure 4: Respondent responses about having a personal account on social media.



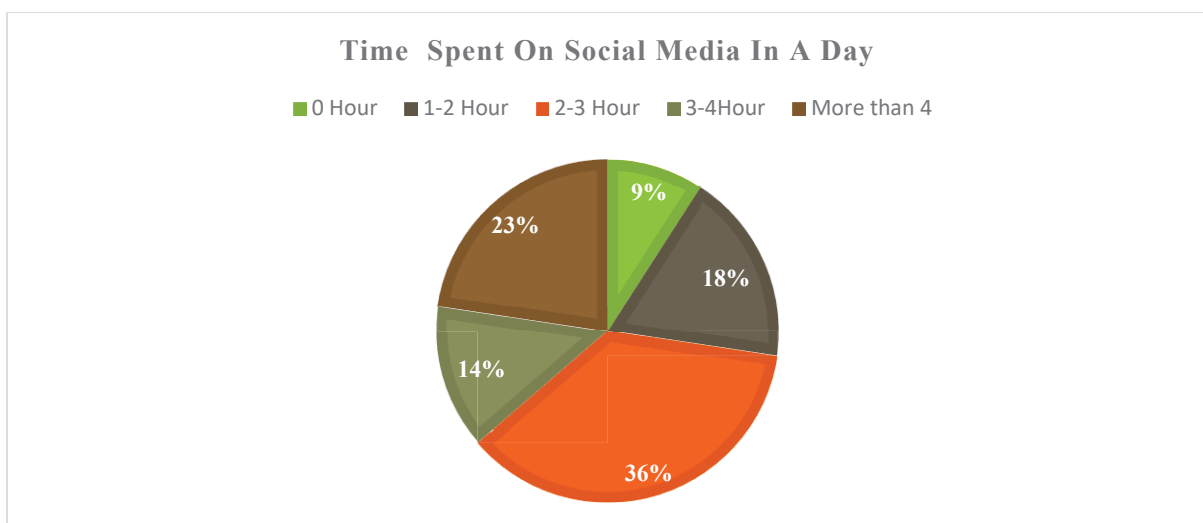
This question was given to check that how many teenagers are having their personal social media accounts. There are 64 percent teenagers who have their personal social media account. They use social media account for various purposes. 13 percent teenagers do not have any personal account on social media. It is because they do not have a personal mobile phone. 14% teenagers do not have their own social media account but use other's account. They do not have their personal account due to some reasons, not having personal mobile phone is one of them. But they use others account, they can be they can be their parents, friends or others. There are 9% teenagers who had their but deleted it. It is because of they found it as a addiction and a disturbance in their daily work. Most of the time they used to waste time on social media. So they deleted it to focus on their study.

Figure 5: Respondent responses about the most used social media platform.



This question was given to check that which social media platform teenagers mostly use. These responses are showing the popularity of different social media platforms among the teenagers. Instagram is the most popular media among the teenagers 41% teenagers uses Instagram the most. It grabs the attention of teens. It is a platform that is designed for the purpose of entertainment. You tube and WhatsApp has equal popularity among the teenagers 23%. 4% teenagers use Snap Chat the most. It is pltfm that allow you to share your present activity by sharing photos. 4% teenagers use Facebook the most. 5% teenagers use other Social Media Platform the most.

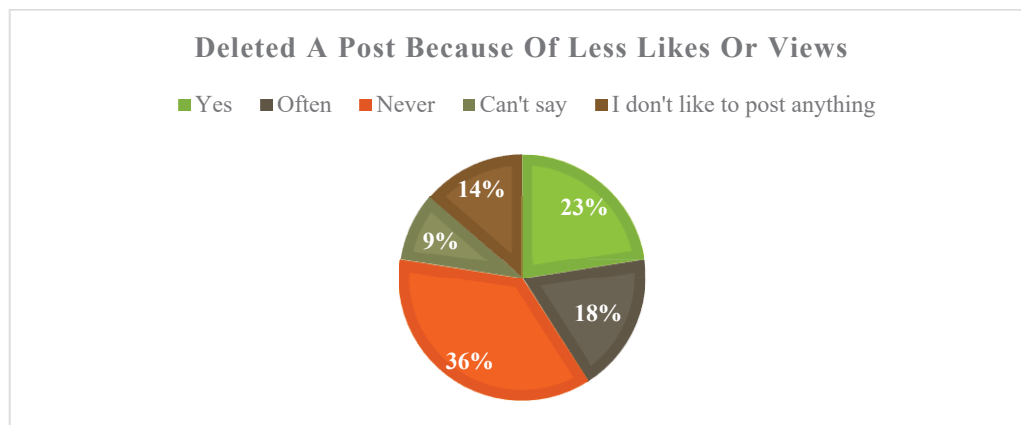
Figure 6: Respondent responses about spending time on social media in a day.





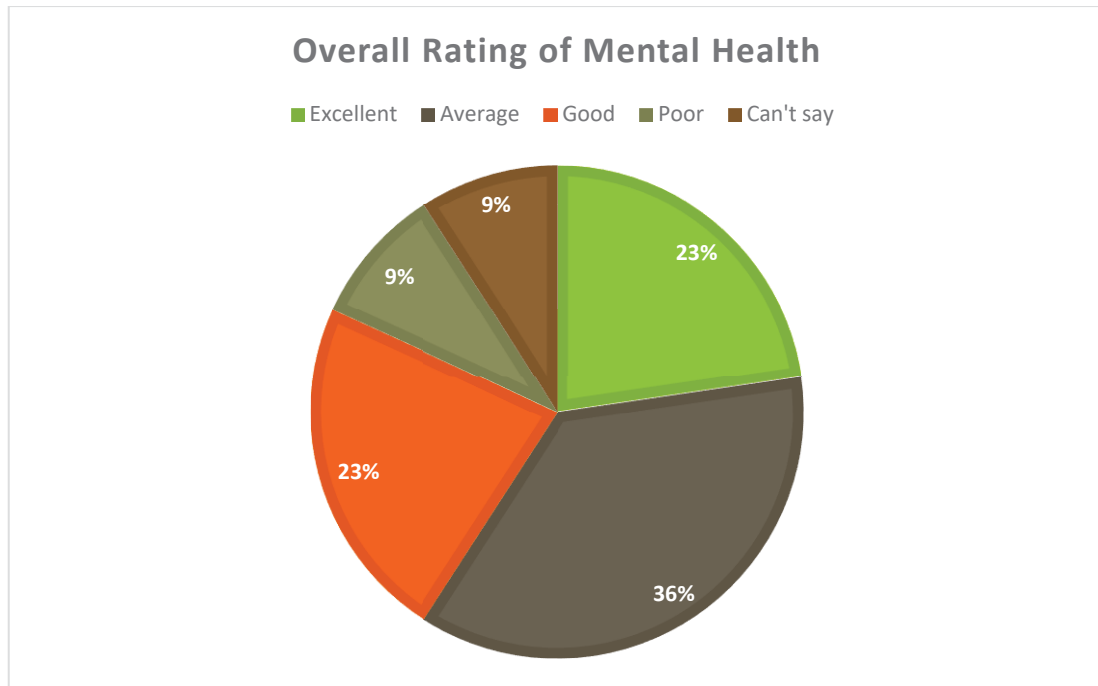
There are 36.40% teenagers are spending 2-3 Hours on social media in a day. They uses social media daily. 22.70% teenagers give more than 4 Hours to social media in a day. Most for the teens spent 5-6 hours on social media in a day. It has become a part of their life. They are addicted to them. 18% teenagers give 1-2 Hours to social media in a day. 13.60 % teenagers are spending 3-4 Hours on social media in a day. They are becoming addicted to them. 9.1% teens give less than 1 Hour to social media in a day.

Figure 7: Respondent responses about deleting post on social media because of less likes or views?



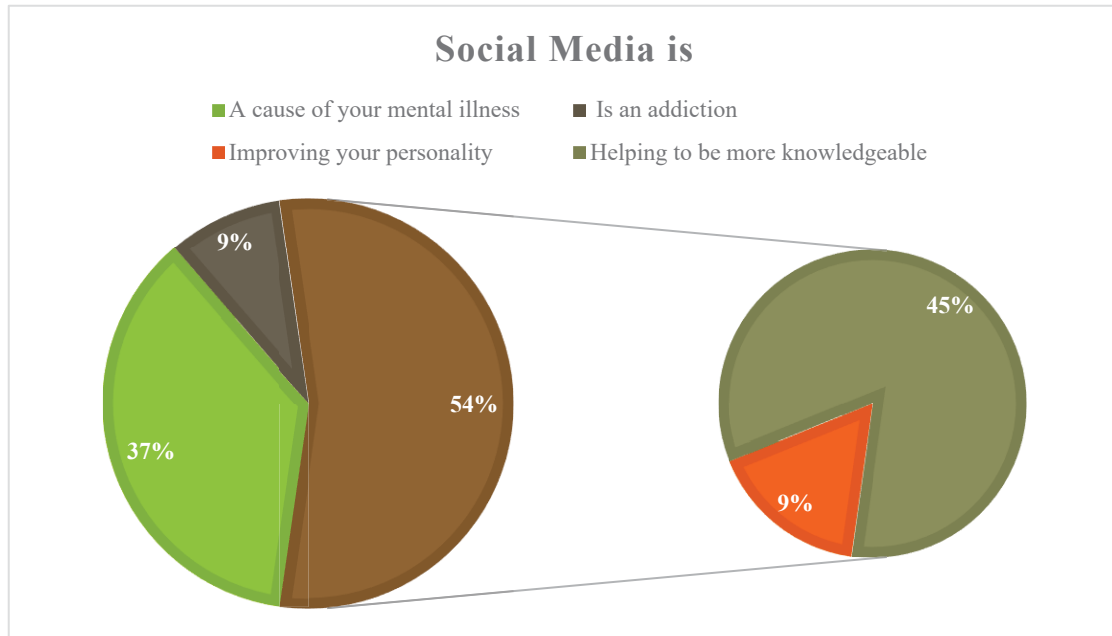
The result shows that 36.40% teens never deleted a post due to less likes or views. They sometimes, post on social media but do not care of likes or comments. The number of likes or views do not affect them. 23% teens accepted that they deleted a post from social media because of less likes or views. Because they want to have more likes and views. And even they make other account if they are not having enough likes or views. 18.20% teens often delete posts from social media because of less like or views. It is because the thinks that social media is a platform to be famous. And if they are not getting enough likes or views, they think that there is a problem in their content. There is a sign of jealousy, insecurity, tension also in finds them. 14% teenagers don't like to post on social media. They just like to watch others content rather than generating it. Some of them thinks that they are not good enough so that the people will like them. 9% teenagers said that they can't say whether they deleted or not. They are not comfortable to share their personal experience with social media.

Figure 8: Respondent rating on their own mental health.



The result shows that 36.4% Teenagers gave average scale to their mental health. Because they don't think that they are mentally in a good state as other teens are. 22.70 % Teenagers gave excellent to their mental health. They are good enough in solving problem and maintain relations with their parents and friends. 23% Teenagers said that their mental health is good. Because they doing good in activity. They can't say that they properly doing everything but they are good enough. 9.10 % Teens said that they have a poor mental health state. They use social media for a long time. But the reason is not only social media. 9% Teens can't say anything about their mental health state. They are not comfortable to share that what they think about their own mental health because they mostly judge them on the basis of others opinion.

Figure 9: Respondent responses about positive and negative impact of social media.

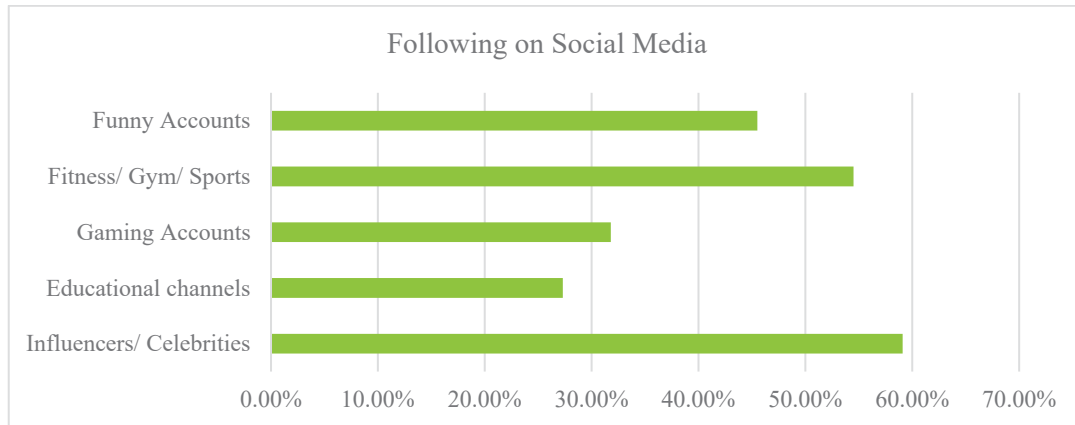


The result shows that 54% teens believe that social media is helpful for them. According to 45% teens social media is helpful to be more knowledgeable as they are getting new information from it. According to 9% teenager’s social media helps to improve individual’s personality as they came to know about latest fashion and trending.

There are 46% teens thinks that social media is not good for them. 37% teens said that it is a cause of mental illness. Some of them share their own experience and some of them finds it a reason of mental illness by seeing the other users of social media. 9% teens said that it is an addiction. Some of them share their own experience and some of them finds it a addiction in their friends and family members.

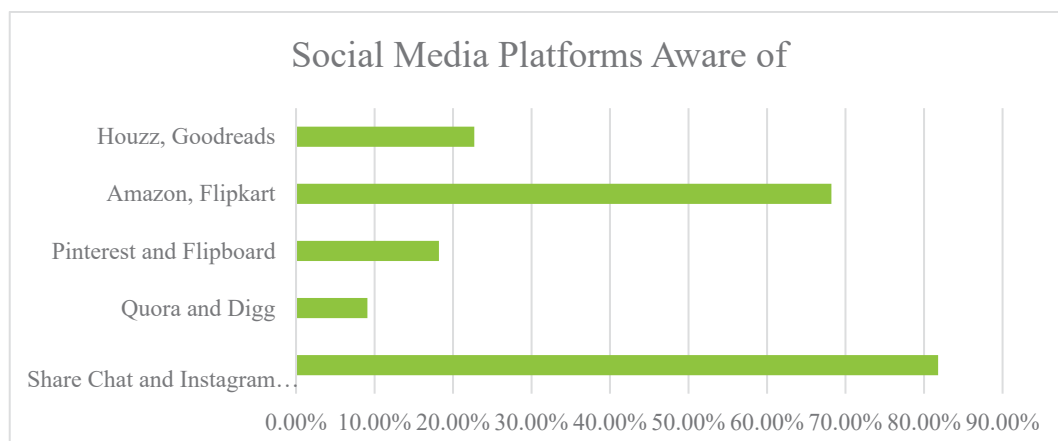
PART B

Figure 10: Respondent responses about following on your social media account instead of your family and friends?



The result shows that 59.10% teenagers follow Influencers or celebrities on social media. This is the highest popular channels among the teenagers. It is because they like their lifestyle and want to know what is going in their favourite celebrity's life. 54.50 % like to follow Fitness/Gym/Sports Channels. Because they are interested in sports or maintain good health. 45.50% like to follow Funny Accounts. They mainly use social media for entertainment purpose. There are 31.80% teenagers follows Online Gaming Channels. 27.30% teenagers follow educational channels on Social Media Platforms. They also watch other channels but prefer to watch it for education purpose as social media (mainly You Tube) is providing numerous ways and educators to understand a topic.

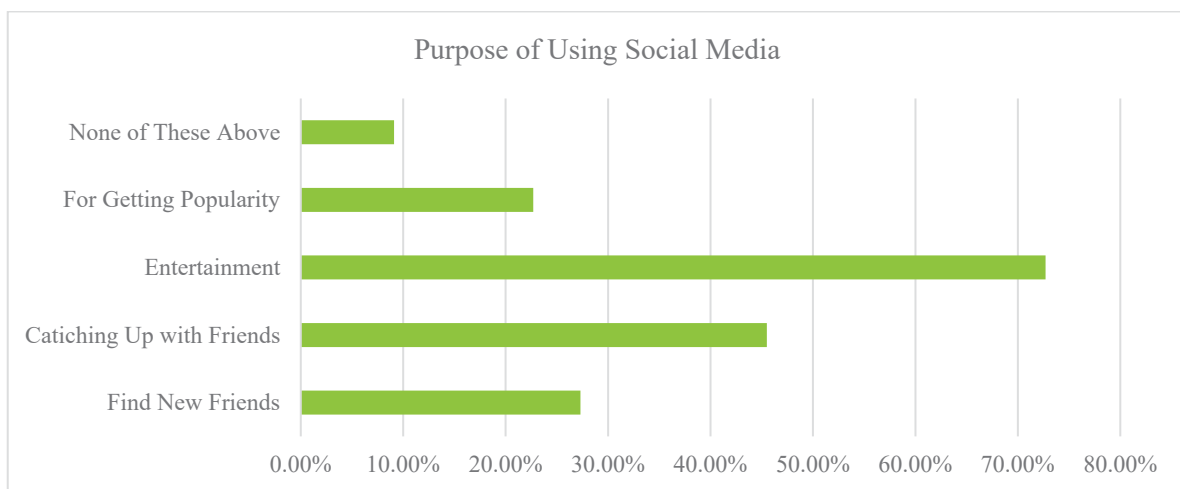
Figure 11: Respondent responses about awareness of various social media platforms.





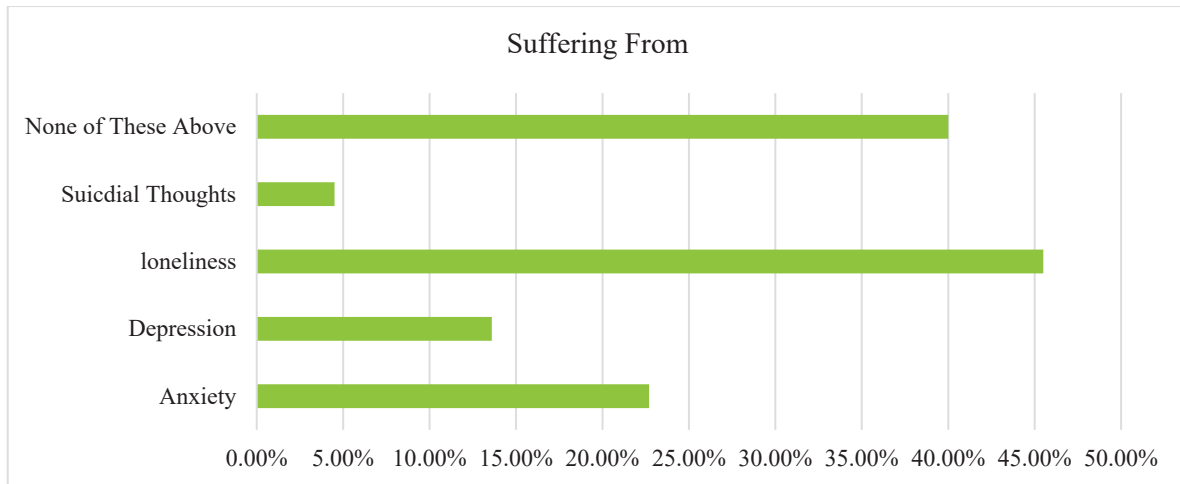
The result shows that 81.80% teenagers are aware of the use of Share Chat and Instagram. These types of social media platforms are used to locate and share online material, including live video, photos, and other types of information. 68.20 % teenagers are aware of the use of Amazon and Flipkart. These types of social media platforms are used for online shopping. 22.70% teenagers aware of Houzz and Goodreads. These types of social media platforms enable users to keep track of their reading and share their preferences with the world. 18.20% teenagers aware of Pinterest and Flipboard. These are used explore, store, distribute, and converse about fresh and popular material and multimedia. 9.10% teenagers are aware of Quora and Digg. These are used to discover, discuss, and exchange news, facts, and ideas. Most of the teens are not aware of the platforms that are giving them new information and promote creativity.

Figure 12: Respondent responses about purpose of using social media.



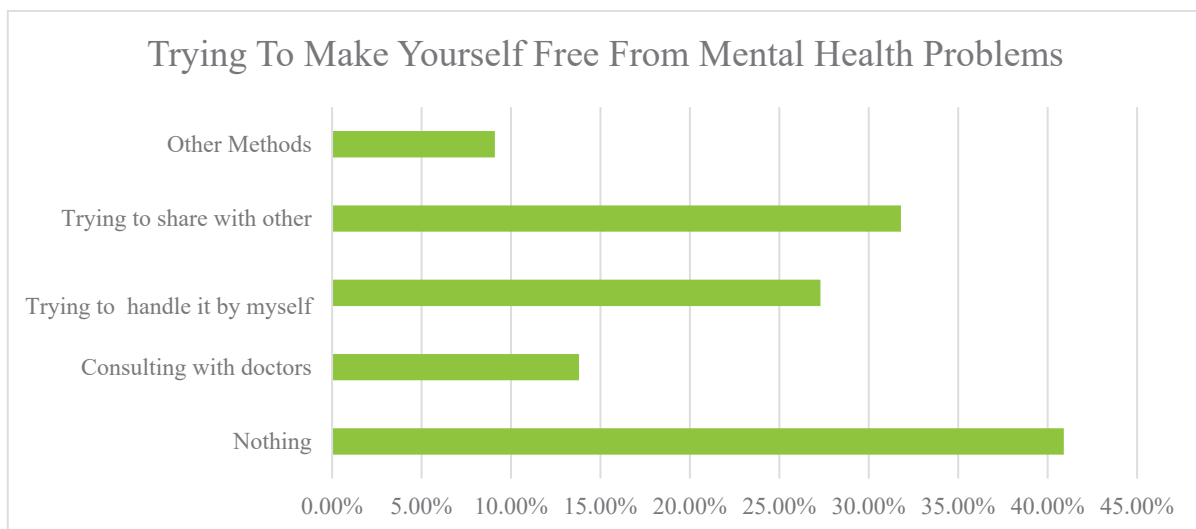
The result shows that 72.70% teenagers said that they use social media platforms for entertainment purpose. They think that social media is another name of entertainment. 45.50% teenagers use social media with a purpose of catching up with their friends. They like to share funny content with their friends. 27.30% teenagers use social media for finding new friends. They try to make online friends as they are feeling lonely. 22.70% % teenagers use social media with a purpose of being popular. They are influenced by social media influencer and want to be like them. 9.10 % teenagers have other reasons to use social media.

Figure 13: Respondent responses about suffering from mental illness.



The result shows that more than 50% of teens are feeling themselves mentally upset. 45.50% teenagers are suffering from loneliness. They feel alone and they usually use social media to find new friends. 22.7% Teenagers said that they are suffering from anxiety. 13.60 teenagers feel that they are having depression. 4.50 % teenagers having suicidal thoughts. 40 % teenagers are free from such kind of mental health issues. The problem of loneliness that produces depression and others mental illness issues in them.

Figure 14: Respondent responses about finding solution to make themselves free from mental illness.





The result shows that 40.90% teenagers do nothing to overcome mental health issues. Some of them don't think that it is a big issue. And don't think that it can be solve by anything. 31.80% teenagers share their problems with others to find a solution (their friends, family). 27.30% teenagers try to handle these issues by themselves. They think that it a natural process and a part of everyone's life and they are trying to solve it by themselves. 13.80% teenagers are consulting with doctors regarding their mental health issues. They are having counselling. 9.10% teens uses other methods to overcome their mental health issues.

Findings

- More than half the population of teenagers have a personal account on social media. Others if they do not have, they use others account like their parents or friends.
- About 75% of teens only know about the platforms that are designed for entertainment purpose.
- About half of the population of teens are influenced by Social Media influencers.
- Instagram, YouTube and WhatsApp are three highly used platforms by teens.
- About 50% teens are mentally upset. They are suffering from anxiety, depression or loneliness.
- About 40% teens thinks that social media is not good for them.

Conclusion

This research investigated the influence of social media on the mental well-being of adolescents. It shed light on the most frequently utilized social media platform among teenagers (Instagram) and the reasons behind their usage. The findings revealed that most teens employ social media for leisure purposes. However, the content they are exposed to has a detrimental effect on their mental health, resulting in feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety.

Additionally, the research underscored that most teenagers are unfamiliar with the diverse social media platforms available to them. They are only acquainted with those platforms that allow them to upload or view content for entertainment purposes.



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The investigation discovered that social media has a negative impact on teenagers, with those who spend more time on it experiencing more mental health issues. Adolescents themselves are aware of their deteriorating mental state and are attempting various methods to overcome it. Some teenagers are unaware of the reasons behind their declining mental health and feel addicted to social media.



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