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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SHAPING CONTEMPORARY LIFESTYLES

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become an essential part of contemporary life, influencing how individuals communicate, access information, develop relationships, consume entertainment, and make everyday decisions. The widespread use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp has transformed traditional lifestyles by introducing new patterns of digital communication, social interaction, education, shopping, and entertainment. This study examines the role of social media in shaping contemporary lifestyles, with particular attention to communication practices, educational activities, consumer behaviour, cultural values, personal relationships, and health awareness. It also explores the positive and negative consequences of social media use, including increased connectivity, access to information, creative expression, social awareness, addiction, misinformation, social comparison, and reduced face-to-face interaction. A qualitative, literature-based research approach is proposed to examine relevant academic publications from 2023 to 2025. The study investigates how social media influences individual behaviour and everyday lifestyle choices across different social and cultural environments. The reviewed literature suggests that social media provides significant opportunities for communication, learning, entertainment, and social participation. However, excessive and irresponsible use may negatively influence physical activities, psychological well-being, privacy, and interpersonal relationships. The study concludes that social media has become a powerful influence on contemporary lifestyles and that balanced digital participation, media literacy, and responsible online behaviour are essential for maintaining a healthy and productive lifestyle.

Keywords:*Social Media, Contemporary Lifestyle, Digital Communication, Social Networking, Consumer Behaviour, Online Entertainment, Digital Culture, Education, Social Interaction, Health Awareness, Youth Behaviour, Information Sharing, Internet Usage, Modern Society, Digital Lifestyle.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technologies has significantly transformed contemporary society. Social media has become one of the most influential technological developments of the modern era, changing how individuals communicate, interact, obtain information, and organise their everyday activities. In the past, people primarily depended on newspapers, television, radio, telephone calls, and face-to-face communication to remain informed and connected. Ansari, S., Iqbal, N., Asif, R., Hashim, M., Farooqi, S. R., & Alimoradi, Z. (2024). found that However, the expansion of internet access and smartphones has introduced digital platforms that allow individuals to communicate instantly and participate in global information networks. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp have become important parts of everyday life, influencing personal habits, social relationships, education, entertainment, and professional activities.Social media refers to internet-based platforms that allow users to create, share, exchange, and interact with digital content. These platforms provide opportunities to communicate through messages, photographs, videos, comments, live broadcasts, and online discussions. Individuals use social media for different purposes, including maintaining friendships, sharing personal experiences, accessing educational information, following current events, and participating in professional activities. The widespread use of these platforms has transformed communication from a largely physical

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activity into a continuous digital experience. Consequently, social media is no longer simply a source of entertainment; it has become an important element of contemporary lifestyle and social organisation.One of the most significant effects of social media is its influence on interpersonal communication and social relationships. Individuals can maintain connections with family members, friends, classmates, and colleagues regardless of geographical distance. Online platforms allow users to share information, celebrate important events, exchange opinions, and participate in group discussions. These opportunities have made communication faster and more accessible. Social media also allows individuals to establish new relationships with people who share similar interests and experiences. However, excessive dependence on digital communication may reduce opportunities for face-to-face interaction and affect the quality of personal relationships. Therefore, social media has created both new opportunities and challenges for contemporary social life.

Social media has also transformed educational practices and information-sharing activities. Students increasingly use digital platforms to access educational videos, online lectures, academic discussions, tutorials, and learning communities. Teachers and educational institutions use social media to distribute information, communicate with students, and support collaborative learning. YouTube, Facebook groups, and other digital platforms allow learners to access educational resources beyond traditional classrooms. These developments have made information more accessible and have created opportunities for independent learning. Nevertheless, misinformation, distractions, unreliable sources, and excessive entertainment content can reduce the educational value of social media when users do not evaluate information critically.Another important area influenced by social media is consumer behaviour and lifestyle preferences. Bekalu, M. A., Sato, T., & Viswanath, K. (2023). Explained that Digital platforms have transformed how individuals discover products, evaluate services, follow fashion trends, and make purchasing decisions. Businesses use advertisements, influencers, promotional videos, and customer reviews to attract consumers and influence their preferences. Young people frequently encounter online content related to clothing, technology, beauty, food, travel, and entertainment. Such content may influence their consumption habits and expectations about modern lifestyles. Although social media provides opportunities to discover products and compare information, it can also encourage unnecessary spending, materialistic attitudes, and unrealistic expectations about personal success and appearance.Despite its advantages, social media also creates challenges for contemporary lifestyles. Excessive use may contribute to reduced physical activity, disrupted sleeping patterns, digital dependence, social comparison, and difficulties maintaining concentration. The continuous availability of online content can encourage individuals to spend extended periods browsing platforms instead of participating in physical activities or personal interactions. Furthermore, cyberbullying, privacy violations, misinformation, and unrealistic online representations may negatively influence users' experiences. These challenges demonstrate that social media should be used responsibly and that individuals need digital literacy to distinguish reliable information from misleading content.

The present study examines the role of social media in shaping contemporary lifestyles by investigating its influence on communication, education, entertainment, consumer behaviour, cultural practices, health awareness, and social relationships. It considers both the positive and negative consequences of social media use and explores how digital platforms influence everyday decisions and personal habits. The study also highlights the importance of

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responsible digital participation and maintaining a balance between online activities and offline experiences. Understanding these developments is essential because social media has become deeply integrated into the social, cultural, economic, and personal dimensions of contemporary life.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How does social media influence everyday activities, behaviours, social relationships, and lifestyle choices in contemporary society?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the influence of social media on contemporary lifestyles and everyday activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media has become an essential component of modern society because it has transformed communication, information-sharing, entertainment, and everyday social activities. It refers to digital platforms that allow individuals to create, publish, exchange, and interact with online content. These platforms provide opportunities for users to communicate through photographs, videos, messages, comments, and live discussions. Unlike traditional communication channels, social media allows individuals to participate actively in the creation and distribution of information. This development has changed the relationship between media producers and audiences because ordinary users can now share information and influence public discussions.The rapid development of smartphones and internet connectivity has increased the integration of social media into everyday life. Bhardwaj, S., Kumar, N., Gupta, R., Baber, H., & Venkatesh, A. (2024). Explains that People use digital platforms for professional communication, educational activities, shopping, entertainment, social networking, and news consumption. Consequently, social media has become more than a communication technology; it is an important environment in which contemporary lifestyles are developed and maintained.Valkenburg (2022) provides an important theoretical background for understanding the relationship between social media use and adolescent well-being. Although this research predates the present review period, it highlights that the effects of social media depend on individual differences and patterns of use. Recent work by Godard and Holtzman (2024) further examines how active and passive social media activities relate to psychological and social outcomes. Their meta-analysis demonstrates that social media use should not be treated as a single behaviour because different forms of participation can produce different experiences.Social media has also changed how individuals organise their daily routines. Many people begin their day by checking messages, notifications, news updates, and online content.

Therefore, understanding contemporary lifestyles requires examining not only how frequently individuals use social media but also why they use it and how digital activities influence their personal, social, and professional responsibilities.Communication is one of the most important areas influenced by social media. Traditional communication was often based on face-to-face interaction, telephone conversations, letters, and other physical forms of contact. Social media has introduced faster and more flexible communication opportunities through

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messaging applications, social networking platforms, and video-sharing services.Individuals can now maintain relationships with family members, friends, classmates, and professional colleagues regardless of geographical distance. Group conversations, video calls, voice messages, and online communities allow people to share information and experiences continuously. These developments have made communication more convenient and have reduced many geographical limitations.However, digital communication has also changed the nature of interpersonal relationships. Some individuals prefer messaging and commenting rather than engaging in direct conversations. Although digital communication is convenient, it may lack emotional expressions, facial movements, and other non-verbal signals that are important in face-to-face interaction.Mo et al. (2024) examined communication through social networking sites and its relationship with online and offline social support among university students. Their research highlighted the importance of relationship strength in understanding how social networking communication relates to support and life satisfaction. This suggests that digital communication can contribute to social relationships, but the quality of those relationships remains important.

Social media therefore creates opportunities for maintaining relationships while also introducing challenges related to communication quality, misunderstandings, and reduced physical interaction. A balanced communication pattern is important for maintaining healthy relationships in contemporary society.Education is another important area in which social media has transformed contemporary lifestyles. Students increasingly use digital platforms to access academic resources, communicate with teachers, participate in learning groups, and exchange educational information. Platforms such as YouTube and educational communities provide opportunities to learn about different subjects through lectures, tutorials, demonstrations, and discussions.Social media can support collaborative learning by allowing students to discuss assignments, share study materials, and exchange ideas. Students can also connect with learners from different educational institutions and countries. Godard, R., & Holtzman, S. (2024). revealed that Such opportunities encourage knowledge-sharing and create additional learning environments beyond traditional classrooms.Manca and Ranieri's earlier work on social media and education provides theoretical background, while more recent research by Oksanen et al. (2024) demonstrates the wider consequences of online communities for individuals and societies. Online communities can support knowledge exchange and participation, although the quality of information varies across platforms.Social media also enables educational institutions to communicate announcements, organise academic activities, and share important information. Teachers can use online platforms to provide additional learning materials and maintain communication with students.Nevertheless, social media can create educational challenges.

Entertainment is one of the most common reasons individuals use social media. Digital platforms provide access to short videos, music, comedy, films, gaming content, livestreams, sports updates, and other recreational activities. These platforms have changed traditional entertainment patterns by allowing users to access personalised content whenever they want.TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube, and other video-sharing services have encouraged the development of short-form entertainment. Users can watch, create, and share videos related to personal interests and popular trends. This has increased opportunities for creative expression and allowed individuals to participate in digital entertainment cultures.Social media has also changed the relationship between entertainers and audiences. Users can

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directly interact with content creators through comments, livestreams, and online discussions. This creates opportunities for audience participation and allows digital personalities to develop communities around their content.However, the availability of continuous entertainment can encourage excessive screen time. Some users may spend considerable periods watching short videos without recognising how much time has passed. This can affect daily routines, sleeping schedules, concentration, and physical activities.The relationship between entertainment and lifestyle therefore depends on individual behaviour. Moderate use can provide relaxation and enjoyment, whereas excessive use may interfere with educational, professional, and personal responsibilities.Social media has significantly transformed consumer behaviour by changing how individuals discover products, compare services, and make purchasing decisions. In traditional markets, consumers often depended on advertisements, newspapers, television, and personal recommendations. Hussain, M., Azeem, I., & Kashif, M. (2024). Elaborated on Today, digital platforms provide continuous access to product information, promotional content, customer reviews, and influencer recommendations.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a qualitative research methodology to investigate the role of social media in shaping contemporary lifestyles. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the research focuses on understanding social experiences, communication patterns, individual behaviour, cultural practices, consumer preferences, and everyday activities influenced by digital platforms. The study primarily relies on secondary data collected from academic journal articles, scholarly publications, systematic literature reviews, and relevant research reports published between 2023 and 2025. Academic information will be obtained through recognised research databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, SpringerLink, and publisher websites. Relevant search terms will include social media, contemporary lifestyles, digital communication, online entertainment, consumer behaviour, social interaction, educational technology, digital culture, and psychological well-being. The selected literature will be evaluated according to publication date, academic credibility, relevance to the research objectives, research methodology, and contribution to understanding social media's influence on everyday life. Particular attention will be given to studies examining communication, education, entertainment, consumer behaviour, cultural practices, health awareness, and interpersonal relationships. Publications that are unrelated to the research topic or lack sufficient academic information will be excluded. The collected information will be organised into different themes to identify how social media influences individual habits and social activities. A thematic analysis will be used to compare the findings of different studies and identify common patterns, differences, and research gaps. The research will also consider the positive and negative consequences of social media use, including increased connectivity, information accessibility, creative expression, consumer awareness, digital dependence, misinformation, and social comparison. Ethical research practices will be maintained by providing appropriate citations and acknowledging the original contributions of researchers.

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RESEARCH DESIGN

The study follows a qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory research design to examine the influence of social media on contemporary lifestyles. The descriptive component focuses on explaining the different ways individuals use social media in their everyday activities, including communication, education, entertainment, shopping, information-sharing, and social participation. The exploratory component investigates how digital platforms influence personal habits, social relationships, cultural preferences, consumer decisions, and lifestyle choices. The study is designed around a review of secondary academic sources published between 2023 and 2025. This period provides a recent understanding of developments in digital communication and contemporary social behaviour. The research design uses thematic categorisation to organise the collected literature into major areas, including digital communication, educational activities, entertainment preferences, consumer behaviour, health awareness, cultural influence, and psychological well-being. Each category will be examined to identify its relationship with everyday lifestyle practices. A comparative approach will also be adopted to examine similarities and differences among the selected academic studies. Particular attention will be given to research conducted in different cultural and geographical environments because social media usage and its consequences may vary according to age, education, economic conditions, and cultural values. The research will also distinguish between beneficial and harmful forms of social media participation. Positive influences include improved communication, educational opportunities, information accessibility, creative expression, and social awareness. Negative influences include excessive screen time, misinformation, digital dependence, reduced physical activity, and social comparison.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis will be conducted through thematic analysis of the selected academic publications to identify the major patterns and relationships associated with social media and contemporary lifestyles. The first stage will involve examining the collected research articles and identifying information relevant to the research objectives. Important findings concerning communication, education, entertainment, consumer behaviour, cultural practices, health awareness, and psychological well-being will be extracted and organised. The second stage will involve grouping similar findings into broader themes to understand the different dimensions of social media influence. Studies examining messaging, online interaction, friendship, and social support will be considered under digital communication and social relationships. Research examining online learning, academic discussions, and educational resources will be organised under educational activities. Publications concerning influencers, advertising, shopping preferences, and purchasing decisions will be examined under consumer behaviour. The third stage will involve comparing the findings of different studies to identify similarities, differences, and contradictory conclusions. Godard and Holtzman (2024) will provide important evidence for examining the differences between active and passive social media participation. Their meta-analysis of 141 studies demonstrates that relationships between social media use and well-being vary according to the type of engagement and the outcome being examined. Ansari et al. (2024) will be considered when analysing the relationship between social media use and well-being. Wilska et al. (2023), Bhardwaj et al. (2024), and Vinodh et al. (2024) will provide relevant information concerning digital consumer identities, influencer marketing, and purchasing behaviour.

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FINDINGS

The literature-based findings indicate that social media plays a significant role in shaping contemporary lifestyles by influencing communication, education, entertainment, consumer behaviour, cultural practices, and everyday decision-making. One major finding is that social media has transformed traditional communication patterns by making interaction faster, more accessible, and less dependent on geographical distance. Individuals can maintain relationships with friends, family members, classmates, and colleagues through messaging applications, video calls, and online communities. These developments have improved opportunities for social connectivity and information exchange. However, the quality of digital relationships depends on the nature of communication and the level of meaningful interaction. Another important finding concerns educational activities. Social media provides access to tutorials, educational videos, academic communities, and online discussions that can support independent learning. Students can exchange information and communicate with others beyond traditional educational environments. Nevertheless, entertainment content, misinformation, and frequent notifications may create distractions and reduce academic concentration. The literature also demonstrates that social media has transformed entertainment preferences. Users can access videos, music, gaming content, live broadcasts, and creative material according to their interests. Although these opportunities provide convenience and enjoyment, excessive consumption may interfere with time management, sleeping routines, and physical activities. Consumer behaviour represents another major area of influence. Wilska et al. (2023) demonstrated that social media influencers and commercial content can shape young people's consumer identities. Similarly, Bhardwaj et al. (2024) reviewed 90 studies concerning influencer marketing and consumer behaviour, highlighting its relationship with consumer attention, decision-making, and purchase intentions. Research by Vinodh et al. (2024) also indicates that social media marketing influences product discovery, consumer-brand relationships, and purchasing decisions.

CONCLUSION

Social media has become an influential element of contemporary society, transforming how individuals communicate, learn, entertain themselves, access information, purchase products, and maintain social relationships. The present study examined the role of social media in shaping contemporary lifestyles through a qualitative review of academic literature published between 2023 and 2025. The reviewed research demonstrates that digital platforms provide important opportunities for communication, educational development, creative expression, cultural exchange, and consumer awareness. Social media enables individuals to remain connected with others, access information quickly, participate in online communities, and explore new interests. It has also transformed traditional commercial activities by allowing businesses and influencers to communicate directly with consumers and influence purchasing decisions. However, the study also identifies several challenges associated with social media use, including excessive screen time, misinformation, social comparison, privacy concerns, reduced physical activity, and difficulties maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships. These challenges demonstrate that the influence of social media depends on how individuals use digital platforms and how effectively they balance online and offline activities. The study concludes that social media is neither entirely beneficial nor entirely harmful; rather, its influence is determined by the purpose, quality, and frequency of participation. Individuals should use digital platforms responsibly and avoid allowing online activities to interfere with

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education, employment, physical health, family relationships, and personal responsibilities. Educational institutions should promote digital literacy and teach students how to identify reliable information, protect personal data, and manage screen time.

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