
1-20-2020

Impact of Social Media Addiction on Employees' Wellbeing and Work Productivity

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Recommended APA Citation

Priyadarshini, C., Dubey, R. K., Kumar, Y., & Jha, R. R. (2020). Impact of Social Media Addiction on Employees' Wellbeing and Work Productivity. *The Qualitative Report*, 25(1), 181-196. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4099>

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to gain insights into the experiences of employees regarding their social media usage and consequences of social media overuse at the workplace. Fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted, audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) procedures. The qualitative data was collected from the employees working in renowned IT/ITES companies in India. The themes that emerged are lack of sleep; backache and eye strain; feeling of envy; lack of depth in the relationships; tendency to seek approvals; not meeting deadlines; compromise with the work quality; distraction from work. The present study intends to assist human resource managers in designing appropriate policies and guidelines pertaining to employees' social media usage at the workplace.

Keywords

Social Media, Social Media Addiction, Employee Wellbeing, Work Productivity, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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Impact of a Social Media Addiction on Employees' Wellbeing and Work Productivity

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The objective of this study is to gain insights into the experiences of employees regarding their social media usage and consequences of social media overuse at the workplace. Fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted, audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) procedures. The qualitative data was collected from the employees working in renowned IT/ITES companies in India. The themes that emerged are lack of sleep; backache and eye strain; feeling of envy; lack of depth in the relationships; tendency to seek approvals; not meeting deadlines; compromise with the work quality; distraction from work. The present study intends to assist human resource managers in designing appropriate policies and guidelines pertaining to employees' social media usage at the workplace. Keywords: Social Media, Social Media Addiction, Employee Wellbeing, Work Productivity, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Introduction

Social media is a web-based platform that is used to build social networks and relations among people with similar backgrounds, interest, activities, and connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). The penetration of social media (Facebook, SnapChat, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram, etc.) is led by the rise in number of accessible devices such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets. These digital devices provide people with ample opportunities to communicate virtually, irrespective of temporal and spatial boundaries (Junco, 2012; Nadkarni & Hoffman, 2012; Powell, 2009). Social media generally allow users to communicate and share images and videos with others in their social network. Thus, the content of social media is predominantly user generated (Soliman, 2012), relationship-based (Buettner, 2016; Haddud, Dugger, & Gill, 2016), and professional and social community orientated (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). People of all ages across the globe take advantage of the opportunities offered by social media and spend considerable time on social media to connect with others (Schulze, Schöler, & Skiera, 2014). In this regard, a recent report by Digital Statshot (2015) noted that social media continues to grow swiftly around the globe, with active user accounts now equating to roughly 29% of the world's population. Number of

monthly active user for the most active social network in each country add up to almost 2.08 billion; a 12% increase since January 2014 (Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman, 2015). Further, in 2018, an estimated 2.65 billion people were using social media worldwide, and the number is projected to increase to almost 3.1 billion in 2021 (The Statistics Portal, 2019).

A survey of 3,000 university students across the US reported that 90% used Facebook while 37% used Twitter (Dahlstrom, de Boor, Grunwald, & Vokley, 2011). Other studies have noted that over-involvement with social media adversely impacts student academic performance (Al-Menayes, 2015; Skiera, Hinz, & Span, 2015). In this regard, most studies have found negative relationships between time spent on social media and student grade point averages (Junco, 2012). Similarly, the impact of social media on peoples' lives has been widely examined in the recent past (Greenhow and Burton, 2011; Ito, et al., 2009; Livingstone, 2009; Selwyn, 2007). However, social media may also impact employees at their workplace. Past studies noted that social media usage by employees lead to more satisfaction with their work environment and improved communication compared to employees who do not use social media (Bennett, Owers, Pitt, & Tucker, 2010; Koch, Gonzalez & Leidner, 2012; Patel & Jasani, 2010; Zhang et al., 2015).

Social media usage may also lead to negative workplace outcomes. For example, researchers have argued that employee productivity and engagement may be hindered through excessive use of social media at the workplace (Clark & Roberts, 2010), and may blur the boundaries between professional and personal spaces (Dutta, 2010). Researchers have also argued that addictive social media usage not only result in wastage of time, information overload, role conflict, privacy risk, lack of productivity and low performance, but it also potentially impacts the physical and mental well-being of the employees (D'Abate & Eddy 2007; Griffiths, Kuss, & Demetrovics, 2014; Moqbel, Nevo, & Kock, 2013; Nucleus 2009; O'Murchu, Breslin, & Decker, 2004; Rooksby, Kahn, Keen, & Sommerville, 2009; Ryan, Chester, Reece & Xenos, 2014; Shepherd, 2011). The impact of social media addiction on employees' Wellbeing and Work Productivity remains a relatively unexplored avenue of scholarly investigation (Aguenza, Al-Kassem, & Som, 2012; Bennett et al., 2010; Charoensukmongkol 2014; Moqbel, 2012; Moqbel & Nah, 2017). Therefore, the present study investigates the impact of social media addiction on employees' wellbeing and work productivity.

Literature Review

Social Media Addiction

Overusing social media has been proposed as a behavioral addiction recently due to the similarity it shares with other types of addiction, such as withdrawal, conflict, relapse, tolerance, and mood modification (Cao, Ajjan, Hong, & Le, 2018). Due to the advent of Wi-Fi connectivity in smartphones, cheaper internet data packages offered by the telecommunication service providers and the widespread availability of free social media apps, the difference between smartphones and personal computers usage have been blurred. Also, as their name indicates, mobile phones are portable devices allowing frequent access to the internet irrespective of place and time, offering a medium for Internet addicts. Social media usages on mobile phones present a large number of experiences from a psychological perspective, each with potential that can result in problematic behavioral patterns. For instance, a socially inclined person might expend much time on Facebook, repeatedly checking their profile to have a glimpse of the number of "likes" that their latest post got from viewers. Others, with a narcissistic inclination, may find Instagram to be an addictive arena for them to present themselves to others with "selfies." Another fuel for social media

addiction may be social anxiety. The fear of missing out offers an explanation for frequent social media any time of day at the expense of other activities (Blackwell, Leaman, Tramosch, Osborne, & Liss, 2017; Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013).

Past studies of online addiction did not address problematic mobile phone use. Mobile phones today offer access to almost all Internet applications along with voice and video calls, text messaging, and video recording. In addition, there are numerous engaging apps for small screens, but their results can also be shown on any screen. Also, they have the added element of accessibility, an attribute qualitatively different from the traditional personal computer. Mobile phones can be used while strolling, traveling in buses or trains and even while driving a car. These “micro time slots” in which people can take part in numerous online activities were not available just a decade ago. Micro time slots can lead to obsessive mobile phone usage and can interfere with face-to-face interaction and harm academic performance (Almenayes, 2014).

To contribute to clarifying the nature of these impacts, the research question examined in this paper is: What is the impact of excessive social media usage on employees’ wellbeing and productivity at the workplace? To answer the question, this study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the impact of addictive social media usage on employee outcomes.

Method of Study

Researchers’ Background

It would be relevant to present our background as researchers and our stance on this study in order to help the readers build a perspective and make inferences about the study findings. The first author of this paper is an assistant professor in the area of Human Resource Management in a large business school in South India and has been diligently involved in research and teaching for last 6 years. The second author is an assistant professor in the area of Finance and Accounting for last 2 years and has prior teaching and research experience of 7 years before completion of his PhD. He also has immense interest in the field of IT given his past work experience in a reputed IT company in India. The third author is an associate professor in the area of Human Resource Management in another esteemed institution in South India and has been actively involved in teaching, research and conducting Management Development Programmes for last two decades. The fourth author of this paper is associated with the same business school as 1st author and is working as an assistant professor in the Department of Finance, prior to which he was pursuing his PhD and was actively involved in research for last 6 years. All the authors have previously published research articles using qualitative research methods. All the authors are of a theoretical stance that social media addictive usage behavior has adverse effects on workplace productivity and employees’ wellbeing. This stance is highly influenced by both review of literature (c.f. Almenayes, 2014; Przybylski et al., 2013) and practical experience obtained by the authors. Being a part of this phenomenon ourselves, and based upon the insights from others working in different organizations, we have come to conclusion that due to various social media Apps configured in the smartphones, people tend to indulge in excessive use of social media at the workplace which further leads to addictive social media usage behavior and interferes with the work or task in hand. Based on these initial insights, we wanted to conduct a qualitative research to investigate about this phenomenon as a scholarly pursuit. To conduct the study, first author and fourth author jointly prepared the interview schedule and conducted interviews with the participants. The first author conducted the literature review and transcribed the interviews. The third and second authors contributed in data analysis using

IPA procedures along with first and fourth authors. All the authors jointly contributed in reporting the findings.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

An interpretative phenomenological analysis was used in this study as it is noted as the optimal way to investigate a complex phenomenon that is difficult to capture. Interpretative phenomenological analysis enables the researcher to uncover the uniqueness of individuals' lived experiences (Dowling & Cooney, 2012; Mackey, 2005). To date, there is dearth of phenomenological studies in the realm of social media addictive behavior in the workplace and its potential employee outcomes. This study attempts to gain insight into participants' lived experiences about a phenomenon that is often subconscious. The paucity of conceptual framework and knowledge gaps in the social media literature, especially in the emerging economies like India, indicates the need for a qualitative study. Of all the qualitative methodologies, interpretative phenomenological analysis is considered the most appropriate when one is trying to draw inferences about the lived experiences of the participants, such as investigating their day to day social media usage and its outcomes (Converse, 2012; Dowling, 2007; Tuohy, Cooney, Dowling, Murphy, & Sixsmith, 2013). Thus, the focus of this study is on the lived experience of employees excessively using social media via smartphones or tablets at their workplace.

Sampling and participants selection

According to the IPA guidelines prescribed by Smith and Osborn (2007), and considering the need to explore participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon under inquiry, purposive sampling (c.f. Willig, 2013) was used to select the participants for this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Klein & Westcott, 1994). The objective was to identify appropriate sample so as to successfully address the research question of this study. Smith and Osborn (2007) recommended the use of purposive sampling for IPA studies as it focuses on identifying a closely defined group of participants for whom the research question will be relevant. Accordingly, the target samples, for this study were the employees working in those IT/ITES companies in India, where social media usage were not restricted or monitored. Selection of the companies was based on the ease of accessibility to the company branches that employed people from all parts of the country. The criteria of selection of participants were based on gender (6 males, 8 females), average social media usage in a day, and at least two years of experience with using social media on smartphones. For recruitment of participants, we asked all the employees about their average social media usage per day and only those employees who reported to be using social media for two or more hours a day were approached and requested to participate in the study. However, only those employees who agreed voluntarily to participate in the study were interviewed. The issue of generalizability is one of the main concerns in research, but phenomenological studies do not aim to represent the population and focuses on extraction of issues that can be generalized to groups of people. According to Solomon (1972), "the phenomenological reduction guarantees that we see essences and not just individuals" (p. 22).

Data Collection

After seeking permission from the institutional review board which comprised of senior faculty members at our university and the senior managers of the IT/ITES company branches, first and second authors conducted 14 semi-structured interviews. In-person semi-

structured interviews were conducted as it is the most extensively used method of data collection in IPA studies (Brocki & Wearden, 2006) and it allows for an in-depth insight into the phenomenon. The participants were briefed about the purpose of this study and their consent was given to audio-record the interviews for the purpose of further analysis. All the participants were assured about their anonymity and the confidentiality of information shared by them. The interviews were conducted until the point of theoretical saturation where no new ideas surfaced. Each interview on average lasted for approximately 40 minutes. The participants included 6 males and 8 females with mean age of 32.5 years. Their average years of work experience was 8.07 years and all of them were using smart phones from last 5 to 7 years.

Data Analysis

We used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to examine the effects of social media addiction on employees' wellbeing and work productivity. IPA fosters detailed understanding of the participant's personal experience and perception regarding an event or situation they are exposed to (Smith & Osborn, 2007). First and second authors transcribed each semi-structured interview and extracted significant statements and verbatim from the same. We omitted similar statements after generating all the significant statements from fourteen transcriptions. Further, we obtained meanings out of the significant statements by reading and re-reading the transcription several times. Later, these were categorized into clusters of themes that emerged from the participants' inputs and were common to all the interviews. The transcriptions and their interpretations were then taken back to the participants so as to ensure that the authors have extracted the valid themes and that the participants verify and agree to the interpretations of their lived experiences made by the authors. The step-wise procedure followed by the authors for data analysis included transcribing the interview audio tapes to learn about the experiences of employees using social media excessively. We also made note of significant nonverbal and paralinguistic communication. Further, we started data analysis by reading and rereading the initial transcript several times to completely understand the text. We then coded the text into two major themes and several sub themes. In the next step we compiled themes and started establishing connections between them. The clustering of themes was done using the list of sub-themes created in the previous step. By clustering sub-themes, we reduced their number and ended up with a smaller number of sub-themes, which constituted the major themes. We then coded the remaining transcripts by using the master list of themes that was treated as a guideline for subsequent transcripts. Finally, we prepared a summary of the interviews by incorporating the themes that we had extracted from the data.

Results

Theme 1: Impact of Social Media Addiction on Wellbeing of the employees

Five categories of themes were identified as the effect of social media addiction on employees' physical and mental wellbeing. They were (a) Lack of sleep, (b) Backache and eye strain, (c) Feeling of envy, (d) Lack of depth in the relationships, and (e) Tendency to seek approvals. Employees across all the companies identified each of these themes as outcomes of overusing social media. The following section examines each of these outcomes in detail.

Lack of sleep

Due to excessive use and addiction to social media, individuals reported to be sleeping for a smaller number of hours when compared to earlier days. Being constantly indulged in the social media chatting and checking updates from others during bedtime has now become a common practice across the globe. People do not realize the time elapsed on the social media channels, resulting in a smaller number of hours to sleep. This experience is succinctly captured in the following verbatim:

The fact that internet penetration in India has grown rapidly in last few years and as [Reliance] JIO with its free and cheap internet packages have [has] elevated smartphone and social media usage in every household, we tend to spend a lot of time chatting with our family and friends on the WhatsApp groups... on Facebook... and sleep for less time. When these channels were not there we used to call our friends and distant relatives occasionally and talk for a few minutes only... [pauses] but with the growing penetration of social media we are all connected 24*7... and most of the times we chat late till night or read different posts on Facebook. As a result we suffer from lack of sleep that causes headache and drowsiness in the day time. Hmm... but despite that we can't actually control our usage or keep away from social media. It has become as necessary as oxygen or water... [laughs] (Male, 39 years)

Rise of social media and internet penetration has led to connectedness with friends and family which is supposed to improve the psychological wellbeing. But it has turned out otherwise for many. Respondents admit the excessive use of social media and are aware of the same leading to sleep deprivation still; they are unable to control their behavior. This is a sign of addiction and it is bound to hamper the wellbeing of the respondent in long run. The sleeplessness of the individuals is likely to impact their productivity at workplace as well.

Backache and eye strain

Most of the participants in the study reported having cervical or middle backache due to frequent internet and addictive social media usage. Further, since most of the social media usage takes place through smartphones and tablets, cervical pain was attributed mainly to excessive use of social media. Further, a few participants reported to be looking at their smartphone screens for around 1 to 3 hours a day, causing discomfort, backache, and eye strain.

Working on a system [computer or laptop] is different than working on a smartphone as we look downwards into our phone's screen while look straight at the computer screen. But since most of the social media Apps are configured in our smartphones... we don't bother to use the same through our systems [computer and laptop]. Umm... yea... on an average I look downwards for more than 2 hours a day while using WhatsApp... Facebook... YouTube etc., which causes strain in the neck and shoulder muscles and results in mild to severe pain at times. (Male, 32 years)

Since most of our work involves computer usage... it is obvious to cause some strain in our eyes but somehow I feel that it was still manageable when I was

not indulged in social networking sites. Yea... It is due to the excessive use of social media over and above the routine office work which makes the condition worst.... and it's not only eye strain but back pain... neck pain at times... however I am still unable to stop using social media... It has become a habit now. (Female, 29 years)

The web of social media apps and the fear of missing out (FOMO) have led to ever rise in screen usage time for phones as well as computer systems. With digitized work environment the use of computers cannot be completely avoided, but workplaces usually come up with ergonomic office infrastructure in order to reduce health issues related to long sitting hours. However, the usage of smartphones is self-imposed and despite knowing the health concerns respondents admit the continuous usage of the same. With varied nature of social media apps and contents, the screen usage time has increased and so has the respondent's complaints pertaining to back-ache and eye strain.

Feeling of envy

Some of the participants were of the view that excessive use of social media leads to feeling of jealousy and envy towards others. It is because individuals post about their success, luxury, and moments of rejoice on social media which make others in their social network consider oneself as inferior, leading to sense of envy towards others.

Due to being connected to several people from our school... colleges... previous company... etc., who are not necessarily our close friends... we keep getting their posts and updates frequently. Ironically, I find everyone doing well in their careers... buying luxurious cars... home... [Umm...] travelling abroad... able to manage their jobs well and receiving awards despite child and family responsibilities... unlike me. [Pauses] ...I find myself juggling to balance my professional and personal life, buying even small things through my credit card... where buying luxury seems a distant affair. I... actually... did not see anyone who was struggling like I was and then I realized that I am using social media too much to get information about others instead of just focusing on my life. But yea... it led to the feeling of insecurity and envy towards a few people in my connections. Thankfully, my husband counseled me which made me feel better. (Female, 34 years)

The excerpt above should be highlighted in the context of locus of control and also individual's behavior towards overly positive representation of their achievements, status, etc. People with external locus of control are bound to be affected with these kinds of external stimuli. The use of social media has led to a virtual life where everyone portrays a rosy side of their life. The respondent's response as envy towards other's life and lifestyle is a common phenomenon observed with the rise in usage of social media. This feeling of envy will lead to dissatisfaction at both personal and professional levels and will lead to deteriorating health and job performance.

Lack of depth in the relationships

Most of the participants were of the view that excessive use of social media leads to lack of bonding and depth in personal and professional relationships. It is due to spending enormous time on social media and lack of time spent with family and friends which leads to

communication gaps and gives way to distrust, misunderstanding, and breach of expectations that were set by the near and dear ones.

I find myself scrolling through the WhatsApp Chats... and Facebook feeds... more often than I talk to my spouse or parents or extended family... for that matter... and it is not I alone.... my wife too is very particular about posting each and every bit of detail on Facebook and Instagram.... be it a fever to a cup of coffee outside... [laughs] our generation has become too dependent of social media apps and we don't talk face-to face that often despite living in the same house. At many events we had communication gaps and misunderstanding in the last 1 year. Same is the case with my friends... who only talk on social media and never bother to visit or give me call... Umm... but no one can suggest a way out of this... I think we can't help it [smiles]
(Male, 33 years)

With high level of involvement in social media and limited face-to-face interactions, the personal touch and feel of being around loved ones has been lost. Often perception plays a major role in deciding the context and intent of the message. This has led to loss of love, intimacy, depth and touch in relationships. This has also led to increasing miscommunication and dissatisfaction at personal and professional space which in turn leads to poor wellbeing and deteriorating productivity.

Tendency to seek approvals

Some of the participants opined that frequent use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp which allows users to share status and pictures with others in their social network fosters the tendency to seek approvals from others within their network in the form of the number of likes, views, reactions, and comments on their post. Many participants also viewed these features of social media to be causing addiction amongst the users.

Now what causes addiction to social media are the things like comments that you get on your posts... the notifications about how many people have liked and reacted to you posts and so on... if I receive less number of likes or comments on any of my post it makes me consider my post as inferior... it actually bothers me as to why I posted a picture or a status that wasn't appreciated by many... greater number of likes... comments... and views on the posts... or status... makes me feel confident about myself. It... [Kind of]... confirms my popularity in my social network. (Male, 27 years)

There is an urge to keep checking the notifications and number of views which makes me use social media more frequently... and if these features were not there... I don't think I would have used these apps only to chat with others.
(Female, 28 years)

The virtual life created by the social media is turning out to be the social trap and also reflects more or less the real-life social setting. Individuals tend to create an image of themselves on the social media platforms and expect ego satisfaction created by the social acceptance and approval. The cost of seeking self-esteem, tendency to seek approvals and always trying to hog the limelight of the friend/family circle is leading to addiction towards the likes and

comments aggregated from social media platforms. The non-approval or decline in number of likes/comments make the respondents believe that people are ignoring them and draws them towards depression and anxiety. These in turn lead to deterioration in their social well-being and work productivity.

Theme 2: Impact of social Media Addiction on work productivity

With regard to the impact of social media addiction on work productivity of employees, three categories of themes were identified. They were (a) Not meeting deadlines, (b) Compromise with the work quality, and (c) Distraction from work. Employees across all the companies identified each of these themes as outcomes of overusing social media. The following section examines each of these outcomes in detail.

Not meeting deadlines

Some of the participants were of the view that excessive use of social media leads to loss of productive time and keeps them engaged in non-work-related activities. As a result, they sometimes fail to meet the deadline given by their superiors or team leaders for completion of a task or seek extension of the given deadlines.

When I use Facebook... I get lost [in] reading the various posts that appear on my homepage... but the urge to open and check the messages and other notification keeps me getting back to the social media apps. This has resulted in a poor performance rating last year... because... I failed to meet two consecutive deadlines... When I used the working hours only for task related activities... I always met the deadlines or even... submitted the task beforehand. Anyhow, I am trying to avoid the usage of social media apps at workplace as much as possible... but as you have raised this question... I still feel I am addicted to using social media. (Female, 31 years)

It happened a few times with me when I requested my boss to extend my deadline by a day or two... It was because I couldn't complete the job on time due to overuse of FB [Facebook]... and Insta [Instagram]... during the work [working] hours. [Smiles...] I had to make weird excuses for the same and then I realized... I [should] better stop using my phone so much in the office. (Female, 30 years)

Social media has become a place where not only content is being created but also it is being consumed heavily. The fear of missing out (FOMO), the tendency to obtain latest updates and news, and the vicious cycle of notification has led to over-engagement of participants on social media apps, where the loss of time resulting from the same often goes unnoticed. Participants admitted to having been trapped in the message threads one after another to keep themselves updated with the whereabouts of peers, socially relevant news and gossips so that they don't feel left out in peer discussions. This leads to loss of work time and delay in completing their core job responsibilities.

Compromise with the work quality

Majority of the participants in this study reported to have compromised with the quality of work to be able to complete the work on time i.e., to meet the deadlines. The

participants further reported to be using social media apps quite often at the workplace resulting in a smaller number of productive hours and substandard quality work output. A few participants also expressed the feeling of wrongdoing they had for compromising with the quality of work and for producing a shabby work outcome, which they were capable of doing better otherwise.

Getting stuck to my phone and the social media apps has become an integral part of my everyday life... [Giggles...] no matter how much you try to focus on work alone... you can't manage to stay away from your social media apps for a longer time. I keep checking the apps every 30 minutes and spend at least another 10 minutes on the same. This habit has made me lose a lot of time I would have utilized for the work... and performed better. Just to escape my boss's wrath... and meet the deadlines... I have compromised with the quality of my work several times. (Female, 29 Years)

The over commitment of time on social media platforms lead to loss of work time and respondents often procrastinate on the core job responsibilities for seeking one additional information/notification/update on social media. The respondents admit to having submitted incomplete or inferior quality work due to pressure of meeting deadlines at their workplace. Had they focused on job and were not distracted; the quality of work output would have been substantially better. Clearly, social media addiction leads to compromise with the work quality.

Distraction from work

Most of the participants unanimously agreed to the fact that excessive use of social media at the workplace causes distraction from work. The participants revealed that they couldn't control their social media usage during working hours beyond a certain extent such as during the team meetings and discussion sessions with the superiors. They further reported to be engrossed in the Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp applications during the working hours quite frequently causing distraction from the core office work and lack of efforts to enhance the productivity. The previous themes identified in this study also suggest that due to distraction from work, the employees have either failed to meet the deadlines or have compromised with the quality of their work in the past.

I get totally distracted from work once I open my social media apps... Who will not...? It takes a while to get your brain back to work and concentrate. The entire flow of work is lost once you get the social media notifications. Personally I can't help it... I go on checking the posts and comments... and reverting or sharing the same in my own style... [Laughs] and in that process... you lose the track of your work... but I am sure I am not alone of this kind... there may be millions facing the similar issue [laughs] (Female, 30 year)

The social media addiction is leading to distraction at the workplace and participants feel helpless about it. They also try to attribute this to others in order to justify their social media usage pattern. Based on the participants' excerpts, the findings are insightful about the social media addiction and usage and also how users tend to justify themselves. The casual approach of participants towards knowingly accepting their social media addiction is a cause of concern for the employers with regard to employees' wellbeing and work productivity.

Discussion

The findings of the current study provide useful information about how social media addiction adversely impact employees' wellbeing and productivity at the workplace. In comparison to their internet usage in the initial days of work, majority of participants reported significant increase in the use of internet due to social media usage at their workplace in last 3 to 5 years. From the themes that emerged in this study, it is evident that the employees, who make excessive use of social media at home and their workplace, are struggling to meet the performance expectations by their employers. Further, addiction to social media channels are leading to increased health issues and lifestyle disorders among the employees. According to the participants in this study, social media addiction also causes a dent in their personal and professional relationships and further leads to a sense of insecurity and an inferiority complex. The findings of this study are consistent with the extant literature on social media addiction (see Duke & Montag, 2017; Kuss & Griffiths, 2011; Zivnuska, Carlson, Carlson, Harris, & Harris, 2019). Hawi and Samaha (2016) in their study also reported a negative relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem and social media addiction and life satisfaction among university students in Lebanon. Thus, this study, confirms the adverse effect of social media addiction on individuals' personal and work-related outcomes in developing economies like India.

With regard to generalizability of these findings, the insights obtained through qualitative research are noteworthy in its own right (Adelman, Jenkins, & Kemmis, 1976). According to Myers (2000), the objectives of a research study must be considered while evaluating the quality of research findings as the issues of sampling and generalizability of findings may be of little relevance against the objectives of study and realism involved in qualitative research. Aligned with the above stance on generalizability by qualitative researchers, we consider the goal of our research as idiosyncratic and worthy of investigation among the target sample of this study.

Based on the study findings, employers are advised to take a note of personal experiences shared by the employees and design a new or alter the existing policies and guidelines regarding smart phone and social media usage at the workplace. Furthermore, the employers should also provide counseling sessions to the employees making excessive use of social media channels during the working hours. Employees must be educated about the ill-effect of social media addiction on health and psychological wellbeing. Employers should make use of positive reinforcement to promote good performance by the employees. Similarly, positive punishment can be used by the employers when employees fail to meet the deadlines or the quality standard of outcomes they are expected to produce. Therefore, findings of the present study posit to assist the HR managers in formulating strategies to help employees overcome the consequences of social media addiction and minimize their social media usage at the workplace.

Despite the merits of this research as discussed above, the study is not free from limitations. The sample of the present study includes the IT/ITES employees only and does not capture the experiences of employees across different sectors and/or industries. It is likely that experiences of employees across other sectors may not be identical to the current findings. It would be interesting to see how people working in other industries perceive about their social media usage and consequences of social media overuse. Further, the present study collected data from employees working only in those organizations that did not restrict or monitor the social media and/or smart phone usage by the employees at the workplace. It would be relevant to examine the social media usage behavior of the employees working in organizations that monitors and restricts the social media usage by blocking the social media websites at the work premise. Besides, this study can be extended by future researchers by

collecting data from the employers about the challenges and consequences of employees' social media use/overuse at the workplace. Such studies will enrich our understanding about the opportunities and threats for organizations due to employees' social media use and overuse at the workplace. Future researchers may also investigate the practices adopted by employers to extract the positive outcomes of social media use such as networking and knowledge sharing and minimize the addictive social media usage by the employees during the working hours.

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Article Citation

Priyadarshini, C., Dubey, R. K., Kumar, Y. L. N., & Jha, R. R. (2020). Impact of social media addiction on employees' wellbeing and work productivity. *The Qualitative Report*, 25(1), 181-196. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol25/iss1/12>
