

Research Article

A Correlational Study to assess the Impact of Social Media on Disordered Eating Behavior among Students of B.Sc. Nursing at MMINSR SKIMS

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A B S T R A C T

Background: Eating practices are dramatically changing around the world and there is a rapid transition in culture due to fastest means of communication. This shift of culture has created a lasting effect in developing cultures of Asia. Emphasis of media on an extra skinny and underweight model as an ideal figure is causing a distress and psychological disruption in eating behavior of young boys and girls. In the whole course of life, we are conditioned to turn to food for pleasure and reinforcement. It is surprising that these reinforcements become hazardous in the college years. The evidence comes from the fact that after obesity and asthma, disordered eating is the most common chronic illness among adolescents and young adults. The study aimed to determine if there was a correlation between two disordered eating behavior and social media.

Objectives: The objectives of the study were to assess the disordered eating behavior among the B.Sc. Nursing students, assess the social media usage among the B.Sc. Nursing students, find out correlation between disordered eating behavior and social media usage among the B.Sc. Nursing students, find out the association between disordered eating behavior and selected demographic variables, find out the association between social media usage and selected demographic variables.

Methodology: A quantitative research approach with correlational descriptive design was used to conduct the study on sample of 100 college students which were selected through stratified sampling technique at MMINSR, SKIMS, Soura. The data was collected through EAT-26 scale and self-structured social media usage scale.

Results: Findings revealed that there is a positive correlation between disordered eating behavior and social media ($r=0.720, p < 0.0001$).

Conclusion: The findings of the study concluded that B.Sc. Nursing students were found to have disordered eating behavior and there was impact of social media on disordered eating behavior. It may be due

today's youth is just imitating what is shown on social media they trust on what is shown like calorie deficit regime, the models having thin body, the competition to look good. By the use of social media, they had forgot what is healthy and what is disordered eating. Thus, there is impact of social media on disordered eating behavior.

Keywords: Disordered Eating Behavior, Social Media, B.sc. Nursing Students

Introduction

Eating practices are dramatically changing around the world and there is a rapid transition in culture due to fastest means of communication. This shift of culture has created a lasting effect in developing cultures of Asia. Emphasis of media on an extra skinny and underweight model as an ideal figure is causing a distress and psychological disruption in eating behavior of young boys and girls. In the whole course of life, we are conditioned to turn to food for pleasure and reinforcement. It is surprising that these reinforcements become hazardous in the college years. The evidence comes from the fact that after obesity and asthma, disordered eating is the most common chronic illness among adolescents.¹

Disordered eating behavior include dieting, skip meals, rigid rituals and routines surrounding food and exercise, feeling of guilt and shame associated with eating, preoccupation with food, weight and body image, compulsive eating and purging.² As a result of the biological changes, peer pressure, societal drive for thinness and a body image preoccupation that occurs during puberty, adolescence and college going students are pointed out as the most vulnerable time for developing DE³.

Disordered eating behavior can lead to risk of eating disorders. Eating disorders affect seventy million individuals worldwide whereas it affects five to ten million Americans. Eating disorders have been frequently reported in western countries in the late 20th century⁴ which depicts the female to male 9:1 ratio of eating disorder. However very few studies focus on the incidence or prevalence of disordered eating behavior exclusively. Johnson, Powers and Dick found in their studies that 9% of the female college athletes were diagnosed for an eating disorder where as 58% were found at high risk for development of disordered eating behavior. The same study reflects 1% of male diagnosed as eating disorder and 38% were at risk for developing disordered eating behaviors⁵.

A systematic review and meta-analysis of 32 studies was done including 63181 participants from 16 countries, 22% reported that children and adolescents showed disordered eating behavior. More proportion of disordered eating behavior was elevated among girls and older adolescents.⁶

Saha(2023) in her study a comprehensive review on prevalence of eating behavior between year 2010-2022. it was done in seven places of India that were Mysore, Allahabad, Karnataka, Amritsar, Adichunchanagiri, Mangalore and Howrah. It was found that disordered eating behavior were 19.5% in Mysore, 26.6% in Allahabad, 29.20% in Karnataka, 16.90% in Adichunchanagiri, 25.50% in Mangalore, 38.30% in Howrah and the highest was in Punjab i.e. 52.12%.⁷

Certain factors among tend to be associated with disordered eating, including perceived pressure from parents and peers, nuclear family dynamic, body mass index, negative affect (mood), self-esteem, perfectionism, drug use, social media and participation in sports that focus on leanness. These factors are similar among boys and girls alike.⁸

Researchers have said the most pervasive and influential factor controlling body image perception and disordered eating is the social media. Social media as a platform is boon and at the same time bane. Over the last past 5 years, according to a new Pew research center survey of U.S. adults. YouTube and Facebook continue to dominate the online landscape with 81% and 69% respectively (2021 census). 40 % adults use Instagram, Pinterest or LinkedIn. One quarter use snapchats, twitter and WhatsApp. 21% are using the TikTok app.⁹

India has embraced the internet with open arms and its digital population has been rapidly growing in the past decade. Over 680 million active internet users. Active Facebook user are 329.65 million and 230.25 million are using Instagram¹⁹ social media has become increasingly favored across the globe and widely used by people regardless of age and gender, with 71% of its users are dominated by adolescents from the age of 18 to 24 years.¹⁰

Need of Study

Now a days disordered eating behavior has become a lifestyle statement. The major factor that causes disordered eating behavior now a days is social media. We live in an era where digital technology and social media are pervasive. Social media platforms are widely used, especially by young people who are more susceptible to developing disordered eating behaviors. Social media often promotes unrealistic beauty standards, leading to body dissatisfaction. This can contribute to disordered eating habits as individuals strive to meet these standards.

Social media allows individuals to closely follow peers, influencers, and celebrities. These figures may inadvertently or intentionally promote unhealthy eating behaviors, making it vital to study this influence. It encourages constant comparison to others, which can negatively impact self-esteem and body image. Negative experiences on social media, including cyberbullying, can exacerbate

disordered eating issues. These factors can contribute to the development of disordered eating. Today's youth is just imitating what is shown on social media they trust on what is shown like calorie deficit regime, the models having thin body, the competition to look good. By the use of social media, they had forgot what is healthy and what is disordered eating. There is a need to analyze the impact of social media on disordered eating behavior and spread awareness regarding this.

Zhang ,Wang ,Qianru,Chenggang (2021) Conducted a metanalytical study between social networking sites usage (SNSs) and eating behaviors including studies 22 studies of 2010-2020 at University of Macau, China . The results showed ($r=0.09$, 95% $P<0.001$). University Students showed a larger correlation between SNSs and disordered eating behavior than other samples ($r = 0.089$; 95% , $p < 0.001$). Overall, this meta-analysis confirms that the excessive use of SNSs is related with an increased risks of disordered eating behaviors.¹¹

The majority of the research is on assessment of social media and eating concerns and are focused on a specific platform, such as Facebook or YouTube. Additionally, much of this research has been limited to specific groups of individuals with eating disorder diagnoses. There are less studies exploring the links between broader social media use and eating concerns among a general, nationally-representative population of young adults.

Very few research study has been done in J & K as Ahmad et al (2016) conducted a cross sectional study was carried to assess the activity behavior and eating habits amongst 300 adolescents . 138 male and 162 female ,aged between 15-18 years were selected from coaching institutes at Pampore ,Pulwama .It was found that the adolescents were more into skipping breakfast .About 52.89% males and 36.4% females eat while watching T.V and social media .So there is a need to assess the correlation between social media and disordered eating behavior in Kashmir valley as there is risk of development of Eating disorders.¹²

From the researcher's experience findings from studies can inform policymakers and regulators about the need for guidelines and regulations related to body image standards, advertising, and content moderation on social media platforms. Parents and educators can benefit from research findings to better understand the challenges young people face in the digital age and how to provide guidance and support. Research on disordered eating behavior and social media is essential for safeguarding public health, especially in the context of the digital age. It can provide insights, inform interventions, and promote a healthier online environment for individuals of all ages.

Methodology

A non-experimental descriptive (correlational) design was adapted in this study. The study was conducted at MMINSR ,SKIMS Soura,Srinagar. The sample consisted of 100 B.sc nursing students. A probability stratified sampling technique was used to select sample. Standardized EAT-26 scale by Garner was used to assess disordered eating behavior and self-structured questionnaire was used to assess social media usage. Scoring key for eating behavior, more than 20 score was considered disordered eating behavior. A score of '1' was assigned to 'Yes' and a score of '0' to the 'No'. The scores were summed up and the total score was divided by total number of items (27) giving a mean score for each area.

Assessment of social media usage was categorized into various levels based on the criteria developed by Y Qutteina's (2019)¹³ in her study. If the score was >18 , it was considered as extreme user; if the score was between 9-18, it was considered moderate user, and if the score was < 9 , it was considered infrequent user.

Ethical clearance was obtained from Institutional Ethical Committee (IEC), to conduct the study on selected 100 B.Sc. Nursing students of MMINSR, SKIMS. Permission was also obtained by taking informed consent individually from B.Sc. Nursing students, prior to their inclusion as sample in the study. Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity were being guarded.

Results and Discussion

Finding related to demographic variables of study subjects:

Present study showed that out of 100 study subjects, majority of students (57%) were in the age group 20-22 years, only 17% and 26% were in the age group <20 years and >22 years, respectively. Maximum subjects were male (61%), 39% of them were females. The Majority of study subjects (78%) belonged to rural areas, whereas only 22% belonged to urban areas. The majority of study subjects belonged to the nuclear family (81%) and 39 % from joint families. 17% belonged to the group having household monthly income $< \text{Rs } 20,000$, whereas 40% belonged to the group of $\text{Rs } 20,000$ - $40,000$ and 43% belonged to the $>\text{Rs } 40000$ group. The Majority of students' fathers' (33%) had educational qualification as graduation and secondary education. 14% of them had no formal education, and 20 % had primary education. Almost equal i.e., (38%) students' mother had have no formal education. 26% and 27 % have the primary and secondary education respectively and only 9 % had done graduation or above as depicted in table 1.

A similar study was conducted by Sharma , Singh , Tiwari, Chauhan (2019)¹⁴ who investigated the influence of media

on the eating attitudes among 370 undergraduate students of medical college Delhi, India. The study showed that most of the subjects were in 20-22 yrs. age group i.e., 51.9%, about 36.2% were from 17-19 years and 11.9% were above 23yrs. Harrel (2021)¹⁵ who found out correlation between social media and disordered eating behaviour in 75 university students at Western Kentucky University, in the United States. The study found that maximum study subjects were males (50.66%) and about (49.33%) were females. Mannat M, Shradha S, T.V. Bhumika (2016)¹⁶, who assessed body image, disordered eating, and the role of media among the Indian adolescents of Udupi Taluk, Karnataka, India. Out of 550 adolescents, the majority of study subjects lived in rural areas (70.36%) in comparison to urban areas (29.64%). Concerning the type of family, about 67.45% were from nuclear families and the rest from joint families. Derks and Jansen (2022)¹⁷ who assessed the association between social media and disordered eating behavior among adolescents at Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands. Out of 1729 adolescents, the majority had medium family income (47.1%), (42.5%) had high family income 10.5% had low family income. Qutteina, Narsallah, Kunnel, Khaleed (2019)¹³ who assessed the relationship between social media usage and disordered eating behavior among female students in Qatar. Out of 1418 female students, (46.5%) mothers' educational status was post-secondary, (2.1%) had high school diploma and (29.4%) were less than high school. Regarding fathers' educational status 54.9% post-secondary education, 21.3 % high school and 23.9% more than high school education.

Findings related to the assessment of the disordered eating behavior among the study subjects:

The findings of the present study showed that among study subjects, 58% had disordered eating behavior and 42% had normal eating behaviors depicted in table 2.

A similar study was conducted by Edmund, Vin (2020)¹⁸ who conducted a cross-sectional study among 652 college students at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) to find out the prevalence of disordered eating behavior. A total of 652 respondents, aged between 19-25 years old took part in the study. The results revealed that 44.2% had disordered eating behavior, which was higher among females (28.6%) as compared to males (15.6%)

Findings related to the assessment of the social media usage among the study subjects:

Out of 100 study subject, 60% spend time on social media 4-6 hours per day, whereas 20% spend <4 hours and >8 hours per day, respectively. 8% of students use social media during the day, 58% during the evening and 34% during the night. 2% of students use one social media platform, 22 % use two social media platforms, 41% use three social media platforms and 35 % use four social media platforms

The most frequent used platform was YouTube 49%, 12% Facebook, 9 % Snapchat and 30 % u Instagram. The majority, 46% checked social media more than 8 times, 23% on every notification, 18% 4-8 times and 13% used less than 4 times. Almost equal i.e., 46% are extreme users, 32 % are moderate users and only 20 % are infrequent users as depicted in table 3 and 4

A similar study conducted by Husna (2023)¹⁹ who assessed the impact of social media on the dietary patterns of intermediate students in Hyderabad, India. Out of 200 study subjects, (14.4%) spent 30 minutes-1hr on social media, 26.2% spent 3-4 hrs., 29.2% spent 4-5 hrs. and 30.2% spent more than 6 hrs. Rahman (2019)²⁰ who assessed the impact of social networking sites on sleeping habits among university students in Bangladesh. The results revealed that out of 248 students, most of them use social media at night i.e., 71.11%. Wilksch et al. (2020)²¹ also conducted a cross-sectional study on 996 (grade 7 and 8) adolescents from an Australian school to assess the relationship between social media and disordered eating. The findings showed that the majority, i.e. 42.3% of girls were using two social media platforms, 11.7% were using three social media platforms, and 1.6% were using 4 and remaining were using only one social media platform. Siddhartha, Adil, Mulla, Sayed, Singh, Krishnappa et al (2020)²² conducted a cross-sectional study on the usage of social media among undergraduate university students in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia. The study revealed that majority of university students use different types of social media platforms. The results showed that 69% were using Facebook, 93% YouTube. Out of 100, 57% were using it more than 10 times a day and 46 % were using social media for more than 3 hrs. A similar study conducted by Qutteina, Narsallah, Kunnel, Khaleed (2019)¹³ who assessed the relationship between social media usage and disordered eating behavior among female students in Qatar. 43.8% were in the low social media intensity, 26.1% in medium and 30.1 % in high social media intensity.

Findings related to correlation between disordered eating behavior and social media usage.

In the present study it was found that there was correlation between disordered eating behavior and social media usage ($r=0.720$, $p<0.001$) as depicted in Table 5.

These findings of the present study are also supported by a study conducted by Muthia, Margawati, Fitrianti, Dieny, Hananingtyas (2022)²³, who conducted a correlational study between disordered eating behavior and use of social media among 123 students at a University, Semarang, Indonesia. 18-24 year old college students were selected using consecutive sampling. Results showed that there was a significant correlation between social media and disordered eating behavior ($p=0.001$; $r=0.415$).

Findings related to association between disordered eating behavior and social media usage with their selected demographic variables:

The present study showed that there was no significant association between social media usage and disordered eating behavior with their selected demographic variables i.e., age, residence, type of family, household monthly income, fathers' education, fathers' occupation, mothers' education and mothers' occupation at 0.05 level of significance as depicted in table 6&7.

A similar study conducted by Qutteina, Narsallah, Kunnel, Khaleed (2019)¹³ who assessed the relationship between social media usage and disordered eating behavior among female students in Qatar. The study showed that there is no significant association between age, mothers education status, fathers education status $p > 0.05$ level of significance.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of study subjects according to Demographic Variables

N=100

Variables	Categories	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Age	<20	17	17.0%
	20-22	57	57.0%
	>22	26	26.0%
Gender	Male	61	61.0%
	Female	39	39.0%
Residence	Rural	78	78.0%
	Urban	22	22.0%
Type of family	Nuclear family	81	81.0%
	Joint family	19	19.0%
Household monthly income	< Rs 20000	17	17.0%
	Rs 20000-40000	40	40.0%
	>Rs 40000	43	43.0%
Educational status of father	No formal education	14	14.0%
	Primary education	20	20.0%
	Secondary education	33	33.0%
	Graduation or above	33	33.0%
Educational status of mother	No formal education	38	38.0%
	Primary education	26	26.0%
	Secondary education	27	27.0%
	Graduation or above	9	9.0%
Occupation of father	Unemployed	11	11.0%
	Self employed	36	36.0%
	Private employee	13	13.0%
	Govt employee	40	40.0%
Occupation of mother	Unemployed	78	78.0%
	Self employed	5	5.0%
	Private employee	3	3.0%
	Govt employee	14	14.0%

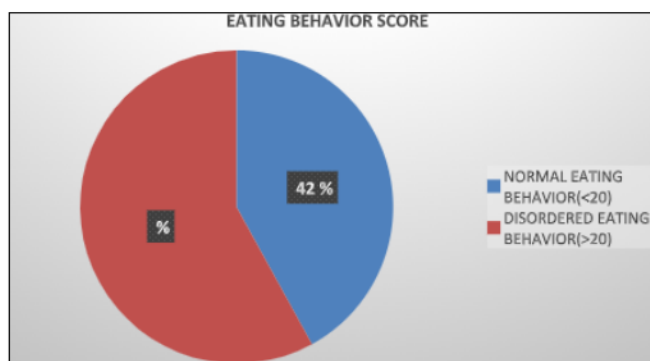


Figure 1: Pie chart showing eating behavior among B.Sc. Nursing students

Table 2.Frequency and percentage distribution of assessment of the disordered eating behavior among the study subjects

N=100		
Eating behavior	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Normal eating behavior	42	42%
Disordered eating behavior	58	58%

Table 3.Frequency and percentage distribution of assessment of the social media usage among the study subjects

N=100			
Duration and frequency of social media		Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Time spent on social media per day	< 4hr	20	20.0%
	4-6hrs	60	60.0%
	>8hrs	20	20.0%
Increase use of social media	Daytime	8	8.0%
	Evening time	58	58.0%
	Night time	34	34.0%
Number of social media platform used	One	2	2.0%
	Two	22	22.0%
	Three	41	41.0%
	Four	35	35.0%
Most frequently used platform	Instagram	30	30.0%
	Snapchat	9	9.0%
	YouTube	49	49.0%
	Facebook	12	12.0%

Checking social media	<4times/day	13	13.0%
	4-8times/day	18	18.0%
	>8times/day	46	46.0%
	On every notification	23	23.0%

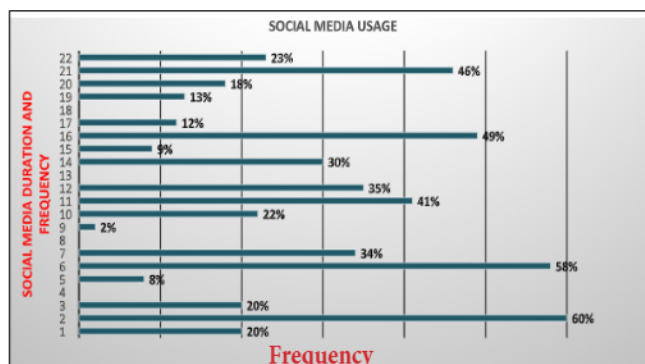


Figure 2.Bar graph showing social media duration and frequency among B.Sc. Nursing students

Table 4.Distribution of study subjects according to social media usage among B.Sc. Nursing students

Social media usage behavior	Frequency (F)	Percentage %
Infrequent user (<9)	22	22.0%
Moderate user (9-18)	32	32.0%
Extreme user (>18)	46	46.0%

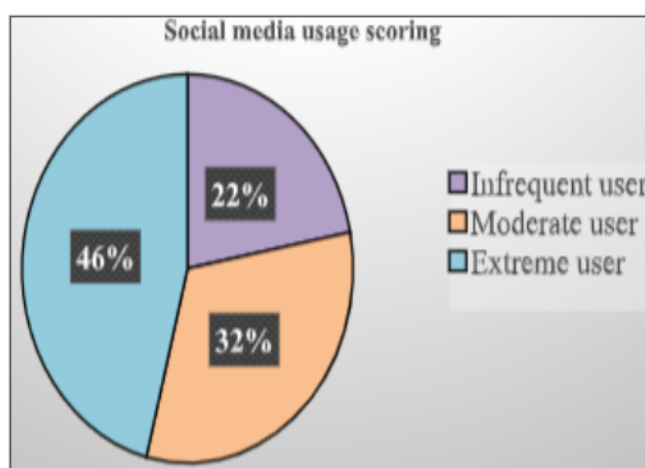


Figure 3.Pie chart showing social media usage among B.Sc. Nursing

Table 5. Description of correlation between disordered eating behavior and social media usage

N=100

Variables	correlation coefficient	P value	Remark
Disordered eating behavior	0.720**	0.000***	Highly significant
Social media usage			
*** Significance at level of 0.001 level			

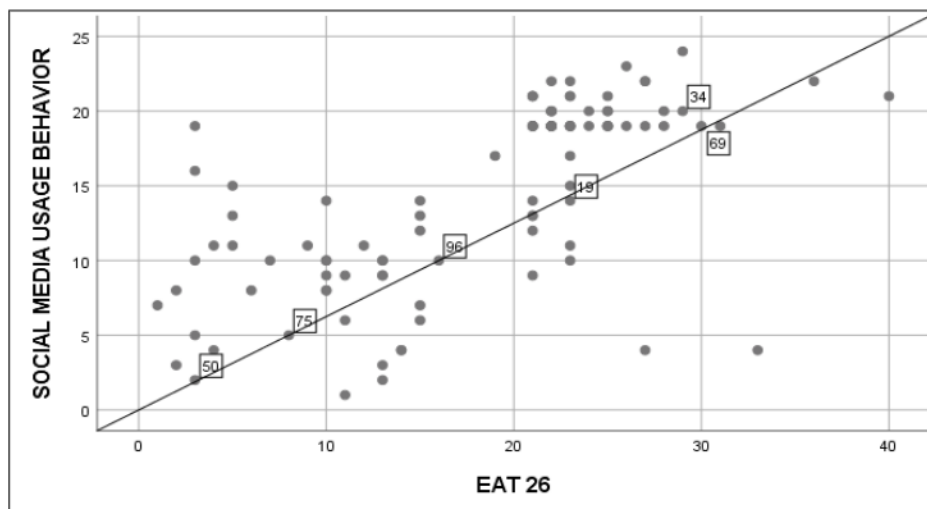


Figure 4. Scatter diagram showing correlation between disordered eating behavior and social media usage

Table 6. Description of association of disordered eating behavior with their demographic variables

N=100

Demo-graphic variables	Categories	Eat 26				Association			
		<20 normal eating behavior		>20 disordered eating behavior		CHI test	df	p-value	remark
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage				
Age	<20	10	23.8%	7	12.1%	2.621	2	.270	*NS
	20-22	23	54.8%	34	58.6%				
	>22	9	21.4%	17	29.3%				
Gender	Male	28	66.7%	33	56.9%	.977	1	.323	*NS
	Female	14	33.3%	25	43.1%				
Residence	Rural	34	81.0%	44	75.9%	0.368	1	0.544	NS
	Urban	8	19.0%	14	24.1%				
Type of family	Nuclear family	36	85.7%	45	77.6%	1.046	1	0.306	*NS
	Joint family	6	14.3%	13	22.4%				
Household monthly income	< Rs 20000	9	21.4%	8	13.8%	1.008	2	0.604	NS
	Rs 20000-40000	16	38.1%	24	41.4%				
	>Rs 40000	17	40.5%	26	44.8%				

Educational status of father	No formal education	7	16.7%	7	12.1%	3.481	3	0.323	*NS
	Primary education	8	19.0%	12	20.7%				
	Secondary education	17	40.5%	16	27.6%				
	Graduation or above	10	23.8%	23	39.7%				
Educational status of mother	No formal education	18	42.9%	20	34.5%	2.095	3	0.553	*NS
	Primary education	10	23.8%	16	27.6%				
	Secondary education	12	28.6%	15	25.9%				
	Graduation or above	2	4.8%	7	12.1%				
Occupation of father	Unemployed	5	11.9%	6	10.3%	0.567	3	0.904	*NS
	Self employed	16	38.1%	20	34.5%				
	Private employee	6	14.3%	7	12.1%				
	Govt employee	15	35.7%	25	43.1%				
Occupation of mother	Unemployed	35	83.3%	43	74.1%	1.401	3	0.705	*NS
	Self employed	2	4.8%	3	5.2%				
	Private employee	1	2.4%	2	3.4%				
	Govt employee	4	9.5%	10	17.2%				

Table 6. Description of association of social media usage with their demographic variables.

N=100

Demo-graphic variables		Social media usage						CHI SQUARE	df	P VALUE	re- marks
		<9 infrequent user	9-18 moderate user		>18 extreme user						
	Frequency	Per-centage	Fre- quency	Per-centage	Fre- quency		Per-centage				
Age	<20	5	22.7%	6	18.8%	6	13.0%	1.245	4	0.871	NS
	20-22	11	50.0%	18	56.3%	28	60.9%				
	>22	6	27.3%	8	25.0%	12	26.1%				
Gender	Male	16	72.7%	15	46.9%	30	65.2%	4.299	2	0.117	NS
	Female	6	27.3%	17	53.1%	16	34.8%				

Residence	Rural	20	90.9%	25	78.1%	33	71.7%	3.188	2	0.203	NS
	Urban	2	9.1%	7	21.9%	13	28.3%				
Type of family	Nuclear family	21	95.5%	26	81.3%	34	73.9%	4.489	2	0.106	*NS
	Joint family	1	4.5%	6	18.8%	12	26.1%				
Household monthly income	< Rs 20000	6	27.3%	5	15.6%	6	13.0%	2.535	4	0.638	NS
	Rs 20000-40000	8	36.4%	14	43.8%	18	39.1%				
	>Rs 40000	8	36.4%	13	40.6%	22	47.8%				
Educational status of father	No formal education	3	13.6%	5	15.6%	6	13.0%	3.739	6	0.712	NS
	Primary education	6	27.3%	5	15.6%	9	19.6%				
	Secondary education	9	40.9%	11	34.4%	13	28.3%				
	Graduation or above	4	18.2%	11	34.4%	18	39.1%				
Educational status of mother	No formal education	10	45.5%	13	40.6%	15	32.6%	6.208	6	0.400	NS
	Primary education	7	31.8%	7	21.9%	12	26.1%				
	Secondary education	4	18.2%	11	34.4%	12	26.1%				
	Graduation or above	1	4.5%	1	3.1%	7	15.2%				
Occupation of father	Unemployed	1	4.5%	4	12.5%	6	13.0%	10.973	6	0.89	NS
	Self employed	14	63.6%	7	21.9%	15	32.6%				
	Private employee	1	4.5%	6	18.8%	6	13.0%				
	Govt employee	6	27.3%	15	46.9%	19	41.3%				
Occupation of mother	Unemployed	18	81.8%	26	81.3%	34	73.9%	3.390	6	0.759	NS
	Self employed	1	4.5%	1	3.1%	3	6.5%				
	Private employee	0	0.0%	2	6.3%	1	2.2%				
	Govt employee	3	13.6%	3	9.4%	8	17.4%				

Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn on the basis of findings of the study.

- The study subjects were having strong co-relation between disordered eating behavior and social media usage, this indicates as social media is one of the factors that is responsible for disordered eating behavior. It is because students are addictive to social media they don't eat, do restrictive dieting and purge with the influence of social media which will affect their eating behavior.
- There was no significant association between disordered eating behavior and selected demographic variables i.e., age, residence, type of family, household monthly income, fathers' education, fathers' occupation, mothers' education, mothers' occupation, which indicates that these variables probably have no effect on disordered eating behavior of study subjects.
- There was no significant association between social media usage and selected demographic variables i.e., age, residence, type of family, household monthly income, fathers' education, fathers' occupation, mothers' education, mothers' occupation, which indicates that these variables probably have no effect on social media usage of study subject.

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Conflicts of Interest: None

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