

Social Media Sleepwalkers: Is Gen Z Opting for Unfiltered Life by Hitting Snooze on the Feed?

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Received on: February 09, 2024 | Accepted on: March 22, 2024 | Published on: March 29, 2024

Abstract

Social media fatigue, also known as SMF, has gained widespread attention in recent times. It is globally renowned for affecting people's well-being. SMF impacts a person's capability of focusing, causing bad mental health, bad sleep cycles, and tiredness, ultimately affecting the users mentally and physically. This study seeks to investigate the various aspects of SMF, particularly in the Kolkata area, aiming to enhance existing research to understand if the previously identified dynamics apply in Gen-Z situations in different cultural backgrounds. The Stressors, Strain, Outcome (SSO) model was taken as a base to analyze the relationship between SMF dynamics (Privacy concerns, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), Self-efficacy, Information Overload, and Tech-Time Dilemma) with SM Fatigue and social media fasting. A total of 308 samples of data were collected through Google Forms. The findings imply that social media (SM) users in Kolkata prefer Instagram the most among other SM platforms, the data show a pattern in SM usage time of the teen and adults based on age. The 20-23 age group responded to experience most SMF. This study's theoretical and practical implications may help the different stakeholders of SM in future studies to understand the possible patterns in young SM user's psyche and their perception.

Keywords: *Social Media Fatigue, SMF, Social Media Fasting, Social Media Apps, Generation Z*

1. Introduction

Social media apps are modern standards for socializing over the internet in today's rapidly evolving digital era. Close to 84% of youth today (18-29 years) are on at least one of the SM platforms (Atske, 2023). Despite being critically blamed for spreading negativity on the internet (misinformation, hate, harassment), the popularity of SM still grows every year (Pew Research Center, 2020). According to Wong (2023), there were 4.9 billion SM users recorded in 2023. India is no exception from the SM effect. Nearly half of the people in a nation with a population of more than 1.42 billion, use social media, with 467 million of them being daily active users (The Global Statistics, 2024). The cheap, widespread Internet infrastructure is credited for the

exponential rise of SM apps in India. With 531.46 million users, WhatsApp is the most loved SM app in India followed by Instagram (516.96 million users). An average Indian spends about 2 hours and 50 minutes on SM daily (The Global Statistics, 2024).

SM is mostly popular among the youth. According to Salo et al., (2018), young ones exhibit varying degrees of dependence on SM but this over-dependence could cause SMF (Malik et al., 2020; Dhir et al., 2015; Xie and Tsai, 2021; Fan et al., 2020). Overwhelming use of Social media (SM) and experiencing a constant influx of informational and emotional stimuli lead to negative emotional reactions like tiredness, boredom, burnout, frustration, and anxiety, etc.

(Zhang et al., 2016; Liu & He, 2021). This feeling of tiredness is SMF. Several studies claim that SMF affects user psyche, they show reduced enthusiasm for SM in general, resulting in diminishing interactions, and less engagement in SM. Also in some cases the users temporarily or maybe permanently leave SM (Zhang et al., 2020; Fan et al., 2020; Xie and Tsai, 2021; Shokouhyar et al., 2018). The consequences of SMF affects the mental & and physical well-being of the user. Depression, anxiety, emotional stress, diminishing academic performance, poor sleep cycle, etc are common health issues among SM users (Dhir et al., 2019; Malik et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2016; Dhir et al. 2018; Pang, 2021). SMF is quite common for people of every age. In earlier studies, the different initiators of SMF were discussed. In addition, a new practice of SM fasting (Digital Detox) was highlighted as a means of lowering SMF. Social media fasting is an intentional break from SM activities for a certain period, ranging between a few hours to several days (weeks and months also). By lowering SMF, the goal is to eliminate distractions, free up time for more important tasks, and increase overall productivity (Larksuite, 2023; Mathenge, 2023). it is already in practice among other generations (Brown & Kuss, 2020). This research aims to find the existence of SMF in Gen-Z users in the Kolkata area and to study if SM fasting is practiced by them to tackle SMF.

1.1. Study Implications and Objective

The study will look into the relationship between SMF and other variables that can trigger SMF, like Privacy concerns, Self-efficacy, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), Information overload, and Tech-time dilemma (Time cost of using SM). Zheng and Ling (2021) pointed out a major gap in previous studies asking for more empirical research in a variety of cultural contexts. By concentrating on the dynamic aspect of Generation Z's social media behavior—those born between 1997 and 2012 (Eldridge, 2024)—this study aims to fill that gap,

especially concentrating on the Kolkata area to find possible patterns in their SM habits. Gen-Z is more prone to getting affected by the SM side effects. They reportedly experience more negativity on the internet (Coe et al., 2023). From the beginning of their life, they have been around technology. So, they naturally acquire a distinct viewpoint on particular circumstances. They are more sensitive and emotionally fragile according to a report from Business Insider India (2021). This study carries significant theoretical and practical implications for different stakeholders (SM users, Parents, Educators, Lawmakers, and IT managers) to provide them valuable insights regarding SMF, its dynamics, and its effects on an individual's well-being in a diverse cultural context for finding an optimum setting for a healthy user-friendly internet experience.

2. Literature Review:

Nearly all SM users encounter SM Fatigue regularly, causing them to feel tired, depressed, and anxious due to overwhelming negative comparisons, information overload, or privacy concerns, ultimately harming their mental and physical health (Gao et al., 2018, Bright et al., 2015). According to Dutton and Blank (2015a, 2015b), the youth are becoming more divided, distracted, and sad as a result of social media's big influence on their behavior. Although SM is infamous for being a bad habit for the user's well-being, Chun & Reyes, (2012) argued the beneficial sides of SM. For example, the rise of SM has promoted seamless information sharing among users, it provided a place where people connect over the internet on a global stage, it helped businesses to connect with their consumers, helped the government share vital information with its people and policy-makers, etc (Curtis et al., 2010).

Advantages aside, the problem arises when addictive social media algorithms hook users to

overuse the platform more than they initially intended (Lembke, 2021). Gen-Z is already habituated to overusing smartphones and logically, it correlates with higher usage of SM among Gen-Z. The users tend to smile less, face-to-face interaction is less frequent, and may experience loss of empathy (Kushlev et al., 2019; Dwyer et al., 2018; Melchers et al., 2015; Chou et al., 2016). Overuse of SM also affects the academic performance of the youth as Rosen et al., (2013a, 2013b) explain overuse of technology affects the learning environment in a social context. Ayyagar et al., (2011) argued that extensive use of SM in the classroom and outside has serious implications on students' concentration, Causing psychological stress, and affecting students' cognitive and academic performance. For instance, A study conducted among 218 Facebook users showed, heavy usage of SM affects GPA scores negatively (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010).

People have become conscious of SM's negative aspects and how it affects their mental health. Thus, "Digital Detox", or "Social Media Fasting" has gained popularity among users to run away or get a break from the SMF (Bell, 2017; Osterberg, 2016). SMF may happen due to various reasons, privacy concerns, worry of missing out on any trends, self-doubt, time cost, social detachment, information overload, etc (Huang, Yuan, 2018; Brown & Kuss, 2020; Cao et al., 2019a; Zhang et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2016). In recent times, cyberbullying cases have significantly increased and social media has become a major hub for online bullying (Manuel, 2024). According to Atske (2022), nearly 46% of US teens (13-17 years old) have been bullied online in the year 2022. Conversely, a privacy breach increases the possibility of Cyberbullying, making users more concerned about their internet privacy (Cao et al., 2019a). Also, data leaks are now pretty much common these days (Hill, 2017). In 2019, 530 million Facebook user's data were compromised,

similarly, 500M user data was leaked from the LinkedIn server in 2021 (Newman, 2021; Morris, 2021). SM may have connected people online but as they overuse it, the fatigue grows and people start to feel the importance of personal connection more and want to disconnect from SM (Hardey & Atkinson, 2018; Jorge, 2019). One of the primary factors for SMF was the time aspect, people were tired of overusing the platform than what they intended but they could not help it. It was likely influenced by active fear of missing out on opportunities and other emotional factors (Brubaker et al., 2016; Ganito & Jorge, 2018; Jorge, 2019; Miksch & Schulz, 2018; Skivko et al., 2020; Syvertsen & Enli, 2020; Brown & Kuss, 2020).

The Fear of missing out (FoMO) is an intense sense of worry that a person experiences due to perceiving missing out on fulfilling experiences that others are having (Przybylski et al., 2013). According to Brown & Kuss (2020) and Hunt et al. (2018), one of the main reasons people use social media more is because of the FoMO; the greater one's friend network, the more the FoMO one endures. According to earlier research (Karapanos et al., 2016; Wolniewicz et al., 2018; Malik et al., 2020), a primary factor contributing to SMF is FoMO, making users feel anxious and frustrated. Another influencing element to SMF is the negative comparison of oneself with their SM connections. As Swallow and Kuiper (1988) pointed out, SM users tend to make correlational comparisons of themselves where they perceive themselves to be on the disadvantageous side, further lowering their self-esteem.

These factors were prominently blamed for causing SMF as mentioned in previous studies (Brown & Kuss, 2020; Cao et al., 2019a; Zhang et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2016). According to Brown and Kuss (2020), users typically take a break from SM to reclaim control over their lives, reestablish relationships with loved ones, and lower their SM

Fatigue. In Brown & Kuss's (2020) study, the subjects of the research noticed significant differences in their lifestyle as they took the break. Some users permanently quit SM to overcome SMF (Shokouhyar et al., 2018; Fan et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020; Xie & Tsai, 2021). Just like Brown & Kuss, (2020), other studies done by researchers showed SM fasting can positively help reduce SMF (Lepik & Murumaa-Mengel, 2019; Syvertsen & Enil, 2020; Scheppe, 2022).

2.1. Hypothesis Development:

- **Privacy Concerns & SM Fatigue**

Privacy concern is a major element identified in previous literature. There have been many instances when the social media giant Facebook failed to protect user privacy, causing big data leakouts (Hill, 2017). When user privacy is breached, the user may experience cyberbullying. This causes social distress creating SMF (Cao et al., 2019a). Privacy awareness affects the user psyche, they feel more stressed, and anxious. This frustration leads to unhealthy mental conditions resulting in SMF (Fan et al., 2020; Cao et al., 2019a). Hence,

H1: Higher levels of privacy concerns are positively associated with SMF

- **FoMO & SMF**

FoMO is the anxious feeling of being overlooked or not included in an experience that others, like friends or family, are currently benefiting from (Pollard, 2012). Brown & Kuss (2020) in their study discovered that overuse of SM triggers FoMO in users. People connect online to maintain relationships (Lamblin et al., 2017). FoMO is believed to be one of the leading players triggering SMF, the more friends a user has the more FoMO it may cause, creating SMF (Brown & Kuss, 2020; Hunt et al., 2018). Hence,

H2: Higher levels of FoMO are positively associated with Higher SMF

- **Self-Efficacy & SMF**

SM users deliberately compare themselves to the information presented on SM sites and believe they are at a disadvantage. This negative comparison results in low self-esteem and frustration among the users leading to SMF (Swallow & Kuiper, 1988, Brown & Kuss, 2020). The inferior comparison has a substantial role in the young one's low confidence in themselves. Because of their unhealthy mindset, they feel their skill set is insufficient for the SM standards and they reduce or stop using SM (Huang & Yuan, 2018). Hence,

H3: Lower levels of self-efficacy are positively associated with SMF

- **Information Overload & SMF**

SM users experience a constant overflow of information from various platforms, many of which may be irrelevant. Information overload causes health issues like stress, dissatisfaction, and anxiety. These common side effects were reported in multiple papers on social media fatigue (Lang, 2010; Zhang et al., 2016; Dai et al., 2020). Prolonged social media usage leads to exhaustion, a major contributor being information overload that ruins the SM experience (Gao et al., 2018). Hence,

H4: Higher levels of Information overload are positively associated with SMF

- **Tech-Time Dilemma & SMF**

Overwhelming features cause fatigue, an average user may not have use for all features of SM (Fu et al., 2020). There is also a time cost of using SM apps. Users unintentionally overspend time on SM interactions and engagements more than what they initially expected, creating guilt in them, and

leading to exhaustion (Zhang et al., 2020). Technostress is a negative psychological impact of overusing technology. Constant contact with digital technology devices and applications can psychologically overwhelm the users and create fatigue for the SM (Maier et al., 2015). Hence,

H5: Increased time-consuming tech has a positive association with SMF

- **SMF & SM Fasting**

Social media fatigue, also known as SMF, is an overwhelming emotion triggered by factors such as constantly switching between different SM platforms, dealing with excessive content, maintaining connections with friends, and information overload to keep pace with the trends. Lee et al. (2016) defined SM Fatigue as a subjective feeling of exhaustion rising from excess use of SM, high exposure to overwhelming information, and stimulants on different SM platforms. However, the intensity of SM Fatigue to its user and the user's response to SM Fatigue can vary (Ravindran et al., 2013).

SM Fasting also known as Social media fasting, involves intentionally abstaining from social media activities for a preferable duration (Larksuite, 2023; Mathenge, 2023). In recent studies, it was identified that SMF has a positive correlation with SM fasting (Xie & Tsai, 2020; Zhang et al., 2022). Users intentionally take breaks from SM platforms to improve their well-being. A popular report from Phoenix (2015) claims taking a break from SM has social connectivity and mental health benefits such as

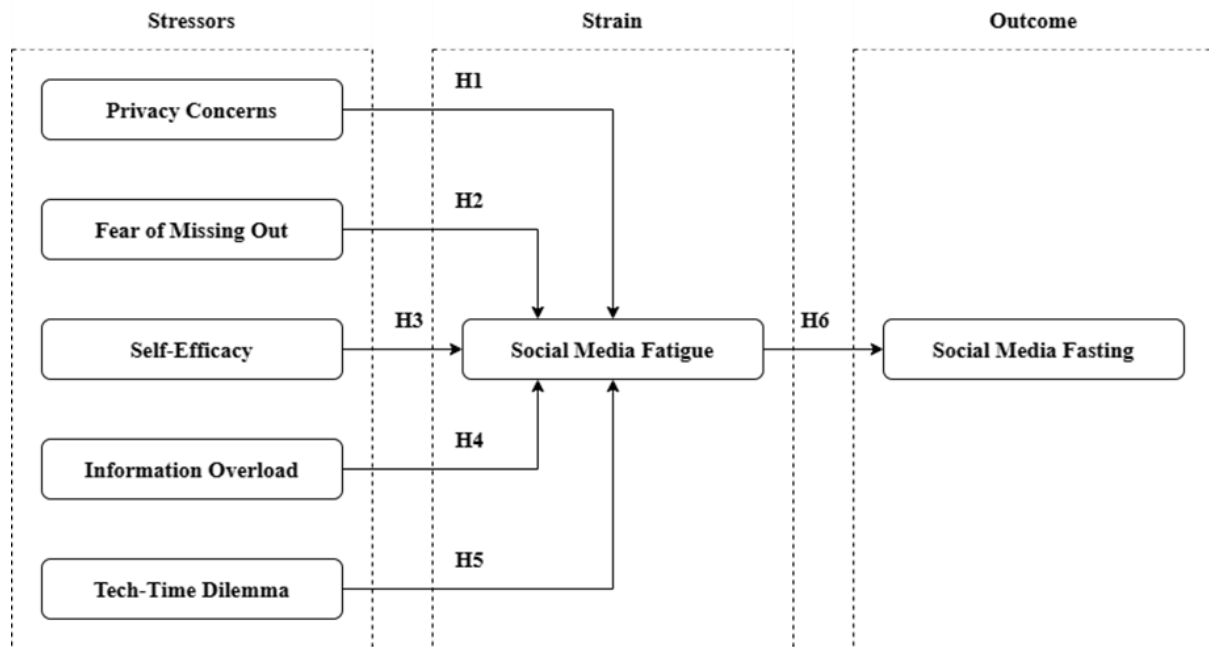
motivation for daily tasks, mental positivity, better sleep cycle, and physical well-being (Osterberg, 2016; Scheppe, 2022). Hence,

H6: Increased levels of SMF are positively correlated with SM fasting.

3. Research Methodology:

Stressor-strain-outcome also known as the SSO model has become popularly used in prior studies to identify the causes and effects of SM Fatigue (Lee, Chou et al., 2014; Lee, Son et al., 2016; Bright et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2016; Blabst & Diefenbach, 2017; Lim et al., 2017; Luqman et al., 2017). Individuals under stress frequently feel psychological exhaustion and a deterioration in their emotional stability (Zheng et al., 2021). The SSO model was previously trusted to provide insights regarding stress-related outcomes in a statistical context (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Cheung & Tang, 2010; Ayyagari et al., 2011). The components of the SSO framework, stressor, strain, and outcome represent three stages of the stress psyche, the stressors are the stimulus that causes stress, the start is the emotionally stressed stage, and the last reflects the psychological outcome or reaction due to the stress.

This current research study employs the SSO framework provided by Koeske & Koeske, (1993) to illustrate how certain negative indicators, i.e. stressors including (Privacy concerns, Fear of missing out (FoMo), Self- Efficacy, Information overload, and Tech- Time dilemma) can eventually have certain adverse consequences including SMF.



Research Model

This SSO framework was implemented for this research study because of its effectiveness and the ability to facilitate the exploration of the stressors related to SMF and the establishment of correlation due to linkages between stressors and their outcomes. The literature review indicates that the SSO framework appears to be a useful and effective instrument for exploring stress-related issues and their repercussions.

3.1. Questionnaire development & Data collection

To explore the interplay of various factors a quantitative method is used to gather primary data from suitable SM users (Generation Z, aged between 16-27) in Kolkata. The questionnaire

includes two main sections. The first part includes demographic information on a nominal scale from the targeted respondents. The second part includes questions to be answered on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and 5 represents "Strongly Agree". The purpose of these questions was to measure the level of agreement with statements related to the research variables.

3.2. Model Reliability test

The Cronbach's alpha value for all dimensions was greater than 0.70, which makes the data reliable for further studies (Schmitt, 1996; Bland & Altman, 1997; DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021).

Stressors	NO.	Questions	C. Alpha
Privacy Concern	A1	I've disclosed a lot of personal privacy information on social media. (Liu & He, 2021)	0.831
	A2	I think my personal data could be effortlessly utilized by marketers on social media platforms. (Bright et al., 2015)	
	A3	I am worried that my private data is accessible to anyone on social media platforms. (Baj-Rogowska, 2023)	
FoMO	B1	I get stressed out when I do not know what my friends are engaged in. (Przybylski et al. (2013)	0.855
	B2	I become concerned when I realize that my friends are having fun without me. (Przybylski et al. (2013)	
	B3	It is essential to me that I get the jokes that are popular among my friends. (Baj-Rogowska, 2023)	
Self-Efficacy	C1	I have valuable insights and expertise to offer on social media platforms. (Liu & He, 2021).	0.713
	C2	I can smoothly navigate through social media content shared by others and engage with it by commenting, replying, forwarding, liking, adding, or removing comments. (Liu & He, 2021).	
	C3	I am confident that I can offer valuable insights to others on social media platforms. (Liu & He, 2021).	
Information Overload	D1	I am flooded with information overload on social media. (Liu & He, 2021).	0.834
	D2	Social media is flooded with excessive advertising information. (Liu & He, 2021).	
	D3	Irrelevant content on social media often overshadows important information. (Liu & He, 2021).	
Tech-Time Dilemma	E1	Scrolling through my friends' posts consumes a significant amount of my energy and time. (Maieret al., 2015).	0.878
	E2	Continuously monitoring my friends' updates consumes an excessive amount of my energy and time. (Maieret al., 2015).	
	E3	Sorting and sifting through information consumes a significant amount of my energy and time. (Maieret al., 2015).	
SM Fatigue	F1	I am no longer interested in trying out the new features of social media. (Bright et al., 2015).	0.787
	F2	I desire to revert to the straightforward and conventional means of social connection (such as communicating via phone calls, meeting in person, and engaging in casual conversations). (Bright et al., 2015).	
	F2	When searching for information on social media sites, I frequently just give up because there is too much to deal with. (Bright et al., 2015).	
SM Fasting	G1	In the future, I anticipate using social media considerably less than I do now. (Maieret al., 2015).	0.818
	G2	Occasionally, I will take extended breaks from social media and resume using it later. (Maieret al., 2015).	
	G3	I will shut down my social media accounts. (Maieret al., 2015).	

Table 1.0: Reliability Analysis (Primary Data)

3.3. Sampling and Tools

The Primary data was gathered using a non-probability convenience sampling method and the raw data was filtered in Excel and analyzed in SPSS. In this study, correlation, regression, and other statistical methods have been used to analyze the patterns in the responses.

4. Data Analysis & Implications

4.1. Frequency Analysis of Demographic Profile

The following table (Table 2.0) represents the demographic data for the population (N=308).

56.17% of the respondents identified as male, 40.58% were female respondents and 3.25% did

not reveal their gender. The larger portion of the respondents fall into the 20-23 age group (57.79%), 27.60% of respondents were from the 24-27 age group and 14.61% were from the 16-19 age category. 35.06% of the respondents use SM for 3-4 hours a day, 26.95% use it more than 5 hours a day, 26.62% users spend 1-2 hours a day and 11.36% users spend less than 1 hour in SM. Instagram was the most widely used SM app by the users (31.82%) followed by WhatsApp (28.57%) then YouTube with 17.53% of the users using the app most frequently in a day. Also, 15.58% of the users agreed on posting multiple times in a day and 19.48% responded that they post multiple times in a week. 25.97% of respondents post content often in a month. 28.90% post rarely and 10.06% have responded they do not post anything on social media.

Parameter	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	173	56.17%
	Female	125	40.58%
	Prefer not Saying	10	3.25%
Age	16 - 19 years	45	14.61%
	20 -23 Years	178	57.79%
	24 - 27 years	85	27.60%
Average time spent on SM	< 1 Hour	35	11.36%
	1 - 2 Hours	82	26.62%
	3 - 4 Hours	108	35.06%
	> 5 Hours	83	26.95%
Frequency of Posting	Multiple times in a Day	48	15.58%
	Multiple times in a Week	60	19.48%
	Often in a Month	80	25.97%
	Rarely	89	28.90%
	I Don't	31	10.06%
Frequently used app	Instagram	98	31.82%
	Facebook/Messenger	34	11.04%
	Whatsapp	88	28.57%
	YouTube	54	17.53%
	Snapchat	17	5.52%
	LinkedIn	8	2.60%
	X (Formerly Twitter)	9	2.92%
Grand Total		308	100.00%

Table 2.0: Demographic Data Analysis (Primary Data)

4.2. Relation Between User Age and Usage Frequency

Time & Age	Female	Male	Prefer not saying	Grand Total
1 - 2 hours	29	52	1	82
16 - 19 years	4	7		11
20 - 23 years	18	33	1	52
24 - 27 years	7	12		19
3 - 4 hours	42	62	4	108
16 - 19 years	8	6	1	15
20 - 23 years	24	38	1	63
24 - 27 years	10	18	2	30
Less than 1 hour	13	19	3	35
16 - 19 years	3	6		9
20 - 23 years	4	7	2	13
24 - 27 years	6	6	1	13
More than 5 hours	41	40	2	83
16 - 19 years	3	6	1	10
20 - 23 years	25	24	1	50
24 - 27 years	13	10		23
Grand Total	125	173	10	308

Table 3.0: Age & Usage Frequency (Primary Data)

In Table 3.0, a pattern can be seen, the 16-19 age group has a higher volume of responses in the 3-4 hour a day usage group, the 20-23 age group has a higher response volume in the 5 hours daily and the 24–27-year group has a higher number of responses in every parameter. Meaning, 16-19 teenagers reduced social media usage than adults. This may be due to the availability of tech or parental guidance or any other reason but as they grow up and become independent their social media engagement grows. Then as they grow up

their life gets busy and they gradually decrease using SM.

4.3. Correlation & Regression between SM Fasting, SMF, and other dimensions & Hypothesis testing

Table 4.0 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients and corresponding p-values for various dimensions concerning Social Media Fatigue. All the associated correlations were revealed to be statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ (Dahiru, 2011).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	R	R square	ANOVA Significance
Social Media Fatigue	Privacy Concerns	0.667	0.445	< 0.001
	Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)	0.550	0.303	
	Self-Efficacy	0.633	0.401	
	Information Overload	0.773	0.597	
	Tech-Time Dilemma	0.743	0.552	

Table 4.0: Regression table between SMF & Fatigue dynamics (Primary Data)

This research follows Dancy & Reidy, (2017) and Akoglu, (2018) highlighted range to study correlation strength among the dynamics. In the current research study, it was remarked that several factors have a significant impact on the extent of SM fatigue. Information overload dominates as the most significant predictor ($r=0.773$), stressing the severe consequences of being overloaded with information. Closely followed by Tech-Time dilemmas ($r=0.743$), which showed a strong correlation with rising fatigue, emphasizing the challenge of maintaining a balance between digital connectivity. Privacy concerns ($r=0.667$) and Self-efficacy ($r=0.633$) also played substantial roles, suggesting resistance to revealing personal information and the importance of self-assurance when managing online interaction. Furthermore, Fear of missing out (FoMo) ($r=0.0550$), and the urge for constant communication also contribute significantly to increasing Social Media Fatigue. These insights indicate the importance of addressing psychological elements to regulate fatigue in our social world and provide valuable perspectives on the dynamic essence of Social Media Fatigue.

H1: With the regression value (r square) of 0.445, it can be claimed that privacy concerns do affect SM Fatigue. Our findings align with previous studies conducted by Cao et al., (2019a) and Bright et al., (2015), Privacy concerns enhance SM Fatigue as users get frightened by the potential risk involved in revealing personal information on the SM platforms which leads to selective shearing and reduced SM engagement. The high correlation value (0.667) with ANOVA significations (< 0.001), proves that hypothesis H1 was correct as SMF is dependent on Privacy concerns.

H2: Fear of missing out (FoMo) shows a moderate but still positive correlation ($R=0.550$, R square)

with SMF, indicating that SM Fatigue might occur in the users with a greater level of FoMo. This also aligns with previous works by Przybylski et al., (2013) and Dhiret et al., (2018), FoMo makes users anxious and restless by continuously refreshing the loop in their SM feeds, which increases SM Fatigue. With the ANOVA significations (<0.001), this relationship was also statistically significant and accepted hypothesis H2.

H3: Self-efficacy and SMF had a strong and positive correlation ($R=0.633$, R square = 0.401) explaining a 40.1% variance in SMF. Indicating that low self-efficacy leads to low self-esteem, resulting in a bad user experience for the SM user causing fatigue. Huang & Yuan, (2018) and Liu & He, (2021) also remarked the same kind of result in their renowned research works, SM Fatigue is driven by Self-Efficacy, which hampers their confidence to manage their own SM activities. Low self-efficacy might result in higher vulnerability and fatigue in controlling their SM. The ANOVA significance (< 0.001) shows the statistically significant relationship between these two variables and accepted hypothesis H3.

H4: Information overload showed the strongest positive correlation ($R=0.773$, R square=0.597) with SMF, explaining 59.7% of the variance. Suggesting Information overload is a major factor impacting SMF. These findings align with past studies conducted by Dai et al., (2020) and Zhang et al., (2020), SM users may find it struggling to sort and prioritize the vast amounts of information bombarding them. Furthermore, the constant flood of notifications and updates creates a buzz of distraction and fatigue. The ANOVA significance (< 0.001) provides strong supporting evidence for accepting hypothesis H4 and the significant relation between these two variables.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	R	R square	ANOVA Significance
Social media Fasting	Social Media Fatigue	0.759	0.576	< 0.001

Table 5.0: Regression table SM Fasting & SMF (Primary Data)

H5: It is observed that there is a presence of a strong and positive correlation ($R=0.743$, $R\text{ square} = 0.552$) between Tech-Time dilemmas and SM Fatigue, explaining 52.2% of the variance in SM Fatigue. Indicating users facing dilemmas in excess technology use and time management may face higher levels of SM Fatigue. These findings also aligned with past studies explored by Brown & Kuss, (2020) and Hunt et al., (2018), Tech-time dilemmas highly influence SM Fatigue by provoking conflicts between users' online and offline interactions, making it hard for users to maintain these realms which leads to stress, guilt, and dis-satisfaction. Moreover, overspending screen time disrupts quality sleep circles and overall well-being which adds to fatigue. The ANOVA significance (<0.001) proves the statistical significance relationship between these two variables and accepted hypothesis H5.

H6: Table 5.0 shows a strong positive correlation ($r=0.759$) between SMF and SM Fasting. The ANOVA significance value (<0.001) indicates the statistical reliability of this interrelationship. This strong positive correlation stresses that the rise of SMF can influence the potential of SM Fasting, the regression data, $R\text{ square}$ (0.576) shows that 57.6% of the variability of SM Fasting can be explained by SM Fatigue. These findings also align with the previous research works conducted by Maier et al., 2015; Cao & Sun, 2018; Cao et al., 2019b; Gao et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2019; Fu et al., 2020. Thus, the results satisfy the hypothesis H6.

4.4. Findings

- Instagram seems to have been the most popular SM app among the users (in Kolkata) as 31.82% voted to use it most frequently throughout the day.

- It was seen that as teens grow up to be adults their SM usage grows and it gradually decreases in the 24-27 age group as they get busier with their life.
- All dynamics had a strong positive correlation with SMF. Also, SMF and SM fasting were highly correlated. The regression values also indicated SMF can be variably affected by the selected dynamics. Additionally, SMF had significantly high (57.6%) variability in SM fasting meaning the variables impacted each other as the previous literature suggested.

4.5. Limitations & suggestions for future studies

- The study was carried out in the Kolkata area but the sample size may not be sufficient enough to represent the entire diverse demographic population of Kolkata. The users may come from different localities and the lifestyle may vary based on their cultural values. For instance, a group of friends may prefer one particular SM app over other options thus that group can change the statistical pattern of the study. So, a different sampling technique would be better.
- The observations of this study align with past literature studies but it limits the users' way to tackle fatigue only by SM fasting which may not be the best option. Implying there could be multiple paths to reduce fatigue.
- The questions used to identify the relation between self-efficacy and SMF may seem unrelated to an average user. Thus, simple

question designs should be implemented in future studies.

- A very low number of teenagers (16-19) participated in the survey as there are external factors in teenagers' decision-making process.
- Lastly, countless articles explain SM side effects but how SMF could be connected with them is not clearly explained. Furthermore, most studies on SMF focus on US demography so more studies should be done on the Asian context to understand the SMF dynamics in other cultural contexts.

5. Conclusion

This paper provides major insights that contribute to our understanding of SM Fatigue and its relation with SM fasting from the Indian perspective, especially focusing more on the Kolkata Area. Although SM is widely popular in India, the darker side of using SM has not been explored properly. This research study aims to address the gap by thoroughly analyzing crucial aspects related to SM Fatigue and SM Fasting, specifically focusing more on the ever-changing nature of Gen Z and their SM behavior. SMF and its effects on Gen-Z should be a big concern. Hill Holliday's (2018) survey reported that almost 34% of Gen-Z experience SMF in daily life and have either reduced their SM usage or stopped using it entirely in some cases (Hill Holliday, 2018).

The SSO model is applicable for stress-based research like this one but the outcome can be different so it must be studied. Furthermore, there are other initiators of SMF found in previous literature, self-disclosure, social comparison, or there can be technological cravings impacting the user experience (Swallow, Kuiper, 1988; Dhir et al., 2019; Fernandez et al., 2020).

The paper establishes and assesses five hypotheses that evaluate how stressors like Privacy concerns, Fear of missing out (FoMo), Self-Efficacy, Information overload, and Tech-Time dilemmas influence SM Fatigue, also establishing a clear relational outcome that leads to SM Fasting.

Information overload and Tech-Time Dilemmas, particularly stand out as essential indicators. The strong positive correlation between SM Fatigue and Information overload, Tech-Time dilemmas emphasizing the serious consequences of overwhelming information, and also the difficulty of finding a balance between digital connectivity.

The outcomes of this research study have some significant implications for both academics and professionals in the field. For businesses involved in social media or around social media. Understanding crucial stress factors such as Information overload or Tech-Time dilemmas can help businesses create more focused and targeted content, and help to avoid the excess overflow of unnecessary information to their audience. Recognizing the conflict of balancing digital connectivity, Brands can accomplish more favourable outcomes and long-term relationships simply by prioritizing quality content over quantity content on SM platforms. Businesses can improve user experience, refine existing strategies, and thrive more in digital worlds by employing these data. From an academic point of view, this research study bridges a gap in the existing available literature by analyzing the multifaceted nature of SM Fatigue and SM Fasting, more especially within the domain of Gen Z online behavior on various SM platforms. In conclusion, as the popularity of social media expands nationwide, exploring and understanding these stressors of SM Fatigue, which also leads to possible Social Media Fasting will be crucial in inviting new Social Media users also retaining the existing users. Fostering a possible balance between SM engagement and real-world interactions.

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