

Beyond Screen Time: How Emotional Content Shapes Social Media's Impact on Youth Mental Health

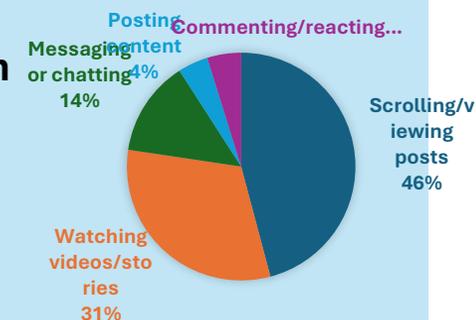
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Research Questions:

- How are social media usage behaviors correlated with depressive symptoms?
- Does sleep quality mediate the relationship between social media content exposure and depressive symptoms?
- How do the emotional tone of social-media content predict depressive symptoms?
- Can content-level feedback and visualization of social-media exposure improve users' awareness of risky engagement patterns that are associated with poorer mental health?

Analysis:

- Social media content affects users more significantly than time spent
- Sleep quality is a mediator between social media content and depression
- Mooditer* can increase user awareness of harmful media and prompt them to change



Methodology:

- Conduct a preliminary study evaluating the correlation between depression, social media content, and sleep quality
- Conduct a causality study to confirm that negative social media content consumption leads to worse sleep quality, which leads to depressive symptoms
- Create *Mooditer* through Python and machine learning software, an app that gives content-conscious feedback
- Conduct a survey comparing *Mooditer* to a time-only interface to understand the strengths and limitations

- Emotional content influences affect, sleep, and depressive symptoms, and that content-aware feedback (*Mooditer*) can increase awareness and self-regulation without compromising privacy.
- Social media's impact on youth mental health should be assessed not by screen time alone, but by the emotional and contextual qualities of content.

