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HOW SOCIAL MEDIA SHAPES TEENAGERS MENTAL HEALTH

Ergashboyeva Mahliyo Nodirjon qizi
Student of the Uzbekistan State World Language University

Zulxumor Xatamovna Bannopova
Scientific Adviser Senior Teacher of
State World Language University
Ergashboyevam691@gmail.com

Abstract

Social media has become an integral part of our daily lives in today's digital environment. Social media sites like Instagram, Tik Tok, and Twitter offer countless chances for self-expression, enjoyment, and communication. Despite these benefits, worries about social media's potential detrimental effects on mental health are mounting. According to research, excessive internet use, particularly among teens and young people, can lead to problems including anxiety, melancholy, loneliness, and distorted body image. This article examines the effects of social media on mental health as well as the reasons it is still so alluring and addicting.

Keywords: Interact, digital technologies, mental health, social media, youth, depression, anxiety, digital communication, addiction, cyberbullying, usage limits, digital literacy, comments.

Introduction

The way young people interact, study, and view the world has been profoundly altered by the quick growth of digital technologies. Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are now essential to young people's culture.

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But despite their advantages, there are worries about how they may affect mental health, especially in young adults and adolescents. advantages of social media. For younger users, social media has a number of benefits. First of all, it makes it possible to interact and communicate with peers beyond geographic borders. For people who might feel alone in their offline surroundings, this is particularly crucial. Second, social media gives people a way to express themselves by sharing their ideas, inventiveness, and accomplishments. It can also be a useful resource for information and assistance, providing access to instructional materials and mental health resources. Social media's negative effects. Despite its advantages, excessive social media use can result in a number of psychological problems. The emergence of anxiety and sadness is one of the biggest issues. Regular exposure to idealized lives and pictures can lead to irrational comparisons, which can cause low self-esteem and discontent. Additionally, cyberbullying has grown to be a major issue that has a detrimental impact on mental health. The impact of social media on mental health is complex and depends on how it is used. Moderate and purposeful use can be beneficial, while excessive and passive consumption may be harmful. It is essential for young people to develop digital literacy skills and self-awareness to manage their online behavior effectively. Parents, educators, and policymakers also play a crucial role in promoting healthy social media habits. Encouraging open discussions about online experiences and setting reasonable usage limits can help mitigate negative effects. Addiction is another problem. Many young people use the internet excessively, which can interfere with sleep cycles, decrease physical activity, and have a detrimental effect on scholastic achievement. Additionally, the desire for approval from likes and comments could lead to an emotional reliance on social media sites.

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Benefits of using social media: It's crucial to acknowledge social media's potential advantages, particularly in terms of emotional support and connection, even while a large portion of the current conversation about it centers on its dangers. By interacting with people who have similar experiences, social media enables users to create and preserve relationships. This online community can offer emotional support, especially to people who are struggling with stress or mental health issues. For example, it has been demonstrated that sites like Facebook provide substantial peer-to-peer support. Many people participate in mental health-related communities where they can ask questions, exchange stories, or just find support. People may feel less alone and more capable of managing their mental health as a result of these connections. Social media may also be a tool for learning, accessing mental health resources, and expressing oneself. Through shared content, users can acquire information, discuss personal issues in a nonjudgmental setting, and even learn coping mechanisms..

Social media's drawbacks: Social media presents serious threats to mental health despite its apparent advantages, especially for young adults and adolescents. "Facebook depression," a word used to characterize the emotional repercussions of comparing one's life to carefully chosen posts, is one emerging problem. Feelings of inadequacy, jealousy, and loneliness might result from excessive expectations brought on by constant exposure to idealized images and positive updates. These forums may also serve as venues for exclusion, severe criticism, and cyberbullying. Particularly young users could experience pressure to live up to online norms, which could have an impact on their sense of value. Teens may even resort to dangerous habits like substance abuse or food disorders in certain situations, particularly if these behaviors are accepted in particular online communities. Social media's drawbacks Furthermore, excessive or passive usage of social media might actually lower the quality of in-person relationships, despite the platform's promise of connection. People might start substituting

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shallow online interactions for in-person conversations, which would hinder their capacity to build genuine and profound connections. Stress and anxiety can also be brought on by the continual need for approval, attention, and likes. Social media has a complicated psychological impact. When used excessively or in hazardous ways, it can lead to mental health issues even if it can provide emotional relief, connection, and helpful knowledge. This essay will examine the particular mechanisms—such as addiction, social comparison, and passive use—that account for the wide range of effects that social media has on individuals. Developing healthier online habits requires an awareness of both the advantages and the dangers.

Notification Triggers and Social Pressure: Features like read receipts, typing indicators, and push alerts put users under social pressure to act fast. Because of this urgency, consumers spend more time on screens and find it more difficult to detach, even when they want to take a break. **Adolescent Vulnerability:** Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to these consequences. Their brains are still growing, especially in the parts that regulate emotions and self-control. This increases the likelihood that they may adopt harmful usage habits and become emotionally dependent on social media comments.

Natural stopping places are eliminated by features like limitless scrolling and video autoplay. Users are able to keep going for extended periods of time without noticing how much time has gone by. This produces a "flow state," in which concentration is maintained but awareness of time and the need for rest diminishes.. **Personalization and Algorithmic Traps:** To provide tailored content, algorithms monitor user behavior. Although this makes platforms interesting, it also leaves users trapped in "filter bubbles," where they only see content that supports their opinions or arouses strong feelings, both of which lead to more time spent online.

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Conclusion:

Social media is still changing how people express themselves, communicate, and get help. This essay has emphasized social media's dual effects on mental health, highlighting both its capacity to foster emotional wellbeing and its propensity to cause psychological harm. Platforms can provide access to mental health services, social connection, and validation, but they can also promote addictive behaviors, negative self-comparison, and emotional dependence, especially in young adults and adolescents. The way people engage with these platforms has a significant impact on the psychological effects of social media use. Collaboration between researchers, mental health specialists, educators, and tech developers is crucial going forward. When they work together, they can design digital environments that promote rather than undermine mental health. Promoting healthier involvement and digital literacy should be the goal of public awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, and platform-level changes. Society can maintain the advantages of social media while addressing its drawbacks by adopting a fair, evidence-based strategy that enables users, particularly younger ones, to use the internet responsibly and safely.

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