

5

The Effects of Social Media on Society: A Case Study on Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to identify and determine the effects of social media on society in the context of adolescents. To achieve the objectives, a qualitative approach using secondary data was applied by collecting information from journal articles and government and international websites. Therefore, this paper discusses both the positive and negative effects of social media on adolescents. The positive effects identified in this paper are gaining knowledge, improving relationships, finding a job, being in touch with the world, and enhancing social media as e-commerce. The negative effects of social media identified in this paper include cyberbullying, hacking, addiction, cheating, and humiliation. Based on the presentations and arguments on the results of previous research findings, some recommendations were made.

Keywords: Social Media, Society, Adolescents, Positive and Negative effects.

Introduction

New developments in technology have changed people's habits, allowing them to find real things in virtual worlds. Technology has changed our lifestyle, not only the way we communicate, but also the attitudes and relationships we have with people of different ages in our society, both for the better and for the worse. Social media is one of the major beneficiaries of the technology in facilitating knowledge sharing among people. Today, Social media consists of societies or people interacting with each other. Social media combined with technology has greatly

improved our communication process. Appearances on social media have become a part of daily life these days, especially among young people. Most young people are rapidly moving from electronic media such as TV viewers and radio listeners to social media across all age groups. Social media influence is largely directed at adolescents, as the percentage of adolescents is well suited for the shift to social media. So, the purpose of this paper is to summarise and present both the positive and negative effects of social media, as well as some recommendations for policymakers so that negative impacts can be minimized for the benefit of users and society at large.

Literature Review

Undoubtedly, social media has become popular all over the world due to significant technological developments. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat have gained admiration over time and today's young people are attracted to many social networking sites due to their attractive features¹. Social media offers young people new opportunities for online learning and plays an important role in improving vocabulary and pronunciation². Students have developed strong habits of visiting various social networking sites, which interfere with their learning. Recent findings show that most young people are preoccupied with their studies and work and are less able to learn³.

Despite being distracted from their studies, they develop friendly and social bonds with their environment⁴. One important effect of these networks is on students' academic performance, and several experimental studies have found that unproductive time spent on social networking sites harms students' grades⁵.

It was discovered that 82.6% of young people agreed that social media had a significant impact on their social lives⁶. Most young people use social media before or after every activity; they do not interact with their peers, but instead, communicate with their social friends, and they are becoming less social⁷. Most young people use social media for social rather than educational purposes. Social networking sites have some influence on young people's language⁸.

Methodology

Secondary data from research journals, newspapers, websites, university publications, and governmental and international statistical articles were collected to provide a reliable and valid platform for social media dissemination of the highlighted topics.

Results and Discussions

There is no denying the benefits of social media right now, especially for managing personal, social, political, and public life. Through social media, people can communicate with each other from one part of the globe to another. In the digital age, social media is seen as a sophisticated invention that makes our lives easier than ever before. Internet-based technologies facilitate the exchange of ideas, information, opinions, and thoughts⁹. According to statistics, over 800 social media platforms are used by users, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, WeChat, Google+, LinkedIn, Viber, VK, Pinterest, and others¹⁰. As of January 2023, there were 5.16 billion internet users worldwide, which is 64.4 percent of the world's population of this total, 4.76 billion, or 59.4 percent of the world's population, were social media users¹¹. According to recent reports, Facebook is the most popular social media platform, with 2.96 billion monthly active users, followed by YouTube, WhatsApp, and Instagram¹².

Social media is constantly expanding, advancing, and growing all over the world. The total number of social media users is expected to exceed 4.4 billion by 2025, accounting for roughly half of the world's population¹³. Most adolescents used social media for fun and entertainment. Digital content creators and influencers are highly present on social media. Short videos like Instagram Stories, TikTok, IGTV, YouTube content, and hosting live streams are popular types of content published on such accounts. TikTok is booming as the COVID-19 outbreak forces millions of people to work, learn and have fun from home.

Social Media and its Effects

The use of social media is on the rise, and the number of users is growing rapidly around the world. More adults and teenagers are using social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, WeChat, WhatsApp, etc. Adolescents are more likely to become addicted to social media. The use of social media has a significant influence and impact on the social lives of today's adolescents. It has shaped an alternative innovative world as well as a vast domain of information, interconnectivity, and communication that cannot be initiated through social communication and interaction among adolescents. According to a Pew Internet report, 95 percent of adolescents now have full access to smartphones, and 45 percent of them are constantly online¹⁴. Aside from this report, the survey found that 31 percent of adolescents believe social media has mostly positive effects, 24 percent believe it has mostly negative effects, and 45 percent believe it has neither positive nor negative effects on

them¹⁵ adolescents are a unique group of social media users. They are one of the first to grow up surrounded by communication technology so each of them is influenced by social media in different ways. Adolescents are currently experiencing many problems due to the overuse of social media because they are going through a rapid period of development, growth, and maturation so there are two types of social media effects on society: positive impacts on society and negative impacts on society, especially on adolescents.

Positive Impacts of Social Media

Adolescents benefited from social media use in many ways, including education, improved relationships, employment opportunities, exposure to the world, movement influence, and social media such as e-commerce¹⁶. Today, no one can deny that Google is a full-time teacher for every teenager, student, and knowledge-seeker. Besides Google, YouTube, Wikipedia, Facebook, and Instagram have become good sites for knowledge acquisition and exchange. Because knowledge is increased by imparting it, not storing it, many social media influence users to share knowledge in many ways. adolescents' learning styles are changing as technology advances. They live in a technological world, so they gain technological capability early. In recent times, social media has become an important part of adolescents' life. Adolescents entertain themselves by using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others. They now rely on social media to communicate with one another. As a result, it becomes a basic requirement for them.

Social media are a technological blessing from the standpoint of education. Social networking technology allows us to share a thought or two. It helps people on one end of the world connect and share ideas with people on the other end. Not only is it a source of entertainment, but it is also influential. Its advantages can be used to achieve positive results in education. For example, if a student is absent from class for any reason, how can they obtain their class notes? Social media groups, such as WhatsApp groups, can help you collect class notes from other friends who have attended your class. When teachers assign group assignments, students can communicate with each other via social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, or Viber groups. Students cannot imagine an education system without social media support.

Social media is an important contributor to the formation of new relationships among adolescents. Facebook, Skype, and other social media platforms have supported greatly communication and relationship building. Making new friends, reconnecting with childhood friends, and communicating with relatives via social media are all very common nowadays so social networking sites can assist young people

in connecting with friends. Social networking sites allow adolescents to live a chat-free life.

Many organizations have created their pages on Facebook to share information with others. Adolescents who are looking for work have benefited from getting jobs through their pages. Furthermore, its influence on recruitment is growing. Companies find suitable candidates for available vacancies in their organization by creating profile pages on social media, particularly LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, in addition to the company website. According to freelancers, it is a fantastic opportunity to earn money and live a happy life outside of their primary job. Most of them get this job opportunity through social media, so we can measure how well social media supports job opportunities.

Believe it or not, social media connects people all over the world, even if it appears that social media is disconnecting people from their surroundings. World news can spread around the world in a short time after an incident. Facebook live streaming and video calling options make our lives easier. If people don't use social media on their smartphones, they may not realize how much they rely on it. Adolescents can use social media to raise social awareness and convey kindness.

Have you ever considered that every day, about 250 billion photographs are published on Facebook's timeline by users?¹⁷ Everyone wants to look good in their image, and adolescents are now being persuaded to workout to become physically healthy and appealing. Indirectly, social media influences physical activity among adolescents, demonstrating that social media has a positive impact on society.

In this age of technological innovation, adolescents are living amazing lifestyles through social media. They showcase their skills and creativity on social media. Adolescents are far more advanced than adults when it comes to using technology, especially on social media. These days, many adolescents create YouTube channels to showcase their expertise and skills. For example, a person who can dance creates a video, uploads the video, and shares it with viewers through a YouTube channel. So nowadays many adolescents have benefited from social media.

Social media also influences politics, both positively and negatively. Politics and elections are well-known phenomena that have influenced ordinary people through social media. Politics has recently experienced several incidents in which social media played an important role. With so much hype surrounding social media and more young people joining in, political parties have finally recognized its significance. Everyone is

recognizing this new powerful medium for interacting with the masses and getting them to participate, allowing for better communication. Social media has sparked a new political debate. The new political domain is filled with commercials, blog posts, and hundreds of tweets. Social media shifts the power of political messages from the mass media model and places them firmly in the peer-to-peer, public conversation.

Apart from the numerous positive effects of social media on society, especially adolescents, there are some notable negative effects social media has on our society social media might affect users intentionally or unintentionally. Cyberbullying, hacking, addiction, cheating, and humiliation have all been studied as negative effects of social media on adolescents.

Negative Impacts of Social Media

In this digital age, cyberbullying has touched the vast majority of adolescents who use social media. Cyberbullying is a type of bullying that occurs on electronic devices such as cellphones, laptops, tablets, and desktops cyberbullying can occur via timeline status, text, online, or applications in social media where adolescents post their content, images, and thoughts. Cyberbullying is defined as the spreading of someone else's negative content, terrible images, and destructive and cruel content on social media adolescents can be embarrassed or humiliated by sharing personal information. Most students of middle and high school have been identified as victims girls are more likely to be victims of cyberbullying than boys. These victims attempt suicide because they are depressed.

Another negative effect of social media on adolescents is hacking. Hacking individuals on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter can expose personal data and photos. Several personal social media accounts were hacked by hackers, resulting in financial loss. Many adolescents' Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter accounts have been hacked, and the hacker subsequently uploaded their intimate images and videos to the public to shame the individual. The administrators of these social media platforms always advise users to use case-sensitive passwords to ensure the security of their social media accounts.

Addiction is the most dangerous negative effect of social media on adolescents. Adolescents are becoming increasingly addicted to social media, to the point where it is called a social sickness. Addiction to social media has isolated today's adolescents from social life. They waste precious time hiding on social media. They will not be successful in life if they cannot overcome their addiction. Social media use is very

necessary for our daily lives, but excessive social media use can lead to addiction.

Social media can harm a person's reputation and dignity through the dissemination of fake social media accounts and fake news. Apart from these major negative effects of social media, there are some minor negative effects such as the glamorization of drugs and alcohol, adultery and relationship troubles, reputation, and health issues. Adolescents suffer from many physical and psychological problems due to excessive use of social media. The majority of adults are addicted to social media, whether intentionally or unconsciously. Nowadays adults become the victim of anxiety and depression due to excessive use of social media. There is no substitute for self-discipline and personal determination to make their social and personal life more effective to control their excessive use of social media.

Recommendation

We have made recommendations based on secondary sources:

- Turning off smartphone notifications is the best approach to reduce or eliminate the negative effects of social media on adolescents. Unnecessary notification not only wastes time but is also annoying.
- Adolescents should spend their time properly on social media for improved social networking rather than squandering it on casual chats and posts on WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.
- It is encouraged that social media users especially adolescents recall the objective of utilizing social media and continue to use informational sites while also being conscious of privacy risks associated with the usage of apps.
- Spending more time with loved ones such as family, friends, and relatives is one of the best solutions to eliminate the negative effects of social media.

Conclusion

The content of this paper includes a discussion of the effect of social media on adolescents. Adolescents are the future power of every society and nation. According to the studies, social media has both positive and negative effects on adolescents. Adolescents have been regarded as the most susceptible group in our society, who have profited and been injured in some way by social media platforms such as Facebook,

Twitter, Instagram, and others. The conclusion of this paper demonstrated that, despite its drawbacks, social media is a blessing for some people in this current period. This paper has made specific recommendations to address the issue of social media's negative impact on adolescents. Overall, social media can be beneficial if used wisely and in the proper proportions.

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