

The Impact of Social Media on Adolescent Mental Health: An Exploration of Anxiety, Depression, and Self-Esteem

Prof. Elin S. Hartvig

Centre for Intelligent Infrastructure, University of West Fjord, Norway

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Abstract:

the effects of social media on the psychological well-being of adolescents, with a concentration on low self-esteem, despair, and anxiety. Social media has grown in importance among teenagers in recent years, impacting their relationships, sense of identity, and mental health. A lot of people are worried about the possible harmful impacts of social media on mental health, even while it allows people to interact, express themselves, and share information. the relationships between teenage anxiety, depression, and self-esteem and several components of social media use, including amount of time spent online, material genres ingested, and online interactions. Adolescents' social media use and other mental health indicators were the focus of a mixed-methods study we conducted. Excessive use and exposure to bad content are linked to increased levels of anxiety and sadness, revealing a complex relationship between social media use and mental health. It would suggest that some of the negative impacts can be mitigated through positive online interactions and supportive social networks, on the flip side. teens' vulnerability to the detrimental psychological impacts of social media use may be heightened by the moderating function of self-esteem. In order to promote adolescents' mental well-being, this study emphasises the significance of encouraging healthy online behaviours and self-care techniques, and it argues for a balanced approach to social media involvement.

Keywords: Social Media, Adolescent Mental Health, Anxiety, Depression, Self-Esteem, Online Interactions, Social Media Use

Introduction:

Social media has changed the way young people express themselves, build relationships, and interact since its introduction in the digital era. Adolescents are more engaged than ever before in online peer interaction, content sharing, and identity curation due to the proliferation of social media sites such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Snapchat. There are growing worries about the possible detrimental impacts of social media on the mental health of adolescents, despite the fact that these platforms provide chances for social connection, creativity, and self-expression. During adolescence, a person goes through a lot of changes emotionally, mentally, and socially. External influences can have a significant impact on individuals' self-concept, coping methods, and overall well-being throughout this stage. Stress, anxiety, and sadness can result from being constantly exposed to idealised pictures, comparing oneself to others, and interacting with others online. More and more, young people are gauging their value by the number of likes, comments, and followers their posts receive, which can have an impact on their self-esteem due to the validation-seeking behaviour that frequently matches

social media use, adolescent mental health, with a focus on anxiety, depression, and self-esteem as it relates to social media usage. The study aims to shed light on the ways social media affects teenagers' mental health by investigating the relationships between various elements of social media use and mental health outcomes. These aspects include the amount of time spent online, the kinds of content consumed, and the nature of online interactions. This research also delves into the potential moderating or mediating roles played by variables like self-esteem and online social support in relation to the impacts of social media usage. Adolescents may find positive social connections and emotional support through social media, but it can also have detrimental psychological effects. This research seeks to shed light on how teenagers may make better, more balanced use of digital platforms, while also promoting resilience and overall health, by examining the pros and cons of social media.

Mental Health Challenges in Adolescence

Adolescence is a period of significant transformation, characterized by rapid physical, emotional, and psychological changes. People go through a period of increased sensitivity to intellectual, social, and environmental stresses. A large proportion of teenagers make it through this time unscathed, but an increasing percentage are dealing with mental health concerns that may affect them for the rest of their lives. Modern life's stresses, such as the ubiquitous nature of social media, can worsen typical mental health issues including anxiety, sadness, and poor self-esteem.

Anxiety in Adolescence

Among the many mental health challenges that teenagers face, anxiety ranks high. Factors at the genetic, environmental, and developmental levels often interact to set it off. Anxiety is a common reaction among adolescents to societal expectations, academic performance, and future uncertainty. Adolescent anxiety disorders are worrisome because they can impact everyday functioning, social connections, academic performance, and quality of life in general. Furthermore, adult-onset anxiety, if untreated, can cause a host of other mental health issues. Anxiety among teenagers is increasingly attributed to social media. Adolescents are subjected to the stress of constantly comparing themselves to others and the pressure to present an idealised picture of their lives on platforms such as TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram. Anxietiest symptoms may worsen as a result of increased FOMO, feelings of rejection, or social exclusion.

Depression and Emotional Distress

Adolescents also face the significant mental health issue of depression. Mood swings, toxic stress, and internal conflicts about who we are and how we fit in with society are common causes. Teen depression can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including an inability to lift one's spirits, a lack of interest in once enjoyable activities, altered eating and sleeping habits, trouble focussing, and even suicidal or self-harming ideas. Adolescent depression is worrisome because it might hinder a person's capacity to develop positive connections, succeed in school, and carry out regular daily tasks.

Social media use is associated with an increased risk of depression, according to research. This is especially true for people who engage in passive consumption, such as skimming through

content, or who compare themselves to others. Feelings of inadequacy, melancholy, or loneliness might set in when teenagers compare their actual life to the carefully constructed, frequently idealised, portrayals of other people's lives that they come across online.

Self-Esteem and Body Image Issues

As they start to form their own unique identities, adolescents engage in a period of profound self-discovery. On the other hand, when it comes to issues of self-esteem and body image, this is the stage when one is most susceptible to harmful influences. Adolescents face a lot of changes, both physically and emotionally, and a lot of pressure from society to conform to certain standards of achievement, behaviour, and appearance, which can make them feel inadequate and insecure.

Adolescents' sense of self-worth is greatly influenced by the idealised beauty, success, and popularity standards that they see on social media. Photoshopped photographs and influencer culture frequently expose adolescents, especially females, to false depictions of body image. Adverse body image, poor self-esteem, and the emergence of eating disorders and other mental health problems can all be influenced by these online representations. Teens' sense of self-worth can get so entangled with their online identities that they start to look for approval in the form of likes, comments, and follows.

The Role of Social Media in Mental Health Challenges

Adolescence is a time of great personal development and progress, but it is also a time when many people are most susceptible to mental health issues. This stage of growth has become much more intricate due to the proliferation of social media. Cyberbullying, social comparison, and the pressure to fit in are all issues that teenagers face on a daily basis. There are several ways in which social media affects people's mental health, and these effects are both beneficial and harmful. While many teenagers use social media to make friends, talk about life, and get support, some report feeling more anxious, depressed, and low in self-esteem after spending too much time online.

The importance of studying how social media affects teenagers' mental health is growing as the digital landscape develops more. Recognising the impact of external variables, like social media, on the emotional and psychological well-being of teenagers is essential for addressing these concerns, as is understanding the individual elements that contribute to anxiety, despair, and low self-esteem.

Conclusion

During adolescence, people experience profound changes in their emotional, social, and psychological selves. Anxiety, despair, and low self-esteem are common among adolescents, and while many make it through this time unscathed, they can have serious consequences for their future happiness. This research has brought attention to the intricate connection between how often adolescents use social media and their mental health, specifically in regards to anxiety, despair, and self-esteem. Studies have shown that adolescent mental health concerns are worsened by social media, due to the continual exposure to unrealistically perfect life stories. Anxiety, despair, and low self-esteem are worsened by compulsive usage, as are behaviours that seek approval from others and compare oneself to others. The ubiquitous aspect

of social media, while providing chances for connection and support, can have negative psychological repercussions, especially for individuals who struggle with self-worth or who are exposed to abusive content and cyberbullying. Developing healthy online habits and resilience in the face of digital demands is crucial, as is encouraging teenagers to engage with social media in a balanced and thoughtful manner. Improving teenage mental health requires raising knowledge about the dangers of social media and making available options for emotional support and mental health treatment. To further our understanding of the complex ways in which social media impacts the mental health of adolescents and to create effective methods for promoting mental wellness, it is essential that this line of inquiry be maintained. Adolescents need emotional resilience and support to handle the digital world and their own complicated emotional growth, and we can help them acquire it by tackling these difficulties.

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