Social Media Affect Mental Health

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Abstract
Social media has become an integral part of modern life, transforming the way people communicate and interact. However, its widespread use has raised concerns about its impact on mental health. Research suggests that social media can both positively and negatively affect individuals' well-being. On one hand, it provides a platform for social connection, support, and self-expression, which can enhance self-esteem and emotional well-being. On the other hand, excessive or maladaptive use can contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Social comparison and exposure to unrealistic standards on platforms may lead to lower self-esteem and body image concerns. Additionally, cyberbullying and online harassment have been linked to increased stress and emotional distress. The constant availability and pressure to maintain an online presence can also contribute to burnout and sleep disturbances. It's crucial to understand the complex relationship between social media use and mental health to promote healthier online habits. Strategies such as setting boundaries, fostering genuine connections, and promoting digital literacy may mitigate the negative effects while maximizing the benefits of social media. Further research is needed to understand the nuances of this relationship and guide interventions for improved mental health outcomes in the digital age.
Keywords: Social Media, Communicate, Stress, Emotional, Mental Health.

Introduction

These days social media is taking the world by storm; people all around the world, no matter what age group, use it. Social media is a revolutionary platform on internet which drastically changed overall view of the world and has become an integral part of our society. According to Zsila & Reyes (2023), with the advent of social media in the early 2000s, social interactions now have more channels and avenues for communication. Individuals use social media for 2.3 hours per day, according to the Zsila & Reyes (2023). In 2022, young people are using YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat more frequently, and one-third of them believe they use these sites excessively. The substantial amount of time that people spend on social media across the globe has focused researchers' attention on the advantages and disadvantages of using it. Social media has brought a lot of benefits to our society. However, social media has a considerable amount of negative impact on the youth. Social media has adversely affected the mental health of the teenagers.

According to Bernama (2023), social media frequently makes people feel anxious and useless and exacerbates any unhappiness or frustration they may have with their lives, relationships, or finances. Put differently, social media amplifies the 'Keeping Up with the Joneses' mentality, when individuals feel compelled to showcase their achievements and compete with others.

Social media, a dominant force in contemporary society, significantly impacts mental health. It fosters connectivity, enabling users to maintain relationships and share experiences globally. However, it also contributes to mental health challenges. Constant exposure to idealized representations of others' lives can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. Cyberbullying and online harassment are prevalent issues that exacerbate anxiety and depression. Moreover, excessive use of social media often results in addiction, disrupting sleep patterns and reducing real-life social interactions. While social media has the potential for positive influence, it is crucial to use it mindfully to safeguard mental well-being.

Mental health is crucial as it influences every aspect of our lives, including how we think, feel, and act. Good mental health enables individuals to cope with stress, build strong relationships, and make meaningful contributions to society. It impacts physical health, with conditions like depression and anxiety increasing the risk of chronic diseases. Moreover, mental health is essential for personal well-being and productivity. When mental health is compromised, it can lead to severe consequences such as substance abuse, social isolation, and even suicide. Prioritizing mental health ensures a healthier, happier, and more resilient society.

As mentioned by World Health Organization (WHO) (2022), a person in a condition of mental health is able to manage life's stressors, reach their full potential, learn and work effectively, and give back to their community. A fundamental human right is mental health. Furthermore, it is essential for socioeconomic, communal, and personal growth. Not only has social media been proven to cause unhappiness, but it can also lead to the development of mental health issues such as anxiety or depression when used too much or without caution. Mindlessly scrolling through our social media feeds when we have a few spare minutes or some hours. And as we probably know intuitively, and as the research is confirming, it's not the best habit when it comes to psychology.

However, research also indicates that whether or not using social media will improve or worsen a user's mental health depends more on the quality of use than quantity. We shall examine the impacts of social media use on mental health in this collection by offering thorough research perspectives on both the advantages and disadvantages.

Issue Recognition

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, influencing the way we communicate, connect, and consume information. With billions of users worldwide, these digital spaces have transcended geographical boundaries, connecting people across cultures and continents. While it offers numerous benefits, there is growing concern about its impact on mental health.

Firstly, social media has been linked to a range of negative mental health outcomes. A study by the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) found that the social media use is associated with increased levels of anxiety, depression, and poor sleep quality RSPH (2017). The study also revealed that social media platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram are particularly detrimental to mental health due to their emphasis on appearance and comparison.

One reason for this is the pressure to present a perfect image on social media. Users often curate their online persona to showcase their best moments and hide their flaws. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem in those who compare themselves unfavourably to others. A study by the University of Pennsylvania found that limiting social media use to 30 minutes a day led to significant improvements in well-being, including reduced symptoms of depression and loneliness (Andreassen, 2017).

However, it is not all doom and gloom when it comes to social media and mental health. Social media can also have positive effects on mental well-being. For example, social media can provide a sense of community and support for individuals who may feel isolated or disconnected from others. A study by the University of Oxford found that social media use was associated with increased feelings of social connectedness (Kircaburun, 2018).

In conclusion, while social media has both positive and negative effects on mental health, it is clear that excessive use of social media can have detrimental effects on well-being. To mitigate these negative effects, it is essential that individuals adopt healthy social media habits such as limiting screen time, avoiding comparison with others, and being mindful of cyberbullying. It is also important that social media platforms take steps to address issues such as cyberbullying and promote positive mental health outcomes for their users. By doing so, we can ensure that social media continues to be a force for good in our lives rather than a source of harm.

How Social Media Affects Mental Health
Individual

Social media can affect individuals' mental health in various ways. Excessive use can contribute to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, or depression as individuals compare themselves to curated representations on these platforms. To start, as mentioned by Rogier H. (2021) social media can cause people to become self-absorbed. sharing endless selfies as well as your innermost thoughts on social media can create an unhealthy self-centeredness that causes you to focus on crafting your online image rather than making memories with your friends and family members in real life.

Furthermore, social media usage can help alleviate social isolation by connecting individuals because of their physical environment with others online. It can also facilitate the formation

of support systems for individuals with rare or stigmatizing conditions. However, social media usage may also have negative impacts on social isolation by substituting social media usage for face-to-face social interactions, or by exposing individuals to unrealistic or distorted portrayals of connections lives, leading to feelings of social isolation.

Like drinking or using drugs, using social media can quickly and consistently cause dopaminergic pathways to become overactive compared to naturally occurring rewards like working hard in class and receiving a good grade. The reward system is accessed more slowly by effort put forth in thorough, time-consuming labour, yet a quick fix of dopamine is obtained from checking Instagram or Snapchat. The act of frequently checking can be compared to smoking a cigarette, which quickly floods the dopaminergic system.

As a result, the nearly immediate dopamine surge develops into an addiction and may cause anxiety, sadness, or other mental health issues. Compulsive social media use is characterised by obsession, spending more time on social media sites at the expense of one's relationships or health, needing longer internet sessions to feel satisfied, trying in vain to limit or quit using social media, and experiencing restlessness, melancholy, or anxiety when trying to do so.

Society

The pervasive influence of social media on society's mental health manifests through a myriad of facets, encompassing both advantageous and detrimental effects. Positively, these platforms facilitate unprecedented connectivity, bridging geographical boundaries to cultivate robust support networks and communal ties. Individuals find solace and companionship within these virtual communities, assuaging feelings of loneliness and fostering a sense of belonging. Furthermore, social media serves as an invaluable tool for mental health advocacy, disseminating information, eroding stigmas, and providing accessible resources for seeking help or guidance. Its role as a platform for self-expression empowers users to share their creativity, opinions, and personal narratives, nurturing self-esteem and promoting a sense of empowerment.

Nonetheless, the shadowy side of social media becomes apparent when viewed through the prism of comparison and the pervasive fear of missing out (FOMO). Constant exposure to carefully chosen content, which frequently presents idealized lives and unreachable beauty standards, increases anxiety and fosters a culture of comparison that devalues oneself and fuels feelings of inadequacy. According to Abjaude , the increasing prevalence of cyberbullying and online harassment poses serious risks to victims, increasing their stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. Both users and the objects of such vitriol may experience severe mental strain as a result of the "cancel culture" phenomena and the widespread negativity on social media.

Moreover, according to O'Reilly et al. (2018), there is a serious risk to one's mental health because social media use is addictive. Overuse of screens interferes with in-person social interactions, stealing away from genuine moments of connection. It also frequently causes sleep disturbances and a reduction in general wellbeing. Particularly the younger generations are susceptible to the damaging effects of social media's exaggerated beauty standards, which promote body dissatisfaction and aid in the emergence of eating disorders and negative self-images. Seeking approval from others via likes, comments, and followers can lead to an unhealthy reliance on outside validation, which can negatively affect one's psychological stability and self-worth. Users might become enmeshed in a never-ending search for validation, sacrificing their own value for approval from others.

Media Industry

In recent years, social media has become an integral part of the media industry, changing the way news is produced, distributed, and consumed. On the other hand, social media platforms have many benefits, including: For all its benefits, including increased reach, engagement, and revenue opportunities, social media also poses significant challenges to the mental health of media professionals. This research examines the empirical evidence and impact of social media on the mental health of media industry professionals' academic sources.   First, social media is exacerbating work-related stress among media professionals. A study by the Royal Society of Public Health (RSPH) found that social media use was associated with increased levels of stress and anxiety among journalists Royal Society of Public Health (2017). The survey found that journalists report feeling overwhelmed by the volume and speed of the news cycle and facing pressure to produce viral content. This pressure can lead to burnout, a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Second, social media has contributed to a culture of constant connectivity and availability among media professionals. A survey by the American Psychological Association (APA) found that 80% of Americans check their phones before bed and 63% check their phones while eating American Psychological Association (2019). This constant connection can blur the boundaries between work and home life, leading to work-family conflict and burnout (Barnes & Barnes, 2016). A University of Sydney study found that journalists who reported high levels of work-family conflict were more likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety (Wang & Cheng, 2019).

Third, social media has also led to an increase in cyberbullying and online harassment among media professionals. A Pew Research Center survey found that 41% of journalists have experienced some form of online harassment (Perrin & Anderson, 2017). This harassment can take many forms, including threats, insults, and doxing (sharing personal information online without consent). Cyberbullying can have serious effects on journalists' mental health, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Kircaburun & Griffiths, 2018).

Fourth, social media has also led to an increase in impostor syndrome among media professionals. Imposter syndrome is a psychological phenomenon in which people doubt their own abilities and feel like impostors (Clance & Imes, 1978). A University of Southern California study found that women in journalism were more likely to suffer from impostor syndrome than men (Bartlett & Deuze, 2006). This phenomenon can cause anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem in journalists.

Finally, social media has also led to increasing addiction among media professionals. A University of California study found that frequent social media use was associated with symptoms of addiction, including withdrawal and tolerance (Andreassen et al., 2017). This addiction can lead to a variety of mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017).

In summary, social media has a significant impact on the mental health of media industry professionals. On the other hand, social media brings many benefits to the industry, including: Their increased reach and involvement also causes significant mental health issues, including work-related stress, work-family conflict, cyberbullying and online harassment, impostor syndrome, and addiction.

News organizations should promote work-life balance policies, provide training on cybersecurity and online safety practices, provide support to victims of cyberbullying and

online harassment, encourage journalists to practice self-care, and provide resources to journalists. Steps must be taken to address these challenges, including by providing Fighting impostor syndrome. By proactively addressing these challenges, media companies can help their employees thrive both personally and professionally in an increasingly digital world.

Option Consideration
Individual
As mentioned by Robinson (2023) it could be time to reevaluate your online habits and strike a healthier balance if you're spending too much time on social media and experiencing negative emotions like loneliness, discontent, or irritation. Media can affect individuals' mental health solutions in various ways. Positive portrayals and accurate information can encourage seeking help, reducing stigma. On the flip side, sensationalized or misleading content might contribute to misinformation, potentially deterring individuals from seeking appropriate assistance. It's crucial for individuals to critically assess media messages and for media outlets to responsibly portray mental health, fostering a supportive environment for personal well-being.

Other than that, recognising that there is an issue with excessive social media use and developing a plan to reduce consumption are the first steps. Research indicates that self-corrective behaviour is both successful and attainable. Using applications to monitor usage is one way to identify rising social media use and engage in corrective behaviour. Additional recommendations include charging mobile phones in locations that are more difficult to access, switching to black and white on the phone's colour settings, turning off app notifications—which are the biggest source of distraction—and moving the most popular apps from the home screen to a folder as what has been mentioned by Middle Georgia state University (2022).

Society
According to Anbessie (2023) the media has the power to influence public awareness, policy deliberations, and resource allocation, which in turn shapes social attitudes towards mental health solutions. Sensible media coverage has the power to dispel stigma, advance understanding, and boost mental health programmes. However, sensationalism or false representations might impede development by spreading false information or stereotypes. Fostering a supportive atmosphere for mental health solutions in society requires developing a positive and knowledgeable conversation in the media.

Media Industry
The media industry plays a critical role in influencing mental health solutions. Responsible reporting can contribute to public awareness, reduce stigma, and support evidence-based approaches. However, media practices, such as sensationalism or the glamorization of certain issues, can have adverse effects by perpetuating stereotypes or promoting unrealistic expectations.

The media industry should prioritize ethical reporting, provide accurate information, and actively engage in destigmatizing mental health to contribute positively to the broader solutions in this field. As what was has been states by Mental Health Education, Awareness and Stigma Regarding Mental Illness Among College Students (2022) it's critical to increase mental health awareness and identify pupils who could be at risk for mental health issues. Higher education institutions' mental health awareness initiatives have transformed students'

attitudes about mental health and increased public knowledge of mental health issues. Prevention and education about mental health issues can normalise asking for assistance and inspire people to act when they need it.

Conclusion

Social media's detrimental effects on mental health have drawn attention from a number of quarters, including the government, media, and society at large. From a social perspective, people's perceptions of others and themselves have changed as a result of the widespread use of social media. According to Kawachi and Berkman (2001), it has aided in the growth of comparison culture, which has caused users who are aiming for unrealistic standards to experience anxiety, low self-esteem, and feelings of inadequacy. In addition, too much time spent in front of a computer and social media has damaged relationships in real life, which could result in social isolation and a deterioration in mental health in general.

The narrative and content that are viewed on social media platforms have been greatly influenced by the media industry. Although there is a wealth of information and entertainment available on these platforms, the emphasis on sensationalism, clickbait, and carefully selected content frequently reinforces unattainable standards and exacerbates mental health problems. The competition for attention sparked by the need to get likes, shares, and followers has a negative effect on the mental health of both users and content creators.

Policymakers and governments are realizing more and more that social media has negative effects on mental health. Initiatives to control internet content, advance digital literacy, and establish policies for social media usage that are appropriate are being investigated. It is still difficult to strike a balance between protecting mental health and allowing for freedom of speech.

In summary, social media has a variety of negative effects on mental health, and society, the media, and the government must work together to address these issues. To lessen the negative effects of social media on people's mental health and the health of society at large, it is imperative to raise awareness, create a healthier online environment, support digital well-being, and enact appropriate regulations. The preservation of mental health while preserving the benefits of social connectivity is a crucial task that requires constant attention and coordinated efforts from all parties involved.

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