

CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACTS ON ADOLESCENTS

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"The technology landscape has rapidly evolved in recent years, with social media now playing a central role in the lives of youth. Social media has created both significant new challenges and exciting opportunities."

-Jacqueline Nesi

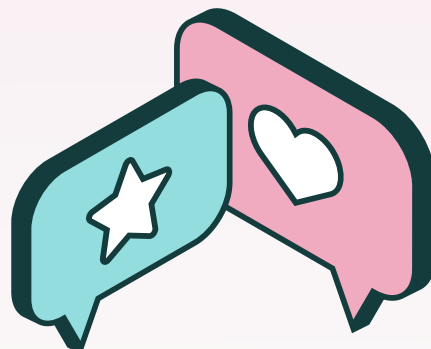
INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will discuss social media use and how social media has affected teenagers and young adults with its adverse effects and addictive qualities. Social media has made children more depressed, obese, changed beauty standards, lowered self-esteem, made it more difficult to communicate, and lowered performance. We wanted to research this to have a conversation about the role social media has in the lives of young adults.



INTRODUCTION

ADOLESCENTS' SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE



Adolescents spend over 7.5 hours a day, every day, using media sites outside of school (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberst, 2010).

For the past 5 years, the most adolescents have chosen Snapchat as their favorite social media site. The next 2 most chosen sites were TikTok and Instagram. Snapchat has over 247 million daily users!

Visual Capitalist, 2020

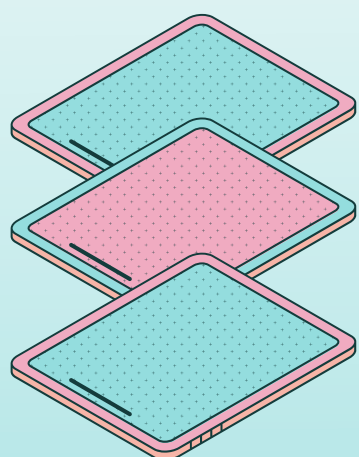
Social media is addictive because it uses operant conditioning to keep users involved. Operant conditioning is a type of learning in which the user's behavior changes in terms of form, frequency, and/or strength as a result of the consequences of that behavior.



Positive Reinforcement: Positive reinforcement occurs when the outcomes of a behavior are positive. Examples of this in social media include likes, retweets, follows, comments, etc.

Punishment: Punishment occurs when the outcome of a behavior is bad. Social media also provides punishment, such as when brands and/or companies have bad reviews on their pages.

Advertising: Social media has strengthened advertising in that it allows for more trustworthy recommendations of products. In addition, online engagement with customers has increased the effectiveness of ads. Clickable ads only make social media more addictive.

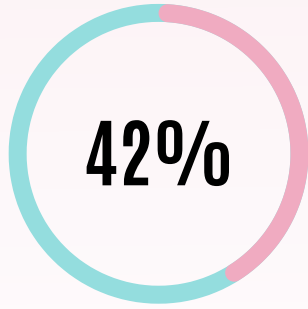


Addictions of any kind can be hard to break. Therapists have advice for adolescents and others struggling with excessive social media usage. Suggestions include: taking small steps to break the habit, such as turning off notifications; examining why one is using social media and how it makes them feel; and picking a new activity to do instead and using positive wording in one's mind to help them continue to pursue it.

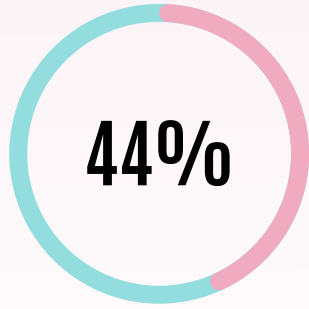
SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT ON

ADOLESCENTS' SOCIAL PRACTICES

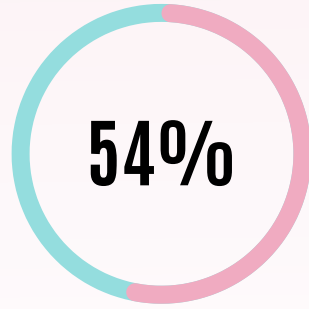
Teens Reveal Their Experiences: Social Media and Social Life



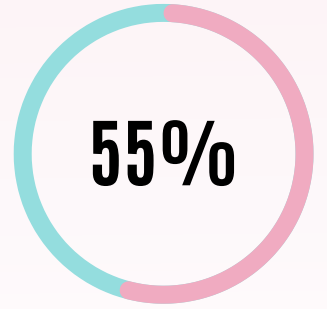
Teens agreed that social media has taken away from in-person time spent with family and friends, as compared to 34% of teens in 2012.



Teens get frustrated when their friends use their phones when spending in-person time together.



Teens admit that they find themselves distracted by social media when they know they should be paying attention to the people that they're with.



Teens say that they almost always have their phones out when they are spending time with their friends.

Social Media's Impact on Writing Skills

Despite what appears to be moral panic about whether or not student's increasing use of social media (SM) will have a negative impact on their writing abilities, perhaps due to the frequency abbreviations, slang and emoticons used on SM rather than proper spelling and grammatical form, concrete evidence suggesting a negative correlation between the two fails to exist at this stage. In fact, studies showed a statistically significant relationship between the amount of time spent using SM and respondents' media writing self-perceptions. The study concludes that student's have the growing ability to recognize the difference between writing for SM and writing for professional or academic purposes. Similarly to how we speak differently than we write, it seems reasonable to be able to separate the difference between online writing and formal writing.



Parrella, Leggette, and Redwine ,2021

Is Social Media Causing Adolescent's Face-to-Face Social Skills to Decline?

PERCEIVED BENEFITS

LOWER STAKES WHEN "BREAKING THE ICE"

Some believe that making friends or simply introducing yourself online is less pressure than doing so in person, which may allow adolescents to build up confidence.

POTENTIAL TO PREVENT LONELINESS

Social media has a potential to relieve feelings of loneliness among adolescents, by serving as a medium for keeping one connected to family and friends at any time.

TIME TO THINK OF APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

Communicating via social media gives adolescents time to think of an appropriate response to messages.

"The the rhetoric regarding the consequences of technology for adolescent's social skills does not match the evidence"

Douglas & Gibbs



PERCEIVED DETRIMENTS

INCENTIVIZED TO NOT TAKE SOCIAL RISKS

Having the ability to hide behind a screen when looking to confront someone, or get to know someone perhaps shelters adolescents from fully developing in-person communication skills.

DRAINING NATURE OF HYPER-CONNECTIVITY

As social media is always accessible, it may prove to be difficult for adolescents to ever truly "disconnect", learn how to spend time alone, and be comfortable with their alone time.

DIFFICULTY WITH REAL-TIME RESPONDING

Less time spent having in-person interactions, and potential to depend on having time to craft a response may prevent adolescents from practicing spontaneous social interactions.

The lack of studies done on this topic lack focus on objective indicators of social skills like how long contact is held or how often kids hit one another. However, conducting such a study proves to be very difficult. Therefore, drawing a conclusion on whether or not social media has a negative impact on social skills or practices in general is still a pressing question.

SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT

ADOLESCENT PHYSICAL HEALTH

66%

2/3 high school aged children are not getting enough sleep
-CDC, 2018



When staring at Facebook or doing any other screen-based activity for a prolonged period of time, your eyes are pushed into overdrive as they're constantly refocusing to process text and images. This invariably accelerates aging of your eyes and has an impact on the long-term health of your vision.
-London Vision Clinic, 2018

76%

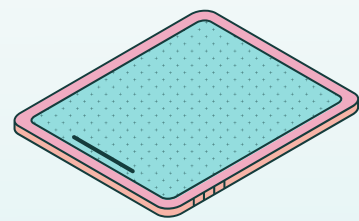
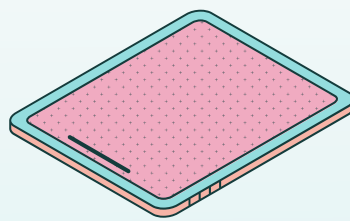
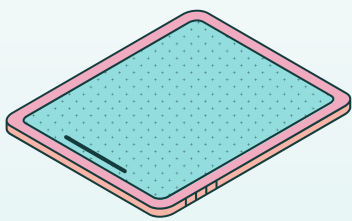
76% of children are not getting the recommended 60 minutes of exercise daily
-World Economic Forum, 2021

"In particular, SM (Social Media) use impacts later sleep timing and more variable sleep schedules, which are known risk factors for poor physical and mental health outcomes (e.g., depression, suicidality, substance use)."
Hamilton etc. al, 2020

"Regular social media use every day was associated with a reinforcement of health behaviors[physical activity and sleep] at both extremes of health behaviors, whereas a medium intensity of social media use was associated with the highest levels of physical activity and lowest sleep adequacy among those with moderate health behaviors. Hence, finding an optimal level of social media use that is beneficial to a variety of health behaviors would be most beneficial to adolescents who are in the middle of the health behavior spectrum."

Shimoga, Erlyana, Rebello, 2019

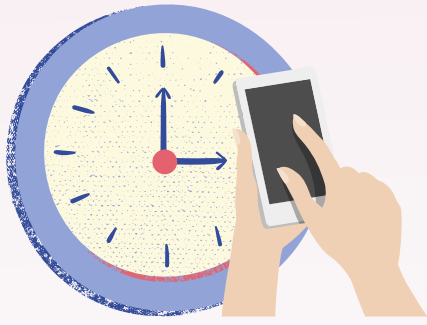
It is difficult to fully understand the impacts of social media in regards to long-term health, since social media is so new and there have not been studies that show concert findings.



Constant social media usage has led to youth not getting enough sleep, staring at screens for a long period of time, and not exercising enough which is harmful to a developing body. Since this is the reality we are living in, scientists can only guess what the effects on children will be in the long run. My conclusion is that obesity rates in adults will skyrocket, more people will have glasses, and lack of sleep will cause depression and anxiety. There might be a correlation between social media and health effects or it might be a factor due to the changing world around us. These conclusions are conjectures on the unknown, since everyone is still trying to figure out how this large amount of screen time is affecting us.

SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT ON

ADOLESCENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

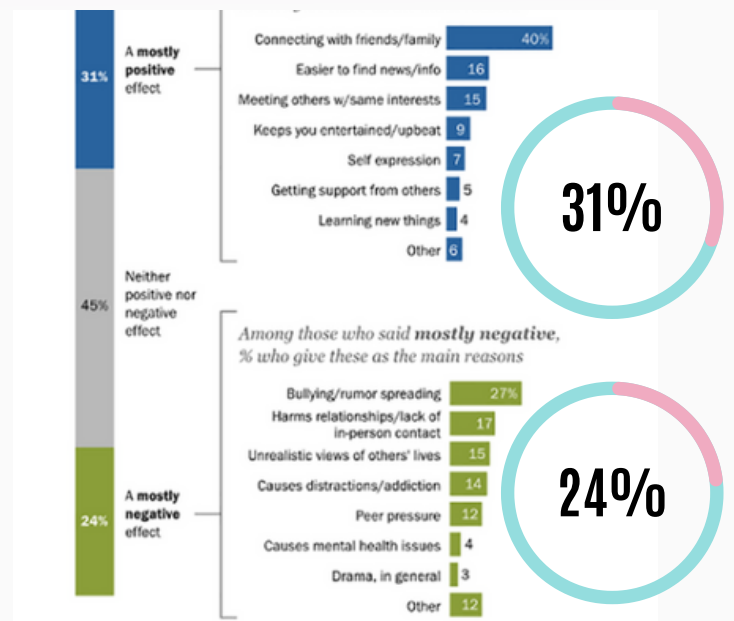


Recent studies have shown that there is an association between time spent on social media and poor mental health, including symptoms of depression and anxiety. Many experts believe that spending large amounts of time on media is over stimulating the nervous system into fight-or-flight mode, contributing to symptoms of mental health issues.

In a 2018 study, 14-to-17-year-olds using social media at least 7 hours a day were "more than twice as likely to have been diagnosed with depression, treated by a mental health professional, or taken medication for a psychological or behavioral issue during the last year" (Twenge and Campbell, 2018).

Some experts argue that young people's use of social media is adding to their depression... [However, our] research suggests a third possibility: that many young people who are experiencing depression— whatever the cause— are purposely and proactively using social media and other digital tools to protect and promote their own well-being."

- Common Sense Media Report (2018)



In that, 31% of teens believe that social media has a positive effect, compared to 24% believing it has a negative effect.

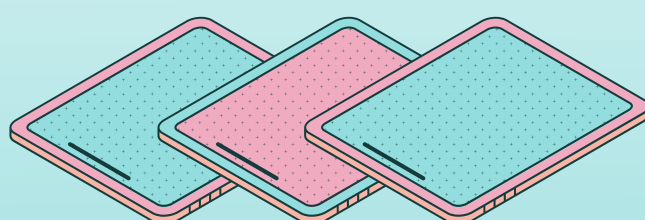
- Via Pew Research (2018)

Negative Effects of Social Media on Youth Mental Health:

- To some extent, the dangers of social media can encourage youth to engage in unhealthy and dangerous behaviors by serving as a distraction and way for adolescents to learn ways to intensify the behavior, which leads to even worse consequences in mental health.
- A lot of adolescents report lower self-evaluation and self-esteem due to the constant social comparisons in observing the lives of others on social media, which can worsen mental health and increase prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms.
- The overuse of social media can lead to addictive behaviors as the brain releases a rush of dopamine in response to social media, which may lead adolescents to experience underlying issues linked to social media addictions, such as chronic depression and anxiety or low self-esteem.

Positive Effects of Social Media on Youth Mental Health:

- Social media can help and inspire young people to adopt healthy mental health practices through the opportunity to connect and develop relationships that offer support and hold them accountable to better lifestyle changes.
- Social media leads to improved self-awareness and self-esteem through the autonomy of youth to explore their identities and interests, which leads to better mental health due to aiding the development of identity formation.
- Social media allows young people to be able to express themselves creatively through photography, writing, art, or music, which can increase positive emotions and lessens symptoms of depression and anxiety.



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