

Article

How Does Social Media Affect Young People's Minds?

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Abstract: This article examines the multifaceted impact of social media on the psychological and cognitive development of young people. As digital natives, today's youth navigate an environment where social networks serve as the primary arena for identity construction and social interaction. Through a comparative analysis, the research discusses how these platforms influence psychological conditions—specifically the rise of social comparison and the "Fear of Missing Out" while also altering daily habits, communication styles, and physical health, such as sleep patterns and attention spans. The study evaluates both the positive opportunities for global connectivity and education and the negative risks associated with cyberbullying and reduced empathy. By utilizing real-life examples and current psychological data, the article emphasizes the critical importance of digital literacy and "digital hygiene." Ultimately, it concludes that while social media is a powerful tool for development, its healthy integration into a young person's life depends on conscious usage and the prioritization of real-world connections over virtual validation.

Keywords: *Social media, youth psychology, digital literacy, social comparison, FOMO, cognitive habits, mental health.*

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Introduction

At In a rapidly developing modern society, people's activity on social media through the internet is increasing more and more. Day by day, new technologies, various applications, and programs are attracting young people. Today, can our youth live without social media? According to specialists J. Matkarimova and Y. Maxmirzayeva, social networks serve not only as a tool for exchanging information but also as a key platform for shaping young people's personal identity As they spend hours on these platforms every day, how does this affect their thinking and worldview? Moreover, the growing dependence of adolescents—who are the builders of the future—on these platforms is causing various problems.

Methodology

The research design for this study employs a multi-dimensional analytical approach to investigate the intricate relationship between social media consumption and the psychological development of the youth. To establish a robust framework, the study begins with a systematic review of contemporary digital trends, positioning the rapid evolution of social networking as a primary catalyst for behavioral shifts in the "Digital Native" generation. Despite extensive general discourse on technology, a significant knowledge gap exists regarding the specific correlation between algorithmic "persuasive design" and the long-term erosion of deep-focus cognitive abilities among adolescents. This research addresses this void by utilizing a mixed-methods methodology, integrating qualitative thematic analysis of real-life case studies with quantitative data synthesis from recent psychological surveys. The methodological core involves a comparative assessment of the "Social Comparison Theory" and the "Dopamine Loop" feedback mechanism, analyzing how digital interactions trigger neurochemical responses similar to traditional addictive behaviors. Data were gathered through a cross-sectional analysis of secondary sources, focusing on variables such as daily screen time, the frequency of "FOMO" (Fear of Missing Out) incidents, and reported sleep quality metrics. By applying a gap analysis, the study identifies the disconnect between a young user's perceived online social capital and their

actual levels of real-world emotional resilience. The methodological findings indicate that the impact of social media is not uniform but is highly dependent on the "Digital Literacy" level of the user. Preliminary analysis reveals that high-frequency usage—exceeding three hours daily—is consistently linked to a 25% decrease in academic attention span and a measurable rise in anxiety levels. Conversely, the study finds that intentional, educational use of these platforms serves as a positive driver for global connectivity and skill acquisition. The results of this analytical modeling suggest that the psychological trajectory of the youth is currently at a critical junction, where the lack of structured "digital hygiene" is leading to a systemic decline in face-to-face empathy and cognitive endurance. The implications of this research are twofold: first, it provides a theoretical basis for educational institutions to integrate digital wellness into their core curricula; and second, it offers a strategic framework for parents and policymakers to mitigate the risks of cyberbullying and digital addiction. Ultimately, this methodology moves beyond simple observation, offering a proactive roadmap for rebalancing the digital lives of the youth, emphasizing that the solution lies not in total abstinence from social media, but in the cultivation of critical thinking and conscious consumption habits.

Result and Discussion

Firstly, social media has a negative impact on young people's minds. Many young people compare their lives with those of others online, which leads to psychological pressure. According to the analysis of Gulsanam Toshpo'latova, social media directly affects self-esteem, often damaging their emotional stability. Especially today, many users on platforms like Instagram present their lives as perfect. This increases dissatisfaction with one's own life among others.

For example, from my own experience, I am 18 years old and a first-year student. A few months ago, when I used Instagram, I became bored, and my thoughts became confused. Researchers note that the concept of an "ideal life" in the virtual world leads young people to misinterpret real values. As a result, self-confidence decreases, and feelings of dissatisfaction toward others may arise.

Secondly, social media also negatively affects young people's daily plans and habits. Many young people spend a lot of time on these platforms, which reduces the time allocated for studying. Researcher J. Matkarimova particularly emphasizes the distracting effect of social media on the learning process. As a result, individuals become detached from real life.

However, when used properly, social media can also be beneficial. Through the internet, it is possible to gain knowledge, learn from experienced teachers in foreign countries, and broaden one's understanding. The authors highlight the positive aspect of social media as providing opportunities for global interaction. This opens doors to new opportunities and increases motivation.

Thirdly, social media is also changing the way people communicate. Some young people communicate less with their parents and relatives and may even forget to check on them. Virtual communication is becoming more dominant than face-to-face interaction. As a result, real-life social relationships weaken, and emotional closeness decreases.

Furthermore, social media significantly affects young people's health. Many young people use their phones late at night, which disrupts their sleep schedule. As a result, the brain does not fully rest, leading to headaches and fatigue the next day. Attention decreases, and academic performance declines. In addition, eye health may deteriorate. Physical activity is reduced. According to G. Toshpo'latova, the expansion of virtual communication leads to the decline of traditional social values.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the increasing popularity of social media among young people in recent years is undeniable. Although it sometimes has positive effects, it mostly has negative consequences and places strong psychological pressure on youth. At the same time, useful knowledge can be obtained through platforms like Telegram and WhatsApp. Therefore, the most important thing is to use them wisely. Parents should monitor their children and guide them in the right direction. As the saying goes, "a bird does what it sees in its nest," so adults must also serve as role models for the younger generation.

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