

Logging Off

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In this era, social media has turned out to be the most advanced platform for engaging adolescents. Mostly, adolescents' day-to-day life has been engulfed by prevalent interaction, and communication that is happening through different media platforms and devices every day. Recent studies have indicated that in past years adolescents have remained in touch with only friends and colleagues of their groups in schools and colleges (Best, Manktelow & Taylor, 2014). However, this is not the case today. It is clear that through various social media platforms adolescents not only remain intact with known friends but also unknown individuals as well. As per the BBC news studies of 2013, 67 percent of the Facebook platform users are adolescents and obviously, this number consists of students, and therefore this embraces the fact that adolescents have more focus and relation. All through the world adolescents frequently utilizes the web, online games, mobile phones, and other online devices and platforms to communicate and collect information with each other. This paper will discuss the societal pressures of how social media has affected adolescents both positively and negatively.

Methods

This project began in September of 2018 and although my time at Purchase College has come to an end, there is still a lot of room for further research and development. I used a couple of different methods to strengthen my understanding and knowledge of my topic to build my project's body and value. The first method I used was literature reviews of as many articles as I could find that I thought pertained to my topic that would eventually help me out with my own research. I then conducted qualitative interviews to bring the perspective of other young artists and adolescents to help give my project fresh ideas that I could only receive from asking my

peers. I found that the use of quotes from them was more beneficial than ones I found online from broader articles because talking to someone in person allows you to better feel the emotion from their voice and really pay attention to key details. Another method I used was autoethnography. This gave my essay a sense of integrity and truthfulness. I believe that allowing myself to speak my mind freely and translate that into my essay really developed a strong understanding of what I am trying to explicate. My final method is very necessary; critical reflection. It is very important to examine if my initial hypothesis was somewhere along the lines of what I expected people to tell me, as well as a feeling of satisfaction that I could have potentially helped someone express themselves by describing their experiences.

Autoethnography

Before discussing the discoveries I have found on a broader scale, I wanted to start with the person I know best; me. I have been a user of FaceBook since 2010 and on Instagram since 2013. A majority of my adolescent life has been documented and recorded on the internet, even if I think deleting a photo or post will remove it completely, that is not the case. The internet records everything. It is impossible to completely go off the grid, especially if you have been on social media for over a decade. The internet used to be, and still is at times, a resourceful way to research any type of information you need, stay connected with people, and more recently a platform to build your brand. A couple years ago when I was in the early stages of recording music, I learned that making good music was only half of being a successful recording artist. I needed to have a look and a definite style. Obviously my style changes quite often, as do most people, but I needed to search deep inside myself to create an image that would appeal to people all around the world. Although I'm still developing my sound and image, I feel with each day I'm

getting closer and closer to becoming the artist I see myself as. I truly do want to be successful, and for this to happen I need to inspire others and create a deep connection with my audience for them to feel the authenticity of my work. Inspiring others is a passion of mine that would not be possible without other people inspiring me. And by other people I mean my friends and substances that take my mind and body to another planet.

For many, alcohol and THC are seen as a component to the recording process. Depending on my mood and the energy in the room, these desensitizers usually do the trick in loosening me up to step into the booth and begin speaking into the mic. It doesn't even matter to me how many people are in, or not in, the studio; I still need to get in the zone and there's no better way to do this than by feeling less present in the room mentally. Of course there have been times where smoking or drinking doesn't do the trick. This has led me to explore other hallucinogens such as prescription medication, cough syrup, and other non over the counter medications. Everything I have tried has not been directly prescribed to me by a doctor so the only way I get it is through friends and their friends. I've made some poor choices over the years and even bought these pills from people I don't know who just happen to be at the same party or kick back as I and were smart enough to sell it to me. And when I say "smart" I do not mean they are intellectual people, but wish to make money and I can understand that. I eventually found out that some of the pills I was taking weren't even real but in fact were pressed with other substances such as fentanyl, which continues to kill people every year. I cannot say I have truly stopped taking prescription medications but for the last year I made sure I knew where the pill was coming from. When I recollect my substance abuse problem, I ponder whether it has actually made my music better. Everyone has off nights, regardless of what field you are in. There have been times I have

recorded while extremely high and have created some, in my opinion, very different and actually pleasant music but there have also been occasions where I would listen to the songs back the next day and think to myself, I just made complete nonsense. Is taking pills not prescribed to me even worth the risk? That is what I think everyday. I want my music to be heard; I want my visions to come true. I have been living my life on the edge for some time now and there's always the risk of not waking up while mixing these drugs with alcohol or whatever else I'm on. I have a wide range of fans, a lot of them being under eighteen years old. How am I supposed to be an example for them if I'm abusing these drugs just because I think it's going to help my music?

Getting my music heard around the world is an extremely important goal of mine, and for this to happen I need a strong social media presence. Instagram has been the most helpful in doing so. It is very easy to interact with my fanbase but also scary at times. When I see people on Instagram doing and living the life I want, it discourages me and really brings me to a place where I'm convinced I'll only be fine when I'm numb. Although I am currently in school, my main focus is music. It's all I ever think about and want. Recently I have tried to lessen my time looking at what other people are doing and fully concentrate and focus on myself. I am my own brand and social media really has helped my company grow to places I never thought it would. I have made friends in countries I have never been to, and are in contact with people from my childhood that now live abroad.

As of now, I am finding myself interested in researching and studying the effects of social media on adolescents and their behaviors because of it. I would like to figure out if social media has direct links to depression in children and in young adults. I would also like to look for

positives in how social media has helped adolescents engage with each person they may have never gotten the chance to talk to without it. Careers have been made through apps such as Instagram and Facebook so I will explore the impact social media has on attracting people to use it for economic gain.

I was lucky enough to interview one of my close friends at Purchase College who is studying graphic design and has a clothing brand of her own. Stella gave me perspective into her upbringing and early usage of social media. She gave me insight into her self-esteem problems and how social media has positively and negatively affected it. On one hand, it has boosted her confidence while simultaneously forced her to see unrealistic expectations of beauty. I met with her at the lounge on my floor and asked her questions in a very casual manner, the only time I wrote stuff down directly in front of her is when I wanted to quote something she said that I thought was very interesting. For instance, something that really stuck to me that she said was, “Social media is just there, it is what you make of it....delete the app and that world is gone...” What is it about social media that keeps us all on a hook? Why do so many of us feel addicted to looking at our screens and live in a make believe world where you can say anything you want without facing instant consequences? I am convinced that social media can be as addictive as abusing any drug or substance.

Another friend of mine who attends Fashion Institute of Technology agreed to participate in a short interview with me. Noah, who I also went to high school with, has been my friend for almost eight years and I have seen first hand how social media has directly affected the person he is today. Noah has been on Instagram for a while now and has been using it for different reasons; sometimes to promote his clothing brand, other times to contact people, maybe even at times to

stalk his past lovers. I do not think a day has gone by where he hasn't checked his Instagram at least a hundred times a day. This has led him to have a love/hate relationship with it. He always shares with me funny videos or pictures but will also send me posts by people that according to him, make him want to end his life. It is really messed up to say stuff like that everyday but he has been consistent with saying how miserable social media makes him. He has about five Instagram accounts all logged into his phone then wonders why he feels like he is going crazy. I never feel like my advice helps him, I do not know if it is because he is stubborn or he really is too lazy to do something about the way he feels. For someone like him, I believe the best thing to do is not completely delete Instagram, but to use it in moderation and turn all notifications off until he can control the way it is making him feel. I cannot change anyone's actions and feelings but my own and although I want Noah to feel and become a better person, I know he will figure it out and move forward on his own time. Social media can inadvertently latch you onto your past, whether you realize it or not. Instagram, Twitter, FaceBook, etc. are all timestamps and help us remember memories we have made and documented online. Even amiable pictures can insinuate traumatic experiences that we do not know how to abandon. I will continue to do my own research and interview more of my peers to give me better insights into their experiences with social media usage.

Positive Effects of Social Media on Adolescents

Let's start with the positive impacts of social media on adolescents' behavior: First, it helps create and develop awareness. Since a significant number of adolescents are still under their parent's guidance or they live a sheltered life, they tend to develop awareness regarding their society and the world once they are exposed to various media platforms. The political and

cultural awareness that they get from various media outlets is crucial as long as there is a good will to develop a generation of adolescents who are responsible for matters pertaining to socialization. With media outlets such as Facebook platforms and magazines blaring regarding world happenings, adolescents can discover that there are much more in the world than what they see in their regions.

Furthermore, social media helps develop social skills. According to research conducted by Best, Manktelow and Taylor, adolescents who are much exposed to social media platforms tend to develop socially compared to those who live a sheltered life (2014). Social Media platforms have changed the social awkwardness of many adolescents; the media has given adolescents an opportunity to groom their social skills. In addition, social media gives them a chance to extend their group of friends and increase their friendship. Other advantages of social media include increased proficiency in the media, social certainty, and more social help. Media has the ability to diversify the social skills of adolescents such as communication and awareness, which in turn enables them to navigate successfully via modern society.

Fortunately, social media outlets develop reading and writing skills for adolescents. This is because when a star tends to talk about a certain book which is a favorite of the adolescent he or she might be tempted to grab a book as well. In this sense, the behavior of the adolescent changes toward reading and writing and as a result, these skills are nurtured to perfection. Furthermore, if adolescents want to be part and parcel of blogs, and chat rooms among others, they need to improve their writing and reading skills.

Social media has turned adolescents into social animals inducing a sense of social networking among them. As a matter of fact, social networking can increase the chances of

sharing useful information. Such information may include good eating behaviors. When adolescents encounter such information they tend to put them into practice and eventually exhibit desirable eating behaviors. Other important information shared may include the dangers of attending some places such as dance clubs that teach inappropriate behaviors for adolescents and these can help to put off adolescents from such places (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung & Valenzuela, 2012). This is clear evidence that social media has the ability to change the behaviors of adolescents for the betterment of their lives. Also, some adolescents look up to these sites for advice and information. Some professionals and counselors post educational information on various sites such as Facebook and they can be helpful to adolescents.

Adolescents also look to social media for obtaining answers regarding their career objectives. For example, there are educators who use social media to teach their students inclined to see them as a success in their academic life. Adolescents can get course materials from former students who pursued the same course. These materials can be so beneficial as long as enlightening the adolescents is concerned. Nonetheless, adolescents can make use of these platforms to change their economic status by uniting people across the world with a common goal. This triggers positive behaviors among adolescents. Furthermore, adolescents can use social media to develop their skills. For instance, today coaches use social media recruiting and this can be helping adolescents who have special skills in football and athletics since they can post videos or show the interests of joining different clubs or academies.

However, despite the many benefits associated with social media in regard to adolescents' behavior, social media influences the emotions of adolescents as well (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung & Valenzuela, 2012). Considering social media in light of its emotional effects, one

can agree that adolescents who experience low self-esteem can change their status by the use of these platforms. Since social outlets increase connectivity, it is connected to the Freudian concepts of the id, super-ego, and ego. What's the relationship to social media? All things considered, as we've found in the three social media networks, the immediate idea of Twitter – or our "social Id" – fits both ongoing snapshots of enjoyment, humor and shared occasion driven encounters, yet additionally offers voice to deplorable blasts and restricted character shots of affront, sexism, bigotry, and different continuous flows that may have better been left implied (or if nothing else, unwritten).

It is true that social media does not necessarily take adolescents out of the real universe but helps them face reality in most of the cases. Therefore, social platforms can be utilized to revive and preserve relationships with other colleagues. Something else that gives this platform an upper hand is that there is an incredible number of like-minded individuals who can associate in just a single click. A study conducted by Gil de Zúñiga, Jung and Valenzuela (2012), shows those adolescents who experience low self-esteem can consider using social media platforms and its ability to connect them with other colleagues so as to take them out from slumps in their moods.

Consecutively, recent research has shown that social platforms have the ability to help adolescents who are more anxious and socially insecure to gain high-self-esteem. The research suggests that adolescent who gains positive feedback regarding themselves on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook exhibited stronger activity in the nucleus accumbens of the brain; a section within the brain that is associated with “reward” processing (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung & Valenzuela, 2012). The study connected this stronger activity with greater utilization of

social media platforms most specifically Facebook. One thing that can be noted from this study is that many users who become addicted to social media outlets utilize the platforms as a way of gaining attention and enhancing their self-esteem.

Notwithstanding the organizational support drawn from social media by adolescents; social media platforms offer adolescents an opportunity to network with organizations that can enable them to have personal progression. In most incidences, these organizations tend to engage adolescents on constructive things such as career growth and health concerns. Additionally, some of these organizations guide adolescents on how to better use these platforms. Adolescents are provided with an advanced versatility educated methodology that recognizes computerized vulnerabilities and expects to enable the adolescents to explore harmful components of using social media outlets with regards to a strong relationship.

Negatives Effects of Social Media on Adolescents

Despite social media having positive influences on the behaviors and emotions of the adolescent, it as well has negative effects. It influences young adults negatively especially when they become addicted to using the platform. To begin with, social media results in social segregation that can be the cause of depression. For instance, adolescents can develop Facebook depression which is a condition that develops among the teens when they tend to spend most of their time on Facebook and other social media platforms, and they start to show the classic signs of depression (Barker 2009). The development of the online platform is said to be the main factor that can lead to depression in some adolescents. Like with offline depression, adolescents suffering from Facebook depression are at risk of developing isolation. At times, they decide to look for help in other online sites like blogs and friends whom they meet online which can

sometimes lead an individual to start using drugs, being aggressive, engaging in unsafe sexual activities and self-destructive action.

Subsequently, social media contributes to depression once an individual fails to get employment due to the information they have posted on social media. Adolescents tend to post and share their private data without considering the impacts that may follow. For example, when posting inappropriate and compromising photos can lead an adolescent not to ever get a job because in the current world employers are viewing individuals' social media profile in order to establish the kind of a person they are about to employ (Sözbilir, 2018). Therefore, if a person had ever posted some compromising pictures the employer denies them a chance. This is because the kind of information a person posts on a social media platform reflects individuals' personal traits to the employers and the world at large.

Also, social media results in cyberbullying that can result in negative effects on adolescent psychosocial wellbeing and can slowly decrease their self-esteem. Most adolescents have been misjudging themselves by whatever they see on social media. Some also feel as if they are not beautiful enough or they are not achieving their objectives when they view glorified photos and status updates uploaded by their friends on Facebook, and Twitter among other social media platforms. For example, some individuals post photos of big houses, luxurious cars, getting married as well as of their children or even other people's children but they pretend to be theirs (Valkenburg, Peter & Schouten, 2006). This update makes adolescents feel as if they have not planned and utilized their time properly hence regarding themselves as inferiors. Social media makes adolescents feel that they should be living a particular life like their social media

friends that makes them be depressed as they try to live like them. Sometimes, adolescents even have low self-esteem to an extent that they do not want to face other individuals.

Efficient detection of depression stigma in mass media is important for designing effective stigma reduction strategies according to Ang Li's article, "Detecting Depression Stigma on Social Media: A Linguistic Analysis." Using linguistic analysis methods, this paper aims to build computational models for detecting stigma expressions in Chinese social media posts (Sina Weibo). A total of 15,879 Weibo posts with keywords were collected and analyzed. First, a content analysis was conducted on all 15,879 posts to determine whether each of them reflected depression stigma or not. Second, using four algorithms (Simple Logistic Regression, Multilayer Perceptron Neural Networks, Support Vector Machine, and Random Forest), two groups of classification models were built based on selected linguistic features; one for differentiating between posts with and without depression stigma, and one for differentiating among posts with three specific types of depression stigma. Results: First, 967 of 15,879 posts (6.09%) indicated depression stigma. 39.30%, 15.82%, and 14.99% of them endorsed the stigmatizing view that "People with depression are unpredictable", "Depression is a sign of personal weakness", and "Depression is not a real medical illness", respectively. Second, the highest F-Measure value for differentiating between stigma and non-stigma reached 75.2%. The highest F-Measure value for differentiating among three specific types of stigma reached 86.2%.

Social media influence the development of personality disorders and defiant activities of young adults especially the use of Facebook. According to various researchers, overuse of social media can result in several disorders like; antisocial personality disorder where an individual feels that they do not want to socialize with their peers and other individuals (Strasburger, Jordan

& Donnerstein 2010; Valkenburg, Peter & Schouten, 2006; Barker, 2009). It is as well known for causing borderline disorders, histrionic personality disorder and bipolar disorder (Strasburger, Jordan & Donnerstein, 2010). Moreover, overuse of social media is known for causing psychological issues such as developing mental illness in adolescents that are triggered by the obsession with using social media. It as well as triggers social anxiety where young adults become anxious especially when they are among individuals. This is commonly triggered by the posts that they view on social media for example if young adults get to see more horror or pictures of dead people they develop anxiety. Furthermore, young adults who are used to being on social media for a long time tend to become sad especially if they see some people. Also, this is triggered by cyberbullying; if an individual is being cyberbullied they become sad whenever they are online because of the name and the word that is thrown upon them by their peers.

Social network sites (SNSs) are relatively new phenomena, and the relationship between SNSs and psychopathology remains unclear. The purpose of Hatice Gözde's study was to evaluate the type of SNSs depressed adolescents use and the incidence of depressive disclosure on SNSs among them. The study was designed to be cross-sectional. The sample consisted of 53 adolescents diagnosed with depressive disorder, as confirmed by K-SADS-PL, and 55 non-depressed adolescents. The Children's Depression Inventory, Social Anxiety Scale and Social Network Use Questionnaire were administered. The primary finding was that the amount of time spent on the Internet and on SNSs was significantly higher among depressed adolescents than non-depressed adolescents. Additionally, depressed adolescents reported significantly higher disclosure of anhedonia, worthlessness, guilt, loss of concentration, irritability and thoughts of suicide on SNSs. The intensity of the depression sharing was significantly higher in

the depressed group. Depressed young people use social networks to express their symptoms. Adolescents' disclosure on social networks may be able to guide relatives, friends and mental health professionals.

An article by Jasso-Medrano, José Luis, and Fuensanta López-Rosales was very helpful in giving me an insight in comparing addictive behavior and excessive social media usage. Addictive behavior to social network sites is considered an alarming phenomenon where other psychopathological problems can be manifested. The purpose of the study was to analyze the relationship between the use and the addictive behavior of social media and the use of mobile devices, depression, and suicidal ideation. The questionnaires were applied to a sample of 374 university students where 58.6% were women and 41.4% men, with an average age of 20.01 years ($SD = 1.84$). Unlike the use of social media, addictive behavior was significantly related to depression and suicidal ideation. 36.1% of the sample reported having at least one idea in relation to suicide in the last two weeks. We propose an explanatory model that was adjusted appropriately and explained the addictive behavior with the frequency of mobile phone use, daily hours, depression, and suicidal ideation, the last one in a negative direction. It is concluded that, unlike excessive use, addictive behavior is associated with negative psychological characteristics. However, addictive behavior can also be considered a protective factor against suicidal ideation when relating to depression.

Additionally, in some circumstances, social media contributes to the development of violence in the adolescent. Most adolescents have become violent because of what they see online. Adolescents are spending most of their time watching action movies that change their perceptions and they become violent (Barker, 2009). This is because when they watch action

movies they tend to try them out with their peers even with adults. Social media causes young adults to become fraudsters and scammers (Strasburger, Jordan & Donnerstein, 2010). This is possible because when they see business advertisements they get attracted to such business and because they do not have anything to sell they post advertisements on false items and they even provide terms and regulation for their business. For instance, they indicate that a person has to pay for the goods before delivery where some pay gets convinced and they pay for the product which is never delivered.

Also, the use of social media by adolescents who are still schooling contributes to poor learning activities where learners fail to study as they spend most of their time online. From the above discussed negative effects, adolescents should be educated on the effects of utilizing social media in an excessive way because it negatively influences their behaviors and emotional wellbeing. They should be educated on the type of information they should avoid posting (Strasburger, Jordan & Donnerstein 2010). Therefore, the social media administrators should establish regulations that prohibit some information to be accessed by adolescents; sensitive information should only be viewed by adults.

Social Media in a Global Pandemic

The world as we are all aware has gone quite crazy. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is spinning out of control over the globe, and there doesn't appear to be an end in sight. It began in December 2019 in China and has developed into a worldwide issue, not at all like anything any of us have ever observed previously. Social media is perhaps the most ideal approach to sharing news these days (it might be the main route for certain individuals), particularly on the off chance that you are attempting to alarm individuals of something genuine

in an extremely, brisk way. Regardless of whether it be COVID-19 news from singular states or news on a national extension, online life gets the message where it needs to go. Security precautions are another amazing thing spreading through web-based social networking. One, specifically, is the expression "social distancing." Possibly the best thing that has occurred over an assortment of web based platforms is the quantity of influential people that have made some noise encouraging individuals to take all that they see about COVID-19 genuinely and take action accordingly. Sadly and in numerous occasions, social networking sites can do the same amount of harm as it can do service. To differentiate the primary point I made in the area above, social media is incredible for spreading data and news, however a portion of that can be falsehood or "fake news." Misinformation, particularly about COVID-19, can cause hysteria. Individuals who see falsehood via web-based networking media may think what they see and hear is true. On the off chance that it's something as significant or genuine as an overall pandemic, one must do more research to check whether what they are reading is actually sincere.

Conclusion

As innovation is rapidly growing, the media has turned out to be the routine for each and every individual, where people are seen to be addicted to these innovations every day. Something to note is that in every field it has a different effect on individuals. This paper has enriched how people think of social media as one concept of modern technology. Some of the emotional and behavioral effects of social media discussed here include enhancing unity, educating adolescents, enhancing the writing and reading skills of adolescents, changing the eating habits of the adolescents among other changes. However, this paper has not ignored the fact that there are substantial emotional and behavioral ailments that are attributable to social media platforms.

Some of its ailments including but not limited to, social segregation that can be the cause of depression, results in cyber bullying that can result in negative effects on adolescent psychosocial wellbeing and can slowly decrease their self-esteem, the development of personality disorders and defiant activities of young adults especially the use of Facebook. Also, social media causes sexting behavior, development of violence on adolescents and contributes to poor learning activities where learners fail to study as they spend most of their time online. All in all, use of social media outlets is beneficial but should be utilized in a limited way ensuring that it does not get to a level that can become addictive.

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