

Assignment 8

Name:

Institute:

Date:

PART 1: TOPIC SELECTION (SOCIETAL PROBLEM)

The Chosen Topic: The Impact of Social Media on the Mental Health of Young People

Description:

The use of social media among young people is increasing, and the recent instance of the so-called daily tethering to the applications as Instagram, Tik Tok, and Snapchat as the factors that affect their daily routine, self-image, and social nature are so common that it affects the social quality of adolescents. The possibility of the social media and social media and anxiety, depression and self esteem issues among adolescents to be correlated is a reality as well as a concern given the current standards of the social media as it has been suggested in the recent study. The most vulnerable group of adolescence is the age group between 12-18 years old as they are the most vulnerable groups whose identity and self-consciousness depend on the judgment of their peers which has a far reaching influence on their net psychological well being.

The study being analyzed is important because the study in this area can be easily implemented, being aware of the number of quantitative/qualitative study being made regarding the use of psychology, hours spent on the devices, and the state of mind that the use causes. The condition should be investigated due to the cause that the social avenues of communication that are largely used in the recent past, is a problem to the mental state of the tween and teenager generation. The study will address the gaps in the existing literature and would examine how particular social

media platforms are used, the type of interaction in such a platform and how the use of the platform influence the psychology of the adolescents.

Further researches are necessary because the intrusion of social media is continuing at an alarming rate and the solutions against the predatory quality of social media are not proven scientifically yet. The existence of the given research could serve as a fruitful starting point since the variables which are influenced by the positive and negative reactions to the management of mental health of the newly-emerged digitally-native crowd could be considered.

PART 2: PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES SUPPORTING THE RESEARCH

To examine the association between the daily screen time and the psychological well-being considering the time in childhood and adolescence, Twenge, and Campbell (2018) used the populations-based samples. The study also found out the amplified quantity of screen time, including utilization of social, to be the reason behind the increasing trend of screen time in children and adolescents aged 10-18, as a result of a survey analysis that covered 40,000 children and adolescents. Media devouring was associated with increased anxiety and depressive symptoms and difficulties in sleep. It is, in some way, feared that even light use of social media is threatening mental health, mostly in vulnerable groups and that the low hanging fruit is not doing us well. This agrees with other past and present literature social media and mental health, which demonstrates the adverse influence of social media on the population. Besides, contributes to the existing evidence base of international concern regarding the application of social media and mental health among the young population. It is a highly desirable evidence in order to be able to justify the new policies and programs to restrict the screen time and minimize the psychological harm of using social media.

Such questions regarding the effect of the use of social media on mental health are an issue of ever-growing concern. It is associated with the subsequent mental problems as anxiety and depression. When revising Keles et al. (2020), the authors discuss the outcomes of 20 meta-studies of the effect of social media on teenagers and their psychology. According to Keles, the application of social media will be highly popular and cause an outbreak and spread of the aforementioned disorders, not to mention acute rise in anxiety. In particular, the psychological effects on the use of social media websites among teenagers have been considered to possess gross negative effects with the most prevalent being the state of anxiety and depression. The most problematic of the overall critique is that underage teens become victims of cyber bullying. Social comparisons and fragmented sleep are the mediators in support of the position of Kele who claims developing disorders. The criticism, however, calls upon a balanced and sociable use of the social media. It is still possible to have a lot of validation of social media with assurance of protective factors and plenty to be researched on its harm. The completed thesis by Kele highly indicates that the social media as it is now is going to thrive and the protective aspects are to be held in higher regard hence the clear necessity to validate and produce the protective factors of social media.

In the study by Orben and Przybylski (2019), the authors relied on large-scale data analysis to learn the complexities of well-being and the impact of the use of social media During adolescence, which can be viewed as the time of developmental peaks, well-being gets of first importance as the authors found that the weak-statistically significant relationships between the worsening psychological well-being and the increase in social media use exist in more than 350,000 adolescent datasets. The aspects of users of the social media are more than one. Users are segregated in different ways. There are two users in this case: the female users and the male

users. They do not share the social media users evenly and in this instance there will be two divisions of naked mental health users and fully clothed mental health usersmental health users. The authors launch that the study adds a further depth to the discussion of the social media effects, as the effects of social media are not universal, thus needing different positions to combat the mental health issues. The study forms the basis of understanding the overall social media exposure effects in the society and the more individual social media dangers in adolescence.

Hypothesis

The adolescents who dedicate all their time to the activities that can be attributed to the visual oriented type of social media (e.g. Instagram, the Tik Tok and Snapchat) will record high levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms by a substantial margin in comparison to the adolescents who spend less than an hour on the mentioned social media.

The two variables that can be quantified in the hypothesis are (1) the number of hours the adolescents spend on the visual based social media platforms and (2) the scale of anxiety and depression that the adolescents feel towards themselves. It is directional as the more time a human being will spend on such platforms the more these signs of psychological distress would have a positive correlation. The available empirical evidence supported such expectation because the existing empirical evidence indicated the existence of a correlation between spending excessive time on a screen and the psychologically unhealthy condition. In order to either corroborate this hypothesis or refute it in three important categories, (1) the screen time and the psychological well-being, (2) social comparison and cyberbullying as a variable of mediation, (3)

individual differences and protective variables, the paragraphs below discuss peer-reviewed studies.

Screen time and psychological well-being.

The correlation between the total amount of time spent at the screen and the psychological health of the teenagers may be included among the most significant ones that should be mentioned. The results of the survey of more than 40,000 children and adolescents of different ages (10-18) enabled Twenge and Campbell (2018) to identify the correlation that can be made between the diverse types of screen time and the psychological health. They have determined in their quasi-experimental analysis that their daily screen time amounts and their amounts of time on social media have always settled, as manifested in unhealthy proportions of psychological health comprising of a larger sum of anxiety, and depressive symptoms, and sleeping issues. The researchers also determined that moderate use (one to two hours a day) of social media had a small loss to psychological health but it was found that the use of heavy (more than three hours a day) use was negatively correlated.

What is timely about the conclusions made by Twenge and Campbell (2018) is that it transcends the subjective worries, and leaves an imprint upon general quantitative data in the subject-matter, which has the effect of preconditioning a poor mental health outcome. Their study is founded on the premise that the more time an individual adolescent spends the social media outlets on daily basis the more likely the symptoms of anxiety and depression will be reported at the cost of those that are rather infrequent. This specified correlation predetermines the significance of researching the correlation between the duration of time spent on the Internet and the

development process occurring during the adolescence stage of a human life when a person is extremely vulnerable to social stimulation and appreciation of those around him/her.

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Mediators, Social Comparison and Cyberbullying

It is not only the total screen time, but it is one of the key predictors. A social media process of influencing the state of mental health indirect and complex. Keles, McCrae, and Grealish (2020) have systematically examined 20 articles and investigate the relationship between social media use and depressive mood, anxiety, and psychological distress among adolescents. They have developed a number of mediating processes which have led to the fact that excessive usage of the social media can be harmful. The most effective of them is the social comparison and web bullying.

The social comparison phenomenon implies that a person puts his/her life into a contrast with some filtered photos and posts of other people. Seeing that adolescents are already in an exceptionally precarious condition of identities formation, they can develop a decrease of self-esteem and negligence when they believe that they are not as beautiful as they are depicted in them spaces as Instagram and Tik Tok. This can be one of the reasons to become depressive because such inexorable comparison may cause one to feel less. The second intermediary that is required is cyber bullying. The classical is impossible, and unpreventable when compared to the online one and can take place anytime, and with a large number of people present. In one of the investigations by Keles et al. (2020), victims of cyberbullying, in their adolescence, have the greatest likelihoods of developing anxiety and depression.

Moreover, the second fact that was identified during the review is the sleep disturbance. The social media may interfere with sleep, especially, when people began to use it at night because of the fear of missing out or some other communication on the internet and extend the mental torture. The second mediators that can be analyzed to understand how the dependency on the time spent on the Internet and mental health cannot be the easiest finding and how the character of interactions and social conditions of the platforms determine the dependency are the social comparison, cyberbullying, and sleeping disruption.

These confounding factors enable the proposed hypothesis to be more realistic. This implies that the influence of the harmful side of the excessive use of the social media is not only time inspired, but also in comparison to what experiences teenagers have undergone when using the technology. The inevitable risk of common use of social media on the mental health can be minimised through the use of the mitigating variables namely: enhancing digital literacy, training on how to cope with the relative social situation, and formation of more resilience anti-cyber bullying support groups.

Dissimilarities and Preventions Factors in Personality

The use of social media is not something that affects all teenagers. Exploring the associations between the use of digital technology and well being, researchers of the article by Orben and Przybylski (2019) have studied the data of the population of teenagers (more than 350,000). They found out that despite low and statistically significant correlations between social media increased use and negative psychological well being. It is worth noting that they have demonstrated in their examination that the impacts are disproportionate. The gender variations were observed in how the adolescent females would note more links between adverse mental

well-being due to the use of social media compared to boys. This has been linked to the differences in the process of socialization, how the genders relate with each other or even the type of interaction each gender prefers to participate in.

Orben and Przybylski (2019) have also observed the presence of the potential protective factors, as well. The negative effects of the intensive use of social media in adolescents were reduced due to the efficient offline social support, the possibility to apply a coping mechanism, and the improved base resilience. Other witnessed the favorable developments such as reinforcement in the social network and helpful online communities. These findings render it difficult to streamline any kind of social media consumption as bad. Instead, they assume that individual differences, including the personality traits, family or familial background, and the quality of online communication, confound the effect that social media has on the mental well-being.

Such findings would be useful in the current case regarding the need to consider subgroup difference in the presented hypothesis. Even though the overall trend tends toward the idea that more than three hours of an exposure to social media per day can be linked to a higher rate of occurrence of anxiety and depression, the intensity of such an effect will most likely not be almost equal among the participants. The intervention that takes into account gender differences can succeed as it is possible to manage the differences with some interventions, which, in their turn, will be more effective than the general policy.

Methods

The scholarly articles were collected using databases like the EBSCOhost, PsycINFO and ProQuest and sampled using the online research portal provided by the university library. The relevant studies were located by using keywords such as social media use, adolescent mental

health, anxiety, and depression. The filters were used to make sure that only peer-reviewed articles that were published within the past five years were taken so that they would be relevant. Three articles that were reviewed as a result of reading about twenty articles were selected due to their methodological strength and directness to the hypothesis. The articles have been evaluated in order to determine patterns and areas of focus. This analysis identified three important themes including the psychological effects of too much exposure to social media, the influence that online interactions have on self-esteem, and the possibility of the social media as a source of emotional support. The following sections of this research paper will be guided and analyzed based on these themes.

Evidence Screen Time and Mental health

Population-based studies always indicate the association between the excessive screen time and poor psychological well-being. More than 40,000 adolescents between the ages of 10 and 18 years have been studied by Twenge and Campbell (2018), and it has been found out that individuals who spent more than three hours a day on social media showed a significantly higher rate of anxiety and depression than their less regular users. Similarly, Orben and Przybylski (2019) have investigated the data involving over 350,000 adolescents and determined that using digital technologies and having a good well-being had a small but statistically significant negative correlation. These studies possibly may not be equal in terms of the effect sizes, though, one can make a general conclusion, which is that in more cases than not, an increase in screen time can be related to a decrease in the level of emotional health. These findings prove hypothesis that excessive use of social media can indeed increase the psychological distress in adolescence and is not merely a neutral or positive activity.

Mechanisms of Impact

Such relationship can be attributed to a number of mechanisms. The two outstanding psychological events that cause distress are the fear of missing out (FOMO) and social comparison. Computer-edited images on the web are likely to explain ideal lifestyles, beauty, and they can make one feel ineffective, alone, and not confident in his or her body (Twenge and Campbell, 2018). In addition, the use of screens at night influences the sleeping patterns that influence the quality of sleep and predispose an individual to mood disorders. According to Orben and Przybylski (2019), these effects are not dramatic, although there are personal variations that undermine the influence of screen time on well-being: namely, gender, personality traits, and social support. The combination of these processes implies a complex character of online interactions in adolescent mental health, and the impact of the psychological processes is not the amount of time spent online, but the material watched and the context of the behavior.

Implications and interventions

These outcomes have dire implications on parents, teachers and policy makers. The importance of the preventive and educative methods may be justified by the fact that the screen use should be treated as a potential risk factor but not a harmless hobby. Considerate consumption, establishing digital bedtime and living socially offline can solve the negative effects of overuse of smartphones. The psychological resiliency can also be enhanced through the assistance of digital literacy programs that teach adolescents how to be critical of what they find online and how to identify emotional signs of overuse.

SECTION 3 – TOPIC AREA DISCUSSION

Area one: Screen Time and Psychological Well-Being in adolescents.

It has always been reported in studies that the spending time on screens is correlated with the mental state of the adolescents. There are high rates of anxiety, depressive symptoms, as well as disrupted sleep patterns, associated with high use of visual-based social media platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok, and Snapchat. In one example, a population-based sample of over 40,000 teenagers found out that teenagers who spent over three hours daily on social media conditioned higher degrees of psychological distress compared to those who did not use it frequently (Twenge and Campbell, 2018). The well being impact was not so much but was not insignificant with moderate use of screen time of one to two hours in a day, which shows that there is dose effect relationship between screen time and well being.

The findings support the hypothesis that the longer the period of time spent at visually oriented social media, the greater anxiety and depression. The relevance of the specified problem is reinforced by the suggestions of the health bodies, such as the World Health Organization, who suggest the limitation of the frequency at which adolescents view the screen on a daily basis. The statistics demonstrate that the psychological well-being is not merely vulnerable to the screens exposure, but also the trends of socialization and comparison that occur online and that are why the analysis of online behaviors in this age category is up to date.

Focus Area 2: Cyberbullying and mediation variables, social comparison.

The impact of social media on the mental health of teenagers is not limited to the number of hours spent in front of the screens; additional mediation variables such as social comparison and cyberbullying play a crucial role. Social comparison tends to affect teenagers particularly due to the continuous identity formation and the availability of filtered and idealized images on the

internet can result in the decline of self-esteem and the emergence of depressive symptoms (Keles, McCrae, and Grealish, 2020). Cyberbullying that can occur in any location and to substantial groups exacerbates threats to anxiety and depression even further.

Secondly, social media can also cause sleeping issues and when teens log in to platforms at late hours due to a sense of perceived lack of life (FOMO), this is another source of mental pressure. Combined, these intermediaries suggest that the quality and the quantity of online experiences influence the outcomes of mental health. It was proven that negative impacts can be addressed by using the assistance of digital literacy training, anti-cyberbullying programs, and coping skills, which implies that the relationship between screen time and mental health is not straightforward and can be altered. This finding agrees with the hypothesis by demonstrating the routes through which the application of social media can have a modulating effect on anxiety and depression.

Focus Area 3: Differences among people and Defensive Factors.

Social media does not affect teenagers in a similar way. As large-scale studies (Orben and Przybylski, 2019) show, although there are statistical links between the use of digital technology and the development of negative psychological outcomes, they have less significant impact, which is also determined by the specifics of the individuals. These variations by gender like girls being more likely to report the impact of social media on mental health compared to boys could be attributed to the fact that the socialization of former is not similar and that females usually just like a particular form of the online communication.

These outcomes are also moderated by very critical protective factors. The anxiety and depressive symptoms are not present even in case of major social media use among adolescents who have advantageous offline social support networks and resilience in coping behavior and

engagement in positive online communities. These outcomes assist in emphasizing the personal nature of the research and the development of interventions, it does not imply that the hypothesis is refuted, but on the contrary, the impact of overuse of social media on the well-being of a person is neutral and depends on the circumstances and the person.

Part 1: Limitations

Although the literature provides the same consistent evidence on the association between the use of social media and mental health in adolescents, it has several limitations that complicate the interpretation of the acquired results. The most significant limitation is the extensive use of correlational and cross-sectional designs because these methods do not enable the researchers to prove the causality. The majority of the trendy extensive surveys (e.g., Twenge and Campbell, 2018; Orben and Przybylski, 2019) report one-time record on screen time and psychological prosperity. As a result, there is no certainty whether the exposure to social media enhances the anxiety and depression or the adolescents who already develop psychological distress are more oriented to use the online activities in large volumes. Unless longitudinal or experimental, directionality of effects could not be determined unwaveringly.

The second weakness is related to the measure of the screen time and online behaviors. Most of the research is based on the self-reported information that is subject to the recall bias, social desirability bias and inconsistency in the perception. Teenagers may over estimate their time much they spend on the Internet and underestimate their time much they spend on the Internet, and the interventions do not distinguish passive scrolling, active activity, creative activity, or learning activities. The effort to homogenize the concept of the screen time in one

homogenous phenomenon might result in simplified relations due to the difference between psychological effect of all kinds of screen use.

The other disadvantage is dynamism of the digital world. Platforms evolve very fast and are difficult to keep up with because features, algorithms, and user behaviors are modified within months. To illustrate, short-video format and highly personalized content suggestions algorithms of Tik Tok are fundamentally dissimilar to what they used to be a decade ago in those platforms. It creates a disjuncture between the research measure and the reality of adolescents. Consequently, the findings of the previous studies may not be applicable to the current kinds of social media interaction (Orben & Przybylski, 2019).

Personal differences also involve personality characteristics, socioeconomic status, cultural orientation and certain past mental conditions, which are not usually adequately considered in research designs. Adolescents may be more or less negatively socially comparative and others may be stronger and have positive online social groups. Teenage experiences are quite varied, and it is difficult to generalize the findings to other groups of people.

The results are also difficult to interpret because of mediating and moderating variables, such as sleep disruption, FOMO, cyberbullying, and quality of offline social support. Even though these effects are acknowledged by most research works, few studies examine them individually in one model. This fragmentation does not enable one to comprehend well the impacts of different factors that interact in order to ascertain the mental health outcome (Valkenburg et al, 2022).

Finally, the bulk of the literature available is within the framework of the West particularly the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. The cultural norms, the family

structures, and the communication that are related to technology are different in the world and this fact means that the results may not be universal. All these inadequacies lead to a need to conduct more demanding, delicate and culturally diverse studies before coming into the conclusion on the impact of social media on the well-being of teenagers.

Part 2: Conclusion

The research carried out on the topic in question regarding the screen time, moderating variables and personal dissimilarities all prove that adolescents and their involvement in the visually oriented social media platforms have a direct correlation with psychological well-being. Too much time at the screen and, especially, the use of applications where the emphasis is put on appearance, comparing, and social presence, are always accompanied by high levels of anxiety, depressive mood, and sleeping disorders. Even though a medium duration of screen time may not result in a lot, the direction of the findings in the large population studies shows that there is a dose-response relationship that the hypothesis that more the minds are used, the more they are in distress.

Despite the findings, these shortcomings in the literature cautions against simplistic and deterministic interpretations. The high reliance of correlational research makes it impossible to refer to the definite conclusion about the causality and the dynamism of the world of technologies suggests that the outcomes may become out of date soon. Nevertheless, the evidence available is based on the fact that there is an apparent overall theme that the use of social media is not all bad and not all good, yet its impacts are contingent on the level, the circumstances and personal characteristics.

All these findings together emphasize that balanced and informed digital practices should exist among the adolescents. The parents, educators, clinicians, and policymakers should not only think of how much time the adolescents spend on the screens, but also to make the virtual environment healthier, establish healthy relationships, and educate the young people on how to utilize the digital space without causing damage to themselves and their surroundings. In the future, the existing research ought to be enhanced through the use of longitudinal designs, more specific behaviors, and culturally-diverse samples.

Lastly, the use of social media, and its most visual-based and comparative types of use, in particular, are assumed to have a significant influence on mental health among adolescents, which is supported by the literature. The manner in which this predicament can be resolved is a delicate situation sensitive approach that puts into consideration the risks and the protection of the online life of the young.

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