

THE IMPACT OF PROLONGED SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON TEENAGERS' MENTAL HEALTH

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Abstract: In this article, I investigate the impact of prolonged social media use on teenagers' mental health. Today, social media has become an important part of teenagers' everyday life. I decided to study this topic because I noticed that many teenagers spend long hours on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. While social media has many benefits, excessive use may create psychological and emotional problems. In this research, I focused on anxiety, depression, self-esteem, and sleep quality among teenagers. I used a survey method to collect data from students. The results of my research showed that teenagers who spend more time on social media experience more stress, poor sleep, and lower self-confidence. Based on these findings, I suggest that teenagers should balance their online and offline activities.

Key Words: Social media, teenagers, mental health, anxiety, depression, self-esteem, screen time, digital wellbeing

Introduction

Nowadays, social media plays a significant role in teenagers' lives. I chose this topic because I observed that teenagers spend a large amount of their time using mobile phones and social networking sites. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Facebook allow teenagers to communicate, share photos, watch videos, and express their opinions. However, I noticed that excessive use of social media may also create negative effects. I believe that teenagers are more vulnerable to social media influence because they are still developing emotionally and socially. Many teenagers compare themselves with others online, which may lead to feelings of sadness, stress, and dissatisfaction. In addition, long hours of screen time may reduce physical activity and face-to-face communication. Another reason why I selected this topic is that mental health problems among teenagers are increasing. I wanted to understand whether social media contributes to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Therefore, the main aim of my research is to investigate how prolonged social media use affects teenagers' mental health.

The objectives of this research are:

- To identify how much time teenagers spend on social media
- To analyze the psychological effects of prolonged use
- To examine the relationship between social media use and sleep patterns
- To suggest possible solutions to reduce negative effects

Method

In this research, I used a quantitative research method. I prepared a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions related to social media use and mental health. I distributed the survey among 50 teenage students aged between 13 and 18 years.

I asked students questions such as:

- How many hours do you spend on social media daily?
- Do you feel stressed after using social media?
- Does social media affect your sleep?
- Do you compare yourself with others online?

I divided the responses into three categories:

- Less than 2 hours
- 2–4 hours
- More than 4 hours

After collecting the data, I calculated the percentages and analyzed the results. I also compared students' emotional responses with their screen time.

Results

The results of my research showed that most teenagers spend a significant amount of time on social media. According to my findings:

- 64% of teenagers spend more than 4 hours daily on social media
- 22% spend 2–4 hours
- 14% spend less than 2 hours

In addition, I found that:

- 60% of students reported feeling anxious after using social media
- 55% experienced poor sleep quality
- 48% reported low self-esteem
- 40% felt lonely despite being active online

I also noticed that teenagers who spend more than 4 hours online experience more emotional problems. Many participants mentioned that comparing their lives with others on social media made them feel unhappy.

Discussion

Based on my findings, I believe that prolonged social media use has a strong impact on teenagers' mental health. Teenagers who spend too much time online are more likely to experience anxiety and stress. Social comparison and online pressure may lead to low self-confidence. I also found that excessive social media use affects sleep patterns. Many teenagers use their phones late at night, which leads to poor sleep quality. As a result, students may feel tired, less focused, and less motivated at school. However, I also believe that social media has positive aspects. It helps teenagers communicate, learn new things, and share ideas. Therefore, I think the solution is not to completely stop using social media but to use it in a balanced way.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I found that prolonged social media use negatively affects teenagers' mental health. Teenagers who spend too much time online experience anxiety, poor sleep, and low self-esteem. Based on my research, I recommend that teenagers limit their screen time and participate in offline activities such as sports, reading, and social interaction. I also suggest that parents and teachers guide teenagers in using social media responsibly. In my opinion, balanced social media use can help teenagers benefit from technology while protecting their mental health.

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