

## IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MENTAL HEALTH

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**Annotation:** In recent years, social media has become an inseparable part of daily life, especially among young people. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have significantly changed the way individuals communicate, share information, and perceive the world. While social media offers many advantages, including connectivity and access to information, it also raises serious concerns regarding its impact on mental health.

This article examines how social media affects psychological well-being, focusing on key issues such as addiction, self-esteem, emotional dependence, and anxiety. By analyzing selected academic and online sources, the paper presents the viewpoints of different authors and provides critical evaluation through personal interpretation. The aim of this study is to explore both the negative and positive aspects of social media use and to suggest practical recommendations for healthier usage.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Mental Health, Self-esteem, Addiction, Anxiety, Digital Behavior, Emotional Well-being

### Introduction

Over the past decade, social media has grown rapidly and has become one of the most influential tools in modern society. Millions of people use social media platforms daily to communicate, entertain themselves, and stay informed. For young people in particular, social media is not just a tool but a central part of their social life.

However, alongside its popularity, concerns about its impact on mental health have also increased. Researchers and psychologists have pointed out that excessive and uncontrolled use of social media may lead to psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and emotional instability.

This article aims to analyze the impact of social media on mental health by examining different perspectives and providing a balanced evaluation of the issue.

#### The Negative Impact of Social Media on Mental Health

One of the most serious concerns related to social media is addiction.

According to the article "Are You Addicted to Social Media?", users often develop a habit of checking their social media accounts repeatedly throughout the day. This behavior is linked to dopamine release in the brain, which creates a sense of pleasure and satisfaction.

In my opinion, the author is highlighting that social media platforms are intentionally designed to keep users engaged, which can lead to compulsive usage and reduced self-control.

Another important issue is emotional attachment and difficulty in letting go of past experiences.

The Psychology Today article explains that people may "continue checking their ex-partner's social media due to unresolved emotions and curiosity."

In my opinion, this indicates that social media can prolong emotional pain by constantly reminding individuals of past relationships, making it harder for them to move forward.

Low self-esteem is also a major psychological effect of social media.

According to The Conversation, social media can “crush your self-esteem by encouraging constant comparison with others.”

In my opinion, this suggests that users tend to compare their real lives with the carefully edited and idealized versions of others' lives, which can create feelings of inadequacy and dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, social media contributes to increased anxiety and stress levels.

The same source emphasizes that exposure to unrealistic standards can create pressure to appear perfect online.

In my opinion, this pressure can lead to emotional exhaustion and constant worry about how others perceive us.

Psychological Mechanisms Behind Social Media Use

Social media platforms are built on psychological principles that encourage continuous engagement.

The Psychology Today article suggests that checking behavior is connected to “reward-seeking patterns in the brain.”

In my opinion, this shows that social media use is not entirely a conscious choice but is influenced by neurological responses, making it harder for users to control their behavior.

Another key factor is the fear of missing out (FOMO).

Users often feel the need to stay constantly connected in order not to miss important updates or social interactions.

In my opinion, this creates mental pressure and prevents individuals from relaxing, as they feel the need to always be online.

In addition, notifications, likes, and comments act as external validation.

In my opinion, when people depend too much on these forms of validation, their self-worth becomes dependent on others' opinions, which can negatively affect their emotional stability.

Positive Aspects of Social Media

Despite its negative effects, social media also has several positive aspects.

Firstly, it allows people to stay connected with friends and family regardless of distance.

In my opinion, this is especially important in today's globalized world, where people often live far away from their loved ones.

Secondly, social media provides access to information and educational content. Users can follow educational pages, watch tutorials, and learn new skills. In my opinion, this makes social media a powerful tool for personal and academic development when used correctly.

Moreover, social media can offer emotional support.

Online communities allow people to share their experiences and receive encouragement from others. In my opinion, this can be helpful for individuals who feel isolated in real life.

### **Discussion**

The analysis of different sources clearly shows that social media has a complex impact on mental health. While it offers benefits such as communication, education, and support, it also presents risks including addiction, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

The key issue is not the existence of social media itself but how it is used. Excessive and uncontrolled use leads to negative consequences, while balanced and mindful use can be beneficial.

In my opinion, users should develop digital awareness and learn to control their online behavior in order to protect their mental health.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, social media plays a significant role in shaping modern life and has a strong influence on mental health. It can negatively affect users by increasing anxiety, lowering self-esteem, and creating addictive behaviors. At the same time, it provides valuable opportunities for communication, learning, and emotional support.

Therefore, the goal should not be to completely avoid social media but to use it responsibly and in moderation.

### **Recommendations**

- & Limit daily time spent on social media
- & Avoid comparing yourself to others
- & Take regular breaks from online platforms
- & Focus on real-life relationships
- & Use social media for learning and self-improvement
- & Be aware of emotional triggers while using social media

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