



IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of social media on the minds of young people, examining its positive and negative aspects. It analyzes how social media affects young people's behavior, mental well-being, communication skills, and learning styles. Drawing on existing academic research, the article aims to provide a balanced and comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in the development of modern youth.

Key words: social media, youth, consciousness, behavior.

Introduction. In recent years, social media has become an important part of young generation's daily lives. Applications such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are widely used not only for communication but also for entertainment and learning. According to Pew Research Center, a significant majority of teenagers in the United States use social media daily, which shows its strong influence on youth behavior and thinking patterns (Anderson & Jiang, 2018)

Main body

Positive effects of social media. Social media provides young people with access to a vast amount of information and educational content. It supports self-learning, creativity, and global communication. Research shows that digital platforms can enhance collaborative learning and improve access to educational resources when used properly (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). In recent years, many young people have achieved considerable personal success through the effective and responsible use of social media.

Negative effects of social media. Despite its benefits, excessive use of social media can negatively affect youth mental health. Studies indicate that high levels of social media use are associated with anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem among adolescents (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020). Constant comparison with others on social platforms often leads to psychological pressure and reduced life satisfaction. Moreover, a decline in self-confidence among the younger generation can hinder their development into mature and well-rounded individuals in the future. When young people constantly compare their own lives with the idealized lives presented on social media, their ability



to form independent opinions and make autonomous decisions may gradually weaken. Such individuals may also become more vulnerable to engaging in various forms of deviant or unlawful behavior later in life.

Behavioral influence.

Social media also shapes youth behaviour and decision-making. According to Valkenburg and Peter (2010), online interactions significantly influence identity formation during adolescence. This means that young people often adjust their attitudes and self-image based on online feedback and social validation. In an attempt to gain more positive reactions from others on social media, young people may begin to suppress their true identity and try to present themselves as someone else. This constant effort to maintain an idealized image can place significant psychological strain on them and lead to emotional exhaustion.

Conclusion

In conclusion, social media has a very strong and wide-ranging impact on youth consciousness. On the one hand, it provides important opportunities for learning, information sharing, creativity development, and strengthening social connections. However, on the other hand, excessive and uncontrolled use of social media can lead to various psychological problems among young people, such as stress, anxiety, and low self-confidence. In addition, exposure to false information and constant social comparison can negatively influence their behaviour and worldview. Therefore, in modern society, it is essential to improve media literacy among young people and teach them to use the internet consciously and purposefully. This will help them become mature, independent thinkers and beneficial members of society in the future.

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