



WHY SOCIAL MEDIA IS CHANGING THE WAY WE THINK

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Abstract: This article examines how social media is changing the way people think, communicate, and perceive the world. It focuses on the influence of digital platforms on attention, memory, emotions, and decision-making. Social media encourages quick information processing, constant comparison, and emotional reactions, which can affect critical thinking and mental well-being. The article also discusses both positive and negative effects of social media, showing how it shapes modern thinking patterns. Overall, the research highlights the importance of using social media consciously in order to maintain balanced and independent thinking in the digital age.

Key words: social media, thinking, digital communication, attention, psychology, perception, technology, mental health.

In the modern world, social media has become an essential part of everyday life. Millions of people use platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter to communicate, learn, and entertain themselves. These platforms influence not only how people interact with each other but also how they think and process information. As social media grows rapidly, it plays a significant role in shaping human behavior and perception.

Thinking is a complex mental process that involves attention, memory, reasoning, and emotions. Traditionally, people developed their thinking skills through reading books, engaging in deep conversations, and reflecting on experiences. However, today most information is received through short videos, posts, and images. This shift in information consumption has led to changes in cognitive habits. Social media encourages fast thinking rather than deep analysis, which can influence the quality of understanding.

This article explores how social media affects human thinking, focusing on attention span, emotional responses, and social perception. It also discusses the advantages and disadvantages of social media in shaping modern thought patterns.

One of the most noticeable effects of social media is its impact on attention. Platforms are designed to keep users engaged for as long as possible by offering endless content. As a result, people become accustomed to scrolling quickly from one post to another. This habit reduces the ability to concentrate on one task for a long time. Many users find it difficult to read long texts or



focus on academic materials.

Moreover, social media affects memory. Since information is always available online, people rely less on their own memory. Instead of remembering facts, users prefer to search for them instantly. This phenomenon is often described as digital dependency. While technology makes life easier, it may weaken long-term memory skills and reduce independent thinking.

Another important factor is multitasking. Social media encourages people to perform several activities at once, such as chatting, watching videos, and studying simultaneously. This behavior decreases productivity and lowers the quality of cognitive processing. As a result, the brain becomes overloaded with information, making it harder to analyze and reflect deeply.

Social media also influences emotional thinking. Users constantly compare their lives with others, often seeing only positive and idealized images. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and anxiety. Many people measure their self-worth based on likes, comments, and followers, which affects emotional stability.

Furthermore, social media promotes instant emotional reactions. People quickly react to news, opinions, and trends without careful consideration. This leads to impulsive judgments and emotional thinking instead of rational analysis. The spread of fake news and misinformation is another serious issue, as users often believe content without verifying its accuracy.

However, social media also has positive emotional effects. It helps people stay connected, express themselves, and find support communities. For individuals who feel isolated, online platforms provide a sense of belonging. Therefore, social media can both harm and improve emotional well-being depending on how it is used.

Social media changes how people perceive society and relationships. Communication has become more virtual than physical, which affects interpersonal skills. Face-to-face communication is gradually being replaced by online messaging, reducing emotional depth and empathy. People may find it easier to express opinions online than in real life.

Another important aspect is identity formation. Users create digital identities by choosing what to share and what to hide. This selective self-presentation influences how individuals see themselves and others. The need to maintain an attractive online image can create psychological pressure and unrealistic expectations.

On the other hand, social media raises awareness about global issues and cultural diversity. People gain access to different perspectives and ideas, which can broaden their worldview. In this sense, social media contributes to social learning and cognitive development.



Conclusion

In conclusion, social media significantly changes the way people think, feel, and interact with the world around them. It affects attention span by encouraging rapid information consumption and reducing the ability to concentrate deeply. It influences memory by creating dependence on digital sources instead of internal knowledge storage. Emotional responses are intensified through constant comparison, instant feedback, and exposure to idealized content. Social perception is also transformed as communication shifts from direct human interaction to virtual platforms.

At the same time, social media is not entirely negative. It provides educational opportunities, access to information, social support, and global communication. It allows individuals to express themselves creatively and participate in important social discussions. For many people, especially young generations, social media serves as a primary source of news, learning, and social connection.

Therefore, the impact of social media depends largely on how consciously and responsibly it is used. Developing digital literacy, critical thinking skills, and emotional awareness is essential in the digital age. Users should learn to manage their screen time, verify information, and maintain a balance between online and offline life. Educational institutions and families also play an important role in teaching healthy digital habits.

Ultimately, social media is a powerful technological tool that shapes modern thinking patterns. When used wisely, it can enhance communication, knowledge, and social awareness. However, without conscious control, it may reduce attention, weaken independent thinking, and negatively influence mental health. Maintaining balance and critical awareness is the key to preserving independent and rational thinking in the era of digital communication.

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