



The Digital Trap: Unravelling The Societal Impacts Of Social Media Addiction

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Abstract

This article is an exploration of the impact of social media on society. Billions of people using social media platforms daily, this shows it has become an integral part of our lives. While social media has brought about many benefits, it has also had a significant impact on communication, consuming and sharing information, maintaining business, and even on our mental health. These effects intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in emotional disconnection and strained relationships. Financially, addiction drives increased online purchasing, causing economic strain and negatively affecting students' academic performance. Thus, while social media provides notable benefits, its adverse effects necessitate continuous oversight and regulation to mitigate negative impacts and protect public well-being, as emphasized by Elon Musk, who advocates for regulations to balance social media's role in society.

Keywords: Social media, Addiction, Impact, Disconnection, Stress.

Introduction

Social media is digital tool used for interacting with the people, sharing ideas and information, including texts and visuals through various networks. It also helps the people to build healthy relationships with the friends, family and customers. Social media is a source of news for many people. It also plays a crucial role in the IT companies through which they can promote their product and services. Though it seems to be more potential for this 21st century era, it also has negative consequences as it can lead to increased

depression, anxiety, loneliness, and suicidal tendencies. Nowadays adults and children are more addicted to social media platforms like Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, X(Twitter) and YouTube which creates a tremendous changes in their life. Through an examination of both the positive and negative effects of social media, this article aims to shed light on its impact on society and the need for further study to address its negative consequences.

Prevalence Of Social Media Addiction

The consequences of social media addiction extend beyond individual behaviour, impacting the mental health on a broader level. The users addicted to it experiences psychological changes in their behaviour, feeling distress and increases the feeling of loneliness. It makes the person to neglect their work, responsibilities, relationships, and make them to get isolated from the family, society and increases the level of dissatisfaction in themselves (Mahmoud et al).

Psychological Effects Of Social Media

Psychologically, it has both positive and negative effects. The positive effects are, it helps the user or the person to access support from many online platforms for their educational purposes, medical treatments, seeking for jobs and for business developments. Though it seems to be helpful in many ways sometimes it also acts as double edged sword in each person life. It particularly increases the feelings of depression and anxiety especially in the teenagers and adults, change in the sleep cycle routine which causes mental health issues, allows them to get isolated from the society, reduce the level of concentration, make them to procrastinate from their responsibilities and cyberbullying which causes severe psychological effects both mentally and emotionally to a person and paves way for the suicidal thoughts. The widespread nature of the addiction has a significant blow on purchase behaviours, particularly among younger populations like kids and young graduates. Studies revealed that online buying activities are in greater levels of addiction. They typically participate in more virtual transactions which leads to loss of huge amount of money especially investing in games, trading, buying products (Eda DiSLi BAYRAKTAR). According to a research more than 300 million people are addicted to the social media and internet among them 55% is of adults and teenagers.

Impacts On Relationships And Social Behaviour

One of the most significant concussion of social media is the way it has changed how to communicate with people. In the early days, people had face-to-face interactions and communicated through phone calls. But now, people can communicate with others from around the world in real-time through social media platforms. This has allowed for greater connectivity and has made it easier for people to stay in touch with friends and family members. However, it seems to be helpful it reduced the importance of our lives and it made us to forget the value of our closed ones emotionally by giving priority to unimportant activities. Sometimes it also portrays the society in a negative manner by spreading rumours, creating misunderstandings between the relationships, families and ruined the life of many lives. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic the people of all ages lost physical contacts, casual conversations, made them to disconnect from the real world especially with the youngsters, who become short tempered, lost emotional bonding with their

family members and friends (Yang Ni and f. Jie). To develop a positive face to face interactions the people should spend more time with their family, friends, especially to their closed ones instead of using the online platforms for their conversations.

Economic Consequences Of Social Media Addicitions

The social media addictions created a huge economic impact on both individuals and society. It reduced the productivity of the work and workers. It leads to incompleteness of the tasks. It also reduces the overall business productivity when the workers use social media during their work hours. A study done in the University of London found that the persons who use social media are less productive and has struggle to focus on their work. The online addiction leads to increase the cost of health care as it increases the anxiety level, depression, poor self-esteem in a person. For instance, the United Kingdom National Health Service (NHS) has reported that more than 70% of people seeking help for mental health issues which is mainly caused by excess usage of social media. It created a huge impact in the educational department especially during the pandemic as well as in the post pandemic. Many students started to rely on it completely, which affected their academic performances, paying less attention during the offline classes and reduced their thinking ability (Edubirdie). Some social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok make the users to buy products through online which created a economic problem in the family as well as for the individuals.

Strategies for Mitigating Social Media Addiction

Addressing social media addiction is vital for enhancing interpersonal skills and mental health. By fostering self-awareness and monitoring usage patterns which allows them to set realistic goals for reducing screen time. Techniques like creating device-free zones during meals or leisure time encourage meaningful interactions (Mohd. Imran Khan et al). Alternative activities, such as reading or exercising, can also help to shift focus away from screens, promotes good habits, builds a positive relationship with the people in their surroundings and meditation, can distract the people and the urge to check social media frequently. Ultimately, seeking professional support, such as therapy, having appointment with psychiatrist can also help to get rid of the addiction.

Social Media 2030 – The Future Landscape

During 2030 there will be huge development in technologies. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual/Augmented Reality (VR/AR) will be used widely and frequently by everyone which makes the people to spend most of their time to the technology, social interactions might be completely stopped as the technology rules everyone's life. Most of the people will become unemployed as the robots will be replaced in the place of humans, the production of money will be completely stopped and it will be replaced by the Bitcoins (Crypto Currency) and online transactions which plays a huge role in trading, selling and stock exchanges. The new technologies helps the people to access everything easily but it also steals the personal information from the users. Therefore, the development of these technologies might become dangerous when it is not controlled efficiently as AI will make social media even more problematic.

Conclusion

In conclusion, social media created a huge impact on the society as it brought lot of benefits, developed the mode of communication to make it easier and convenient for everyone, ability to share information quickly and effectively. However it is good and helpful, it lacks in maintaining the private information and critical thinking as well. As social media continues to play a vital role in our life, it is also important to continue to study its impact on society to address every person about its consequences. Elon Musk also quoted about the usage of social media platform as “I think there should be regulations on social media to the degree that it negatively affects the public good”. Through this he conveys that there should be a control or rules over social media platforms to prevent negative outcomes and harmful contents.

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