

The Influence of Social Media Use on Social Adaption Among Adolescents

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Abstract:

Social media has already become very popular in the adolescent population. So, An increasing number of researchers are now focusing on how social media usage impacts social adaptation. This study seeks to organize existing research findings through a literature review and examine the benefits and drawbacks of adolescents utilizing social media in relation to their social adjustment by conducting a literature review. Social media give adolescents chances to connect with society and assist them in building relationships. However, excessive social media use may result in feelings of isolation and alienation, which can impact their mental well-being. Gender and age may play a moderating role in this process, and there may be differences in the impact of social adjustment when using social media among adolescents of different genders and ages, which will be analyzed in detail in this article. In addition, this article will explore the limitations of the existing studies, especially the deficiencies in research methodology and sample selection, and put forward issues and suggestions for further attention in future studies so as to provide references and insights for subsequent academic research.

Keywords: Social media use; social adaption; adolescents; developmental psychology.

1. Introduction

With the swift rise of social media it has become an essential part of adolescents' daily lives. A survey from Anderson et al. shows that Over half of teenagers dedicate a significant portion of their day to social media sites [1]. They use these platforms to interact with friends, get information, and be entertained. Therefore, social media has become an important tool for them to socialize. At the same time, social ad-

aptation is a key point in adolescents' mental health and interpersonal development. Social adaptation can help adolescents a lot. It can help adolescents adapt to environmental changes and build positive relationships in different social environments. Social media can positively impact teenagers but also have some bad effects. All effects may affect adolescents' social adaptation. So, it is very important to do research on the effects of social media use on social adaptation among adolescents. A lot of research has already

shown the influence of social media use on adolescents' social adaptation. Social media can help adolescents enhance their connection with the society. These platforms can help adolescents make their voices heard on topics of social concern and share or upload information [2].

Social adaptation is essential for the healthy growth and development of teenagers, both within the school environment and within the broader society. This process encompasses the essential ability to forge positive and meaningful relationships with peers, as well as the capacity to seamlessly integrate oneself into various group settings. Adolescents who successfully adapt socially tend to exhibit greater confidence, better communication skills, and a stronger sense of belonging, all of which contribute to their overall well-being. However, the advent and widespread use of social media has introduced a complex dynamic to the social adaptation of adolescents. On the one hand, Social media platforms provide numerous opportunities for young people to expand their social networks beyond the confines of their immediate physical environments. They can connect with like-minded peers, join interest-based communities, and engage in conversations that foster a sense of belonging and support. These virtual interactions can sometimes provide a stepping stone for adolescents who might find it difficult to engage in direct interactions with others, thereby enhancing their social skills and confidence. On the other hand, the influence of social media on adolescents' social adaptation is not entirely positive. The expectation to uphold a specific online persona, the anxiety of being excluded from social gatherings, and the risk of online harassment are just some of the stressors that social media can bring into the lives of young people. These factors can lead to increased stress, lower self-esteem, and a sense of isolation, all of which can hinder an adolescent's ability to adapt socially. The ongoing comparison with the seemingly flawless lives of others displayed on social media can lead to feelings of inadequacy and hinder an adolescent's capacity to establish authentic connections both online and offline [3].

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore the positive and negative influence of social media use on adolescents' social adaptation. And to analyze how the use of social media by adolescents of different genders and ages affects their social adaptation. At the same time, this article will also reveal the shortcomings of existing studies and provide suggestions for future related studies.

2. Method

This article is a type of literature review that finds the existing literature on the influence of social media use on adolescents' social adaptation. Specifically, this paper

will summarize the key findings in the existing literature on how social media positively or negatively affects adolescents' social adjustment, categorize these studies, and examine the gaps in the research that have not been addressed. Organizing the main findings in the literature and examining the gaps that were not mentioned in the study. This paper plans to analyze the literature of the last ten years (2014-2024). It is planned to read, analyze, and organize the literature from selected literature from Google Scholar and other academic databases.

The selected literature includes both the advantages and disadvantages of social media regarding the social adjustment of adolescents. Exploring more research studies on the connection between social media and the social adjustment of adolescents is essential for gaining a deeper insight into the subject. By analyzing the existing literature, a more in-depth and focused examination of how different factors (e.g., gender and age) moderated the effects of social media use on adolescents' social adjustment can be explored.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Definition

Social adaptation refers to a person's capability to adjust and thrive within a social setting, which encompasses forming and sustaining positive relationships, adhering to social conventions, engaging in group activities, and managing social pressures. In adolescents, this ability can help them to integrate into different social environments, such as different social circles with family, classmates, and friends.

Social media use of adolescents pertains to engagement in activities that involve forging connections with society via online platforms, which are specifically designed to facilitate social interactions, enable the exchange of information, provide avenues for entertainment, and offer various means of communication.

In this article, the primary focus is on examining the connection between social media usage and social adjustment. Adolescents use social media to make connections and obtain social feedback, and how they balance online and offline social interactions determines their social adaptation.

3.2 The Effect of Social Media Use on Adolescents' Social Adaption

3.2.1 Positive effect

Studies indicate that social media positively influences teenagers' capacity to form and sustain social connections.

Approximately 66.7% of teenagers indicate that they use social media to find new friends, while over 90% engage with their existing offline friends daily via social media. Adolescents can utilize social media networks to gain insights into their friends' emotions and develop a system of emotional support, particularly during the teenage years when receiving support and validation from peers is essential for their growth [4]. Social media provides adolescents with an opportunity to explore their identity and express themselves. Through self-presentation and sharing on these platforms, they can gain a clearer understanding of who they are. Studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicate that social media offers teenagers beneficial experiences [5]. For example, 58% of teens report feeling more accepted, while 67% say they have people to lean on during tough times. Additionally, 71% feel it is a place to express creativity, and 80% say they stay updated on their friends' lives, which keeps them feeling close and connected. Altogether, these findings highlight how social media helps teens build strong bonds, offering both emotional support and a sense of belonging. It reinforces that, when used positively, social media can be a valuable part of a teen's life, helping them feel more connected and understood.

3.2.2 Negative effect

Social media may adversely affect the mental well-being and self-image of teenagers. The anonymous and accessible characteristics of social media sites create a space that can facilitate cyberbullying, leading to increased depression rates among young users. Studies have shown that the experience of cyberbullying, facilitated by anonymous interactions, has strong ties to depressive symptoms, leaving lasting effects on adolescents' mental well-being [6]. Moreover, with the rise in social media usage, adolescents now spend significant amounts of time online. According to research, those who engage with social media for over three hours daily may face an elevated risk of developing mental health issues, as prolonged exposure can intensify feelings of anxiety and depression [7]. Another study indicates that teenagers spend more time on social media to interact with their peers and share feedback on each other's messages and posts [8]. They tend to compare their lives with the idealized images displayed on social media, resulting in negative self-evaluations that affect their social interactions and emotional well-being in real life [9]. Especially among adolescent girls, there is a tendency to compare their lives to the idealized depictions they see online. Such comparisons can lead to lower self-esteem and feelings of inferiority [10].

3.2.3 Age difference

There is some variability in the relationship between social media use and social adaptation among adolescents at different ages. And it changes with age [11]. Younger adolescents are less able to self-regulate and adapt and are more likely to be addicted to social media and susceptible to social comparison, leading to increased anxiety and depression [12]. Young adolescents, particularly those aged 12-14, are more vulnerable to the harmful impacts of social media. Since their self-adaptation skills are still developing, messages encountered on social platforms can strongly influence their social adjustment. As they are in the process of forming self-identity and learning coping strategies, they are at a higher risk for anxiety and depression tied to heavy social media use, especially due to risks like social comparison and cyberbullying [13]. Older adolescents generally have better self-adaptation skills, so older adolescents are less likely to be affected in their social adaptation when confronted with negative content on social media. At the same time these older adolescents predominantly used social media for socialization while not identity formation, which was associated with lower negative self-comparisons and vulnerability to cyberbullying, thus reducing their emotional health risk [14].

3.2.4 Gender difference

Gender has a substantial influence on how adolescents are affected psychologically and socially by using social media. Research shows that girls are particularly vulnerable to the emotional impacts of social media, often engaging in behaviors like "upward comparison"—comparing themselves to others who appear more successful or attractive. This comparison can lead to heightened anxiety and self-esteem issues, impacting their real-life socialization and sense of self-identity [15]. Their tendency to use social media for social interactions and sharing personal experiences exposes them to increased scrutiny and potentially negative self-evaluations while building social networks. As a result, their self-esteem and emotional well-being often become closely tied to the feedback and validation they receive on social media platforms [16]. This gain makes girls more susceptible to problems such as anxiety and depression. In contrast, boys generally use social media differently, with a focus on entertainment and competition rather than personal expression. Studies suggest that boys engage more in activities like gaming and watching videos, often in less socially interactive or identity-focused ways [17]. Related to self-image and emotional health. Boys' engagement with social media is often driven by a sense of enjoyment and accomplishment, not personal validation, which may explain why they report fewer negative effects on emotional expression and self-esteem [14]. Therefore, while both men and

women are affected by social media, how they engage and the resulting psychological outcomes are very different, with girls more likely to experience challenges related to self-image and emotional well-being.

4. Implications

The results of this article offer specific recommendations for both parents and educators to assist adolescents in utilizing social media in a constructive manner and to promote their positive social adaptation. Based on the results of this article, parents can provide more constructive guidance as well as advice to their children by encouraging a balance of online and offline social activities. For example, parents can set limits on their children's social media use while increasing opportunities for face-to-face interaction, such as participation in family or community events. By encouraging conversations about the possible dangers of social media, parents can assist their teenagers in navigating these platforms in a more responsible and productive manner, while also minimizing adverse emotional effects like anxiety and social comparison. Teachers can teach more social skill in school, which can help adolescent, too.

While this article outlined several effects of social media on adolescents' social adaptation, there remain numerous avenues for future research, as this topic warrants deeper exploration. For instance, future studies could compare the influence of social media use across various cultural contexts and countries to gain a more comprehensive understanding of its global impact on adolescents' social adaptation.

While this article highlighted certain effects of social media on adolescents' social adaptation, numerous opportunities for future research remain. An essential area for further study is examining social media's impact within various cultural contexts. As social media use expands worldwide, future research should explore how cultural norms, values, and societal expectations shape adolescents' interactions on these platforms. Through cross-cultural comparisons, researchers can obtain a deeper understanding of the worldwide impact of social media on the social adaptation of adolescents.

5. Conclusion

This article offers an in-depth examination of the impact of social media use on adolescents' social adaptation, covering both its beneficial and adverse effects. On one side, social media serves as a space where adolescents can build and sustain friendships and find emotional support. On the other hand, social media provide a platform for adoles-

cents to develop and maintain friendships, seek emotional support, and explore their own identities, facilitating adolescents' socialization, especially for adolescents who may have difficulty in face-to-face interactions. On the other hand, however, overuse or improper use of social media can result in negative effects like social isolation, anxiety, and diminished self-esteem, often due to processes like social comparison. Gender and age also play an important role in the manifestation of these effects, with girls being more susceptible to mood swings and social comparisons, while boys are more involved in recreational and competitive activities and are less susceptible compared to girls. Parents and educators play a crucial role in guiding adolescents to use social media responsibly. Parental guidance in balancing online and offline interactions, coupled with social skills programs in schools, can provide adolescents with the tools they need to cultivate healthy social relationships and minimize the negative effects of social media use. Although this article highlights several important findings, future research should explore cross-cultural differences in the impact of social media on social adaptation, an area of critical importance as social media continues to evolve and shape the social lives of young people across the globe.

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