

Effects of social media on mental health



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According to the World Census Bureau, there are approximately 7.53 Billion people who currently reside on this planet in the year 2017. In the month of November in the year 2016, a survey was conducted by the Pew Research Center (PRC). This survey gave the results that 77 percent of Americans own a smart phone, while the world combined has an estimated 62.9 percent, with the percentage shooting up by five percent in 2019. However, the PRC conducted another study earlier this year that showed results of Americans making it up to the 95 percentiles of owning a smart phone or cellular device. With such the influx of phones being used all around the world and need to share everything on our social media platforms this can raise concerns.

One of the largest and most used social media platform in the world is Facebook. Facebook was created in 2004, by a man named Mark Zuckerberg. However, it did not go public and available to the world until 2012. After the public release, and the many human beings that were drawn in to this new and exciting concept its popularity grew and will continue to expand well into the future. Besides the fact that you can friend and speak to your friends virtually, you have the option to post a status update, picture, both, or just share something you like. That is where the problem of what we will be getting to reside.

Unlike Facebook there is the next biggest platform called YouTube. As Facebook uses the options to friend and share their life, YouTube is strictly Video based with a section of commenters. YouTube is a place where you can set up an account and produce videos and gain yourself an either small to massive following of fans, that could very well make you money based on

how many subscribers you have and views you get per video. YouTube is a place for all people together to talk and upload videos that can be funny, political, musical ...etc. It's an expressive content platform where offering your opinion on something freely, without breaching its rules.

The next, and maybe the most influential platform used by many people throughout the world is the social media platform Instagram. Instagram is a picture/video base where users can share their life in pictures and videos if wanted to. They do have stories they can post up to twenty-four hours to give short glimpses and you can promote brands. Instagram started out simple, but with competition like Facebook, YouTube...etc. they've had many upgrades. Every second on Instagram an average of 877 photos or videos are uploaded to its database according to InternetLiveStats.

With so many images coming at us at once and the option to scroll endlessly through this means that we as human beings are very impressionable with what we see on a day to day basis. The main point of this research paper is to focus on the mental health of adolescents to young adults and how they can be affected and hurt with the onslaught of anxiety and/or depression from the cause of social media.

According to Samantha Rosenthal, she found that there is a connection between social media and anxiety and depression. One of her findings stated that 82 percent of her 264 participants reported that they had encountered a negative experience on Facebook. In her study, 63 percent of participants stated that they had four or more bad experiences in their lifetime, while 24 percent of her medium sized sample had reported that they suffered from a

medium to high levels of depression. This was found by using the standard Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale. It was found that among people who experienced any NFEs, the overall risk of depressive symptoms was about 3.2 times greater than among those who had not (Rosenthal).

With the rapid development of so many social media sites will mainly be focusing on the ones stated above. According to some researchers it has been found that with the many users on social networking sites and the need to keep in the loop, it has been linked to Depression and Anxiety (Pantic). The first focus will be Facebook and its effects on adolescent's too young adults. Even though many connections have been made with the use of computers and communication, there is still a line that needs to be distinguished to find a concrete answer. Since Facebook as I stated before wasn't created until 2004, screen time usage for young adults and younger wasn't as prevalent.

However, since Facebook has picked up over the years, and according to Wakefield, it has over 1.23 billion users on its database since 2015. Since social media is relatively still new to this world on wide scale basis, it was not uncommon at first for us to be glued to our electronics. Now, though with the abundance of people it has become a problem. Facebook has many things on it, for an example we'll use ads, when browsing through Facebook you'll come across many ads telling you something or promoting a brand that everybody is allegedly buying.

YouTube and Instagram compared to Facebook are maybe the most influential and most used for adolescents to young adults. With Facebook more geared to the older crowd, the other two platforms are specifically geared to adolescents and young adults. In terms of depression and anxiety though, with the mass production of videos being put out on YouTube by influential people and those same beings, promoting products such as “skinny tea detox” or swearing by this certain product it can cause a certain amount of anxiety in a teen. With all the rage to be a certain type to fit in and not be the odd one out, these young people will buy whatever or try and change themselves to be whatever they believe is there role model.

Depression often begins around young adulthood (Hankin). While the researcher Lin, also found a strong relationship between Social media use and depression or anxiety, I would like to conduct my own experimental design to see if I can also come up with the same strong findings that previous researchers have found.

Maarten Selfhout, found results that supported that the more use of social media platforms causes a loss in friendships and also increased risk of anxiety and depression in the average age of 15 years. With other findings by Joanne Davila, who conducted do different studies over a three week period with her average range on the first study being 20-22 and the second 19 years of age, found that both of her groups were affected by the quality of their experience on social media.

In relation to depression and anxiety, there is the issue of body dissatisfaction and peer comparison. These are relevant when coupled with

anxiety and depression, since they can be a direct cause for it or be an indirect cause. Rachel Rodgers, conducted a small study to see if there was any connection between these two categories and found a positive link between them, which would impact the young person negatively. She found that in this society adolescents and young adults will internalize what they are feeling instead of letting it out, which can cause for negative side effects.

Zachary Baker raised concern over the prolific use of social media in young adults and adolescents. I was mainly worried about the negative effect on mental health and general functioning of a human being. He focused on the fear of missing out or FoMO, which is the state of being not constantly in the loop and fearing missing anything important. To test his theory on if this was a defining role in causing high anxiety in these people. He conducted a study on 386 undergrads and found that there was a positive link and that undergrads that were affected by FoMO, experienced more depressive symptoms and no mindfulness. The purpose of my study and what I hope to accomplish is to see if the over usage of social media has a significant effect on mental health pertaining to anxiety and depression

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