The Adolescent Mental Health Consequences of Social Media Usage

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Abstract

This paper looks into the impact of social media on an individual's mental health status in the adolescent population. The scope of the study includes both addiction and recovery, addressing risks such as anxiety, depression, and distorted self-perception associated with the continuous use of social platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, etc. Besides recognizing the detrimental impacts of bullying, body image comparison, and excessive use of screens, the paper also underlines some advantages of social media, such as connecting people and access to assistance. In the present research, numerical indicators and empirical observations are used, i.e. the investigation is conducted on the basis of the mixed research method. It reveals variations in social media effects amongst adolescents based on the moderating variables of individual characteristics and situational context. The paper ends with solutions to alleviate the negative effects, such as digital literacy education, parental guidance, and mental health strategies while fostering the healthy usage of social media regarding mental health. These findings suggest the need for a longitudinal study in order to assess the changes over time in this somewhat new aspect.

Keywords: Adolescent mental health, social media, anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, body image, digital literacy, emotional support.

1. INTRODUCTION

For the past few years, technology has made it nearly impossible for anyone to survive in the modern world without the use of social networks, more so the young people. Activities on the networks such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Youtube, Snapchat, and others not only enhance communication but also entertainment, hence changing the way people and specifically young ones interact with each other and their surroundings. Nonetheless, heated debates have emerged due to the popularity of social network sites and whether the influence they have is positive or negative especially on the youth who have still tender emotions and psychology.

As illustrated by research, social media in moderation social media in moderation can also bear negative results. For example, social media can be a source of positive experiences, including social support, education, and even community building. Finding oneself chronically viewing posed and edited pictures and aggressive lifestyles propagated by media, particularly sociological ones like Instagram and YouTube, can be a cause of self-hate, anxiety issues and low self-worth. There is a

tendency in social networking sites like Facebook, where users seek approval from other users by liking their posts, commenting, and sharing. This unhealthy habit has also led to side effects such as unwarranted social rivalry and self- comparison among the users. Other factors such as cyber bullying, availability of inappropriate content, and prolonged use of screens affect the relation between social media and adolescents' mental issues.

The paper aims to analyze the relationship between social networking sites such as Facebook and YouTube, and the mental health status of adolescents by focusing on the advantages and disadvantages of social media. The study will review existing literature and undertake additional research to help the reader understand the role of social media in adolescent mental health and present recommendations on how to use social media safely among adolescents.

2. OBJECTIVES

Examine the impact of social media usage on adolescent mental health:

Most of the research investigates adolescents' use of social media and its impact on their health, especially in connection to emotional, anxious, and depressive states. Social media and adolescents mental health analysis- objectives.

Identify the risk factors associated with social media usage:

To analyze common issues such as aggression, cyberbully, complexity and so on in more details to understand what risk factors make young people vulnerable to illnesses.

Screen time and related health issues:

To examine whether there is a causal relationship between the social media presence and the deterioration of the mental health state.

Evaluating how content types differ in their mental health effects:

This involves How do different types of images (or information) either positive content or negative content affect the adolescent's state of self-esteem, body image, and social anxiety.

Propose interventions to mitigate the negative effects of social media on mental health:

It is about proposing measures aimed at reducing the negative influences associated with social media and mental health. To put forward some recommendations such as educating the people about the consequences of the social media and active monitoring by the parents to mitigate the mental health issues caused by social media among adolescents.

Analyze the possibility of using social media for mental health:

Finding out whether there are advantages to using social media, in that it may serve enabling networks and resources for one's mental health.

2.1. Overview of the Research Paper

This paper addresses the paradoxical issue of social media and its effects on mental health among teenagers. In the contemporary society, there is a growing reliance on social media especially by adolescents, which has its advantages and disadvantages. Social media contains fusion of communication, self-presentation and connections with others but at the same time, they are harmful to one's mental health.

The article also focuses on why using social media sites or applications for a long period of time especially without regulation is dangerous as it may lead to health complications like stress, depression and low self-worth. It enumerates various risks such as cyberbullying, social media overuse, upward social comparison, and sleep disturbance, which have all been associated with

negative health and emotional effects.

Moreover, it attempts to analyze some of the content and or interactions used by adolescents and their corresponding effects. Both the adverse ones such as bullying and the beneficial ones such as positive interaction will be addressed in order to give a fair view of the influence of social network sites on the young generations.

Finally, the paper strives to fill these gaps by recommending actions and strategies that could enhance optimal social media use among the youths. Some of these recommendations include educating the youth on healthy social media usage habits, encouraging appropriate age integration, and raising awareness of the parents on the resources to safeguard their children's mental health. Simultaneously, the study also shows other dimensions in which social networking sites may be used, which is to promote good mental health through social activity and in helping people access care.

Overall, this paper provides an in-depth evaluation of the positive and negative aspects of adolescents' access to social media, with special focus on mental health issues.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the last ten years, the use of social networks for adolescents has increased dramatically and has become an essential activity in their day-to- day routine. Teens continue to use platforms such as Instagram, Tiktok, Snapchat and Facebook, raising worries on how they affect the mental health of the adolescent population. This paper provides a literature review of studies conducted on the mental health effects of social networking sites among adolescents, with a focus on both the adverse and beneficial outcomes.

3.1. Social Media and Adolescent Mental Health - A Complex Relationship

Many researchers have explored the ambivalence of social media effects on mental health. For instance, Rideout and Robb (2018) noted that constant use of social media platforms increases the risks of depressive disorders, anxiety, and loneliness among adolescents. Additionally, the exposure to conformed images and the expectation to create a "perfect" self online may lead to feelings of worthlessness, low self-esteem and negative body image (Fardouly et al., 2015). The work of Twenge and Campbell (2018) extends this further, documenting that with increased usage of social media comes also an increase in depression rates among teenagers. Nevertheless, the use of social media has been associated with improved mental health in certain circumstances. For instance, Best, Manktelow, and Taylor (2014) asserted that social media will help aversive adolescents to find emotional support, social bonding, and self-exposure without necessarily engaging them face to face. It appears, then, that while there are dangers to using such technologies, these technologies are also capable of fostering a sense of community and supportive relationships with peers.

3.2. Negative Impacts of Social Media on Mental Health

There are several mechanisms which have been recognized regarding the adverse effects of social media on mental health. One of the first ones that comes to mind is that of bullying, or in this case cyberbullying. Kowalski et al. (2014) confirmed that there is a relationship between engaging in cyberbullying and mental health disorders such as depression among adolescents who are victimized.

In contrast to conventional bullying, cyberbullying operates on a different level as it goes round the clock, making it very hard for the victim to avoid it. This ongoing risk of online harassment

increases stress levels and emotional fatigue amongst young people.

Apart from that, there is social comparison which also contributes largely in influencing self-worth among adolescents. According to Tiggemann and Slater (2014), social media platforms have many followers and they tend to look at them and dress like them and this creates conflict on how they perceive themselves. When there is constant comparison, it Creates Behavioral risks that includes regard which is unhealthy where other people beauty standards are over exaggerated (Perloff, 2014).

Furthermore, slashing out sleep due to social media turns out to be another worrying issue. Citing Levenson et al. (2016), a widespread exposure to screen time carried out primarily in the night hours is associated with poor sleep quality in adolescents, a factor that worse the condition of such mental ailments as anxiety and depression. The light that is produced by a cellphone before the a person sleeps aims at making them alert even when they are exhausted, which causes sleeping problems as it inhibits the release of the hormone 'melatonin' that regulates sleep.

3.3. Positive Aspects of Social Media on Mental Health

While there are dangers in using social media, there are also benefits which can be gained especially if it is used properly. For instance, social media platforms can act as a supportive environment for the adolescents in the sense that they can help them establish support networks, especially those who are undergoing personal problems. Radovic et al. (2017) notes that some teenagers with mental health issues tend to go online primarily for the purpose of asking questions, sharing information or even seeking out others like them.

In addition, it enables young individuals to attend to their mental health by providing them with options that are not easily accessed in most cases to them. Recently, Instagram and TikTok have been embraced by mental health professionals and advocates for the provision of helpful content and advocacy for positive mental health and wellness (Naslund et al., 2020). These remedies may encourage young people in the process of getting professional assistance, practicing self-help techniques, or developing coping skills.

3.4. Moderating Factors: Context and Individual Differences

The contributions of social media to mental health issues in adolescents can also be impacted by moderating variables like individual differences and context of usage. For example, researchers Valkenburg, Peter, and Schouten (2006) showed that while engaging in social media activities like keeping in touch with friends had a positive effect on adolescents' mental wellbeing, simply browsing through content did not correlate with the favorable outcomes. Additionally, Nesi et al. (2021) posit that self- regulated adolescents are less susceptible to the adverse mental effects of consuming social media content.

Another one is parents. A report published by Lippold et al. (2016) claims that adolescents that undergo parental supervision and discussion on social media application tend to have better mental health protection. This points out that adequate supervision can help prevent some challenges posed by the use of social media.

3.5. Social Media Usage Patterns by Adolescents

While social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat among others have become popular from several decades' back, Social Media Usage Patterns by Adolescents focuses on the behaviors of teenagers with regard to use and involvement with the sites. Because the age of adolescence is engulfed with social media, almost all daily activities including communication,

socialization, and self-expression revolve around such.

The frequency How often or How Many Times, and The Length of Time: The average period in which almost every adolescent is social networking is immense, with each individual logging in or engaging many times in a day. The approximated mean time spent in a day may be somewhere from several hours or nearly all the day in wake-up hours, primarily depending on one's way of life.

Common Platforms: The Young population endorses the use of photo- centric platforms, mainly Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, where video and photo content is conducive. These Men do not trend towards picture edited communication and base use of social sites such as Facebook or even Twitter.
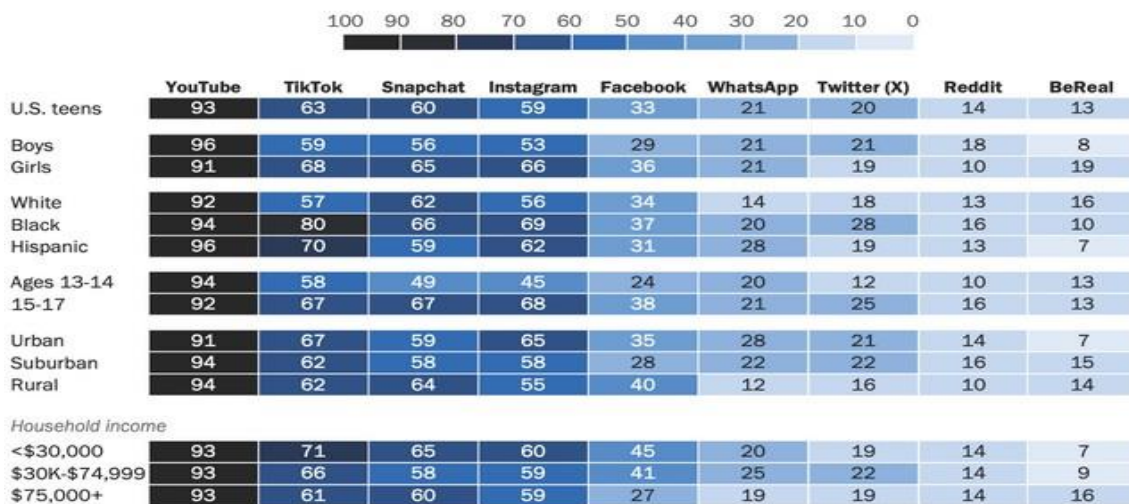
Forms of Involvement: The teen generation consumes different contents which consist of e.g. picture jokes, posts from beauty/fashion influencers, how-tos, and even social media challenges. They also engage in activities such as completing certain steps on a trend which is normally not limited to the common social media platform.

Socializing: Social networking is one important aspect thanks to social media where adolescents can and do interact with peers, make social ties, and seek recognition through likes, comments, and shares. It is also a space where they get to build friendships but undergo social vices such as bullying and peer pressure as well.

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out): The 'Fear of Missing Out' (FOMO) is a primary reason for the tendency of young adolescents to exhibit compulsive checking behavior with highly disturbing practices like social networking, which are themselves very high in anxiety.

The importance of knowing these patterns can't be stressed enough when it comes to determining the consequences of social networking in one's emotional as well as mental health and in the processes of socialization, such as the forming of self-identity, self-appraisal, and building social bonds in this stage which is very critical for the development.

% of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 who say they ever use the following apps or sites

	YouTube	TikTok	Snapchat	Instagram	Facebook	WhatsApp	Twitter (X)	Reddit	BeReal
U.S. teens	93	63	60	59	33	21	20	14	13
Boys	96	59	56	53	29	21	21	18	8
Girls	91	68	65	66	36	21	19	10	19
White	92	57	62	56	34	14	18	13	16
Black	94	80	66	69	37	20	28	16	10
Hispanic	96	70	59	62	31	28	19	13	7
Ages 13-14	94	58	49	45	24	20	12	10	13
15-17	92	67	67	68	38	21	25	16	13
Urban	91	67	59	65	35	28	21	14	7
Suburban	94	62	58	58	28	22	22	16	15
Rural	94	62	64	55	40	12	16	10	14
Household income									
<$30,000	93	71	65	60	45	20	19	14	7
$30K-$74,999	93	66	58	59	41	25	22	14	9
$75,000+	93	61	60	59	27	19	19	14	16

Note: Not all numerical differences between groups shown are statistically significant. White and Black teens include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic teens are of any race. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. teens conducted Sept. 26-Oct. 23, 2023.
"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2023"

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Figure 1: Usage of Social Media Sites Comparison

3.6. Summary of Effects of Social Media on Adolescent Mental Health

The literature reveals that social media usage among adolescents has both positive and negative mental health consequences. While cyberbullying, social comparison, and sleep disruption pose significant risks, social media also provides valuable opportunities for support, self- expression, and access to mental health resources. The relationship between social media and adolescent mental health is complex and moderated by factors such as the context of usage and individual differences. As social media continues to evolve, further research is necessary to develop strategies that maximize its benefits while minimizing its risks for adolescent well-being.

4. METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods approach is adopted for this research and includes qualitative and quantitative approaches. Although each of these approaches has its strengths, the primary rationale for their combination in this study is to yield greater insight into the effects of social networking sites on adolescents' mental health, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Quantitative Approach :

The research involves the gathering and assessment of materials concerning the use of social networks to establish the significance and correlation of social media use (time spent and content engagement) and health issues (depression, anxiety, and self-esteem).

Qualitative Approach:

Qualitative methodologies, such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, will be conducted to gain firsthand insight into how adolescents experience social media, which will help in understanding the intricate impact of social media on their mental health.

4.1. Sample Population and Sampling Strategy

A. **Target Population :** The target population in this research study is adolescents aged 13 to 18 years, an age bracket characterized by excessive use of social media and as well as severe psychological problems. Such a group has a high susceptibility to the effects of social media and their psychosocial development makes them an important group for this study.

B. **Sampling Method :** A stratified random sampling method will be employed to enhance inclusion among gender, class and physical location i.e. urban or rural. This will in turn improve the generalization of the perspective outcome across different sub groups of the adolescent population.

   1. The example will be segmented by three characteristics, namely: sex (male, female, non-binary), social class (lower, middle, upper), and location (urban, suburb, countryside).
   2. The target population will consist of 500 adolescents. The sample size is large enough to conduct statistical analysis with a high degree of accuracy, however, is small enough to cater for the qualitative aspect of the research.

In order to achieve a varied sample, participants sourced from **educational institutions**, **digital platforms**, **virtual group forums** and **mental health associations**. Focused recruiting methods will be carried out, both online and offline in the case of all youths aged between 12-18 years regardless of their backgrounds.

a) **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria :**

To be eligible for participation, individuals should be aged between 13-18, spend more than 1 hour in a day on at least one social media platform, and have guardian approval to take part in

the study.

In order to reduce the presence of the confounding factor, adolescents who have been previously diagnosed with either clinical depression, schizophrenia, or any other mental disorders not associated with the use of social media will be excluded from the study.

4.2. Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods for this study intend to gather quantitative as well as qualitative perception of social media usage and adolescent mental health. A mix of questionnaires and digital data collection, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups have been employed to provide an in depth insight of the issue.

a) Quantitative Data Collection :

i) Surveys - Instrument Development :

A structured questionnaire is the main instrument of quantitative data collection. The survey will contain questions which will be both open and close ended in order to collect particular details concerning the use of social media, mental employing health indicators, and other variables. The questionnaire is divided into a number of sections such as demographic characteristics, use of social media, mental health measures, patterns of sleep, experience of cyber bullying and social comparison.

ii) Mental Health Metrics :

In order to ensure that mental health issues are

effectively addressed, the following validated psychometric scales will be employed:

Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II):

This is a well known and endorsed

scale for measuring levels of depression in adolescent populations. Scores are categorized from minimal depression to mild, moderate to severe depression allowing the study to assess and measure the burden of depressive symptoms.

Classification	Total Score	Depression Level
Low	1 – 10	Normal
Moderate	11 – 16	Mild Level Disorders
	16 – 20	Middle Level Depression
	21 - 30	Moderate Depression
High	31 – 40	High Level Depression
	>40	Chronic Depression

Figure 2: Beck Depression Inventory II (BDI - II) Classification Score

Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD-7):

This scale will be administered to

the study's participants to determine the level of anxiety. The tool allows for the assessment of anxiety as being mild, moderate, or severe in nature, and thus will help to evaluate the range of anxiety disorders present in the study population.

Variable	GAD-7 score	Frequency (%)
No anxiety disorder	0-4	225 (74.4)
Mild anxiety disorder	5-9	56 (18.4)
Moderate anxiety disorder	10-14	16 (5.2)
Severe anxiety disorder	≥ 15	6 (2.0)
Total		305

Figure 3: Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) score of re- spondents

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale:

In this study, self-esteem constitutes an essential component as it is intricately linked to the adoption of social media more so among the youth and the possible repercussions on their perceptions and emotional states. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is widely utilized and applied in measuring self-esteem making it appropriate for the study. The Scale consists of ten statements about feelings of self- acceptance or self-worth wherein respondents are required to rate on the 4-Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree for each statement.

In This scale, attainment of self-esteem will be gauged in relation to social media usage among adolescents that is, whether they believe one needs high self-esteem to participate in these platforms or otherwise. This will enable as well, to ascertain some of the reasons for the low self-esteem levels associated with heavy users of these social networking sites such as social comparison, peer approval seeking, and negative reviews among others.

In turn, the data synthesis will showing the social media effects of adolescents self-worth or self-esteem whether in a good manner like providing help and seeking validations or in a bad way through comparisons and criticisms. This is important for assessing the potential risks of social networks as well as its positive aspects as an identity and confidence development tool for the adolescents.

Mean Interval	Description	Interpretation
3.26 - 4.00	Strongly agree	High self-esteem
2.51 - 3.25	Agree	Moderate self-esteem
1.76 - 2.50	Disagree	Low self-esteem
1.00 - 1.75	Strongly disagree	Very low self-esteem

Figure 4: Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale Mean Interpretation

Sleep Paterns :

A custom designed scale will be employed to measure any sleep disturbances experienced as a result

of social media usage. This section of the questionnaire will examine the participants' slumber patterns with special regard to issues such as latency to sleep onset, total sleep hours, or the late-night exposure to social media that may serve as an aggravating factor on sleep interference.

4.3. Patterns of Social Media Utilization

The questionnaire will also ask participants in depth about their social media engagement by looking at the following:

Duration of interaction with social media platforms: The survey will request for information about the participants' average time spent on various social media including very low (less than 1 hour per day), medium (3-4 hours per day), and very high (5 hours or more) social media use patterns.

Social Media Platforms: The participiants were asked to name the most popular social media networks in which they post and use content for each as well as the number of social networks in which they actively participate (ex. Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook) and their levels of engagement for each.

Interaction types: This section will make a distinction between individuals who participate in passive engagement (e.g., scrolling and watching content) or in active engagement (e.g., posting comments or liking content).

Screen Time: Alongside self-reported data, participants will be requested to provide objective data via their smartphones, indicating their daily screen time, including time spent on particular applications (e.g. Instagram, TikTok). This method minimizes the effects of recall bias allowing more accurate estimates of the time spent on social media.

Also, participants will be asked to give the details of the times they usually use the social media, especially during the late hours where it may affect their sleep habit. Participants' smartphones will be used to back up the collected data against the reported usage to ensure the findings are more trustworthy.
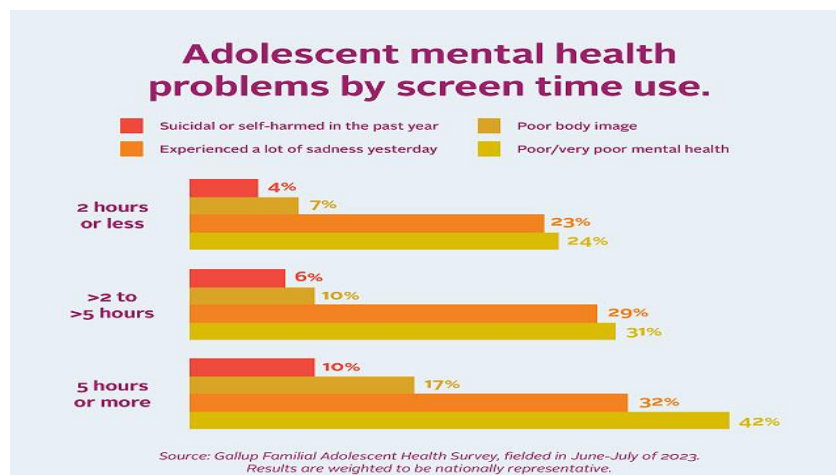
Figure 5 : How Parenting and Self control Mediate, the Link Between Social Media Use and Youth Mental Health

4.4. Mental Health & Social Media - What Message Prevails

The graph which has been named "Mental Health & Social Media: What Message Prevails" drawn from Statista seems to have the visual representation of the perception and the prevailing trend on factors influencing mental health through the use of social media. The chart probably explains how

users accept social networks for mental health enhancement or improvement issues as opposed to further implications of social networks such as anxiety, depression, stress, and other disorders.
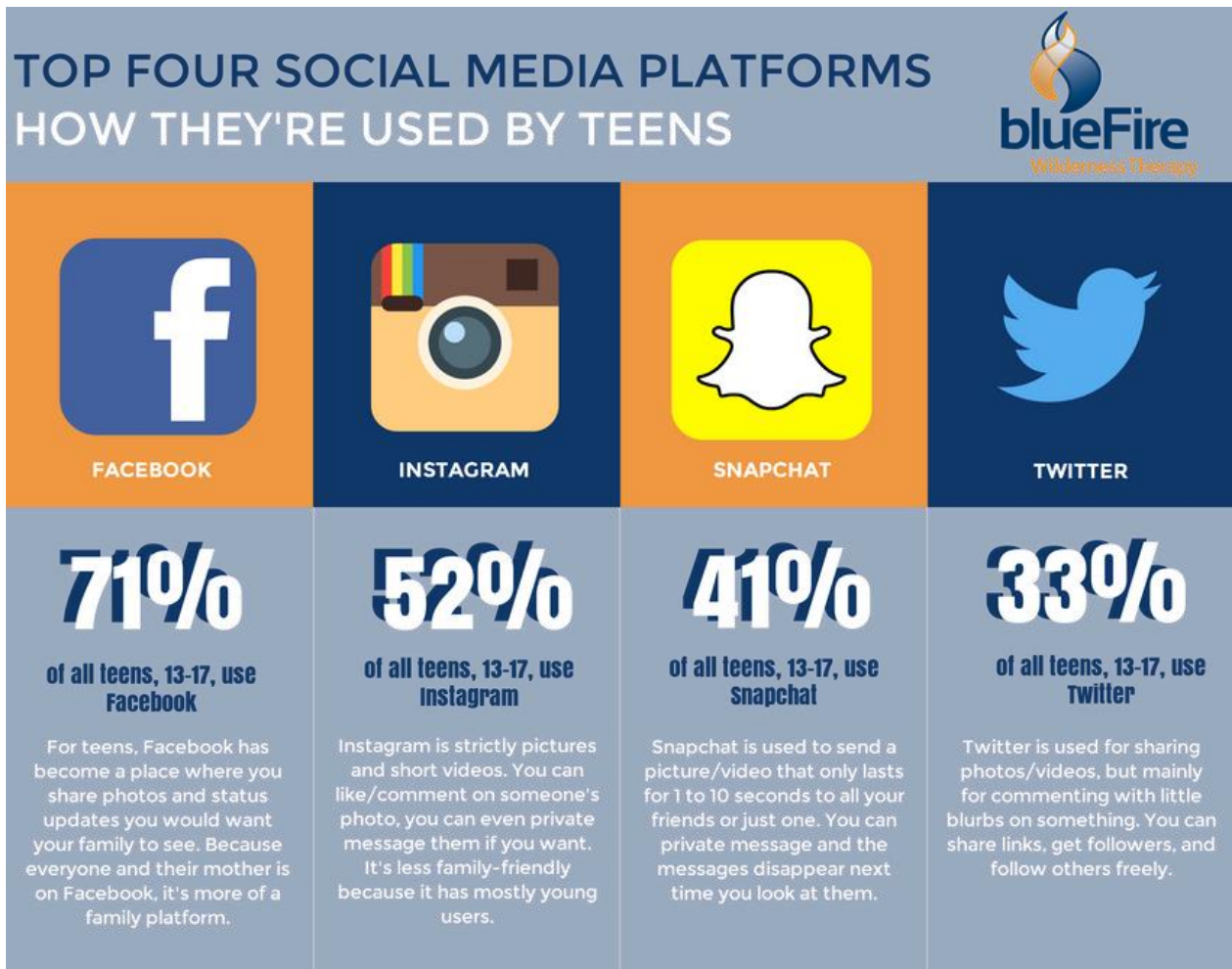

Figure 6: Usage of Social Media (Used by Teens)

The chart most likely incorporates:

Positive Aspects – On the other hand enhanced interaction and social relationships, support for mental health, socialization, and self- expressions.

Negative Aspects – Such as those caused by harassment via the internet, social dynamics, inferiority complex, and increased cases of anxiety, depression, or social isolation.

Demographic Analysis – Differences in perceptions of the effects by age, sex but or region for example or such as enabling activities above.

Trends Over Time – showing variations in perception – does it show more worried opinions than before concerned or does it show more accepting viewpoints over time.

The deductive reasoning would suggest that it is probable that this table will contain majority of the information in terms of bar charts or other presentation aids in the form of rate of sponteous opinion on the role of social media on mental health.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### 5.1. Social Network and Patterns Among Young Adults

Young adults' social networking behavior is highly influenced by the innate need of the individual to connect and express themselves to others. These networks, for instance, Instagram and Snapchat, among other networks, provide a platform for people to interact and share experiences as well as seek applause through 'likes' and comments. But, studies show that too much an engagement may cause problems such as heightening anxiety depression, and loneliness. Young adults are also prone to this social overstimulation, with self-regarding thoughts and behaviors favoring engagement in such traditions. Quite the opposite, primary characters are typically portrayed as leading dedicated lifestyles and looking physically appealing. Such regular exposure creates unrealistic standards that distort one's perception of one's self-image, resulting in anger and frustration. Also, the issue of the online network connectedness in regards to the age group in question is very apprehensive due to aggrieved factors like bullying through social media and pressure from peers. It is, however, just as important to note that these metrics are quite significant in the health landscape of the young population today. For a deeper understanding of the issue, it would be ideal to research from other fields, including psychological and social studies.
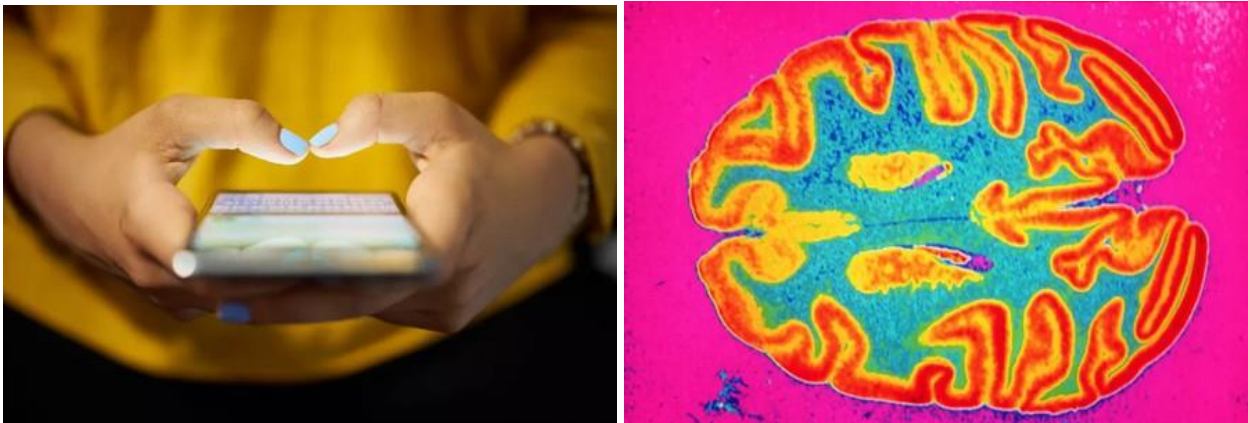
Figure 7: Young Adults and their Patterns

### 5.2. The Effects of Social Media on Anxiety and Depression

For quite some time now, the relationship between social media and the mental health of adolescents has become a contentious topic worthy of exploration. One of the core purposes of social media is to create communities, and as such, it is abused in most cases, leading to adverse mental health effects like anxiety, depression, and low self-worth. Young people are often at risk of social this and that, looking at relevant photos of their ages and celebrities, and thus they tend to feel worse about the life that they are living. The degree of hatred spewed online in social networks helps in bullying, creating a toxic environment that can lead to stress and, in some cases, death threats. On the contrary, a few other findings have indicated social networks as sources of gratification and belonging mainly for the outcast youths. It is necessary to recognize these two sets of beliefs to develop the desired approaches for controlling the negative consequences of the developed means of communication and enhancing their positive potential. Further understanding of the study will also be concentrated on formulating and testing better hypotheses regarding this phenomenon among adolescents.
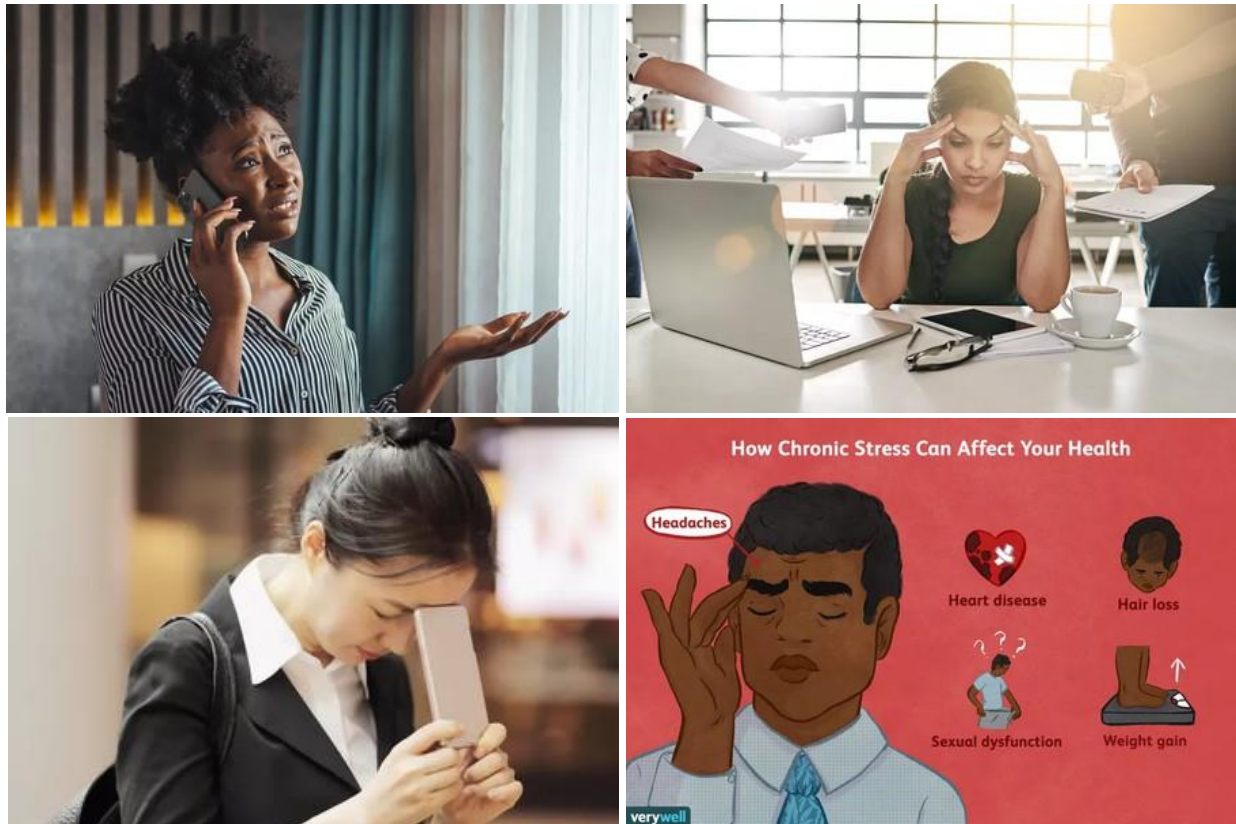
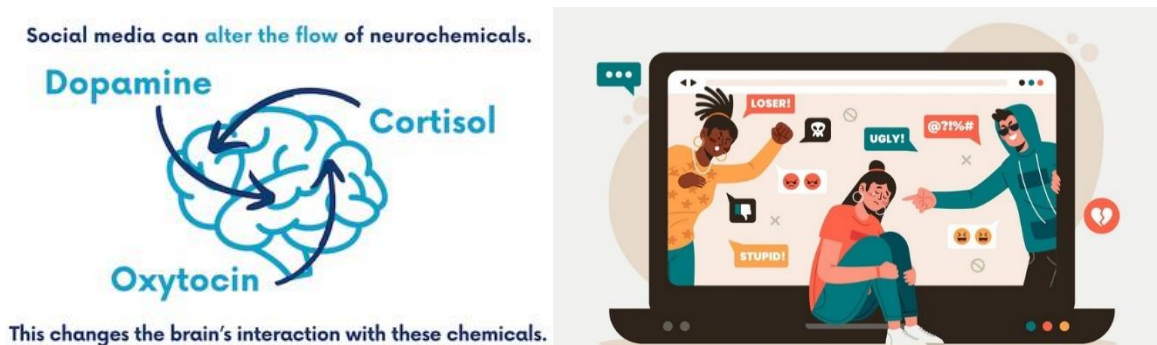**Figure 8: The effects of Social Media**

5.3. Social Media and body image

The impact of social networking sites on the mental health of the young is a worry that needs no rhetoric in today's internet era. Studies show that social media, in most cases, proves to be more damaging than uplifting in the overall psyche of the individual. Adolescents tend to compare their lives with those so called 'friends' and this easily evokes a sense of inferiority and low self-worth. It has been noted from various research that depression and anxiety cases among teenagers tend to increase with the use of social media. Also, modern problems like cyberbullying undeniably aggravate the current situation, adding to the overall emotional turmoil and even provoking suicidal thoughts. On the outside, it may seem that young people are in danger when these platforms are used. However, they can also help find support and valuable communities for such youth. Recognizing the bifurcated nature of the effects of social media is important in coming up with appropriate strategies and campaigns on rape and the proper use of the internet by young people. The issue of looking into these two sides of social media is not stagnant, and several ongoing investigations related to social media and mental health are continuing.
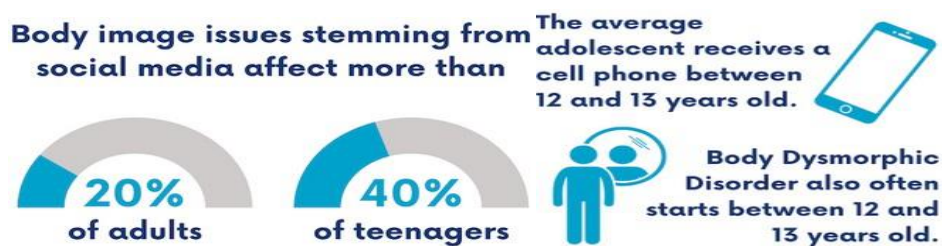
Figure 9: Primarily Affected by Social Media and Body image

5.4. Cyberbullying and Online Harassment

There is an increasing concern about the effect of social media on adolescents' mental health, especially about body image. Studies show that social media can increase anxiety, depression, and self esteem issues among the youth. Over time, this can cause a negative self image where one does not like their body as depicted in the utopian world but instead engages in unhealthy social practices, especially regarding body image with the use of social media. Most teenagers admit that their perception is influenced greatly by how active they are on social media and how many Likes and comments they receive about their posts. In addition, hatred spread to premises concerning photographs and selfies or image ideals prevailing in society, as well as online bullying over these issues, can complicate one's mental state, arousing feelings of distress and even suicidal thinking. Nevertheless, it has also been remarked that such platforms can help to connect individuals and provide encouragement, especially to those who are alone or feel that they are on the fringes of society in any way . Where such problems exist, however, these young users need to be equipped with knowledge, and there is a need for measures to encourage positive use of social media and safeguard their mental health.

Figure 10: Cyberbullying and its effect on Mental Health

5.5. The Adverse Effect of Social Media on People

Concerns about the detrimental effects of social media on individuals, especially youths, have been on the rise. Despite the merits of social networks in fostering interaction and enabling individuals to express themselves, they tend to have negative repercussions on the mind and mental well being most especially when over indulged in. Some of the most common include anxiety, depression and low self worth in relation to how it is usually perceived by the individuals concerned. Many users, more so teens, have a habit of measuring their lifestyle and achievement against beautiful idols or their age mates, and as a result, they feel unsatisfied.

Moreover, they should also include the violence that occurs in other forms, which is known as cyberbullying. Technology, particularly the internet, encourages this deviant behavior in people due to its obscured identity. The concerned authorities tend to take this issue lightly, yet it is one of the most severe problems in our society. This, in turn, may cause mild to severe psychological problems, even causing suicidal tendencies among victims.

Beauty pageants and even the media come up with pictures that have been edited and filtered; this is then passed on to social media that has unwillingly oriented users towards beauty perfectionism. People also sometimes feel pressure due to the lack of 'love' in the form of likes and comments, which affects their mental well-being.
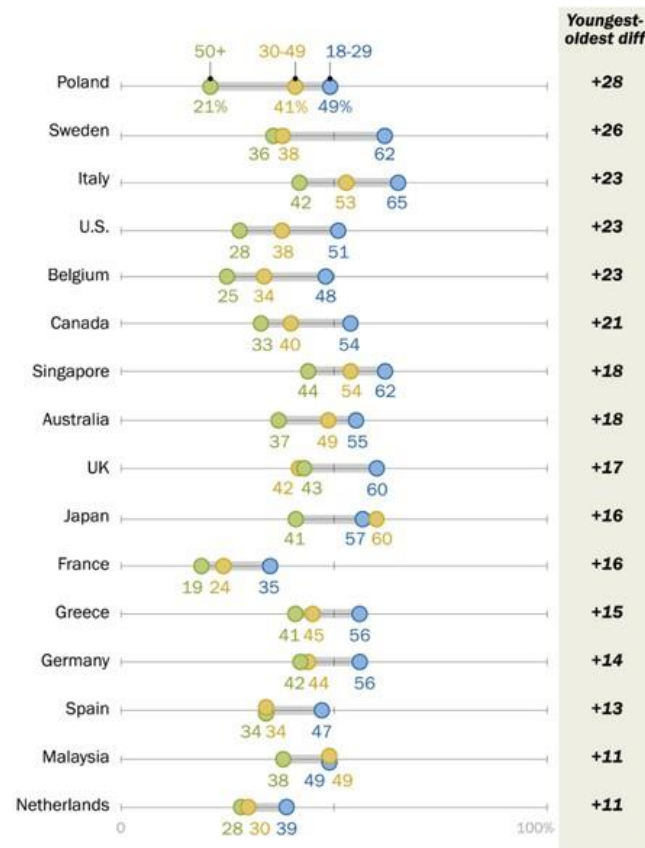
Yes, there are some merits, such as developing relationships and communities. Still, the disadvantages posed by social media, particularly concerning mental health use, underscore the importance of moderation and caution.
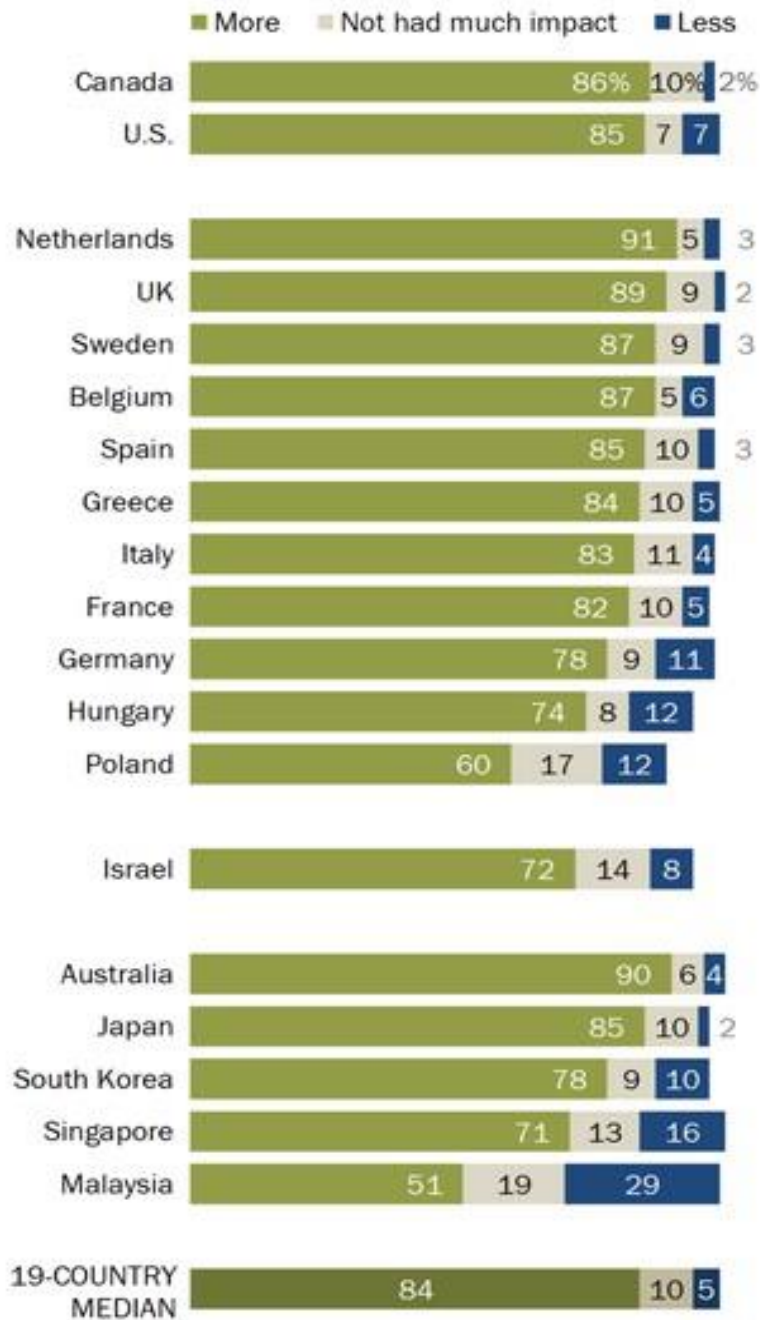
Figure 11: Most see Social Media Making it Easier to Manipulate People

Figure 12: Young adults tend to see Social Media Making People More accepting of diverse views

6. DISCUSSION

6.1. Results Interpretation in Consideration of Research Questions

Given the findings above, several suggestions can be made to improve adolescent mental health with regard to social media. To begin with, there is a need for structured education on digital literacy, which might be incorporated into the school syllabus. Such programs ought to teach teenagers ways of engaging with social media content without being deceived by false ideals of life and body image. Parents and teachers should promote the use of time management approaches that reduce screen time and instead encourage engaging in more positive, healthy practices. Furthermore, social media networking sites have to play an active role by ensuring that there is moderation of content and that there are more mental health facilities. This includes the active promotion of mental illness awareness campaigns and ensuring professional help is readily available for distressed users. Creating policies that allow constructive engagement on the digital platform, without any troll or unhealthy comparison, would go a long way in enhancing mental health for adolescents.

6.2. Differences Seen in Literature Review with Existing Research

While reviewing the results of this research and literature, there were some striking differences. Earlier studies have always pointed out the detrimental effects of social networking sites,

especially on adolescents' self-worth as far as their body image and esteem are concerned. This study acknowledges most of these previous results. However, the stance of this study is different. Previous studies have overwhelmingly suggested that social media hurts its users. However, this study showed that some adolescents sought and got assistance regarding mental issues in online communities. This time difference in these studies could be attributed to increased social media functionalities since the last decade, which was more about social connectivity rather than giving out social support. In addition, some literature noted that most of the harassment experienced by victims is from social networks. In the present research, while bullying is still present within the context, most users regard the behavior less aggressively, thanks to the implementation of privacy features and reporting options on the websites. Such variations in findings suggest that trends and the actual dimensions of the use of social media should be explored more.

6.3.   Recommendations on Adolescent Mental Health

Given the aforementioned findings, a number of suggestions can be made with a view to improving adolescent mental health with regard to social media. To begin with, there is a need for structured education on digital literacy and it might be incorporated into the school syllabus. Such programs ought to teach ways of engaging with social media content without being deceived by false ideals of life and body image among the teenagers. Parents and teachers should promote the use of time management approaches that reduce the amount of time on screen and instead encourage engaging in more of positive healthy practices. Furthermore, the social media networking sites have to play an active role by ensuring that there is moderation of content and that there are more mental health facilities. This includes the active promotion of mental illness awareness campaigns and ensuring professional help is readily available for distressed users. The creation of policies that allow constructive engagement on the digital platform, without any troll or unhealthy comparison, would go a long way in enhancing mental health for the adolescents.

6.4.   Study Weaknesses

Despite bringing in important aspects concerning adolescents' mental health and their use of social media, this current study has some limitations. A fundamental limitation is using self-reported data that is prone to certain biases like under-reporting or exaggeration of symptoms. In addition, although the sample size is sufficient to show general trends, it restricts making broader generalizations about different groups of adolescents, especially those from different socio-economic and cultural settings. The other drawback is that the study adopted a cross-sectional design, meaning that data was collected at one point. A longitudinal design would have provided excellent knowledge of the changes in social media habits and their influence on mental health. One more concern is that the rapid change in social media spaces, such that by the time some data was obtained, some elements or patterns of use may have changed, would make the study somewhat outdated to the new platforms or tools.

7.   CONCLUSION

The results of this research underscore how remarkably social media can affect the mental well-being of teenagers. With the constant growth and development of social networks, young people are, in one way or another, dramatically affected by the good and bad sides of these networks. The information obtained pointedly argues that there is a correlation between the amount of time adolescents spend on social networking sites and the prevalence of anxiety, depression, and

disordered body attitudes that teenagers experience. It is also observed that due to factors such as social comparisons, cyberbullying, and unrealistic pictures of life online, adolescent girls are more susceptible to mental health disorders than their male counterparts.

Nonetheless, this research supports the contention that not all social media interactions have negative consequences. SomeSome adolescents can derive support for their mental well-being from social media as it provides them with communities and resources that help them express and feel belonging. This two-sided impact also points towards the necessity of the conflicted view about the contribution of social media to the lives of adolescents.

Based on these observations, the necessity for restriction is apparent in limiting the adverse effects of social media and encouraging its use, particularly for its advantages. This encompasses increasing the digital competencies of young people more responsibly, modification of the borrowing of idle teenagers by social networks, and the insistent demand for moderation of content concerning children. There is a need for further research not just on social media and adolescent health but also in a longitudinal way.

In summary, we must admit that while social networks have emerged as an integral part of the life of the adolescent, their effects on mental health are complicated and need to be managed as well as investigated.

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