

Author's Name

Professor's Name

Course Name

Date

The Disadvantages of Social Media for Teenagers

Social media include websites such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Google+ and Instagram. Social media have become prominent parts of teenagers' life today due to their vital role in transforming people's lives. The use of social media allows adolescents to keep updated with the current issues in their schools, state or county. Social media also provide youths with a place where they can freely express their ideas to make their opinions count thereby boosting their self-esteem. Other websites such as LinkedIn have job links and job postings that can assist teenagers to access jobs, particularly in their locality. On the contrary, youths increasingly use social media without thinking about their adverse impacts. Increased cases of cyberbullying that cause long-lasting mental, emotional and physical pain have been witnessed. Social media use may also affect youths communicably in terms of poor vocal inflections facial expressions, and body language which can damage their social skills. Social media involves various benefits for youths, however, the government should limit the social media's use for teenagers because of the negative effects on communication, human brains, and quality of lives.

One of the deleterious effects of social media is their adverse influence on communication among teenagers. People need social skills and interaction in order to succeed in life. Adolescents can build their social skills when they interact face-to-face with their peers. Social media affects youths' social skills by severely limiting their interaction with one another, particularly during the most important time of development in their lives. Social skills are built

when children interact and play together. Teenagers should learn how to express themselves with people face-to-face, how to write a letter and also how to receive and talk to others on the phone to improve their social skills.

With the rise of social media today, youths have become masters at keeping themselves occupied for long hours after school. Most of them do not do their homework as they glare on their phones scrolling, trolling, sharing, watching videos and chatting. Youths are missing real-time interactions today. Online communication and texting create a nonverbal learning disability where the facial expression, vocal reactions, and body language are rendered invisible (Ehmke para 4). Without proper regulation, social media will continue crippling adolescents' communication and social skills leading anti-social behaviors.

Moreover, Exposure to social media for long makes the developing brains of teenagers vulnerable. Various studies reveal that adolescents are more prevalent in mental health problems. The environment is an important determinant of mental health status of youths. Teens who experience major traumatic events and sexual abuse are at higher risks of mental health diseases. Continuous use of social media leads to addiction among youths. The popularity and the explosive growth of online communication make internet use become more addictive (Watson 75). Youths focus on likes for their social media posts. The need for many likes for any given post provokes youths to engage in activities that can corrupt their brains. Additionally, social media make youths vulnerable to sexting, cyberbullying and peer pressure which adversely affect their mental health. Various mental health issues develop as a result of social media use.

The first mental health issue is depression. Depressive symptoms including decrease in social activities and loneliness can be motivated by social media use. Some teenage users are usually cyberbullied making them to develop the feeling of loneliness (they do not feel like

associating with other people) thus leading to depression (Watson 80). Also, social media websites utilize addiction triggers to reward users for staying online for long. Dopamine (neurotransmitter for pleasure and rewards feelings) which motivates alcoholics to drink is also responsible for pushing teenagers to use social media more. The notifications, comments and likes teenagers receive in their mobile create positive feelings of acceptance. Without likes and comments on posts, dopamine is not released leading to depression. Social media also trigger destructive behaviors such as approval seeking, cyberbullying and comparison. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter allow cyberbullies to taunt others. Harassments associated with cyberbullying involve fatal mental consequences. Teenagers also develop destructive approval-seeking for all matters pertaining to their lives. Also, adolescents usually compare others with the worst parts of themselves leading to the feelings of inferiority, irrelevance, and shame. Generally, social media use can lower an individual's self-esteem leading to depressive symptoms.

The second social media effect on the brains is anxiety. Adolescents usually devote their time on social media due to the urge of being updated. They continuously feel pressure to be the first to react to people's posts and also to perfect their written posts and images to gain more likes and comments. Such attitudes involve significant anxiety. Most of the youths are more worried about what other people think about them thus they lead a life full of lies to be happy online. For instance, teenage girls are worried about their complexion and appearance, therefore, they usually do a lot of makeups before posting their images specifically to attract likes and comments.

Too much of social media directly correlates with adolescents' aggressive behavior. Social media involve violent movies and videos and youths take a lot of time watching scenes of

gore. It is very difficult to regulate the type of videos posted on social media. For instance, Facebook usually has an option of covering violent videos or images of gore but gives users the discretion to uncover them if they wish to watch or view. Anyone would be pushed to watch. However, exposure to such videos and images makes violence become a reality for youths. Most of the adolescents cannot differentiate between fantasy and reality. To them, violence is a normal thing that society should tolerate. The number of mass shootings in the United States schools can be related to social media. Also, the crime rate has increased among youths making cities unbearable to live. Without appropriate regulations, the United States risks experiencing more school shootings while at the same time increasing crime rate in cities such as Texas, Alaska and California.

Besides, insomnia is another brain problem associated with social media. Teenagers spend several hours online until they start losing valuable sleep. Irregular sleep among students adversely impact performance, learning and memory. Moreover, insomnia is also associated with mood disorders making it a risk factor for suicidal attempts and suicidal ideations (Hershner and Chervin 80). Due to social media addictiveness, most youths usually wake up at night to check on their social media accounts. Lack of sleep contributes to tiredness and sadness. Teenagers are in their active stage of life thus expected to work hard to develop the economy. Insomnia lowers teenagers' immune system making them lazy and weaker.

Worth noting is the fact that 21st-century teens cannot do without social media. As stated earlier, social media use is addictive and can be detrimental to human health. Teenagers use social media to interact with both with strange and known peers to create and sustain social connections. Social media platforms involve false belief of privacy that contribute to more provocative discussions and behaviors including bullying, violence, sex and drug abuse (Landry

et al. 28). Parental monitoring is required to protect against sexual risks among adolescents. Risky sexual behaviors can lead to an increased likelihood of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. Social media limit parents' ability to monitor their children's sexual behaviors such as sex chatting. Adolescents aged 13-19 years are in the stage of rapid cognitive, emotional and physical development making them unable to control their impulsive behaviors (Landry et al. 28). Apart from sex texting, social media provides a free platform where teenagers can access pornographic videos which are destructive in their sexual life. Explicit and suggestive contents are prevalent throughout various social media platforms. Exposure to sexual contents that portray harmful or unrealistic sexual behaviors and stereotypes can adversely affect adolescents as they start to develop their sexual identities. This may lead them to have irrational prospects of sexual norms, experiencing problems with establishing healthy sexual relationships or they may end up developing risky sexual behaviors that affect their entire lives.

Furthermore, the increased use of social media particularly among females leads to the question of whether such platforms have an impact on body dissatisfaction, body image, and self-esteem. Youths usually engage in fake self-promotion on image-based social media platforms such as Instagram due to discontent. The obsession with the number of likes a person gets on social media posts contributes to body dissatisfaction and distorted body image as teenagers seek photo editing and photoshopping applications to enhance their look. Most teenage women are consumed by the need to gain more likes to the extent that they disrupt their normal habits. The belief that their bodies should be better than they are increases teenagers' insecurity and lowers their self-esteem. They find it difficult to associate with others in real life due to fears of what people will say about them. Also, adolescents that live by feeling worse about themselves due to low self-esteem often have poor health and risk committing suicides.

On the other hand, teenagers that spend a lot of time glued on their smartphone screens risk contracting diseases such as obesity. About 16.9 percent of US adolescents and children are obese, and the prevalence rate is increasing (Shin et al. 1520). Spending too much time on social media promotes certain behaviors that predispose adolescents to obesity. First, they change their eating habits and secondly, they do not get time for physical exercises. Obesity-related health effects include diabetes and high blood pressure which are the leading cause of death in the United States. Obesity also increases the risk of cancer. Without the government's intervention to regulate social media use, adolescents will lead a life with poor health outcomes.

In addition, general social media addiction causes misplaced priorities among adolescents. The future quality of life depends on how well a teenager prepares today. Teenagers believe that social media is part of them, an idea that makes them lose focus in life. The society raises lazy youths that cannot promise future progress. Today's youths cannot balance essential tasks with social life. They spend too much time scrolling their screens to view updated social media posts forgetting that they must perform house chores. Most students that give social media a priority in life end up failing in exams thus they cannot qualify for white collar jobs. Minimum requirements of various jobs demand decency of candidates in terms of skill and potential adaptability. Most youths today cannot fit office jobs that require accuracy such as record keeping and continuous service deliver because they need more time to browse the internet. Such teenagers cannot provide for themselves in the future as they depend on parents due to their low income.

Social media addiction also adversely affects youths in formal places such as jobs. Instead of focusing their strength on delivering organizational goals and objectives, they spend most of their time on social media leading to unmet deadlines. Most employers do not prefer

youths because of their characters and attitudes. Teenagers are consumed by social media such that they cannot dress well and articulate their talents thus unfit for most organizations. These factors can be attached to social media since such websites corrupt teenagers minds such that instead of researching about their potential companies and how to match their talents, they spend time selecting best images, editing or photoshopping and posting on social media. As mentioned earlier, comparison and seeking people's approval can also corrupt teenagers' dressing style. Social media adapt youths to unmannered dressing styles because they seek likes. When they use similar dressing at work, they end up being fired. Therefore, uncontrolled use of social media risks increasing youth unemployment making them lead a miserable life.

In conclusion, social media involve various benefits including being technologically savvy, keeping teenagers informed and increasing their chances to access employment opportunities. Nevertheless, extreme use of social media can have bad effects on health, brain, and communication. Dependence on social media as the primary means of communication hinders face-to-face communication which is key to enhancing teenagers' social skills. Spending too much time on social media also involves adverse health effects such as obesity. Teenagers also view social media as part of their lives which affects their brains when things do not turn up as expected, for instance, when they get few likes on posts. Therefore, this calls for the government's attention to regulate the use of social media among youths to breed a responsible future generation.

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