

A Study Of Social Media And Its Effect On Family And Peer Relationships In Adolescence

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of social media on the interactions between teenagers and their families and peers. It utilizes both primary and secondary data sources to gather empirical evidence. The collection of primary data involved the use of three instruments: the Social Media Addiction Scale Student Form (SMAS-SF) developed by C. Sahin, which was scored on a 5-point Likert scale; the Brief Family Relationship Scale-BFRS (Henry et al., 1994); and the Peer Relationship Scale developed by Fatih Aydoğdu in 2015. The secondary data comprised a range of sources such as research papers, books, journals, e-books, and websites. The study included 410 teenagers from schools in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, and Hissar, Haryana. The participants were recruited using the Cochran technique to determine a sample size of 385, which was amended to 410 after discarding incomplete or erroneous replies. The analysis employed Excel and SPSS software to examine hypotheses using descriptive statistics, regression analysis, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation. The findings emphasize that social media has the potential to both improve and damage familial and peer relationships, depending on variables such as usage habits, engagement with content, and individual vulnerability that require more investigation in future research.

Keywords: Social Media, Family, Peer Group, Adolescents, Relationships

1. Introduction

Worldwide, 10–20% of children and adolescents suffer from mental health issues, according to the World Health Organization. Around half of all mental problems manifest by the time a person reaches the age of 14, and around three quarters by the age of 18. Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and depression are the most frequent mental health illnesses in children and adolescents, respectively. There has been a 70% increase in the prevalence of anxiety and depression among young people in the previous 25 years. Teens who suffer from anxiety and depression are more likely to struggle with substance misuse, mental health issues, and suicide, and they are less likely to complete high school or stay in school. In the previous decade, there has been a 68% increase in the rate of self-harm among teenage girls in the United Kingdom.

There has been a rise in mental health issues among teenagers, making it more important to understand how social media affects their mental health. The use of psychiatric terms, such as "addiction," to characterize problematic online behaviors is common (Boer, M., et. al., 2020). On the other hand, it's possible to misunderstand certain behavior in younger individuals as aberrant. It may seem egotistical but posting pictures of oneself ('selfies') on social media has become the standard among younger generations. However, specialists in the field of psychology and allied fields have expressed concerns about the negative impact of social media use on the psychological and social development of younger generations. There are pros and cons to using social media. Research shows that helping people communicate their emotions and receiving social support has positive effects (Keles, et. al., 2020).

Background

Adolescents' usage of the internet and social media has skyrocketed in the last several years. Nowadays, teenagers are more active than ever before on the internet. The Pew Internet and American Life Project reports that 95% of 12–17-year-olds have internet access, with 70% using it at least once a day. Many teenagers nowadays have internet-enabled gadgets in their pockets, such iPads, smartphones, and gaming consoles, so they may access the web whenever and wherever they choose. Nowadays, teenagers rely heavily on social media as a means of contact and as part of their daily life. In this context, "social media means any online platform that facilitates communication between users. An assortment of online resources that fall under the umbrella term "social media" include photo and video sharing websites like Pinterest, Instagram, and YouTube; blogging platforms like Tumblr; online communities for role-playing games like World of Warcraft and Teen Second Life; email; instant messaging; chat rooms; bulletin boards; discussion forums"; and teen second life (O'reilly, et. al., 2018). Adolescents may make their own unique accounts on social media platforms and

embellish them with images, videos, quotations, and more. By connecting with other users' profiles, or "friends," they may expand their online social circle. Social media is used by 76% of all teenagers. While 41% use many accounts, 64% use it every day.

Twitter and Facebook, among others, have grown ubiquitous in people's daily lives. Adolescents' everyday lives would be incomplete without media use. However, there are several risks connected with social media use, including cyberbullying, sexual solicitation, exposure to illegal and problematic content, privacy invasions, and negative impacts on mental health. In comparison to the benefits, the drawbacks of modern social media platforms are far more significant. Since students are the most common victims, these sites could harm society. This is because students often find themselves drawn to these sites when they are studying or searching for course information online, which may be a distraction and make their study time less productive (Kamaku and Mberia, 2014).

As they navigate their changing demands and acquire new abilities, responsibilities, and romantic connections, adolescents undergo profound psychological, physiological, and social changes. They gain independence and a feeling of self during their teenage years. Adolescence is a complicated time of life, and it's perhaps more difficult in today's circumstances since teenagers face more personal and educational expectations than in past generations. Adolescence is a particularly tough time for many people since mental health issues are so common and frequently not diagnosed until then. Although safeguarding mental health and emotional wellness is of utmost significance, teenagers often lack understanding of what it means to be mentally healthy and how to keep this status (Ivie, et. al., 2020).

1.1 Benefits of social media among adolescents

For what reasons do so many teenagers find social media so engaging? One of the most significant developmental challenges of adolescence is learning to form and sustain meaningful connections with other people. Adolescents might find new mates or deepen friendships they already have through social media. Most adolescent social media use is for maintaining offline friendships, planning events, discussing wacky subjects, and spreading misinformation, according to research. Other significant responsibilities of adolescence include coming into one's own sexuality and establishing a solid sense of one's own identity. Adolescents have a platform on social media to hone the abilities of self-presentation and self-disclosure, which are crucial for these endeavors. Adolescents have agency over their own identity development since they get to decide what and with whom they reveal personal details. They could adjust their public persona in response to comments and criticisms made by their classmates (Reid and Weigle, 2014). The development of a strong sense of self and good self-esteem depends on the validation and acceptance they get. Half of the 600 youths surveyed who frequented online chat rooms and utilized instant messaging did so to test the waters, overcome shyness, or meet new people; the other half did the same for various reasons.

Internet users can remain anonymous to some extent, and unlike in person conversations, they have more time to think about what they want to say before speaking. This synchronicity and lack of judgment can be particularly comforting for teens who experience social anxiety or shyness in person. This allows these young people to practice their social skills in an environment that is safer and more comfortable for them. People who struggle with low self-esteem due to negative body image may find solace in online communication, where their genuine interactions, rather than their outward looks, are evaluated. Teens dealing with feelings of guilt, loneliness, and emotional pain also find the Internet's degree of anonymity quite tempting. Adolescents whose tastes run counter to popular culture may find social media to be an appealing alternative. This is a great chance for these teenagers to find other people who share their interests and pursue their passions even further. Additionally, these platforms provide teens with a platform to showcase and promote their creative works. Here, young people may share their creative works, such as poems, songs, and artwork (George, M. 2019).

They may improve their creative abilities and maybe even meet people with shared interests and capabilities through constructive criticism of these works. Also, outside of class, kids may collaborate with their classmates on school assignments via social media. Adolescents have easy access to a wealth of health-related information and educational resources on the Internet. Teens benefit from having access to proper medical information online, even while some of it could be deceptive or incorrect. Adolescents may feel more at ease researching delicate personal health issues on the Internet, because to its inherent anonymity. Some of the things they could look for online more frequently include STDs, depression, pregnancy, and methods of birth control. Nearly three quarters of all young individuals (75%) have sought out health-related information online (Plaisime, et. al., 2020). The percentage of young individuals (15–24 years old) who have researched topics such as weight loss, despair, violence, and substance abuse on the Internet is around 25%. Anxieties and depression sufferers "were significantly more likely to have used the Internet for health information, to have communicated with clinicians about their condition using the Internet," or "to have increased utilization of health care based on information found on the Internet," according to a big national survey of internet users. Teens can get support from others going through the same medical issues by using social media. Joining an awareness or support group might help teens learn more about their disease and find affirmation or comfort (Boniel-Nissim, et. al., 2022).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Review related to impact of social media on different groups.

As one talk about how social media has changed relationships, Toubiana and Zietsma, (2017) found how healthy older persons' cognitive performance was impacted by their social activities, networks, and support. Research findings indicated that there were observed improvements in working memory, executive functioning, and visuospatial abilities. However, no improvements were found in episodic memory, reasoning, attention, and processing speed. Also, Baccarella, C. V., et. al., (2018) explored Cyberbullying, trolling, and privacy abuse were some of the "dark side" aspects of social media that needed to be addressed. The social media honeycomb framework could have been used to do this, and further study was suggested to help us understand and use these platforms more effectively. On the other hand, when one talk about social media and friendships, Kahne and Bowyer, (2018) explored the effects of interest-driven and friendship-driven internet use on young people's political participation in the different countries and found that being part of big social networks increased participation. Although, Alalwan, A. A. (2018) explored the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2) alongside a questionnaire survey involving 437 participants. Its aim was to identify the factors that predicted purchase intention in social media advertising. The study provides both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for marketers. A young mind is more engaged in usage of social media, therefore Berryman, C., et. al., (2018) examined concerns about social media usage may have been unwarranted, as a study involving 467 young adults found that unclear booking was associated with suicidal thoughts, but social media use did not indicate poorer mental health performance. Contrary to the previous studies, Hou, Y., et. al., (2019) found college students' mental health and academic performance suffered due to their addiction to social media, with self-esteem playing a role in this connection. A successful method for eliminating addiction involved a two-stage self-help intervention program. One of the reasons of such behaviour is being examined by Hawi and Samaha, (2017) as an examination was conducted on the SMAQ's findings regarding the connections between social media addiction, self-esteem, and happiness. The findings indicated that self-esteem was positively correlated with life happiness and negatively correlated with addictive usage. The connection between online social networking addiction and happiness was affected by an individual's feeling of self-worth. In contagious to which, Lau, W. W. (2017) stated that University students' academic performance was negatively affected by social media usage and multitasking, while their performance was significantly impacted by video gaming and non-academic objectives. Also, Duffett, R. G. (2017) examined the influence of marketing messages shared on social media on the opinions of South African youth, particularly those belonging to Generation Z, was significant. Cognitive, emotional, and behavioural attitudes were positively impacted, but the results indicated a decline in the scale, indicating a purchasing funnel. Based on the research, businesses needed to change their approaches to reach this group, especially in underdeveloped nations.

2.2 Review related to impact of social media on Peer groups

Social media could adversely affect peer relation and attitude towards one another. Nesi, J., et. al., (2018) noted that the experiences of adolescents' peers played a vital role in their developmental abilities and adjustment challenges. The broad use of social media drastically altered peer interactions. This study stated that a transformation paradigm improved our understanding of social media use and peer connections by bringing about the following changes: altered experiences, heightened expectations, altered relationships, the facilitation of compensatory behavior, and the development of new behavior. While, showed Twenge, J. M., et. al., (2019) that iGen teens' paid job and extracurricular activity participation declined, resulting in less time spent engaging in face-to-face social connection. The rise in the usage of digital media was associated with the displacement of time. On the other hand, Ladd and Kochenderfer-Ladd, (2019) explored direct factors included parental responsibilities, transmission processes, and potential impacts on children's social skills. Indirect influences encompassed attachment, parenting styles, and disciplinary approaches. Also, Burnette, C. B., et. al., (2017) explored the relationship between social media use, body image, and confidence in early teenage girls. It was found that they frequently utilized the internet, expressed concerns about their appearance, and engaged in comparisons with others. Contagious to which Chung and Cho, (2017) investigated the impact of parasocial interactions, self-disclosure, and celebrity endorsement on the efficacy of endorsers on social media was significant. The results indicate that brand credibility and intent to buy were both positively affected. There are some issues when to come to young ladies being on social media, Hogue and Mills, (2019) found that young adult women experienced a more negative body image after interacting with attractive female peers on social media, as opposed to when they engaged with a family member. This finding suggests that concerns about one's appearance might have been intensified by engaging in comparisons with others.

3. Objectives of the study

There is a positive impact of social media usage on family relations.
There is a positive impact of social media usage on peer relations.

4. Hypothesis

There is a positive impact of social media usage on family relations among adolescents.

There is a positive impact of social media usage on peer relations among adolescents.

5. Research Methodology

The paper is based on the primary and secondary sources which were used to scrutinize the “Social Media and Its Influence on Family and Peer Relationships in Adolescence”. The 3 data collection tools were utilised for gathering of data: a well-structured Social Media Addiction Scale Student Form (SMAS-SF) developed by C. Sahin, which was rated using 5-point Likert scale; Brief Family Relationship Scale-BFRS (developed by Henry et.al., 1994), and Peer Relationship Scale (developed by Fatih Aydoğdu, 2015). Secondary data includes research papers, books, journals, e-books, websites etc. Participants of this study came from different schools of Ahmedabad, Gujarat and Hissar, Haryana. The questionnaire had items based on demographics such as age, gender, Locale etc. As one is unaware about the population of this study hence one has taken sample size as 385 by using Cochran formula. To make the sample size data more reliable questionnaire was sent to 420 adolescents’ students studying in the study area. Out of 420 responses it was found that 10 respondents filled incomplete and wrong questionnaires. Thus, study selected 410 as final sample out of which 205 students belonged to each district. Hypotheses were tested through descriptive method. The analysis was conducted with Excel and SPSS software programs. Regression analysis has been performed; mean arithmetic is also used alongside standard deviation for testing the hypothesis.

6. Results

Table 6.1: Descriptive Statistics Table

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Peer Relation	102.9341	7.45668	410
Family Relation	57.0756	5.36644	410

Peer and family relation descriptive statistics are defined in table 6.1. Both the Peer relation and family relation scales have standard deviations of 7.45668 and 57.0756 points, respectively.

Table 6.2: Table of Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Peer Relation	2557.870 ^a	1	2557.870	51.707	.000
	Family Relation	364.381 ^b	1	364.381	13.025	.000
Intercept	Peer Relation	12918.367	1	12918.367	261.141	.000
	Family Relation	5176.690	1	5176.690	185.039	.000
Social Media Addiction	Peer Relation	2557.870	1	2557.870	51.707	.000
	Family Relation	364.381	1	364.381	13.025	.000
Error	Peer Relation	20183.352	408	49.469		
	Family Relation	11414.275	408	27.976		
Total	Peer Relation	4366871.000	410			
	Family Relation	1347405.000	410			
Corrected Total	Peer Relation	22741.222	409			
	Family Relation	11778.656	409			
a. R Squared = .112 (Adjusted R Squared = .110)						
b. R Squared = .031 (Adjusted R Squared = .029)						

Social media is implicated in predicting both the peer and family connections of young people, according to Table 6.2, which shows that both relationships have significant F-values (F (51.707, sig. <.000) and F (13.225, sig. \.000), respectively, with a significance level of sig.=0.05). The fact that adolescents' peer relationships are significantly more impacted by social media use than their family relationships is supported by the data, which explains 11.2% of the variation compared to 3.1% for adolescent peer relations and supports our hypothesis that social media could have a positive effect on both peer and family relations among adolescents, with the former being more strongly impacted.

Table 6.3: Parameter Estimates Table

Parameter Estimates							
Dependent Variable	Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
Peer Relation	Intercept	71.304	4.412	16.160	.000	62.630	79.978
	Social Media Addiction	.306	.043	7.191	.000	.223	.390
Family Relation	Intercept	45.137	3.318	13.603	.000	38.614	51.660
	Social Media Addiction	.116	.032	3.609	.000	.053	.179

Teens' relationships with their friends and family are positively impacted by social media addiction, according to Table 6.3. An individual's level of social media addiction is significantly correlated with the strength of their peer relationships. Like I said before, social media is great for the family but has little impact on interactions between friends. It follows that teens' family and peer relationships benefit from their increasing social media use in terms of communication, interaction, coordination, involvement, etc.

7. Discussion and Findings

In the present world where technicity is being high submerged in minds of the people, the adolescents are no longer being safe from the atrocities of social media, (Wang and Gu, 2019) investigated how 1,286 Chinese secondary school graduates' academic identities were affected by social media. The results indicated that peer relationships had a minor impact on how social media use affected academic identity. While the present study stands out due to its rigorous methodology, comprehensive data collection tools, and robust analytical approach. It effectively combines primary data from structured scales such as the Social Media Addiction Scale Student Form (SMAS-SF), the Brief Family Relationship Scale-BFRS, and the Peer Relationship Scale, each validated and widely recognized in their respective domains. These tools ensured a nuanced exploration of how social media affects relationships among adolescents. The study's sampling strategy also enhances its credibility. Conducted across schools in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, and Hissar, Haryana, the research aimed for 420 responses, ultimately analyzing 410 completed and valid surveys.

Although, Nesi, et. al., (2018) presented a novel framework that was developed to investigate the “revolutionary impact of social media on the peer experiences of teenagers. The framework focused on three key concepts: peer victimization, peer status, and peer influence”. This finding has encouraged more empirical research into the ways in which social media settings influenced these kinds of experiences. By utilizing statistical techniques like regression analysis and descriptive statistics, the study not only described the central tendencies and variations in peer and family relationships but also identified significant predictors—such as social media addiction—that influence these dynamics.

Véronneau, M. H., & Schwartz-Mette, R. (2021) utilized methodological techniques, explored theoretical frameworks, and conducted empirical work on teenage peer interactions, highlighting the blurred line between online and offline connections. On the other hand, this study excels in methodological rigor, robust data analysis, and insightful interpretation of findings, thereby enriching our understanding of the complex interplay between social media use and adolescent relationships. Its comprehensive approach sets a benchmark for future research in exploring the multifaceted impacts of digital technologies on youth social dynamics.

8. Conclusion

The empirical study titled "Social Media and Its Influence on Family and Peer Relationships in Adolescence" highlights the substantial influence of digital platforms on interpersonal dynamics during a crucial period of growth. The findings emphasize that social media has the potential to both improve and damage familial and peer relationships, depending on variables such as usage habits, engagement with content, and individual vulnerability. The implications include the necessity of implementing well-rounded digital engagement tactics that encourage pleasant connections and reduce the likelihood of disputes or negative psychological consequences among teenagers. Suggestions comprise the creation of protocols for promoting healthy usage of social media within families, establishing effective channels of communication between parents and teenagers regarding online activities, and incorporating digital literacy instruction into school curriculum. Nevertheless, the current research has certain restrictions that emphasize the need for longitudinal studies to determine the long-lasting impacts of social media on the establishment and upkeep of relationships over time. Additionally, these studies should investigate the influence of peers and cultural variations in shaping these patterns among adolescents worldwide.

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